

# *The little stories are the best.*

There is one thing I always do on Christmas Eve. Ever since my dad bought me a Christmas book when I was nine, I used to read it every Christmas Eve with him; but not this year.

He died in a fire a little over eleven months ago. This is the first time mom and I spend Christmas without him.

Mom is a nurse at the local hospital. Ever

since the accident, she has never been the same. We moved back to her childhood town two months ago. She has emerald green eyes (she gave them to me) and caramel-brown hair. Every Christmas she puts up decorations all over the house. This year we have six (SIX) Christmas trees. She always puts up holly crowns on all doors. Last week we went to Target and bought about ten Santa Claus statues. I asked her why we need so many and she said "We can never have enough Santa Claus statues!". If that doesn't make you understand how much she loves Christmas, I'm sure this will: she makes me wear a different sweater every day till Christmas. And she does, too! We have 50 different Christmas sweaters in the house!

Now that I think about it, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Scarlett Rose. I'm sixteen years old and I live in a farmhouse near Boston with my mom and our dog. I'm in high school at the local school here.

My favorite subject is English. I have long bright copper hair and emerald-green eyes.

[Geez! This sounds like the personal profiles my old English teacher from school made us write at the start of every year.]

My dog's name is Copper. He's an Australian Shepherd. My dad gave him to me on my fourteenth birthday. He's white, with black and grey spots on his fur and a copper-like ear (that's why I named him Copper).



I was sitting on the red couch in our living room, in front of the brick fireplace, reading the Christmas book I read every year.

Outside, the big sparkly stars were

setting on the ground like powdered sugar on cookies. The lights we put outside the house were turned off, but the ones in the house and on the Christmas tree were on.

Mom had gone to sleep around half an hour before. I stayed in the living room with Copper to finish the book. The dog was curled up next to me.

I took the green blanket off of me.

"It's time we go to sleep," I told the dog.

He got up and started jumping around and wagging his tail.

"No, silly dog!" I smiled down at him. "It's time to go to sleep, not to go out for a walk! Let's go upstairs!"

As I got up the stairs, I looked at all the photos on the wall. The first thing mom did when we moved here was hang up our family pictures. The oldest pictures were at the bottom of the stairs and the

newest were at the top of the stairs, with space still to go.

When I got to the top of the stairs, I heard a large sound coming from the living room. I ran down the stairs (don't do that at home!) and went into the living room. I turned with my hands on the archway, almost falling.

On the floor, in front of the fireplace, a puffy old man was sitting, dressed in a red suit with matching pants and a black belt with a gold buckle. Over his white hair, there was a red Christmas hat. His beard and moustache were white as snow. If it hadn't been for the fact that I was too grown up for that, I would've said that he was Santa Claus.

"How did you get in here?" I asked the man sitting on the floor.

He turned his face to me, his blue eyes shining in the Christmas tree lights. "Just