

## A Mended Christmas

“We’re going away for Christmas this year” announced Hoppy one winter morning. “Aunt Mary is giving a big family party and she wants us all to be together at her house on Paradise Street.”

“I hope you won’t be too lonely, Blume” said Squeaky, feeling sorry that Blume couldn’t come to Aunt Mary’s house with them. Blume tried to be cheerful so that his friends wouldn’t worry about him, but really he was beginning to feel sad and lonely already.

After the morning service that day, Megan, who had been playing with Blume, tossed him to Tom. But Tom caught Blume by his tail and it came loose where the stitching had worn away. The children put Blume down on a chair in the corner and forgot about him. Now Blume felt really sad. His friends were going to be away for Christmas and his tail had come off – what a start to the holiday season.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis had served coffee in the church hall to the grownups that morning and were clearing the cups and saucers away. They are an elderly couple, very quiet and gentle but if you look carefully, you will notice a feeling of happiness around them and a twinkle in their eyes. “Look, the children have left Blume sitting over there in the corner” said Mrs. Lewis as she went over to pick him up. “Oh dear, his tail has come off”.

“We should take him home for a few days so that you can mend him” replied Mr. Lewis. “You can put him in your basket with the rest of the mending and get him done in time for Christmas”. Soon Blume was driven to their home and carried into the warm sitting room where he was placed in a basket beside a big armchair. Underneath him lay some pillowcases with gaping seams and a jumper with a hole in it. They were nice and soft to lie on and soon he was asleep.



Blume woke up later that night when the house was dark and quiet. He wondered if he would remain in the basket for long. Then he thought about Christmas and decided it would be a very dull time indeed, lying in the mending basket by himself. The Lewises were kind people but he didn’t think he was going to have much fun.

During the following week, Mrs. Lewis was far too busy to do any mending. She went shopping and Blume could hear paper rustling as she wrapped little gifts. Then he could smell wonderfully spicy smells as she baked a special cake. Mr. Lewis cleaned the sitting room and went about humming Christmas Carols as he worked. They were tired

in the evenings and went to bed early. Blume lay in the basket feeling sorer and sorer for himself. He began to wonder if he would ever be mended and taken back to church.

It was Christmas Eve. Mr. Lewis brought a small evergreen tree into the living room and set it by the window. Then he and Mrs. Lewis decorated it with all the usual beautiful balls and lights and stars, but poor Blume couldn't see it from where he was lying in the basket. When the tree was finished, Mrs. Lewis said "Now I must mend Blume so that he's ready for Christmas too". She sat down in the armchair, picked up Blume and began to sew while Mr. Lewis put a recording of Christmas Carols on to play.

"Shall I bring them down yet?" he asked. "Yes, do bring the creatures down and let them enjoy the tree" replied Mrs. Lewis. To Blume's surprise Mr. Lewis brought an armful of cuddly toy animals downstairs and placed them carefully in a big wicker chair beside the decorated tree. There were teddy bears of different sizes, a polar bear, a rabbit, a lizard and a tiny lady mouse wearing a dress. As soon as Blume's tail was firmly sewn on, he was placed carefully amongst them where he could see the tree too. This was really exciting.



When Mr. and Mrs. Lewis had gone to bed, the polar bear, said "I'm Polly, what's your name and where have you come from?"

"My name is Blume and I'm a church mouse." he replied. "I've come to be mended because my tail fell off. I was afraid I would be spending Christmas in the mending basket by myself and that would have been very dull. How wonderful it is to be with all

of you. But I'm really surprised that Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who are quite elderly, have a family of toy animals."

"We have all been given to them by their children and their friends" said Polly. Actually I belonged to a very nice man named Jim who became ill and died. His wife felt sad every time she saw me without Jim, so she asked Mrs. Lewis if I could come and live here instead." Then Polly introduced him to the other creatures and they settled down for the night.

Christmas morning sunshine was warming Blume's face when he awoke the next day. There was a buzz of excitement in the room and Blume saw that an envelope and a brightly wrapped parcel was placed on the chair among the creatures. After breakfast Mr. Lewis came over, opened the envelope and took out a little Christmas card that was for all the creatures to enjoy. He stood it up in front of them and then opened the parcel. And there was a tiny story book about some real bears which he read to them. Then he stood it up in front of them so that they could see the pictures in it.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis took Blume to church for the morning service, then brought him home again so that he could spend the week with the other toy animals by the Christmas tree. They became very good friends and were thrilled with all the tales about life in the church that he had to tell them. When Blume returned to church the following week, Hoppy and Squeaky were back.

"We had a wonderful time with all our relatives" exclaimed Squeaky. "We have many exciting things to tell you about our holiday. But I hope you weren't too lonely, Blume".

"Oh no," said Blume. "I had a really wonderful Christmas too and I have many exciting things to tell you. Most of all I learned that people are often very different from what you imagine them to be. Wait until I tell you what surprising people Mr. and Mrs. Lewis are!"

