

P73

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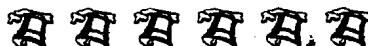
ge 71) he could
hear. Her face
e boy knew that
ould cry in her
oot to the other
ely. "Mom, do
ing on ten."

"Oh!" Now the other grinned broadly.
"Who you looking at?"
"You."
"Like what you see?"
Howie crimsoned. The other was eleven.
"I guess so."

"That's better," Eleven said triumphantly.
"Say, are you Langley?"
"Yeah."
"Here's the telegram they asked me to
give your mother." Playfully he thrust the
envelope at the boy, struck Howie across the
chest and rode off.

"Come back here!" Howie shouted. He
tucked the telegram into his pocket, shot his
fists up and stuck his jaw out. "Come back
an' I'll pulverize you!" He ran after the
bicycle for half the block, while the con-
scripted messenger merely jeered.

Howie gave up near the Walsingshams'
place. Puffing, he walked around through
the back, where Mrs. Walsingham, who was



Santa Claus, Please Listen

BY VIRGINIA SCOTT MINER

Who was that woman who used to
say

"Give me a giddy gift any day—

Give me things that sparkle and
shine

With a uselessness almost divine;
Give me things that I'd like to try
But never, never would just go
buy?"

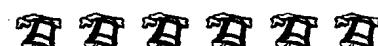
Who was she? Well, I might
remember,

But, Santa, this is a new December.
The things I want are brand-new
tires

And sun-porch screens made of
copper wires;
I could use rib roasts for the
yawning roaster,
And how I'd love a pop-up toaster.

I'd almost settle (oh, change most
utter)

For some country eggs and a pound of
butter!



an elderly widow, usually ate candy as she
read under a parasol. Often he crept in un-
der the hedge and shouted "Boo!" and she
leaped up with her hand over her bosom and
screamed. When she saw who it was she gig-
gled until tears trickled down her crimsoned
cheeks. Today she was eating peanut brittle
with her paper-backed mystery.

"Mrs. Walsingham! Can I walk your
dog?"

"Howard Langley!" she shrieked. "For a
moment I thought it was 'The Horror'!" She
heaved a sigh and raised her spectacles from
her nose. "Well, it is nice of you to drop in."

In desperation Howie fetched his coaster
wagon. He hoisted the old hulk upon the
wagon and dutifully dragged him the pre-
scribed four blocks up and four blocks back,
while Joseph looked on with drooping eyes.

"How far did you take him?" the mistress
asked when they returned.

Wearily, Howie bounded the limits of the
trip. His shirt was wet with perspiration.

"Good!" said Mrs. Walsingham. "Now
you poor, tired fellow"—to the dog—"you
must rest. He hasn't walked so far since we
came back from Miami." She studied the
boy. "I have something for you, Howie."

"Yes'm."

"Guess."

He was too polite to guess. A catcher's
mitt, a fielder's glove or a basketball? "I
can't guess, Mrs. Walsingham."

With a little squeal she lifted her huge
purse and produced it. "A picture of Joseph
in a leather frame. It was taken when I first
got him."

The boy looked dumfounded. A picture of
that fat old cow when he was a skinny little
dog!

"You've been so nice to Joseph that I
want you to have it for your room. Like it?"

"Uh-huh."

"I'm glad."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Walsing-
ham." As he went through the gate he
thought Joseph, again slumped in an un-
lovely heap at his mistress' feet, was grinning
maliciously.

Muttering to himself, Howard sauntered
toward Flutterbach's Fancy Fruits and Gro-
ceries. He threaded through the customers
to the back counter. "Mr. Flutterbach,
want me to deliver anything for you?"

"Sure thing, Howie." The proprietor
sputtered while his palsied fingers counted
blue ration stamps. "Why you didn't want
to work last week?"

"Last week wasn't my birthday."

"And this week?"

"You know."

"How should I know?"

"It's my birthday."

"And so you want to deliver. Three dozen
eggs, maybe?"

"They just dropped, Mr. Flutterbach."

"Or when you left Mrs. Zagreb's order on
the curb to pinch-a-hit in a baseball game?"

"Someone stole the groceries that time.
Gee, you don't want me, Mr. Flutterbach?"

"Who said that?" the other groaned.
"Here, deliver a five-pound sack of sugar to
the Grady's. And please, Howie, don't put it
down in a rain puddle."

"Who? Me?" asked Howard, and he
toiled faithfully most of the afternoon. He
carried flour and sugar and, easiest of all, he
helped to watch the baby buggies when the
mothers were inside the store.

"If you go scrub your hands," Mr.
Flutterbach called wisely, "you can take
samples from the bulk raisins and from the
medium-size prunes too."

Howard moved quickly. He enjoyed
working in the grocery.

"Here's fifty cents," said the proprietor at
the end of two and a half hours.

"Fifty!"

"Too much?"

"I'm nine years old today, Mr. Flutter-
bach, and I thought —"

The grocer shrugged, but his eyes twinkled.
"Well, eggs you didn't break today. Here!
Ninety cents, right?"

"Oh, boy! Gee, thanks."

"All right, it's all right. Happy birthday,
Howie!"

44 AD

You know what
I'd like best
RIGHT NOW?



..One of Mom's nice
cold tuna salads!

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For these quality tunas are always delicate and delicious....

Only the tender light meat is packed. No wonder "G. I. Joe" dreams of "one of Mom's nice cold tuna salads"!

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Terminal Island, California

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