



THE SANTA CLAUS TRAP

It was Christmas Eve. When midnight came, Santa Claus was supposed to come down the chimney.

But Laurence wanted to be sure.
So he made a plan.

He looked in his daddy's tool-cupboard.
He made drawings on pieces of paper.
He did experiments with his bears.
And then he was ready.

In his trusty rucsac he hid:

one tinkly bell from his teddy-bear's collar;
two tough elastic bands;
three bags of crisps which were ready to crunch;
four shiny safety-pins;
five lengths of string all knotted up tight;
six sparkly Christmas stars;
seven marbles that swirled and clicked;
eight figs sticky and sweet;
nine nibbly biscuits of the Christmas kind;
and
ten finger-puppets to wear
(the hippo, the vole,
the leopard, the mole,
the dog and the cat,
the rabbit, the rat,
the toucan,
the bad alligator).

Laurence closed his eyes and switched out his light. But he did not go to sleep.

At midnight, he climbed out of his bed.

He looked in his trusty rucksack and checked that he had:

one tinkly bell from;
two tough elastic;
three bags of which;
four shiny;
five lengths of all;
six sparkly;
seven marbles thatand;
eight figs and;
nine nibbly biscuits of the;
and
ten finger puppets
(the hippo, the vole,
the leopard, the mole,
the dog and the cat,
the rabbit, the rat,
the toucan,
the bad alligator).

He crept quietly into the living room, where the Christmas Tree was softly glowing.

Over by the fireplace was the glass of whisky which his mummy had thoughtfully left out for Santa.

Laurence set to work.

From out of his trusty rucksack he pulled:

one tinkly;
two tough;
three bags of;
four shiny;
five lengths of;
six sparkly;
seven marbles;
eight figs;
nine nibbly

and

ten

(the, the,
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and he put them down carefully on the floor.

This is what he did next:

to one tinkly bell from his teddy's neck
he attached

two tough elastic bands

and hung it from the mantelpiece;

he placed

three bags of crisps

at the front of the fireplace;

he carefully fastened

the four shiny safety-pins

to the sides of the curtains

and between the pins he tied

five lengths of string;

and from the strings he hung
the six sparkly stars;
and then in front of the living-room door he placed
seven marbles that swirled and clicked.

And now no one could
come down the chimney
without tinkling the bell
or
step out of the fireplace
without crunching the crisps
or
come in through the window
without sparkling the stars
or
come in through the door
without twirling the marbles.

Laurence would see Santa tonight.

He hid behind the sofa, and settled down to wait,
with
eight sticky figs
nine nibbly biscuits of the Christmas kind
and
ten finger puppets to keep his little hands warm.

The night was long.
The eight sticky figs were eaten, one by one.
The nine nibbly biscuits were nibbled, nine, eight, seven, six,
five, four, three, two, one, until they were no more.

The stars outside twinkled and the wind stirred in the chimney.
Laurence's eyes grew heavy. One by one, the finger puppets
curled up and snored.

And when Laurence woke up, it was morning.

But.....

the one tinkly bell from his teddy's neck
had not tinkled;

the three bags of crisps
had not crunched;

the six sparkly stars from his tiny Xmas Tree
had not sparkled;

the seven swirling marbles
had not been twirled.

And yet under the tree were presents that Santa had left; he had come and gone, and had drunk his glass of whisky, every last drop.

Laurence sighed.

Back into his trusty rucsac he put:

one;
two;
three;
four;
five;
six;
seven;
eight	- no, not eight;
nine	- no, nor nine;
	<i>but</i>
ten (.....)

And then -

- he opened his presents.

