Who did Patrick's Homework?

Patrick never did homework. "Too boring," he said. He played football, basketball and video games instead. His teachers told him, "Patrick! Do your homework or you will learn nothing." And it was true, sometimes he didn't feel quite smart.

But what could he do? He hated homework.

Then one day he saw his cat playing with a little doll. To his surprise, it wasn't a doll at all, but a man of the tiniest size. He had a little woolen shirt with old-fashioned trousers and a tall hat much like a witch's. He yelled, "Save me! Don't give me back to that cat. I'll grant you a wish, I promise you that."

Patrick couldn't believe how lucky he was! Here was the answer to all of his problems. So he said, "Only if you do all my homework throughout the year."

The little man frowned and looked angrily at Patrick, "Oh, am I cursed? But I'll do it."

And true to his word, that little elf began to do Patrick's homework. Except, there was one problem. The elf didn't always know what to do and he needed help. "Help me! Help me!" he would say. And Patrick would have to help – in whatever way.

"I don't know this word," the elf squeaked while reading Patrick's homework. "Get me a dictionary. No, what's even better? Look up the word and spell it, too."

When it came to math, Patrick was out of luck. "What are multiplication tables?" the elf asked. "We elves never need addition, subtraction, division or fractions. Here, sit down beside me, you simply must guide me."

Elves know nothing of human history. To them it's a mystery. So the little elf kept shouting, "Go to the library, I need books. More and more books. And you can help me read them, too."

Patrick was working harder than ever and it was tough! He was staying up nights and had never felt so tired. He was going to school with his eyes puffed.

Finally, the last day of school arrived and the elf was free to go. As for homework, there was no more. So the elf quietly slipped out the back door.

Patrick got good grades. His classmates were amazed and his teachers smiled with full of praise. And his parents wondered what had happened to Patrick. He was now a good boy.

You see, in the end, Patrick still thought he had made that tiny man do all his homework. But I'll share a secret, just between you and me. It wasn't the elf; Patrick had done it himself!

The Gift of the Magi

It was the day before Christmas. Jim would soon be home from work. Della was preparing dinner in the small, cheap apartment where they lived. She heard the door open, Jim was home.

“Will he still love me?” Della wondered as her hand touched her hair. Just a few hours ago, her hair was very long, but now it was very short, almost like a boy’s. Jim came into the kitchen. He stopped moving and stood there frozen.

“Jim, darling, don’t look at me that way,” said Della as she ran to him. “I had my hair cut off and sold. I need some money to buy you a Christmas gift.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” Jim’s voice seemed angry.

“It grows back fast.” said Della.

Jim tossed a package on the table.

“Don’t worry, Della,” he said. “I would love you even with no hair.” But open that package, and you’ll see why I was so shocked.

Della’s fingers worked quickly to open the package.

“Oh, Jim!” she exclaimed. “ You bought me the combs we saw in the shop window months ago. They are so beautiful.”

The combs would have looked perfect at Della’s long brown hair. Suddenly, Della realized that she could not wear them with short hair. She began to cry.

“Della, don’t cry,” said Jim. “As you said, your hair grows fast. You can wear them later.”

Della sniffed. “Oh, Jim. Here is your present.”

Della brought out a beautiful platinum chain. It was for Jim’ s watch. This watch had been given by Jim’s grandfather to his father and then to Jim. It was Jim’s most precious possession. Jim took the watch chain and smiled strangely.

“Della, I sold my watch to buy your combs,” he said.

They smiled at each other. They had both given up their favorite possessions to show their love for each other.

Trisha's Biscuits

Trisha's parents decided to go to the city to do some shopping, and Trisha wanted to go along with them. They wanted to get some festival presents and she needed to buy some books. They caught an early bus to the city. So by early afternoon, they had bought everything that they wanted.

Trisha was not particularly fond of the city. She hated the noise and the traffic. So she asked her parents to take a taxi to the bus stop because she wanted to go home early. The taxi got stuck in a traffic jam and by the time they got to the stop, the bus had just left. They had to wait for an hour to catch the next bus. So they all went over to the restaurant near the bus stop to have some tea and snacks.

The restaurant was crowded. Trisha had to sit on one empty table near a window away from her parents. She was hungry and couldn't wait for her order to come. So she opened a packet of biscuits that she had bought earlier. She put the packet of biscuits on the table and started eating from it. There was a newspaper on the table, so she spread out the newspaper in front of her and began solving the crossword puzzle.

After a couple of minutes, a man sat down opposite her. He looked like a typical businessman. He was wearing a dark suit and was carrying a briefcase. He ordered for a cup of tea. Trisha didn't say anything to the stranger and carried on with her crossword. Suddenly, Trisha realized that the man across the table took a biscuit from her packet and started eating. She couldn't believe her eyes. She was too shock to say anything. She decided not to make a fuss and ignored it. Trisha always tried to avoid trouble. So she took a biscuit for herself and went back to her crossword in the newspaper.

When the man took a second biscuit, Trisha pretended to be very interested in the puzzle since she did not know what to say to the man. Some time passed and Trisha put her hand on the last biscuit. The man was looking at her as if the biscuit was his. He was staring at Trisha furiously. But Trisha nervously ate the biscuit and decided to leave.

As she was getting ready to go, the man suddenly pushed back his chair, stood up and walked away. Trisha was relieved and she decided to go to her parents to tell the story. So she folded the newspaper, put it aside and stood up. And there, on the table where the newspaper had been, was her own packet of biscuits!