

The Real Gift of Christmas

It was Christmas and in the early hours of the morning, Brightville was bustling with activity. Scintillating crimson and emerald lights flickered on, weaving through the damp, concrete pavements. Buildings contained magnificent oak trees draped in dazzling mistletoe, glistening baubles and an enthralling array of ornaments, each carrying its own story. In one of those majestic households, a heartless child named Big Mike was furiously ranting at his mother.

“I had twelve gifts last year. How come I have only eleven now,” he screamed, his stubby arms and legs shaking, emphasising his indignation.

“I’m sorry darling, but you can get more once we go shopping,” his mum helplessly tried. “You can choose what -”

“Even the presents were bad! Only a PS5! You could have bought me a VR headset Mum,” bellowed the boy again. Mike raged up the stairway and slammed the door that led to his room. Inside, he went ballistic, tossing toys and furniture across the room until he pounced on his bed, staying there for the rest of the day.

The clock struck midnight, and Mike was still awake. Staring at the foggy night sky, he felt drops of resentment drown his mind. Plip-plop. Plip-plop. Each one more ferocious than the rest. Mike wanted to dig himself a hole, and never come out.

Suddenly, he heard the familiar click of the lock. Someone was coming in. Mike pictured a broad man in black holding a gun, and immediately trepidation clutched his heart. Wasn’t this what happened to all the famous people on TV? Why wasn’t his family awake? Mike shuffled down the stairs, afraid to make a sound.

Squelch! Squelch! Squelch! This sound confirmed his suspicions: someone was entering the house. Everything was shrouded in darkness and ripples of doubt were beginning to ebb into his mind. This individual was serious about achieving their goal. Or were they?

Mike could sense the person's presence. He waded through the blackness cautiously, but moments later, Mike stumbled onto the soft padding of the carpet. A dazzling torchlight blinded his eyes, but he didn’t dare move.

“Who are you,” squeaked a small child. Mike finally opened his eyes. He gaped at what he saw: a young girl, barefoot in ragged trousers and a creased t-shirt. Mike groggily sat up.

“Why are you here,” he countered.

The defiant girl replied, “I came here to take a present. You have lots so you probably couldn’t tell the difference.”

“You little sneak,” Mike exclaimed in fury.

“You have so many though.” she ignorantly stated.

“I don't have many! Last year I had twelve and this year I have eleven-”

“And I have none,” she said bluntly.

Zero presents! Mike was astonished. However, moments later the girl bolted out of the room with the present, just like a sneak, and his sympathy was short-lived. Strangely enough, this altercation made him realise the best gift wasn't the PS5s and iPhone 16s. It was the gift of family and friends.