

The legend of St Nicholas

A long, long time ago three children went to the fields to gather ears of corn. They were very, very poor. Their mother had nothing left to eat. So each morning they left home to find ears of corn.

They gathered here one ear, there one ear, here another ear, there another ear, ... They went further and further.

But one night they were very far from home, they were lost. It was becoming dark and they were frightened. They were tired. Finally it was totally dark, they were very, very frightened. They were lost. There was no way home. They looked left, they looked right, they looked in front of them, they looked behind them: there was only darkness.

Suddenly, one of the children saw a faint light in the distance. Although they were very tired, all of them ran, they ran as quickly as they could and reached a small house with a light.

They were happy and knocked on the door.

“Please, let us in.
Please, let us in.
Please, let us in.
We’re lost.
We don’t know where we are.
Please, let us in.
Please, let us in,
Please, let us in.”

The door opened. Crrr ... Crrr ... Crrr ...

A very big man opened the door. He had blood all over his shirt and all over his trousers. He was the butcher. He had a big, a very big knife in his hand.

“Come in, children.
Come in, children.”

As soon as they had entered the house, as soon as they had closed the door, the butcher took his biggest knife, cut the children into small pieces and put them in the salt tub to preserve them, like ham or bacon.

Meanwhile their mother was very worried. She looked everywhere for her children.

She went in the house and shouted :

“Children, children,
where are you?”

But no answer came. So, she cried her eyes out and went further.

She went to the fields and shouted :

“Children, children,
where are you?”

But no answer came. So, she cried her eyes out and went further.

She went to the forest and shouted :

“Children, children,
where are you?”

But no answer came. So, she cried her eyes out and went further.

She went over the mountain and shouted :

“Children, children,
where are you?”

But no answer came. She was desperate. She went back home and cried and cried and couldn't stop crying.

A few days later, St Nicholas came by the butcher's house. He knocked on the door.

“Please, let me in.
Please, let me in.
I'm St Nicholas.”

The door opened. Crrr ... Crrr ... Crrr ...

A very big man opened the door. He had blood all over his shirt and all over his trousers. He was the butcher. He had a big, a very big knife in his hand.

“Come in, St Nicholas.
Come in, St Nicholas.”

St Nicholas went into the house, he went to the kitchen and sat at the table. Then he asked the butcher :

“Please, butcher, give me some meat from your salt tub.”

The butcher made big eyes. He was frightened. He was so afraid when he heard this that he ran away and was never seen again.

St Nicholas went to the salt tub, he opened it and put his three fingers on it and said :

“Children, wake up!
Children, wake up!
Children, wake up!”

The first child woke up, rubbed his eyes, jumped out and said :

“Oh, mmm, I slept well.”

The second child woke up, rubbed his eyes, jumped out and said :

“Oh, mmm, I slept well.”

The third child woke up, rubbed his eyes, jumped out and said:

“Oh, I thought I was in paradise.”

Since this day St Nicolas has been looking after good children and he visits them every year on 6th December. The good children wait impatiently for him and the others are afraid of the Bogeyman.

Be good and wait for 6th December ...

Retold by: Chantal Muller

Illustrated by: Aline Misson