

The Christmas Puppy

Once there was a puppy who lived in an alley between two brick walls. He ate whatever he found to eat, and he slept in a small empty box.

“It’s quite a good bed,” said the little puppy.

But one morning he woke up shivering. It was cold in the empty box. The north wind blew through the cracks and cried, “Get up, little puppy! It’s winter now, and you’ll have to find a warmer home.”

“That’s just what I’ll do,” barked the little puppy, as he tumbled out of the empty box. “This is the day before Christmas. I’ll find a nice warm home for my Christmas present.”

He ran out of the alley, and found some boys throwing snowballs. He ran right up to them. “Who wants a puppy for Christmas?” he barked.



But the boys only laughed and threw more snowballs. One snowball knocked the little puppy over and over in the snow. He scrambled to his feet.

“I thought boys liked puppies,” he thought sadly.

Just then, the wind came whistling around the corner. It blew up under the puppy’s fur and shook his little ears until they looked like unraveling socks.

“Boys do like puppies,” laughed the wind, “but they throw snowballs, too.”

Now the little puppy ran up to the mailman, who was tramping along with his mailbag full of letters and packages.

“Oh, no, puppy,” cried the mailman. “I can’t take care of you. I have too many things to take care of already.”

The wind blew the puppy out into the slippery street.

“Some people are too busy with packages to bother with little puppies,” it whistled, and it tossed the puppy up against a policeman’s big foot.

“Here, puppy,” the policeman said. “Get back on the sidewalk before you get hurt.”

The policeman put the puppy on a big pile of snow on the sidewalk. There the little puppy felt colder than ever.

It was getting dark, and the lights were coming on in all the stores. People hurried by with their arms full of packages. They laughed in the merriest way, but no one noticed the little puppy.

“Everybody seems too busy to even look at me,” sighed the puppy.

And then a little girl ran up to him.

“Oh, Mother,” she cried. “Look at this darling puppy. Can’t I take him home?”

The little puppy’s heart leaped for joy. And then it fell down into his cold little toes, because the girl’s mother said, “A puppy would tear up your dollhouse and scratch the floors and break all the ornaments on the Christmas tree. Come along!”

The little girl ran back to her mother, and they hurried away in the falling snow.

The wind blew sleet in the puppy's ear.

"Some people have too many things to bother with puppies," sighed the wind as it tumbled him over and over again.

The puppy ran on among hundreds of people and double-hundreds of feet, tramping through the snow. Children scampered from store to store looking at toys in the windows.

"I hope I get that fire engine," cried a little boy. And a little girl sighed, "I want that beautiful doll!"

"Bow-wow!" barked the little puppy. "Doesn't anybody at all want *me* for Christmas?"

But only the wind answered him, saying, "Some people are too busy wishing to bother with puppies!" And it blew him down a side street. The little puppy tried to run into the firehouse, but the wind pushed him back.

"Not there," said the wind. "They have a dog and five little puppies now!"

It blew him past the police station and across the railroad tracks. And then the wind blew the little puppy right out into the countryside.

It was dark now. The houses were far apart and the snow was deep.

"Oh, dear," thought the puppy, "if I don't find somebody who wants a puppy pretty soon, Christmas will be over."

"Hurry, then," cried the wind, and it blew the puppy's woolly ears right out in front of his face.

The puppy ran over a bridge and down a hill. He ran past houses with Christmas trees shining in the windows, with wreaths on the doors, and smoking chimneys. Then he saw a dark little house with no Christmas tree in its window, no wreath hung on its door.

"Here, puppy," called the wind. "If you're bound to be a Christmas present, you should have some Christmas wrappings, too."

It whooshed a bright piece of red ribbon toward him, and laughed and laughed as it whirled away.

The puppy grabbed the Christmas ribbon and began jumping toward the door of the dark house. The trailing ribbon made two straight tracks from the sidewalk right up to the door.



The puppy barked and barked on the doorstep. But no one opened the door.

“I guess nobody’s home,” he sighed.

He was too tired to go any farther. So he turned round and round to make a little hollow place for lying down, and then—

A big blanket of snow slid off the roof, and landed on top of the little puppy! It covered every bit of him, and only the ends of the Christmas ribbon showed where he was.



“I’ll freeze to an icicle,” thought the little puppy.

Just then, he heard voices.

“Oh, Mother,” cried a little boy’s voice. “Santa Claus came while we were out. See the marks of his sleigh!”

His mother looked down at the ribbon tracks.

“I don’t think those are sleigh tracks,” she said in a tired way. “I just don’t think Santa Claus would come way out here.”

But the little boy was sure something magical had happened. He went running up the path.

And then he saw the Christmas ribbon sticking up in the snow. He scooped the puppy out of that snowdrift—red ribbon, cold paws, and all—and held him up for his mother to see.

Then the little boy snuggled that cold little puppy against his woolly jacket.

The tired mother smiled a real smile and ran up the path. Her eyes looked as bright as Christmas tree lights. She put her arms around the little boy and the little puppy.

“You did get your present after all,” she whispered to her little boy. “Your little Christmas puppy!”



The puppy wagged his icy tail and wiggled his snowy ears and barked. And the wind laughed merrily as it went by.

“Some people are glad to have cold little puppies for Christmas,” it said, and away it blew.

Richard Scarry
The Animals' Merry Christmas
New York, Golden Books, 2005