

Are you UP a Christmas TREE?

Are you just about worn out from last minute shopping, wrapping gifts, mailing cards and the hundreds of other pleasant little chores traditional of Christmas?

Well, before it's all over, we just want to add our own

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS REAGINS SHOE SHOP

THE VILLAGE HAS A HEART

Dorothy Boys Kilian

THE CLOCK struck nine as Nola hung the last bauble on the fragrant green Christmas tree. Without even stepping back to admire the finished effect she went to the front window and peered out. A cold white moon illumined a cold white earth. She shivered. How lonely she had been in this tiny, quiet village!

When she had written Jim two months before that she was being evicted from their apartment in Chicago he had answered, "I'm hoping against hope to be home from occupation duty in time for Christmas, and I can't think of any place more perfect than Pineville to spend the holidays and my terminal leave. Remember my telling you what happy summers I spent there as a child, and how I'd always wanted to see it in winter? Do investigate this, as a Christmas present for me, Nola darling."

So she had come here and found a house. But somehow she felt that the villagers had ignored her as an outsider.

And now it was Christmas Eve. "He's not going to make it and that's that," Nola thought miserably. She knew that he had landed at San Francisco three days before and had been trying desperately to get a seat on a train or plane.



"It's me, Doc Ryan. We're on your party line you know, and heard the good news. My wife thought I'd better take you over."

The telephone rang. "There's a telegram just come for you, Mrs. West, down here at the drug store. Very important."

"Yes?" Nola breathed.

"Chicago, 8 P.M. Am catching train. Get off Shoreham five miles east of Pineville 10 P.M. love Jim."

Nola leaned heavily against the wall and stared at the phone.

"Mrs. West, are you there?" Mr. Trotter, the druggist, sounded anxious. "Listen, you go out in the garage and get your car motor to warming up. My wife'll be up there in five minutes to stay with your little boy. Hurry now."

In joyful haste Nola peeked in at Jimmy—"Santa Claus is bringing you your Daddy, honey"—powdered her nose and put on her fur coat and boots.

The garage door stuck in its icy groove although she bent her whole weight against it. Suddenly, out of the darkness, a voice called, "It's me, Doc Ryan. We're on your party line you know, and heard the good news. I'm so used to driving out in all kinds of weather, my wife thought I'd better take you over."

"Dr. Ryan, I didn't realize 'til just now how I dreaded that trip alone."

A train whistle shrilled through the cold thin air as they drove up to the little depot.

"We made it!" Nola cried exultingly. "Come on." She held open the door.

But Doc muttered, "I'll stay here and keep my feet warm."

Now the huge black engine roared past, slowed down and slid to a stop. A coach vestibule door opened, and before the conductor could step down, a khaki-clad figure leaped onto the platform.

"Oh, darling, darling, darling," Nola's heart throbbed as she felt once more the thrilling warmth of Jim's arms around her.

"Nola!" Jim said everything in that word.

A few moments later as they walked to the car a voice boomed from within, "Glad you made it."

"Whoever you are—thanks," Jim answered. "It's people like you who made me want Nola to come to Pineville to wait for me."

"Get in and close the door. You're freezing me out." Doc grinned as he raced the motor.

"Christmas Eve," Jim said softly as they squeezed in with Doc. "You beside me, our baby just a few miles away, and a Christmas card place like Pineville to welcome us. Don't you love it there, darling?"

Nola glanced at Doc, thought of Mrs. Trotter and the others. "Yes, Jim, I do," she whispered. "I surely do."

Such Lovely FLAMES

By John Scott Douglas

FRED DOBSON plugged in the string of lights and then stood back to admire the blue and red and green candle globes on the Christmas tree. Ellen left the effect, she was setting to study the effect.

"Nice little tree, Fred. Seems a shame, though, not to be sharing it with someone. This was our year—"

And then she stopped, and her face, still pretty in middle age, grew pink. Fred knew she'd been about to say that it was their year to have the Robbins to Christmas dinner. Every year since their children had married and left they had either entertained their neighbors or had been their guests.

But now, by mutual consent, the quarrel with the Robbins was not mentioned. It was characteristic of Ellen not to blame Fred. And that took forbearance because Martha Robbins had been her dearest friend.

Ellen sighed. "Goodness! the turkey must be almost ready."



He was back in a moment with a rake. Lifting the smoldering tree with the tines, he hurled it out onto the snowy lawn.

Fred thought of their quarrel, which had started because of a cocker puppy which wouldn't stay home. Tom, with his usual consideration for his neighbors, had started to build a fence to keep the dog out of the Dobson's garden. Fred thought the fence was a foot within his own property line, and jokingly said so.

Tom had laughed. "Who's paying for it?"

"I'll pay half," Fred had said, "if you'll buy the strip you're using."

The joke, within a matter of days, had taken on an edge, and then they gave up speaking. No longer did they fish and hunt together, or play in their usual Saturday four-somes.

By then, beginning to fume at Tom's high-handedness, Fred had his property surveyed, only to discover that his garden had in reality extended onto his neighbor's property. The fence was where it belonged.

Fred wanted to apologize, but every time he stepped outside, Tom walked into the house.

Within a matter of seconds, Fred was too busy to think of the quarrel. The little Christmas tree was on fire and crackling fiercely. He flung open the door and screamed, "Fire! help! help!" And then, snatching up the hall runner he'd been planning to replace, he knocked over the tree and began beating out the flames.

Behind him Tom called, "Stay with it, pal—I'll get something."

He was back in a moment with a rake. Lifting the smoldering tree with the tines, he hurled it out onto the snowy lawn.

Martha Robbins had appeared by then. Seeing Ellen staring dazedly at the cloud of smoke and the blackened wall where the tree had stood, she opened the windows and then slipped her arm around Ellen's shoulders.

"Poor dear! And just when you were sitting down to your Christmas dinner. After the smoke has thinned out, this room will be freezing. You and Fred are having dinner with us."

Ellen looked happy but flustered. "But this was our year—"

"Nonsense!" Tom said heartily. "We'll eat with you next year."

"That will be swell," Fred said beaming.

When they started Martha Robbins' bountiful dinner, there was at first a little stiffness. But Tom was soon joking about Fred's "high forehead," and Fred was asking Tom if he'd considered selling his hair to a wire-brush factory.

As they said hearty farewells later, Tom remarked, "Can't say I'm sorry about that fire. We've sure missed you folks."

"And it was all my fault," Fred said. "I was wrong about—"

"Aw, forget it," Tom interrupted. "How about some golf Saturday?"

When they reached home, Fred looked at the blackened wall speculatively. "No real damage done, Ellen. A coat of paint will fix it up."

"How do you suppose the tree ever caught fire?" Ellen asked. Fred grinned sheepishly. "A match and a bunch of tissue paper may have helped."

GREETINGS

The spirit of Christmas helps us to appreciate the true value of the friendly folks whose loyalty makes it possible for us to successfully go on Christmas after Christmas.

Business has friendships . . . many of which gain strength as they go down through the years. Old names on the ledgers, old familiar voices on the telephone, old customers entering our doors . . . all make us realize that behind every successful business there is a powerful force of friendship that gives warmth and feeling to the everyday things of life.

PURCELLS

E. B. Purcell, Sr., Pres. Keitt Purcell E. B. Purcell, Jr. Ben P. Stewart
Mrs. William Franklin Mrs. Richard Wicker Mrs. David Senn

Christmas

and another year has passed. To us here it has been a year of accomplishment and satisfaction. But without your friendship and goodwill, and the friendliness of other splendid folks like you, such achievement could not have been possible.

So we say thank you. Thank you very sincerely for the contribution you have made toward our success this year. We hope that your Christmas will be a Merry one.

SEASON'S GREETINGS



Carolina Remnant Shop

Lillie Mae Goggans Ellie D. Ringer Elizabeth B. Cole
Mattie C. Carroll Julia B. Wicker



A HOLLY WREATH

for your fireside

FRIENDS

and for you

GOOD CHEER

R. M. LOMINACK Hardware