

Name: _____

Stockings Hung With Care

By Kelly Hashway

One of the most popular Christmas traditions is hanging stockings. It's a tradition that has been around for some time. But where did the idea come from?

According to legend, this tradition began with a wealthy nobleman. He had a loving wife and three beautiful daughters. The nobleman's life seemed perfect—he had a family, money, and a beautiful home.

One day the nobleman's wife became very ill and passed away. The man and his three daughters were stricken with grief. He was so upset, he began

to waste his money away on foolish things. Before long the man and his three daughters became very poor. They were forced to move into a small peasant's cottage. Their new home was worn-down, drafty, and the roof leaked. The daughters had to work very hard sewing clothing to sell for money.

When they grew up, the nobleman realized his daughters were old enough to get married. Back in those days, women couldn't marry unless the bride's father paid the groom a large sum of money or property. This was called a dowry. The man knew he didn't have enough money to pay for his daughters' marriages. He feared they would be lonely their whole lives.

One night, while the three sisters were doing their laundry, they hung



their stockings by the fireplace to dry. Saint Nicholas was a kind man who was known to give money to the poor and bring gifts to people at night. After the nobleman and his daughters had gone to sleep, Saint Nicholas stopped by the cottage. He knew the sad story of the nobleman and his daughters, and wanted to help. Through the window, he saw the stockings hung by the fireplace. He took three small bags of gold coins and dropped them down the chimney, and they landed inside the stockings.

When they found the gold coins the next morning, the three daughters were overjoyed. They gave the money to their father who began to cry tears of happiness because he now had enough money to see his daughters get married.

News about Saint Nicholas and the gifts spread. And soon all the people in the village were hanging their stockings by the fireplace in hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there.



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1. Who died in this story?

- a. the nobleman's daughter
- b. the mother of the nobleman's daughters
- c. the nobleman's mother
- d. the grandfather of the nobleman's daughters

2. How did the nobleman become poor?

3. How did the daughters react when their father became poor?

- a. They were angry at their father.
- b. They told him they didn't want to be married.
- c. They begged Saint Nicholas for money.
- d. They tried to help by working hard to earn money.

4. Place these events in sequential order. Write *1st*, *2nd*, *3rd*, *4th*, and *5th* on the lines.

_____ Saint Nicholas visits the nobleman's house.

_____ The nobleman's wife became ill.

_____ The three daughters find money in their stockings.

_____ The nobleman lost all of his money and moved into a small cottage.

_____ Other people in the village begin to hang their stockings by the fireplace.

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Match each of the the vocabulary words on the left with the correct definition on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. _____ stockings | a. small home |
| 2. _____ legend | b. sadness |
| 3. _____ drafty | c. story that is not proven true |
| 4. _____ realized | d. breezy |
| 5. _____ dowry | e. understood; became aware |
| 6. _____ grief | f. person with little or no money |
| 7. _____ peasant | g. socks |
| 8. _____ cottage | h. money paid to a groom in order for a woman to marry |

Now try this: Reread the story and highlight each of the vocabulary words.

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