



## Santa and the Hippies

By Lucrece Beale

### Chapter 1

Here it is Christmas again - well, almost Christmas - and the question is: "Have you been good?"

Have you been nice to your Mama and helped set the table? Said "Yes, sir!" to your Daddy when he asked you to shovel the Snow from the walk?

Have you hung your coat in the closet and come to meals on time? Studied your lessons and practiced the piano without being told? Put your toys where they belong and used a handkerchief when you should?

If you have been good, you can bet your stocking will be overflowing on Christmas morning.

But the strange thing is - if you haven't been good; if, in fact, you've been perfectly awful. Santa will fill your stocking just the same.

But he'll be sad about it and he really won't like it at all.

There once was a boy named Henry Wetherspoon who was a terror of a kid, He called himself Ding Dong and he didn't care at all about being nice to his Mama or polite to his teachers even if Christmas was coming.

Ding Dong never took baths. He never changed his socks or underwear. He wouldn't comb his hair or brush his teeth and he sneaked out of bed in the middle of the night to watch the late late late show on TV.

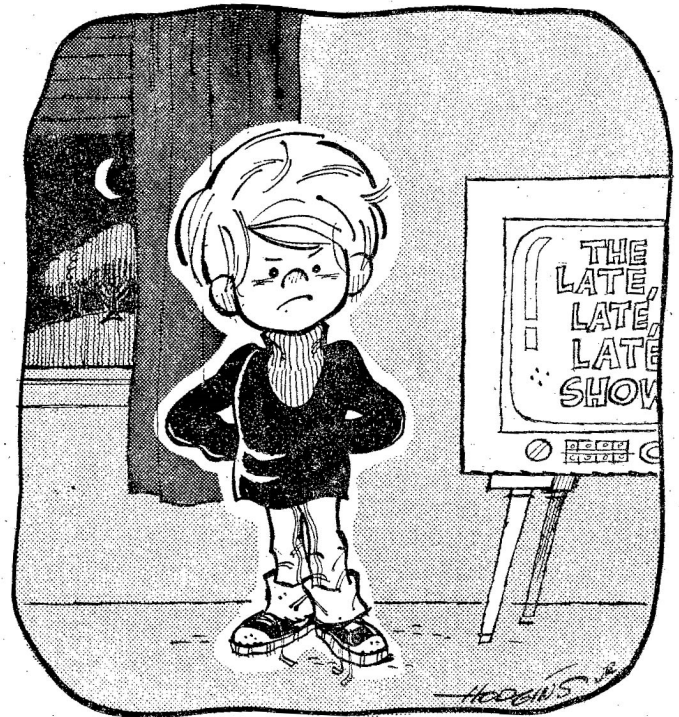
He teased his sisters and played jokes on his brothers and hid his Father's shaving cream. He raided the refrigerator all day long and turned up his nose at the dinners his Mother worked so hard to prepare. He passed notes in school and talked out loud and went to sleep in arithmetic class.

Oh, he was a problem and neither his folks nor his teachers knew what in the world to do with Ding Dong Henry WetherSpoon.

But Santa Claus knew.

He was going over his list of boys and girls and making up his mind what to bring them for Christmas. When he got to Ding Dong's name and asked his helper, an elf named Edgar, "What about Henry Wetherspoon?", Edgar threw up his hands and wailed:

"That boy is impossible!"



**Ding Dong Henry Wetherspoon was a terror of a kid**

Santa took off his spectacles and leaned back from his desk. "Tch, tch," he said reprovingly. "There's some good in every boy."

"Not this one!" snorted Edgar. He told Santa all he knew about Henry Wetherspoon - how bad he was and how unhappy he made all the folks who loved him and worried about him all the time.

Santa rubbed his eyes and rocked awhile in his rocking chair. Then he said: -

"Go and talk to him, perhaps he'd like to live in Hippieville."

Chapter 2  
HIPPIEVILLE

Edgar the elf went to see Henry Wetherspoon - the terror - who called himself Ding Dong.

Ding Dong was lying on his back on his bedroom floor playing a zither with his toes. It was the middle of the night and his folks thought the sound of the zither was Ding Dong snoring in his bed. It was that kind of a sound.

Edgar slipped in the open window and grabbed Ding Dong by the toes. Twang! Clang! went the zither as two strings broke and bopped Ding Dong on the nose.

Ding Dong sat up and stared at Edgar. "I'm dreaming! Man What a dream!"

"You're not dreaming," snapped the elf, "I'm Edgar and though I'm an elf I'm real enough. I've come to tell you that Santa Claus is not at all pleased with the way you have been acting."

Ding Dong rocked with laughter. "Who cares?" he asked disdainfully.

Edgar glared. "Your Mother and your Father are not pleased either."

"So what?" snorted Ding Dong.

"If that's the way you feel," said Edgar, "perhaps you'd like to go to Hippierville. A lot of boys and girls live there who are just like you. They don't study, they don't take baths. They stay up all night."

"Wonderful!" cried Ding Dong, "How do I get to Hippierville?"

"Follow me," said Edgar and added with a sigh. "I hope you

won't be sorry." He pulled himself up the bedroom curtains and slid out the window.

"Wait!" cried Ding Dong rushing to the window, "I can't see you!"

"Just come!" shouted Edgar. His voice sounded miles away.

Ding Dong wiggled out the window but when he dropped to the ground he wasn't outdoors at all but in a long corridor that went on and on as far as he could see.

He began to run. Now he wasn't at all sure he wanted to go wherever it was he was going. But there didn't seem to be anything he could do except run as fast as he could to get there.

Actually it wasn't a terribly long way. Ding Dong was hardly out of breath when the corridor ended. He was in a dirty street of tumble-down houses. He went to the nearest house and knocked on the door. There was a lot of noise inside but no one answered his knock. Ding Dong pushed the door open and went in.

The house was packed with kids. They were dancing on the mantel and banging on dishpans and painting on the walls and shooting popguns at the chandelier.

There was not a grownup around to tell them to be quiet or stick in their shirttails or get the hair out of their eyes or wipe their faces which were smeared with chocolate candy.

"This is living!" thought Ding Dong happily, "This is the place for me!"



"This is the place for me!" cried Ding Dong

## Chapter 3

### FUN WITH THE HIPPIES

Ding Dong stared at the hippies. They hadn't had a bath or changed their clothes in goodness knows how long. But they looked good to Ding Dong because they were having fun.

A red-haired boy with his mouth full of peppermint candy grabbed Ding Dong and shouted, "You're new, aren't you? Well, you're in luck. The action is just starting in the next room!"

He led Ding Dong into a back room where kids were sitting on the floor around a big electric pot. Suddenly the pot began jumping up and down and Ding Dong saw that it was a popcorn popper.

Giant puffs of corn exploded over the children who scrambled to gobble them up. What they didn't eat they stuffed into Ding Dong's mouth which was hanging open in astonishment.

Someone handed him a pneumatic drill and told him to make some music. He picked up the drill and started busting up the fire-place. The hippies said it was groovy music. But it hurt Ding Dong's ears. He was glad when they took the drill away and gave him a triple pizza to eat.

Then they gave him finger paints and told him to paint a picture. He climbed on the chandelier and smeared paint on the ceiling with his hands. The hippies said it was beautiful; they really did dig the scene.

The paint dripped on Ding Dong's hair and clothes. When someone gave him a quart of ice cream it dripped with paint, too.

But, after all, this was really living, so when someone said, "Make up a poem!" he stood up and said:

"I'm a top

"I rockety-rock."

After that he felt sick from all the stuff he had eaten, paint and all. He went to sleep on the kitchen floor. There didn't seem to be any other place to sleep.

The next day the parties started all over again - up and down the block. It was the same thing every day - hippies making music with crazy instruments and popping popcorn and reciting poems and painting pictures on each other when there wasn't anything else to paint on.

After about two weeks Ding Dong decided it might not be such a bad idea to be home again. When he told the hippies this, they said, "Man! You want to go home and take baths and go to bed on time and speak polite and all like that?"

Ding Dong said he certainly didn't want to do that but maybe things at home would be different flow.

"They'll never be different," said the red-haired boy. "It's all because of this square Santa Claus who wants everybody to be so good. What we ought to do is get rid of him,"

"Yeah!" agree the other hippies.

"We'll make him a prisoner," said the red-haired leader. "Then all the kids in the world can do as they please!"

"Groovy!" screamed the hippies.

The redhead asked Ding Dong, "What do you think?"

Ding Dong didn't want to be a spoil sport so he said weakly, "Great!"

The redhead said, "Good, You're appointed,"

"Appointed to do what?" stammered Ding Dong.

"Appointed to capture Santa Claus!"



"Let's make Santa our prisoner!" shouted the hippies

## Chapter 4

### LETTER TO SANTA

By now Ding Dong was a mess. He had chewing gum in his hair, chocolate in his ears and finger paint all over his face and clothes. His own mother would not have recognized him.

Ding Dong's head pounded with the crazy music the hippies beat out on the radiators and dishpans and blinds. His stomach was turned upside down from all the candy and hot dogs and pizzas he'd eaten. He hadn't had carrots or eggs or even a glass of milk since he came to Hippierville. He couldn't remember what it was like to sleep in a real bed.

So when the red-haired hippie told Ding Dong he was appointed to capture Santa Claus and make him a prisoner in Hippierville, Ding Dong protested, "Why me?"

"Because Santa knows you. Didn't he send this elf Edgar to bring you to Hippierville? You have the inside track, man - Santa Claus is interested in you!"

"Well, I don't -" began Ding Dong.

"Go ahead" interrupted the redhead. "Write Santa a letter. Tell him you want to see him, if he really cares about kids the way everybody says he does he'll come."

"Well, I don't -" began Ding Dong again, but he never had a chance to finish his sentence.

The hippies put a scrap of torn brown paper bag in front of him and jar of yellow finger paint and the redhead said, "Write!"

Ding Dong dipped his finger in the paint and wrote: "Dear Santa. Come. Signed Ding Dong." He added 'Please' at the bottom. It was a word he didn't often use but he thought it would be the smart thing to do in this case.

"Now put it in the fireplace like all the kids in Dullsville do!" said a hippie.

Ding Dong put the letter in the broken-up fireplace. Then he crept down to the basement where he'd found a niche behind the furnace where he could be alone. He lay down and went to sleep.

He hardly had time to start a dream when he was awakened by Edgar the elf. "Santa got your letter," said Edgar. "He can't come here, He's too busy. He sent me to bring you to Santa Land."

Ding Dong was relieved. He had done what the hippies wanted. It hadn't worked but no one could blame him. He was very glad Santa wasn't going to be a prisoner in Hippierville after all. He said to Edgar, "Never mind. I'll see Santa some other time."

But the red-haired hippie had come to the basement to get a case of soda pop and he heard the whole thing. He took Ding Dong into a corner and said, "Man, you've got to take the trip! Go to Santa Land and get Santa back here somehow. It's your



"Santa sent me to bring you to Santa Land." said the elf  
duty to free all those poor kids in the world who are working themselves to death being good."

Ding Dong thought perhaps the hippies were right. Anyway it certainly would be a good thing if no one had to take a bath again. So he went back to Edgar and said, "All right. I'll go."



Chapter 5  
SANTA LAND

Edgar glared at Ding Dong.

“Are you going to Santa Land?” unwashed, with your shirttail hanging out and your hair in your eyes. You’re a sight. Santa Claus won’t like it at all.”

“I don’t care,” retorted Ding Dong. He was glad, after all, that the hippies were going to capture Santa because it was a shame, it really was, that all the kids in the world had to be good just to please a square like that.

Edgar sniffed with disapproval. He led Ding Dong outside and gave him a blindfold to tie around his eyes. “Take four steps forward,” ordered the elf. Ding Dong obeyed.

Suddenly the ground beneath his feet heaved up and down like ocean waves. A great wind swept him round and round. Snowflakes peppered his face.

In a moment it was over. The ground steadied. The wind died away. Ding Dong pulled the blindfold from his eyes and there he was standing before Santa’s own house.

Ding Dong ran up tile steps and rang the bell. Mrs. Claus came to the door.

“My goodness gracious!” she exclaimed. She stared at Ding Dong as if she couldn’t believe her eyes. “What are you? I mean - who are you? I mean - oh dear! I don’t know what I mean!”

“I’m a hippie,” said Ding Dong stiffly.

“A hippie! My goodness! A hippie! Oh, do come in!” Mrs. Claus led Ding Dong into the living room where Santa himself sat at his desk before the fire. “Santa! Here’s a hippie come to call!”

Santa got up from the stack of letters he had been reading. He smiled and held out his arms. “You must be Henry Wetherspoon. Welcome to Santa Land!”

Ding Dong side slipped through Santa’s arms. He was sure the next thing Santa would ask was “Have you been good?” and that’s one thing he didn’t want to hear.

But Santa didn’t say that at all. And he didn’t say anything about Ding Dong’s messed-up hair or his dirty face or the way his socks drooped over his untied shoes.

Nor did he seem to mind when Ding Dong demanded rather rudely to know how Santa knew his name.

“I’ve heard a lot about you,” replied Santa. “And of course was expecting you. I hope you will like it in Santa Land. While I finish up these letters go anywhere you like. There are many things here you might enjoy.”

“He’ll go nowhere until he’s had something to eat,” snapped Mrs. Claus and she hustled Ding Dong off to the kitchen.

Poor Ding Dong! His stomach quivered and his face turned ‘green when Mrs. Claus laid out pizzas and soda pop and fried potatoes and chocolate pies and all the things she thought a hippie would like to eat.

How could Ding Dong confess that after two weeks in hippievile what he most wanted now was a plate of spinach and a soft-boiled egg?



“Welcome to Santa Land.” said Santa

## Chapter 6

### DING DONG TRICKS SANTA

Ding Dong tried to eat the pizzas and chocolate pies that Mrs. Claus laid out for him on the kitchen table. The more he tried the greener he became.

“Oh, my!” clucked Mrs. Claus. “You don’t look well at all!”

She dumped a teaspoonful of green medicine into a glass of water, “Drink that!” she ordered. Before Ding Dong knew what it was, he’d swallowed the dose.

Immediately he felt better.

“Hippies need to be taken care of same as anyone else though they may not think so themselves,” grumbled Mrs. Claus.

Ding Dong saw to his horror that she was fetching a large washtub from under the kitchen sink.

“Oh, no!” he thought, “Not a bath! What would his friends in Hippierville say to that?” He leaped to his feet and charged out the kitchen door before Mrs. Claus could turn from the sink.

He ran down to the fields where Santa’s reindeer were being fed by a crew of elves. The deer were friendly and full of life.

“Can they really fly?” asked Ding Dong.

“Try one and see,” said an elf.

He boosted Ding Dong onto a reindeer’s back. The deer sprang off the ground and soared into the sky.

Ding Dong felt as though he were riding the wind. He had never felt so free and happy. When the ride was over he took the reindeer back to the barn. He rubbed him down with towels and covered him with blankets so he wouldn’t catch cold and not be able to fly on Christmas Eve.

Then he remembered that no reindeer would fly on Christmas because Santa would be a prisoner in Hippierville and he himself would be the one who had captured Santa.

He felt badly about the whole thing. But what could be done now? The hippies were counting on him.

He wandered over to the toy shops where the elves were feverishly working on the toys children had asked for Christmas.

“Can’t stop a minute.” apologized an elf. “If we do, some child’s order won’t be filled.”

Ding Dong felt worse than ever. Was it wrong to take Christmas away from everyone just because the hippies wanted to do as they pleased? Ding Dong decided he wouldn’t capture Santa after all.

Just then Santa came into the shop. “I’ve finished my letters, Now what can I do for you?”

“Nothing,” muttered Ding Dong.

“What! You came all this way to ask for nothing?”

“I’ve changed my mind,” said Ding Dong, shamefaced.

“That’s too bad,” said Santa. “I’d like to help you if I could.”

Ding Dong thought, “If the hippies could see that Santa isn’t really a ‘square’ they’d feel different about things.”

So Ding Dong made up a big story. He told Santa that one of the boys in Hippierville had fallen into a well and could not get out.

“We thought you could come and save him,” said Ding Dong, not daring to look Santa in the eye.

“Of course I’ll come!” exclaimed Santa. “I shouldn’t take the time because there’s so much work to be done. But a boy in trouble comes first. We’ll go at once.”

He hurried Ding Dong off to a tiny airplane standing behind the shop. Santa climbed into the cockpit. Ding Dong squeezed in beside him and they zoomed off to Hippierville.



“I can’t stop a minute.” apologized an elf

## Chapter 7

### HESEKIAH

A terrible thing happened as soon as Santa left Santa Land.

There was a misshapen old dwarf named Heseekiah whose only interest in life was the invention of a machine to take the place of people.

He had been working on his invention for 400 years but he hadn't gotten any further than the discovery of a powerful salt that could turn people into spinning tops.

Before he turned people into spinning tops Heseekiah thought it would be a good idea to try out his salt on some creatures who were like people but still not exactly people. That is to say - elves and fairies and such folk-.

Heseekiah thought, "What better place to go than Santa Land?" There would be a lot of creatures he could turn into tops. More important, there were well-equipped workshops where he could continue to work on his machine.

Heseekiah arrived in Santa Land at the very moment Santa and Ding Dong flew off to Hippierville. This was unfortunate for Santa Land because Santa knew the one thing in the world that would stop Heseekiah and turn him into a nothing.

With Santa out of the way things were easy for Heseekiah. He opened his satchel and put on gloves and a hood that covered his head with only two tiny slits to see through. He took out a long blow pipe and carefully filled it with three cupfuls of salt. The pipe was one of his inventions. It had a round howl with tiny holes in the bottom and long stem to blow through.

Heseekiah sneaked up on Santa's porch and knocked. Mrs. Claus came to the door.

"Goodness", she cried. "Are you another hippie?"

For an answer Heseekiah stuck the stem of the pipe in his mouth and blew. The salt in the bowl showered over poor Mrs. Claus.

She threw up her hands in surprise and began to spin in a circle. As she spun faster and faster she grew smaller and, smaller until she was a very small top, fat in the middle and pointed on the end, spinning away in a pool of salt on the floor.

Heseekiah rushed to the doll shops where the elves were making dolls. He flung open the door and blew on the pipe with all his might. The salt sprayed over the astonished elves. In two seconds they were tiny tops spinning madly around the unfinished dolls.

Heseekiah went to the wagon shop and the sport shop and the electric train shop and the dollhouse shop and even to the reindeer stables. Everywhere he went he turned the creatures into spinning tops. Finally there was no one left in Santa Land except the wicked Heseekiah.

He put away his pipe and discarded his gloves and hood and boots, being careful that no salt should get on his skin. Then he went to the master tool shop where no one was ever allowed except Santa himself. There Santa kept his finest tools and all his books of instruction on how to make things.

Heseekiah locked and bolted the door. He said to himself gleefully, "Here I will stay until I have built my machine to take the place of people."



Heseekiah arrived in Santa Land

## Chapter 8

### THE HIPPIES AND SANTA

While all these terrible things were happening in Santa Land, Santa and Ding Dong arrived in faraway Hippieville.

The hippies greeted them with a cheer. "You captured him!" cried the red-haired hippie to Ding Dong. "How did you do it?"

"I said there was a boy in a well who couldn't get out," said Ding Dong, not looking at Santa. "But -"

"Groovy!" veiled the hippies.

"Where is the boy?" asked Santa. "We better hurry and get him out."

"There isn't any such -" Ding Dong began but the hippies shouted. "The well! Take him to the well!"

They led Santa behind one of the hippie houses and there sure enough was an old empty well. Santa peered into the hole. "Why, there's no one in it!" he said.

"Now there is!" cried the hippies. They gave Santa a push and tumbled him into the well.

"He's our prisoner!" gloated the red-haired hippie. "Children everywhere are free. They can do as they please and not have to worry about being good anymore."

Ding Dong shouted, "But what about Christmas?"

"Nobody has to be good for Christmas anymore," bragged the redhead.

"But without Santa Claus there won't even be any Christmas!" protested Ding Dong.

"True," said someone in surprise. "I hadn't thought of that."

With a grunt and a groan Santa Claus suddenly popped out of the well - a very easy matter for one who had been popping in and out of chimneys all his life.

He shook his head sadly and said to Ding Dong, "I'm surprised you'd trick me like that,"

"I did it so they would see what you're really like," mumbled Ding Dong, red-faced.

"Actually, he looks like a hippie!" exclaimed someone.

"I dig those whiskers," said another hippie.

"I dig that groovy red suit," said another hippie.

"So what's all the fuss?" asked Santa.

"Well," said the redhead with embarrassment, "we don't like to comb our hair or eat with forks instead of fingers or clean our rooms and all like that."

"Fine," said Santa. "But why knock the kids who do?"

"You mean you don't care about being good?"

"There are lots of ways of being good," said Santa. "I expect that, in their own way, hippies are very, very good."

'Oh, I dig this Santa Claus!' exclaimed the red-haired hippie.

"And I dig hippies" said Santa gravely. 'But now you've had your fun. It's time for me to get back to Santa Land to fill my Christmas orders.'

"Suppose," said a hippie, "we sent you a letter. Would you fill our order?"

"Try it and see," said Santa, with a smile.

Then he turned to leave. But as he was about to climb in his little plane, Edgar the elf swooped down on the back of a red-eyed goose.

"Santa! Santa!" gasped Edgar. "A terrible thing has happened!"

"What on earth can it be?" cried Santa in alarm.

"Santa Land is no more!" moaned Edgar. Tears rolled down his cheeks and he wrung his hands in despair.



"Now it is time for me to get back to Santa Land."

## Chapter 9

### EDGAR'S STORY

Santa and the hippies listened in horror as Edgar the elf told his tale.

Edgar had been away searching for a certain blue glass that Santa needed to make doll eyes. When he returned to Santa Land with a pocketful of beautiful stones, he went straight to Santa's house to show him what he had found.

The door to Santa's house was open but no one was home - not even Mrs. Claus. Edgar heard a funny whirring sound. Looking down he saw a small top spinning in a pool of salt at his feet.

He thought it was a new toy Santa was trying out. He went to the shops to find out what was going on. Everywhere he went he found spinning tops and a sprinkling of salt on the floor. Even in the stables there were no reindeer - only eight spinning tops.

He saw smoke coming from the chimney of Santa's private tool shop. He thought, eagerly, "Ah, Santa is there!" He ran to the shop and peeped through the keyhole.

Inside he saw not Santa but a misshapen dwarf hammering and sawing on a strange machine.

Then Edgar knew some awful thing had happened to all the creatures in Santa Land. He started running fast as he could. At the edge of Santa Land he came upon a family of red-eyed geese. When Edgar told them what had happened the mother goose said she had seen Santa flying off in his little plane not too many hours ago and she could take Edgar to wherever Santa was because it was easy for a red-eyed goose to track an airplane.

"Now here I am!" finished Edgar. "And, oh, what are we going to do?"

Santa scratched his whiskers thoughtfully. "You say there was salt?" he asked.

"All over the floor!"

"And what was this contraption the dwarf was making?"

"It was huge and ugly with wires and bolts sticking out of its middle and lights flashing in its head."

"Ah" said Santa with a sigh. "It was Heseekiah. He has invented a salt to turn people into tops while he works on a machine to take the place of people. I never thought he would dare to come to Santa Land."

Ding Dong felt terrible. He said it was all his fault because he had tricked Santa into leaving Santa Land. But the hippies said it was really their fault because they had wanted to capture Santa in the first place. Now all of Santa Land was gone and there wouldn't be any Christmas anymore.

But Santa said, "Don't worry. I've known about Heseekiah for a long, long time. I can handle him."



Excitedly Edgar the elf told his tale.

"What will you do?" asked the hippies.

"I'll get the three-colored sting and trip him with it." said Santa. "Then his power will be gone and so will he."

"The three-colored string? What is that?"

"That's a secret," said Santa with a smile. "But come Edgar. We must be off. If we hurry we will still be able to save Santa Land in time for Christmas."

They ran to Santa's plane but Edgar was too short to climb in. Santa offered to give Edgar a boost. He made a basket out of his hands and Edgar stepped into the basket.

When Edgar's shoe touched Santa's hands, Santa himself turned into a spinning top.

Chapter 10  
THE BATH

Edgar and Ding Dong and all the hippies stared incredulously at the top spinning at their feet.

"It's Heseekiah's magic salt!" Edgar moaned. "It turned everyone in Santa Land into tops and now it has done the same to Santa."

But Heseekiah is in Santa Land," protested the hippies. "How could the salt get to Hippieville?"

"I don't know, I don't know," i sobbed Edgar and buried his face in his hands.

Suddenly Ding Dong pointed at Edgar's shoes. "Look at his feet!"

Everyone looked. There on the bottom of the elf's shoes was a trace of Heseekiah's salt.

"I must have stepped in it up at Santa Land," gasped the elf.

"And when you put your shoe in Santa's the salt got on him!" groaned a hippie.

"It's all my fault," wept the elf.

Ding Dong said, "Never mind whose fault it is. We must burn the shoes quickly before we all turn into tops. After that we'll think of what to do."

Ever so' carefully Edgar slipped off his shoes without touching the soles. The hippies built a bonfire and the red-haired hippie picked up the shoes with sticks and dropped them in the fire where they burned to ashes.

"Now," said Ding Dong. "We must break Heseekiah's spell.

"Santa said he could destroy Heseekiah with the three-colored string. Why couldn't we do the same?"

"Where do we get the string?"

Edgar shook his head miserably. "I never before heard of such a string!"

"Someone must know! Think!"

Edgar thought and thought and finally aid, "There's the Butterfly Queen. She was Santa's best friend. She might know about the string."

"Bring her to Hippievilie! She will tell us what to do."

"If she left her kingdom she would die," said Edgar.

"Then take us to her!"

"Only one can go," said Edgar, "For only one human being every hundred years is allowed in Butterfly Kingdom."

Ding Dong said, "If I hadn't come to Hippieville none of this would have happened. I am the one who must go."

Edgar told them that the Butterfly Queen was the loveliest creature on earth, that she lived in beauty in the most beautiful



**They dumped Ding Dong in the bubbles and scrubbed him**

of kingdoms. He looked unhappily at Ding Dong's dirty face and long hair and hanging shirt-tail. It was clear what he was thinking.

Ding Dong looked at the hippies and the hippies looked at him and they all knew what they had to do.

They found an old rusty tub and filled it with water. They poured in seven bottles of the liquid they used for blowing bubbles. Then they dumped Ding Dong into the bubbles and scrubbed him and scoured him and rubbed him with sand.

They perfumed him with olive oil and cleaned his teeth with pine needles. They cut his hair with a pocket knife and combed it with a fork. Finally they dressed him in clean clothes they hadn't used since they came to Hippieville.

When they were through Ding Dong was as neat and shining as a boy on the way to his grandmother's house for dinner.

Edgar nodded approvingly and said, "He'll do."

## Chapter 11

### THE BUTTERFLY QUEEN

Ding Dong felt wonderful after his bath - the first he'd had in Hippierville. He felt light and shining and as if he could breathe again. But the hippies felt sorry for him: To make up for it they brought him their most cherished possessions.

They gave him the popcorn popper and their last set of finger paints and their only unbroken record of rock 'n' roll music and a fistful of hippie poems.

Ding Dong put the things in a paper bag. He picked up the spinning top that had been Santa Claus and carefully placed it, too, in the bag where it went on gently spinning inside the popcorn popper.

Then he said goodbye and climbed into Santa's little plane and sailed away leaving the residents of Hippierville sadder than they had been in many a day.

A long time later Ding Dong and Edgar landed in a wide meadow beside a lake in Butterfly Kingdom. Ding Dong looked around in awe.

The water was greener, the sky bluer, the sun brighter than anyone could ever have imagined. And the flowers! Name any flower - it was there in Butterfly Kingdom.

Thousands and thousands of butterflies played among the flowers. They paid no attention to Ding Dong and the elf as they made their way to the Queen's palace, a woven trellis of columbine and larkspur and black-eyed Susans.

The Queen was a creature of breathless beauty. Her silvery blue wings were spotted with pink and bordered with gold and her small head was crowned with roses.

She looked at Ding Dong kindly and asked him what he wanted.

Ding Dong was glad he had taken a bath and looked so clean. He bowed from the waist and said "Ma'am" politely though he had never done or said such a thing in his life, try though his mother had to make him use some manners.

He told the Queen about Heseekiah and how he'd turned Santa and all the Santa Land folk into spinning tops. He asked if she knew what the three-colored string was that Santa had said would break the dwarf's spell.

The Queen was terribly upset. There were, she said, three threads. One black. One red. One purple. If they were all woven into one string the creature who broke it would lose all his power.

"But, alas," she moaned, "The threads are spun by three fearful witches who would never part with them."

"I will get them!" announced Edgar the elf.

But the Queen informed him that the one thing the witches hated were elves. "I myself will go," she declared.



**The Queen was a creature of breathless beauty**

"But," protested Edgar, "if I you leave your kingdom you will die!"

"What does it mean to live if Santa Claus is no more?" she wept.

Ding Dong stood up as straight and tall as he possibly could and said in a very small voice, "I'm man, I will go."



## Chapter 12

### THE BLACK WITCH

The Butterfly Queen told Ding Dong that the Black Witch lived in a black castle in a black canyon. Once every three years she spun one inch of coal black thread. This was one of the threads needed to break the spell on Santa Land.

Ding Dong took the bag of gifts from the hippies and went off alone in Santa's little plane. He landed in the black canyon but when he tried to enter the castle the guard told him to go away quickly if he cared to save his life.

The guard said the Black Witch had ordered everyone in the castle to paint her portrait but, as yet, not a single portrait had pleased her. In each case she ordered the poor artist to be hung by his heels until a proper portrait should be done.

By now there were 136 artists hanging by their heels in the courtyard and everyone in the castle lived in terror that he would be the next to hang there.

Ding Dong was frightened but he said he must see the Black Witch anyway. The guard shook his head sadly and let him into the castle. When he entered the great hall he heard a deafening hullabaloo. Peeping through a door he saw a fearful sight.

The Black Witch was striding about the room kicking over chairs, smashing mirrors and throwing candlesticks through the windows. Meanwhile the latest unlucky artist hovered in a corner with his hands over his face to block a teacup or bookend the outraged Witch threw at him from time to time.

Suddenly the Witch saw Ding Dong at the door. She dragged him into the room shouting, "What do you think of an artist insulting me this way?"

Ding Dong stared at the offending picture. He thought it a very flattering portrait because it did not show the wart on the tip of the Black Witch's nose or the fearful black rings around her eyes.

But when the Witch demanded to know if it wasn't a terrible portrait Ding Dong could only nod. He was too frightened to speak.

"There! I told you so!" screeched the Witch and she ordered the artist to be dragged away and hung by his heels. Then the Witch said to the dumbfounded Ding Dong, "You shall be the next to paint my portrait. And, remember, if it is as ugly as the rest you, too, will hang in the courtyard."

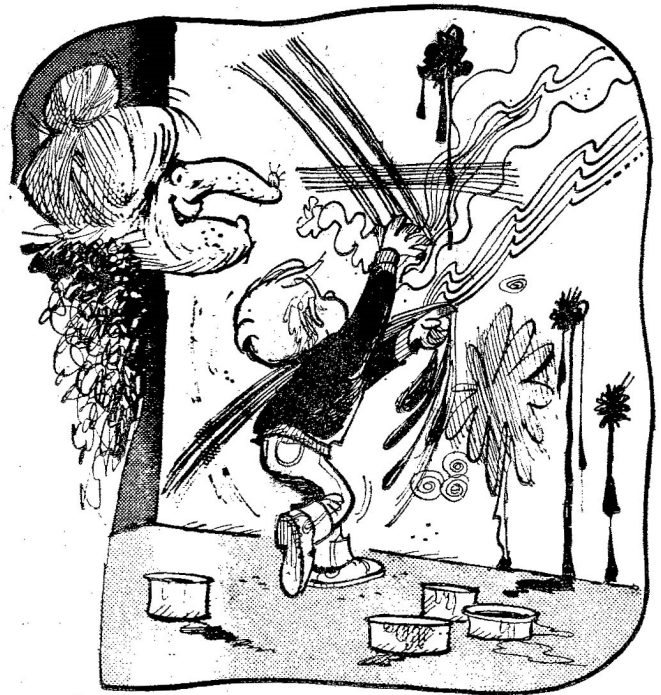
Servants brought easel and brushes and canvas and fine paints, while the Black Witch posed. Ding Dong stood there with shaking knees. He had no idea how even to begin.

Suddenly he remembered the hippies' finger paints in his bag. He opened the jars and dipped in his hands and began to smear paint all over the wall. In five minutes the wall was covered from floor to ceiling with splashes of crimson, dabs of blue, streaks of green, blobs of gold with a handprint of purple scattered here and there.

When the pots were empty Ding Dong sighed and hung his head.

The astonished Black Witch stared at what he had done. She quivered and shook and sucked in her breath and finally she cried, "It's beautiful! It's gorgeous! It's really, really me!"

She ordered all the artists hanging by their heels to be taken down and she asked Ding Dong how she could pay him for what he'd done. When Ding Dong said he'd like a piece of the black thread she wove the Black Witch gave him all 12 feet of it saying, "It's little enough I can do, For you alone have seen the beauty that I me!"



Ding Dong began to smear paint all over the wall

Chapter 13

THE RED WITCH

Ding Dong flew back to the Butterfly Kingdom and gave the black thread to the Butterfly Queen.

“You have done well,” she said. “But alas, the red thread spun by the Red Witch will be even harder to get.”

She told him the Red Witch lived in the red jaws of a monster, who would not let her go.

The monster loved the Red Witch because she could sing and play the harp and cello and piccolo and many other instruments. Her music intoxicated the monster, He kept the Witch a prisoner in his jaws where she had to play and sing night and day.

He gave her furs and jewelry and furnished his jaws with fine china and silver and the best of musical instruments, He ever supplied a spinning wheel made of gold to keep her hands busy while she sang. But he never let her out of his jaws at all.

When Ding Dong heard the story he picked up his bag of hippie gifts and flew away to the seaside where the monster lived.

The monster’s eyes were closed. He was listening dreamily to the Red Witch inside his jaws playing a Sonata in B Minor on the harpsichord.

Every now and then the monster ducked his head in the nearby sea, opened his jaws and took in a supply of fish for the Witch and himself. The Red Witch could not escape because she could not swim.

But Ding Dong watched for his chance. The next time the

monster opened his jaws under water Ding Dong swam in with the fish.

The Red Witch was so startled to see him her fingers slipped on the harpsichord keys hitting A sharp instead of A flat, which caused the monster to shake his in alarm.

The Red Witch told Ding Dong he was the first person she had seen in a hundred years. But when Ding Dong asked for a piece of the red thread she spun she shook her head.

“It is all I have,” she said, pointing to the thread wrapped around her waist. “Every night when he goes to sleep I spin a bit. When I have enough I will use it to pull out his teeth and escape. It is my only hope.”

The monster gargled suddenly. “That is my signal to sing, ‘Lo, Here the Gentle Lark,’ the Red Witch sighed. “He must hear it to soothe his digestion after every meal,”

“Wait,” said Ding Dong.

He took the hippie record out of his bag and put it on the phonograph.

An instant later the Hippies of Hippierville let rip with “Ring Pong Kerchoo There’s an oyster in My Bed Room Slipper but no Hiddley Moo in My Stew.” They beat out the tune with fry pans and fire alarm bells.

The red jaws of the monster rocked and shivered and splintered and quivered and suddenly exploded as the monster opened his mouth to scream in pain.

Ding Dong and the Red Witch rushed out of the red jaw and fled across the fields until they were sure they were safe.

The Red Witch was overjoyed. She unwound the red thread head from her waist and gave it to Ding Dong saying, “It’s yours. I’ll never need it now thanks to you.”



## Chapter 14

### THE PURPLE WITCH

Ding Dong took the red thread back to the Butterfly Queen. Now they had two threads. One more was needed: the purple thread spun by the Purple Witch.

“That one.” said the Butterfly Queen, “will be the hardest to get. It is the Purple Witch’s most valued possession.”

She told Ding Dong the Purple Witch read and studied all the time. The walls of her purple mansion were lined with books from floor to ceiling. Books spilled off the shelves into the kitchen, under the beds and up and down the stairs.

She read them all. She read so much her eyes had become tiny pinpoints. She had to wear five pairs of glasses at once to see at all. She read novels and Mother Goose and poetry and fairy stories and science and first grade readers. She had 47 sets of encyclopedias she had read from Aachen to Zynase. There was nothing she did not know.

She could tell you the natural resources of Tanganyika, how a crankshaft works and what an agouti is. She knew the chemical formula of a vanilla soda, where Nebuchadnezzar was buried and how the ancient Persians cut their fingernails. She could name all the Kings of England, discuss the Fourth Dimension and tell the difference between poison ivy and honeysuckle.

Her brain was so stuffed with all she knew that her head grew bigger and bigger. She looked like a stick with a purple balloon on top. It was impossible to find a hat to fit her.

“But the purple thread?” asked Ding Dong. “When does she spin the purple thread?”

“It is already woven.” said the Butterfly Queen. “That is the trouble. She wove it especially to use as a book mark and she cannot read without it.”

“Oh, dear,” moaned Edgar the elf as he listened to the tale. “Suppose we cannot get it?”

“Then,” said the Butterfly Queen sadly, “we cannot break the spell of Heseekiah and Christmas will be no more.”

Ding Dong opened the bag of gifts from the hippies and looked inside. He had used up the set of finger-paints. He had used the record of hippie music. Three things remained: the popcorn popper, a handful of poems and the spinning top that was Santa Claus.

He sighed. He did not see how any of these things could help him. Nevertheless, he tucked the bag under his arm and climbed once more into Santa’s little plane and flew off to the Purple Witch’s mansion.

When he arrived he found everyone sad and distraught. The Purple Queen was dying. It seems she had read every book in her library 10 times over and now she was dying for lack of something to read. She neither ate nor drank nor slept but sat



**The Purple Witch read and studied all the time**

all day staring at her hands because there was nothing new to read.

If the Purple Witch died all the assistant purple witches would die, too. Everyone in Purple Witchdom wept and wrung their hands and wondered what on earth to do.

They brought all their books to the Purple Witch but she had read them all. They sent off to world famous universities and asked for their most unusual books. When they arrived it was no use. The Purple Witch had already read them.

“The situation is very serious,” said the Witch Doctor gloomily, “She is growing weaker every day. The end is near.”

Chapter 15

HIPPIES POEMS

All the time the Purple Witch was dying Ding Dong stood outside her door hoping that somewhere a book would be found that would make her well so that he could ask for the purple thread.

The Purple Witch Doctor came out of the bedroom looking very solemn indeed.

“She is eating her book mark,” he announced. “Soon all will be over.”

“The book mark!” cried Ding Dong aghast. “But - that’s the purple thread!”

“Yes. It is her most valued possession because it reminds her of all she’s read.”

“But she can’t EAT it!”

“She doesn’t want to leave it behind. When she has finished it, she will die.”

“I won’t let her,” shouted Ding Dong. He brushed past the



“These are poems by hippies,” said Ding Dong

astonished doctor and burst into the Purple Witch’s room.

She was sitting by the window chewing on the purple thread. She looked sadly up at Ding Dong but she couldn’t really see him because she didn’t have on even one of her five pairs of glasses. She thought he was the Witch Doctor and she murmured sorrowfully, “Oh, doctor. It is so sad. If I had just one new thing to read I would recover for I’d be refreshed enough to go through my whole library again.”

‘I have something you’ve never read!’ cried Ding Dong, digging frantically into his paper bag. “Listen!” He read one of the poems given him by the hippies of Hippieville.

“Up goes the elevator

“Down goes the alligator.”

The Purple Witch stopped nibbling on the purple thread.

“Fingers Freeze

“Parakeets sneeze,” read Ding Dong.

The Purple Witch got out of her chair and cocked her head, listening.

“Fishes swim

“To keep in trim,” went on Ding Dong.

The Purple Witch put oil all her five pairs of glasses. “What is this? What are you reading?”

“Poems by hippies. There are lots of them.”

The Purple Witch snatched the bundle of poems from his hands and began to read. Her eyes grew bright and her cheeks rosy. “Something new at last!” she breathed. “What originality! What depth of feeling! How they go to the heart of the matter! How do they do it?”

“I bet you could do it, too,” said Ding Dong hopefully.

“If only I could! How refreshed I would be!” She thought and thought and finally said slowly.

“When the north wind blows I like - I like - I like

“To wiggle my toes!”

“There!” exclaimed Ding Dong. “You are a hippie poet.”

“My dear boy,” said the Purple Witch joyfully. “I am well again. How can I ever repay you?”

Ding Dong pointed to the purple thread still dangling from her fingers. Only an inch or so had been eaten. “Will you give me that?”

“My book mark! I cannot read without it!” she protested. Then she said, “But I won’t need it any more. From now on I shall write hippie poems and leave it to others to read.”

Smiling shyly, she gave the thread to Ding Dong.

## Chapter 16

### POPCORN POPPER

Ding Dong rushed back to Butterfly Kingdom with the purple thread. The Queen took the three colored threads he had gotten and wove them into one three-colored string. She gave the string to Ding Dong and said, "Hesekiah must break this string. Then and only then will the spell on Santa Land be over."

"But how will Hesekiah break it?" asked Ding Dong.

"That is your final task," said the Butterfly Queen. "But if it is not broken in three days Hesekiah's spell will last forever."

"We can never do it!" groaned Edgar.

The Butterfly Queen said, "In three days Christmas will be here. All the children in the world are waiting for Santa. You must find a way."

Ding Dong nodded gravely. He put the string into the paper bag with the popcorn popper and the spinning top. Then he and Edgar got in the little plane and flew away to Santa Land.

When they arrived Edgar warned, "Don't touch anything and be careful where you step. The magic salt is everywhere."

He pointed to Santa's private tool shop. There was smoke coming from the chimney - the only sign of life in Santa Land. "Hesekiah is there!"

They crept to the door and peeped through the keyhole. There was Hesekiah whacking and chopping away on his hideous machine to take the place of people.

Ding Dong tried to open the door. It was locked. "I'll knock." said Ding Dong. "When he comes to the door we'll quickly break the string across his head."

He knocked and pounded and kicked at the door but Hesekiah never heard a sound, so intent was he on his fantastic invention.

There was nothing to do but wait for Hesekiah to come out and break the string.

They waited all day and all night and part of the next day. Hesekiah went on smashing and clouting on his invention and never came out of the door.

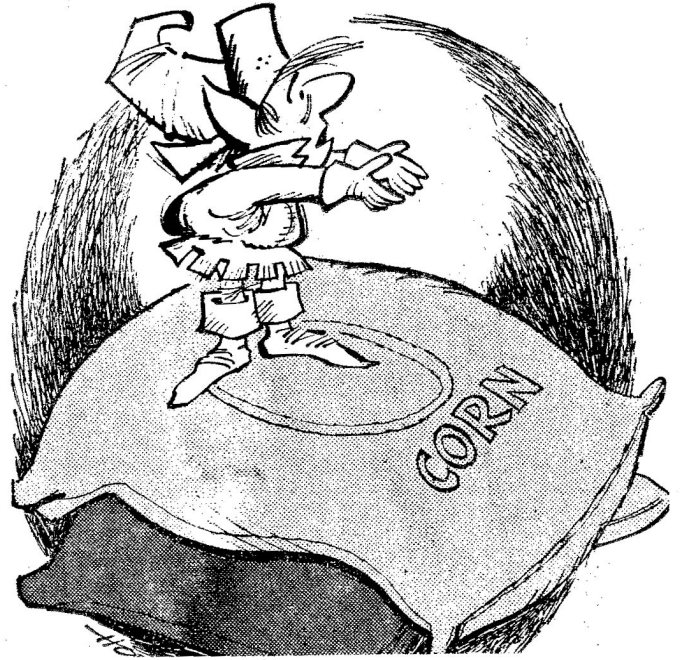
"It's Christmas Eve!" moaned Edgar, "We've only a few hours more!"

Ding Dong emptied out the paper bag he'd brought from Hippierville. He had used all the gifts the hippies had given him except the popcorn popper. He stared at it glumly.

Suddenly he asked, "Is there any corn in Santa Land?"

"Tons of it," said Edgar. "All stored away where Hesekiah's salt wouldn't have touched it."

"Bring all you can!" cried Ding Dong.



"What are you going to do with this corn?" asked Edger

Edgar rushed away. Ding Dong took the spinning top that was Santa Claus out of the popcorn popper and set it gently on the ground. He climbed onto the roof of the shop with the popcorn popper under his arm.

Edgar returned with two enormous sacks of corn. "What are you going to do?" he gasped when he saw Ding Dong on the roof.

"You'll see!" cried Ding Dong. "Pass up the corn!"

Chapter 17

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

It was Christmas Eve. Only an hour remained to break the spell on Santa Land.

Ding Dong stood on the roof of Santa's workshop and carefully dropped the hippie's popcorn popper down the smoking chimney. When it was in place on the burning coals below Ding Dong began to drop kernels of corn, one by one, down the chimney into the popper.

For a moment there was no sound except Heseekiah chopping and swatting on his machine. Then, between the whacks of the hammer, Ding Dong heard the soft pop-pop-popping of the corn in the fireplace below.

He dropped the corn faster and faster until it was pouring down the chimney in a river. Now, the hammer blows were silent. There was only the gentle popping of corn.

Edgar the elf scurried to the front of the shop and peeped through the keyhole.

"He's stopped working!" he cried. "The whole shop is filling with popcorn! It's covered his feet! Now his knees! His middle! His neck! He's drowning in popcorn!"

Ding Dong dumped the last of the corn down the chimney. He yelled, "Watch out! He'll be out in a minute!" And he slid to the ground to see the fun.

A moment later the dwarf flung open the door and burst out in a cloud of popcorn. His stumbling feet snapped the three colored string stretched across the door frame.

The spell on Santa Land was broken. The spinning tops stopped spinning. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus and all the elves and reindeer were themselves again.

There was such rejoicing! Edgar told Santa all that Ding Dong had done and Santa asked what he could do for Ding Dong in return.

Ding Dong said he would like to go home again. "If only I didn't have to be good all the time!" he added with a sigh.

"Being good is just thinking of others," said Santa. "That is something you certainly have done."

What about taking baths and being polite and picking up toys and all like that?"

"It isn't necessary," said Santa thoughtfully. "But you might say it is a way of thinking of other people."

"I suppose I could give it a try," said Ding Dong reluctantly.

"I don't think it would hurt much," said Santa with a smile. "It probably wouldn't hurt at all."

The elves loaded Santa's sleigh with toys and Mrs. Claus tucked in sacks of cookies. The reindeer were hitched to the sleigh and it was time to go.

Santa climbed in with Ding Dong by his side and off they soared over the great sleeping world. When they came to Hippieville Santa leaned from the sleigh and dropped off an enormous bag of gifts for the hippies below.

The bag bulged with records and strange new musical instruments and magic color paints and weird clothes, Unknown to Santa, Mrs. Claus had slipped tooth brushes, combs and a dozen bars of soap in with all the rest.

The hippies, who never sleep when others sleep, heard the jingling bells of the sleigh and knew that all was well. They rushed into the street shouting joyfully, "Merry Christmas!"

Santa and Ding Dong, circling away, waved and called back, "Merry Christmas to all!"



"Merry Christmas to All!"

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