

The Tailor's Secret

Narration: Our story begins a long time ago in the streets of Helsinki in Finland. It was winter, and as usual Helsinki was very cold, with only a few hours of sunlight each day. Tradesmen worked at their crafts in cozy workshops by glowing fires. Women left the warmth of their kitchens only for hurried trips to the shops.

Boy: Look, Mommy, at that old man over there. He's looking in the garbage can.

Mother: Yes, my dear. That's poor old Klaus. His is a sad story. He was once the finest tailor in town. But now with his tattered clothes and tangled white beard you can hardly recognize him.

Boy: Can we help him?

Mother: I'm afraid not, dear. Ever since his wife and two children died in an epidemic, he stopped working and gave up on life. He refuses anyone to help him. Now he aimlessly wanders the streets with his head hung low, scrounging through garbage cans for what little food he can find. Come, my dear, it's getting dark already. We need to get home.





Narration: At nightfall, Klaus would return to his cold, empty workshop where, after eating whatever little food he had managed to scrounge, he would collapse in despair on his cot.

Klaus: Oh God, I feel so alone. With my wife and children gone, what's the use in living?

Narration: But Klaus was not alone. At that very moment his departed wife, Gertrude, and his children, were looking down from heaven.

Child 1: Poor Daddy. He misses us so much.

Child 2: Let's try to help him.

Mother: I've tried to whisper words of love and encouragement to his heart, but his heart is so broken, he cannot hear me.

Child 1: But, Mommy, we have to do something to help Daddy.

Mother: Well, many times I have pled for your father's sanity before the throne of God, and God has always comforted me.

Child 1: What did God say?

Mother: Well, sweetheart, God has promised me that at just the right moment, a ray of light

and hope and new purpose will shine through the dark clouds that hang over your father's heart. The moment that he turns his eyes away from his own sorrow and sees the needs of others, God will work a miracle in his life.



Narration: Helsinki was so cold in the winter that only the children seemed to venture more than a few blocks from home. Wherever they lived, it never seemed too far to walk to Children's Lane, where the town's renowned toymakers worked their magic. Window after window was filled with toys which delighted the children's eyes and set their minds awlirl.

Klaus: Look at those children! They remind me so much of my own two children. How

sweet they were. We had such fun together. If only they were still alive.

Narration: One day, Klaus noticed a small boy, in clothes nearly as tattered as his own, gazing at the toys in a shop window. From the unseen realm of the spirit, his wife, Gertrude, whispered to his heart.

Gertrude: Klaus, Klaus. That little boy needs you.

Klaus: Hello, little boy! Why are you crying?

Little boy: Because I'm so poor, sir. I'll never know what it's like to have such fine toys as those.

Narration: Klaus began to cry, but for the first time in a very long time, Klaus wasn't crying for himself. His tears were for the little boy and the hundreds of other poor children like him. The image of the small boy lingered in Klaus' mind as he went on his way.





Narration: Scarcely thinking about where his feet were taking him, Klaus found himself at the small ravine on the edge of town, where people dumped their junk and trash.

Klaus: I don't know why, but for the first time in a very long time, I feel happy and hopeful.

My goodness! Look at this! There are quite a few broken toys here that have been thrown away. That wooden doll is lifeless and in pieces, but

Gertrude: Klaus, pick up the pieces! Put it back together.

Klaus: Huh? Was that my imagination? Or did that doll just open her eyes and look at me?

Doll: Thank you for giving me back my life.

Klaus: You're welcome. Wait a minute! What am I doing? Talking to a doll! I must really be going crazy.

Narration: Klaus tossed the doll back on to the junk pile, but immediately a great sadness filled his heart. He picked the doll up again, and happiness filled his heart once more.

Klaus: How strange! Oh, look, there is an armless teddy bear. How nice it would be if these broken toys could be repaired and

given to the children of poor families, like that little boy I saw today. How happy they all would be. But what can I do about it? I'm just a poor, broken old man myself. And I have no tools, no needles or thread, or material to mend them with.



Gertrude: With God nothing is impossible. Where God guides, He provides. Look around.

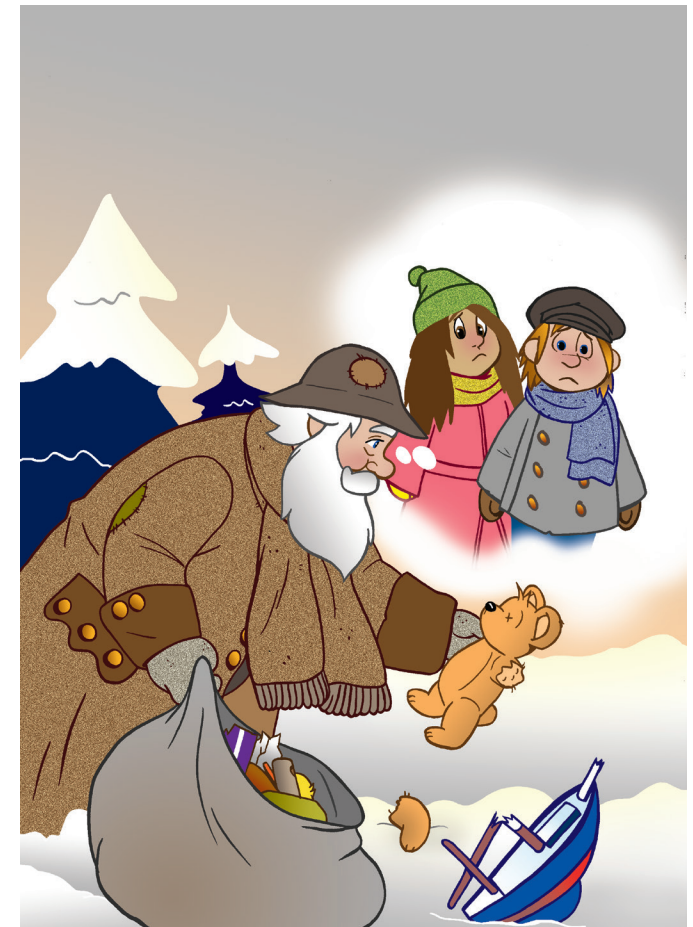
Klaus: Maybe if I look around, I'll find something in this junk that is scattered around. Hmm, an old wooden box. It looks pretty battered and worthless, but let's see what's inside. Look! It's full of tools! Everything I need for the job. There's a

sewing kit, needles of all sizes, and even thread in many colors. The tools are old, and a little rusty, of course, but I could scrub and sharpen them, and they'd be as good as new. That's an idea! What if I collect all the broken toys I can find, and I fix them and give them to poor children for Christmas?

Narration: In heaven, Gertrude and all those helping her jumped for joy.

Gertrude: God's promise is coming true!

Narration: Klaus didn't waste a minute. For the next few days, he collected broken toys, and took special notice or quietly asked where each needy child in the town lived. This information he wrote down in a small book. Klaus then spent many days repairing, mending, gluing, and stuffing toys.



Klaus: In a few days it will be Christmas, and the children from the poor families will need to have toys of their own. How I want them all to be happy.

Narration: Klaus felt wonderful inside. On Christmas Eve, seven big bags filled with beautiful toys sat on his workshop floor. Every child in his book would get a present.



Klaus: But how should I give them to the children? They must not think that the toys are from me, for truly they are gifts of love from God's own heart.

Gertrude: Klaus, why don't you disguise yourself and give them away at night?

Klaus: Yes, yes! At midnight I'll load the bags onto my big sled, the one on which I once pulled my own dear children.



Narration: And so he did. The load of toys was heavy, and Klaus struggled to pull it through the snow. From street to street he went, leaving packages on the doorsteps of each house where a poor family lived. In each package was a toy for some child in the house. And on each toy was a little note that said, "To you with love, from God above."



Narration: Peace at last filled Klaus' heart. On Christmas morning, the poor of the town awoke to a wonderful surprise.

Father: Look! Toys for the children! Thank God! It's a miracle.

Young boy: Wow! Toys! What a miracle!

Mother: I don't know what to think! But I'm so glad to see the children happy.

Young boy: These presents are from heaven!



Older boy: I heard someone say that they saw an old man, covered with snow, deliver the packages.

Girl: The story I heard was that there was this mysterious sleigh loaded with many big bags.

Narration: And so the story grew, until finally it was said that the sleigh was pulled by reindeer and had come down from heaven. And so was born the legend of Santa Claus.



And much of the story was true. There was an old man covered with snow, and there was a sled filled with bags, and yes, in a sense, they did come from heaven, for God was surely behind it all.

Narration: As for Klaus, well, he spent the next year quietly collecting and fixing broken toys. How happy that made him. And when Christmas came again, Klaus once more made his secret rounds to deliver toys to all the poor children.



Narration: Then, exhausted from a long night's work, Klaus passed away in the early quiet of Christmas morning. Most people in the town didn't even notice he was gone. But what a party they had where he went. Klaus was reunited with his wife and children, and all heaven rejoiced.

Gertrude: Oh, Klaus, I'm so proud of you.



Narration: God told him:

God: What you did was wonderful, but it doesn't have to end there. All children need to experience My love. Will you help Me give it to them?

Narration: Klaus was happier than he ever thought possible. He began doing



everything he could to help children around the world, whispering in their hearts and encouraging them as Gertrude had done for him. What joy he felt as the children opened their hearts to God's love and their lives became happier.

The End

