

# Has Santa Come Yet?

---

I was probably 10. We had a new baby but he was in his cot beside my Mum and Dad. In our bedroom, my two brothers were in the next bed to me. They were aged 5 and 3 and still believed in Santa. It had taken ages for them to get to sleep but at last they were gone, over into the land of nod.

My Mum peeked round the door and checked then whispered as she switched the overhead light on:

'OK Johnny, you can read for just another wee while.'

She returned with a fresh hot water bottle, a stoneware pig wrapped in a towel. I was reading a library book. It may have been 'White Fang' or 'Call of the Wild'.

From the slightly open bedroom door I heard Mum and Dad talking along the corridor, heading for bed.

After a while, I fell asleep.

A sixth sense wakened me, making me stand up.

From the bed beside me, Dougie asked:

"Has Santa Come Yet?"

We tiptoed along to the Living Room to check under the Christmas Tree. The room was warm, dimly lit by the banked up coal fire. But there was a funny smell. I closed the door behind us and switched on the light.

Beside the fireplace the electric iron was glowing hot, sitting on top of a tin Mum used for storing buttons. It was an old battered National Dried Milk tin.

I told Dougie to sit on the floor and not to move.

I edged forward and pulled out the plug on the iron.

We sat near the door and waited until the iron cooled down.

I checked the toys and found one for Dougie. A big brown teddy. I picked out my best toy, a pair of six shooters in a double holster. At last, after years of waiting, I was 'Two Gun Tex'. There was a box of caps but I saved them for later because of the noise.

# Has Santa Come Yet?

---

I checked the iron and it was only warm, not hot but to be safe I lifted it and stood it on its end inside the fender. The button box was still warm but no longer smelly.

Santa's ginger snap was half-eaten and he had drunk all of the ginger wine cordial. Rudolf's carrot was gone. There were sooty footprints on the tiles inside the fender.

We turned off the light and crept back down the corridor to our bedroom. I hung my holster over the end of my bed. Dougie and Big Teddy cuddled into my back,

I read my book again and after a while I fell asleep.

When Mum came to wake us she asked me about the iron and told me I was a very clever boy to do what I had done.

In another present, roughly wrapped in Christmas paper, there was a cowboy outfit for me, a present from Aunt Margaret who was a seamstress in a clothing factory.

Now all I needed was a cowboy hat and a Sherrif's badge. I already had black wellie boots.