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## Leave room for pudding...

Chester was hiding quietly in the bread basket out of sight  
Everyone was finishing their Christmas dinner he had to time this right

The table was piled high with so many culinary delights  
Hopping with excitement he had never seen such a sight

As soon as they left, he scampered past the crackers  
Running past party hats his little feet went like the clappers  
Tasting gravy and trimmings he sampled each delicious plate  
Such a feast this was there was no time to wait

He nibbled handfuls of salad from a bowl decorated with holly  
After devouring some juicy sprouts, he then spotted the broccoli  
His fluffy bum then accidentally pushed over a glass of red claret  
In his utter excitement to get to the honey glazed carrots

He let couldn't help but let out a "week-week" of screeches  
For there was a plate stacked high of juicy ripe peaches  
After guzzling the delicious fruit, he eyed the grand prize  
It was a Christmas pudding that made his eyes grow wide

His mouth filled with deliciously plump fruits and spices  
He signed with pleasure each bite so sweet and nice  
His belly stretched contentedly from all he was devouring  
But he always knew to leave a bit of room for pudding

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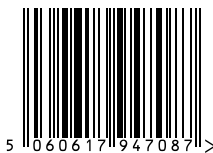
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## Leave room for pudding...



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## Mr Prickles Christmas Party

The smell of fresh spiced gingerbread biscuits wafted through the woodland to Badgers hole  
Excitedly he threw on a scarf and hopped out to join the cheerful crowd on a stroll  
For today everyone would join in the festive fun for it only happens once a year  
Today is the famous Mr Prickles Christmas Party of celebration and good cheer  
A fragrant wreath of moss, pine cones and mistletoe adorn his little front door  
“Knock Knock!” they all cried merrily as they heard his padded feet running across the floor  
As he threw open the door, they all cheered and piled into the home at the base of a tree  
As they looked around, they gasped in wonder at such wonderous sights they did see  
Thousands of fairy lights twinkled all the way up inside the tree sparkling from every branch and twig  
“It’s like being inside a star!” cried Squirrel as she suddenly spotted a bowl of frosted honey figs  
As the animals all arrived, they were handed hot apple cider and the party got into full swing  
Brown Hare cheerfully handed out hot bowls of wild chestnut stew and said “let the games begin!”  
Blackbirds and robins tweeted merrily above singing carols as they played pin the tail on the deer  
Badger couldn’t stop laughing as he removed all the toasted marshmallows stuck to Mr Deer’s rear  
“Pull the cracker” cried Mr Prickles and as they pulled out his loose needles, he shouted BANG!  
They told stories of the ancient forest and filled their bellies with delicious winter treats  
The young foxes full of energy and sweets were still playing games like hide and seek  
And so, into the night they all merrily danced and sang until the stars appeared  
Old Barn Owl raised a glass and declared it another successful party to end the year!

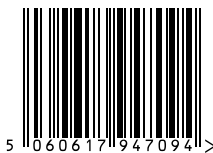


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## Donkey's Wish

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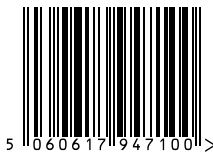
Dylan was a shy and quiet little donkey, a bit different from the rest  
His heart, however, was so enormously big that it filled out his fluffy chest  
The farmer worried that he would be unable to safely do his daily chores  
So, while the others did all the heavy work Dylan had to stay indoors  
As Christmas Eve crept near it began to snow and poor Dylan's sadness grew deep  
Wishing he could just be useful in some way, he softly cried himself to sleep  
But at this magical time of year things can happen and his wish was secretly heard  
A messenger was sent from the North Pole in the form of a special little bird  
Sweet beautiful bird song gently woke Dylan up the very next day  
A little robin redbreast was sat staring at him in a bed of glistening golden hay  
"I can help you" said the bird, "but from here you must now leave"  
Dylan's heart was brave and true, so he joyfully decided to believe  
Robin led him through an overgrown hedgerow path guarded by a fox,  
Dylan's heart thumped as there stood a very old and faded red postal box  
It was glittering strangely, tucked behind a wall of Ivy hidden from view  
It was certainly magical and could only be found by those who truly knew  
"Now remember your special wish" said Robin and Dylan closed his eyes  
With a woosh a letter appeared in his mouth much to his surprise  
"Post it through here" smiled the Robin "and your wish shall be granted"  
As the letter dropped it glowed from inside for it was truly enchanted  
When Christmas Eve arrived, the donkeys were worried Dylan was nowhere to be seen  
Suddenly a distant tinkling of bells drew them to run out and look up to the night sky  
Gasp! they saw their beloved Dylan flying up high with the reindeer with a smile that beamed  
His wish had come true, he was now the happiest of donkeys and bursting with pride  
So never give up on your dreams, whatever they are, for you really never know  
Someone just might be listening, someone to whom all your secret wishes go.

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## The Christmas Scarf

A glistening blanket of white snow covers Crabtree Farm  
A happy gaggle of geese were nestled quietly in the barn  
Gordon the Farmer waves at the feathered ladies as he drives past  
Suddenly the old tractor spluttered and backfired with a terrific blast

“Argghhh” cried the geese and madly flew this way and that  
Geraldine took the full force and fell into a puddle with a splat  
Dazed and confused she lay there looking up at the snow fluttering down  
Her eyes were fuzzy and her ears were ringing with a deafening sound

She spent a week in the farmers wife’s kitchen keeping warm by the fire  
The shock had terrified Geraldine and left her feeling very tired  
The feathers around her neck had fallen out leaving her sore and cold  
Each evening Edna took out her knitting balls of wool neatly rolled

Clickity - clack went her knitting needles which soothed Geraldine to sleep  
On Christmas morning she felt so much better and leapt to her feet  
Hang on! Cried Edna, I have made you a special gift, just wait and see  
She pulled out a beautiful woollen red scarf with excitement and glee

As she wrapped it around Geraldine’s neck, she had tears in her eyes  
Her very own handmade gift, little Geraldine was speechless in surprise  
Edna smiled as she watched the little goose run off with so much pleasure  
For Christmas is really about the little things and moments to treasure.

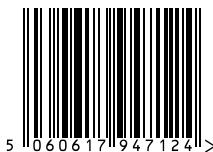
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## Berries & Snowflakes

The winter hare always has to be so cunning and clever  
He scampers about in the open despite the awful chilly weather  
For precious food becomes sparse when the temperature drops  
Shimmering snow covers the fields and there are no more farmers crops  
As a wise and mystical creature, the hare will always survive  
Chewing moss and hunting for berries they dig and they dive  
As glittering snowflakes softly fall and land on his wet nose  
The shining moon above watches over him wherever he goes  
As others silently hibernate, the hare travels all winter long  
But soon it will be spring and the birds will burst into sweet song  
The harshness of winter will be a distant memory for the hare  
As sunshine returns bringing an abundance of food to share  
Refreshed and relaxed he will be sipping fresh water from the lake  
Remembering his long days chasing berries and snowflakes

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## Dreaming of a White Christmas...

Between the ancient roots of an old oak tree  
Nestled in a bed of moss and copper-coloured leaves  
Lays a little hedgehog as snuggled warm as can be  
The cold winter wind whistles as he softly sleeps

As the inky midnight sky twinkles with a thousand stars  
Silver frost creeps silently over the fields and hedgerows  
The frosty moon hangs quietly watching from afar  
Soundly asleep he twitches his feet and tiny nose

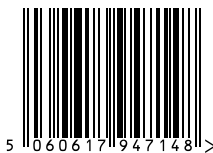
He is dreaming of a magically white Christmas  
A joyful day of feasting to be enjoyed by all  
The majestic barn owl glides silently past overhead  
As little hedgehog sleeps on delicate snowflakes being to fall..

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## The last mince pie...

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Happily dozing in her big comfy bed, Dottie heard the keys jingle in the front door  
Excitedly she pads down the hallway to greet her human as shopping bags drop to the floor  
"DOTTIE!" comes the usual welcome, "come here sweetheart. Look what I have just for you."  
Sniffing excitedly, she hopes for a treat, so she sits on her bottom and waits for a chew  
As a pair of red antlers came out of the shopping bag Dottie isn't sure how she feels about this.  
She is ushered over to the table into position and her wet nose gets a kiss  
From her humans' squeals of pleasure, she guessed it was best to follow along  
A cake tin is removed from the cupboard amidst happy humming of a Christmas song  
Dottie wags her tail as a mince pie is placed in front of her and she is told to wait  
She barely notices as the ridiculous antlers are placed on her head  
Flash, Flash goes the camera "look at Mummy! Yes, that's right there now HOLD"  
I can smell the pastry. Mmm thinks Dottie "NO, you licked your lips, stop moving!" she is told  
Fidgeting, how many more is she going to take? Dottie's bum starts to slide off the chair  
I'm seeing stars from the flash.."that's it! Now hold it right THERE"  
FLASH! "Wait" she says, "wait, hold it, ah that one's blurred" as Dottie starts to drool  
"Hang on the antlers slipped", help me thinks Dottie I can't last much longer on this stool  
As the aroma of spices tickle her senses Dottie leans a little closer  
"Ah you blinked. Just one more. That's it you're mummies perfect little poser!"  
Dottie doesn't think she can sit still much longer, her paws are slipping  
that's the last mince pie, perfectly dusted with icing, her tongue starts dripping  
The kids will come in any moment. What if they took her well-earned prize?  
Dottie made her mind up and suddenly dived across the table for her prize  
Her mouth full of crumbly pleasure animal instincts, after all, teach you to survive  
Leaving cries behind her she ran down the hall and jumped back into her comfy bed  
I love Christmas, thought Dottie, the festive pair of antlers still half dangling from her head

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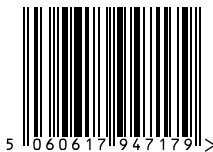
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## The last mince pie...



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## All I want for Christmas...

Sofie is a very cheeky girl  
And rather clever for a mouse  
She tiptoes down the quiet corridors  
Undiscovered within the country house

Her favourite time of year has finally arrived  
The freshly baked gingerbread wafts down the hall  
The tree is hung with pretty baubles and twinkling lights  
A smell that's irresistible to the resident mice

As the house falls silent, Sofie looks all around  
Scampering towards the treat her feet make no sound  
She has her eye on her most desired prize  
The giant orange ball reflecting in her glassy black eyes

Swinging wildly from branches to steal the treat  
She reaches with all her might for something sweet  
With a final swing she captures her treasure  
Tapped and unwrapped she enjoys the chocolatey pleasure

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## All I want for Christmas...



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## Christmas Magic

There is a sprinkle of magic in the frosty air tonight, for this is Christmas Eve  
Woodland folk gather together with good cheer because they firmly believe

Each year on this night there is a special visitor from up above  
Spreading happy tidings, delivering gifts with jolly laughter and love

Snowflakes gently begin to fall as they gaze up eagerly at the stars  
Everyone closes their eyes and makes a special wish from their hearts  
In the distance there is a soft jingling sound and the robin excitedly tweets  
Here he comes! It's the winter wonderland sleigh bearing lots of yummy treats

With a sudden woosh across the sky the glittering sleigh bursts into view  
Presents drop into the trees where the owls catch them crying "twit twoo"  
The reindeers jingle their bells waving to the animals cheering down below  
Flying high on their magical dust which make their long antlers glow

A feast the animals will now enjoy of wild mushroom stew and cranberry pies  
Hugging each other goodnight they stretch, yawn and hibernate with contented sighs  
As they huddle together knowing the greatest gift is having each other near  
A Christmas lullaby is softly sung to welcome in a Happy New Year.

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## Special Delivery!

Through snow covered windows a festive and rather chaotic scene was unfolding  
Blackberry Cottage had a new arrival, a bundle of fluff somewhat challenging  
Ginger, a labradoodle puppy, was a giant mass of orange fluff and fuzz  
Racing around the tiny cottage doing what only a puppy does  
She got rather excited at seeing all the mysterious boxes coming out  
Strings of lights and sparkly stars what was this all about?  
She got under her daddy's feet as the huge tree was dragged inside  
Circling excitedly, she got too close to the fireplace burning her behind  
"Ginger!" he cried, "sit still you crazy girl!", looking up at the rather splendid tree  
Ruffling her ears, he put a sparkly star in her mouth "oh how beautiful it all will be"  
He hoofed her up to the top where she gently placed the star pride of place  
"I have a special job for you to do tonight" to put a smile on Mummies face  
Handing her the end of the lights she circled the tree round and around  
When it was covered the fairy lights switched on and twinkled like a jewelled crown  
"Woof" she barked loudly and knocked over the mince pies and crackers  
Laughing, he draped her neck in tinsel, it was having fun that mattered  
When the glass baubles came out, she sat still like a good girl  
Mesmerised by the glittering domes as they swirled and twirled  
By evening the cottage was a cosy Christmas wonderland retreat  
Snuggled by the fire with a chew Ginger waited for her Mummy to greet  
As the key turned in the lock there were gasps of pleasure at the sight  
Being welcomed home by loved ones on this Christmas Eve night  
Ginger carefully carried over her present as she was trained to do  
A special delivery Mummy with lots of love just for you!

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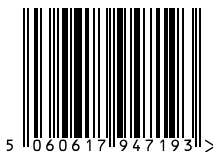
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## Special Delivery!



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## Snow Bear & Hare

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One blustering winters night, when the trees folded over in a stormy gale  
A young hare struggling to make her way, tripped on a tree root and fell forwards into a hole  
Down and down she tumbled, into a dusty place of lost and ancient things  
She landed with a bump on a large old book covered in moss and twine  
Ever so slowly she opened the heavy cover and the pages began to flutter

Millions of tiny glowing stars burst from the book throwing back her long velvet ears  
As she blinked her eyes against the brightest of golden lights spinning all around her  
She could just make out the shape of a huge Snowbear walking towards her through the swirling light  
He appeared like a glittering wish, a sweet dream half remembered  
Sparkling frosted light and snowflakes fluttered behind him as he approached

His fur was the crispest white of snowy mountains and streaks of gold shimmered from within his skin  
He looked at her with kind chestnut eyes that twinkled with honey gold flecks  
"I am the guardian of the book" he softly spoke, "what do you seek little one?"  
Shyly she lowered her eyes and shuffled her feet, "I wish for a friend" she whispered

His face broke into a glittering smile, "I have such wonderous sights to show you"  
She took his paw which was wonderfully warm and gentle, and they flew into the book  
Snowflakes and golden letters spun wildly past them as they tumbled through the pages  
Out they burst under a dark velvet starry sky, floating down landing with a soft crunch on the snow  
Little Hare gasped as she looked around at the beautiful world she found herself in

There were snow covered mountains and lakes, forests and ice castles in the distance  
"Shall we take a ride?" asked Snowbear, scooping her up onto his glittering furry back  
"Woo-hoo!" she cried as he took off from the ground and flew high, he actually flew!  
They soared over the gleaming frozen lake and waved at penguins and sealions  
As they swished through the tree tops she reached out and felt the tickle of the pine needles on her paw  
She felt such warmth in her heart, she was on an adventure and she had her very own Snowbear!

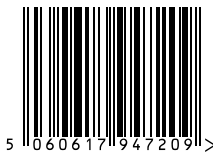
To be continued ... full story book coming soon

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## Dashing Jumpers!

Denzel was a bit grumpy about Christmas but his Human loved it dearly  
She always knitted him a smart winter jumper; a tradition done yearly  
This year she caught a terrible cold and was forced to her bed before it was complete  
Most upset she cried Christmas Eve until exhaustion took her finally to sleep  
Resting by the fire Denzel reluctantly stretched his front legs and then the back  
He heaved himself out of his comfy bed as his joints moaned and cracked  
This called for reinforcements and he knew just who to see  
He snuck out the back door and trotted round to number 3  
He pawed at the window and up onto the windowsill jumped a large ginger cat  
Molly opened the window and Denzel squeezed through so they could chat  
He explained the situation and she quickly hatched a clever plan  
Denzel followed her into the garage where she led him under a dusty van  
There in an old carpet bag lived a huge family of little brown mice  
Molly was too old for chasing things so they all loved her for being so nice  
They were all too happy to help and, in a trice, they gathered wool and threads  
they spread out different coloured wool and threaded onto the needle heads  
As Denzel laid down, they worked so fast, clink- clink as they weaved in and out  
The mice sang sweetly as a row of delicately stitched woolly snowmen appeared  
When it was finished, they gathered up the wool with claps and cheers  
Thanking them, Denzel went home yawning as he settled back by the fire  
Next morning, he jumped on the bed showing off his rather splendid attire  
Such shrieks of pleasure at this Christmas surprise filled his little heart full of joy  
He was rewarded with a bowl full of plump juicy turkey for being such a thoughtful boy

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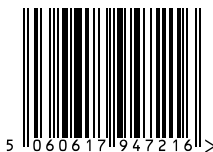
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## Dashing Jumpers!



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## Sprout Supper

Mr Snuffles loved to be in the kitchen where he didn't miss a thing  
From his spot on the windowsill, he watched as Lily started to sing  
It was her baking day today which he enjoyed most immensely  
As she weighed out all her ingredients, he watched her intensely  
Her rolling pin glided up and down over the pastry growing nice and flat  
Little puffs of flour billowed in the air dusting this and that  
He leaned in close to get a better look wiggling his little pink nose  
He sniffed some flour which made him sneeze blowing the flour from his toes  
She filled the pastry parcels with juicy currents and spice  
Carefully she glazed them and they were into the oven in a trice  
From the fridge a bag rustled and Mr Snuffles ears pricked up  
She carried a bag of fat round green balls; he couldn't believe his luck!  
It was only September but could it really be his favourite snack?  
He started hopping through the flour and slid down her back  
He pulled at her apron strings excitedly with his long teeth  
She nearly tripped over him as he bounded round her feet  
She tipped a good serving of sprouts into a bowl and set it on the floor  
Glancing at the golden pastries gently rising through the oven door  
Smiling at him happily munching his treat as she put away the butter  
Its never too early for sprouts he thought as he settled down to his supper

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## Sprout Supper



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## The First Snow

A hushed blanket of sparkling white covers the whispering woods  
The youngest of the animals are waking up to a surprise today  
What wonder awaits them when they emerge from their comfy beds  
For something magical blew through the night to come their way

A twitching nose emerges from a hole to explore the crisp morning air  
“My goodness what’s this?” He exclaimed at the wonderous sight  
Hare scampered past Badger then stopped; all he could do was stare  
“It’s beautifully white and crunchy!!” And he jumped with all his might

Robin landed onto a branch above them and some of it fell down  
“It’s falling into my ears, ouch its cold!” Laughed little hare  
“It tickles my nose a bit”, said Badger looking all around  
Stag stuck his tongue out to catch it, “its magic” he declared

“It’s chilly on my feathers” said Robin, “I’m not sure I can fly”  
“It makes my whiskers tingle” laughed Fox, who had come to join them as well  
They all stood in wonder looking up as it gently fell from the sky  
Their first snow had enchanted them all with its wondrous wintery spell.

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## Light The Way

The cold wind whistled deep in the darkness of an ancient woodland  
As a frightened young badger found himself quite lost one wintery night  
The wild forest was coming alive with strange noises and fierce rustling  
The little badger stumbled along trying to remain calm with all of his might

He had never wandered off on his own before and now felt very alone  
As his fur caught on brambles, he clung to a small lantern which offered a warm glow  
Scampering and rusting noises seemed to surround him making his heart thump  
He tripped over tree limbs and undergrowth not knowing which way to go

He came upon a small clearing and looking up to the tall trees and dark skies above  
Badger sat down on a clump of moss and wept "I just can't see my way through"  
"Hello there, young Badger" called a greeting from a little Robin on a branch nearby  
"Don't worry I will help you" Robin said with a cheery tweet "I know just what to do"

The friendly bird flapped his wings until the lantern blew out, "now look up" he sang  
Badger panicked at the sudden blackness then blinked his little eyes looking up to the trees  
Slowly the forest changed and was covered in a moonlit glow as the twinkling stars appeared  
"Your night vision is strong and the forest will help you" it was true for he could now truly see

Badger thanked him as he noticed other friendly creatures smiling at him from the shadows  
No longer afraid Badger marvelled at the beauty of the glimmering fireflies and moonbeams  
As a little mouse waved at him his heart filled with joy realising, he was never truly alone  
Robin smiled "now follow your feet and the moon and stars will light the way home".

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## Christmas Cuddles

As the snow gently fell Squirrel and Hare pulled up their hoods  
As they merrily made their way skipping through the woods  
For this is the night they look forward to each year  
It's Mr Stags famous festive feast of good cheer!  
The smell of spices and joyful carols they could hear  
And also see fairy light lanterns flickering as they drew near  
Garlands of bells and mistletoe hanging from every tree  
Such delights through the windows they could now see  
Badger and Fox were handing out wooden toys  
To the children running around with such festive joy  
Gleaming baubles and gingerbread, fir cones and stars  
Tawny Owl handing out jellied sweets from frosted jars  
The table was bursting with juicy berries and golden pies  
Oh, I hope our bellies will be bigger than our eyes!  
And even though its chaos and the place will be in a muddle  
The evening always ends with cosy fireside Christmas Cuddles xx

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## The Bear & The Hare

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As the first drift of snow begins to fall, the magic of Christmas draws near

The forest glistens and sparkles with everyone in festive cheer  
With the ground covered in a frosty blanket of crunchy white snow

Little Hare scampers along leaving pawprints where she goes

As the smell of plum pudding and hot chocolate fills the air

Carefully carrying her gift she makes her way there

Her very dear friend she cannot wait to see

Mr Bear will be singing and trimming his tree

For no other she knows loves this season quite like he

Cracking chestnuts by the fire his face fills with glee!

But Bear is so sad when January finally comes around

Which is why she is excited by the gift she has found

Arriving at last she knocks on his tinsel covered door

“Ho Ho Ho”!! he cries running across the floor

“Merry Christmas little Hare, come in come in”!

I have fruitcake and games and carols for us to sing!

“Wonderful! Dear friend, but first, grant me my wish”

And with that she carefully hands him his very special gift

“Oh My”! says Mr Bear and has to sit down in surprise

Pulling back ribbon and glittery tissue Bear has tears in his eyes

For it's a Christmas wonderland in a globe to enjoy all year round

Mr Bear is so emotional he just can't make a sound

He grabs little Hare in the biggest of biggest Bear hugs

For Christmas is really, after all, all about LOVE...xxx

*Art that tells a Story...*

*Love*  
*Country*  
by Sarah Reilly

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## Find your Sparkle!

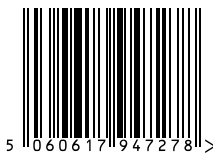
Poppy was a lazy puppy who loved nothing more than a good sleep  
She could stay in bed for hours and hours week after week  
Her owners sometimes worried that she didn't do rather a lot  
Blaming themselves for the ultimate luxury bed for her they bought  
They made a great effort and offered her so many toys  
But she wasn't very interested and snored loudly regardless of any noise  
They had to wake her up just to push her outside for a wee  
Grumpily she sped back to her bed not interested in the garden to see  
As she slumbered her nose filled with a new scent of pine needles and greenery  
She opened her eyes a little and there was their very first Christmas Tree  
It almost filled their little lounge and there were boxes of decorations laying all around  
The family were excitedly hanging tinsel and bows and a long string of lights  
When they plugged them in the room suddenly lit up so sparkly and bright  
Above her head a giant bauble was hung, it spun like a thousand stars twinkling bright  
Her eyes suddenly grew wide as she was mesmerised by the beautiful sight  
Softly she wined and pawed at the fascinating glittery ball  
The family laughed and felt relieved that Poppy had found her festive sparkle after all!

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## The Hare & The Robin

Brown Hare was out searching for some tasty winter grass  
As is snowed, overhead hundreds of birds fluttered past  
He watched them with joy from the field where he sat  
Then spotted a distressed bird darting this way and that  
My Dear little bird please tell me what is the matter?  
"I cant find a coat!" He cried through his chit and his chatter

For it is time to flock to the thrush family ball  
Where all Robins and Blackbirds and Nightingales call  
They all have smart red coats but I cannot find mine  
So upset was the bird in his eyes bright tears shined  
With a smile Hare said gently it's because you are young  
Once you are bigger you will grow the finest red one!  
For you my dear friend are a Robin don't you see?

A sure sign of winter like the snow of the trees  
You will drop your first feathers and this I can vow  
Then grow a splendid red chest of which to be proud!  
With relief Robin knew he really did belong  
And flew off to his family with his heart full of song

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