

BILLY (*with a half laugh*).— Floss, y're crazy! There aint no such thing as fairies.

FLO. (*nearly crying*).— There are so fairies! (*more doubtfully*) I saw one!

BILLY (*with an air of wanting to avoid dispute*).— Huh!

FLO. (*in sleepy tone*).— I do believe in fairies . . . An' I want a red dress with lace on it.

*Another short silence. FLO. is becoming sleepy. FLO.'s head droops and she falls asleep. BILLY glances about watchfully, a few times.*

BILLY.— Y're little girl's house is gettin' all lighted up. An' the fellers are gone up from the pond. (FLO., *making no answer, BILLY looks around at her.*) Pore kid! she's off t' sleep. (*Looks at her feet and leans against her.*) I wish't I could get her some boots for Chris'mas.) Sixteen cents! (*Takes out coins from his pocket and counts them. Puts them back and settles down again.*) Wonder if ther' could be a Santa Claus! (BILLY *does no more watching. Is very still. Head droops or falls back against his sister. Eyes close.*) M 'S 'ng me a pair o' skates! (*Murmurs indistinctly as he falls asleep.*)

*When the children are asleep, it grows darker. Blinds should be drawn down and as much light as possible shut off from stage.*

*FAIRY comes flitting and sparkling across the stage. Sees the two children. Pauses before the doorstep, smiling kindly at them, as they sleep.*

FAIRY (*in soft voice*).— Well, well! There they are! (*after a moment, whirls around, waves her wand and calls softly*) Santa Claus! Santa Claus!

*Flitting about, fairy-like, she waves the wand in graceful "passes" toward the concealed Tree. The curtains are withdrawn, the candles are lighted, and the Tree "appears." (Several grown-up persons should attend to this as quickly and inconspicuously as possible, if it cannot safely be done before the curtains are withdrawn, which, of course, would be more effective). FAIRY flits over to the sleeping children and touches each with her wand, then moves back a little. Be careful that FAIRY is not between the children and the audience.*

FLO.— "Oh! It's a fairy!"

*FLO. wakes first and starts to her feet, on the step.*

*Her "oh!" is a big breath of amazement.*

*FAIRY skips and flutters her wings.*

BILLY (*shrilly*).— Jiminy Chris'mas! What's that?

*BILLY wakes slowly, sees the Tree first (FAIRY should be a little to the other side), blinks, draws his hand across his eyes, stares at it again. Sits up straight.*

FLO.— See Billy! See, see! It's a fairy! Didn't I tell you?

*FLO. jumps down from her steps, pulls BILLY to his feet, and points to the fairy, excitedly.*

FAIRY (*accusingly*).— Are you the boy that doesn't believe in fairies?

*FAIRY points wand steadily at BILLY. BILLY backs against the house, gazing at her, and from her to the Tree, and back at FAIRY.*

FLO. (*earnestly*).— Oh please, please! Billy's a good boy! And, oh please tell Santa Claus to bring him some skates!

*FLO. is afraid the FAIRY is angry with BILLY. She reaches one hand toward BILLY and the other toward the FAIRY.*

FAIRY.— But Billy says there is no Santa Claus.

*FAIRY looks at FLO. and smiles while FLO. is speaking but looks back at BILLY seriously.*

SANTA.— Ha ha! Hoh hoh!

*SANTA appears and approaches, laughing. (This hearty laugh should be carefully practised and not too often repeated here).*

*Both children are rather overwhelmed and silent, but FAIRY skips about delightedly.*

FAIRY.— Santa Claus, Flossie wants a red dress with lace on it.

SANTA.— Let me see, have I a red dress with lace on it!

*SANTA lays his finger beside his nose, and smiles teasingly.*

FAIRY.— Come Santa! Open the wonderful bag and let's see what's in it.

*FAIRY taps SANTA's bag (which of course is slung over his back) with her wand. SANTA drops the bag to the floor, and skates are heard to rattle.*

BILLY.— Skates!

SANTA.— Never you mind, young man, there is no Santa Claus. (SANTA *wags a finger at BILLY, but looks so kind that BILLY for the first time brightens up and begins to look happy, and smile.*) Now for the little girl that wants a red dress with lace on it! (SANTA *rummages in the big bag, and pulls out the dress. He spreads it out, impressively.*) There! What do you think of that for a red dress with lace on it?

FLO.— Oh Santa! Thank you! Thank you!

*FLO. squeals, takes dress politely, but holds it up to her excitedly, and smooths it down.*

SANTA.— And who wished for a pair of skates?

*SANTA dips into depths of bag and brings out skates, presents them to BILLY with a grin.*

BILLY.— Regular beauts! New ones! Just my size!

*BILLY examines them, measures them to his boot.*

FAIRY (*whispering audibly to Santa*).— Can't you hunt out that doll?

*Hunting in the bag is liable to cause an awkward pause here. So the doll may be taken from Tree or beneath Tree, and handed to FAIRY, who, followed by SANTA, presents it to FLO. SANTA leaves FAIRY talking to FLO. while he produces the boots from bag just in time to present them. (See below). FLO. kisses and hugs and admires the doll.*

SANTA and FAIRY (*together*).— Here it is.

SANTA (*to BILLY*).— That's what grows on Christmas Trees!

FAIRY (*to FLO.*).— Now isn't that the *realliest* doll you ever saw?

FLO. (*not gushing, very softly*).— Oh! Sweet!

FAIRY.— See, she opens and shuts her eyes, and look at her lovely clothes.