The Cinnamon Bear

Episode One: Paddy O'Cinnamon

A chapter book for young readers

Chapter One: Letters to Santa Claus

On the day after Thanksgiving, in a big old-fashioned house with a steep roof and a dusty attic, two children sat in the upstairs sitting room and worked on the most important letters of the whole year.

They were Judy and Jimmy Barton, and they were twins. Judy had a pencil and a very serious expression; Jimmy had a pencil too, and his tongue stuck out of the corner of his mouth, the way it always did when he was thinking hard.

"How are you getting along with your letter, Jimmy?" asked Judy, looking across the table at his page, already covered with writing.

"Pretty well," said Jimmy, without looking up. "I guess I've got about everything down by now."

Judy warned him not to ask for everything the way he had done last year, because Santa might think him greedy. Jimmy answered that if they put the things in her letter and the things in his together, she would have the most. Judy said she bet she wouldn't, either, and Jimmy said she would, and there the argument might have gone on forever if Jimmy had not remembered his dignity.

"Well, I won't argue about it," he declared grandly, waving his pencil, "but I bet my letter is more dignified than yours. Now stop bothering me, so I can finish it."

He bent over his paper and wrote very carefully at the bottom: *P.S. And Santa, just one thing more I'd like. A nice red velocipede.*

Then he stopped and frowned down at the last word. "Judy," he said, "how do you spell *velocipede*?"

Judy tried — "V-e-l-o..." — and stopped, and admitted that she didn't know. Jimmy said that was a fine thing, after all her fuss, but Judy only laughed and agreed that maybe he was right for once. Then they both went back to writing, because a letter to Santa Claus is serious business — even when nobody can spell the finest present on the list.



Judy and Jimmy writing their letters to Santa Claus.

Chapter Two: The Missing Star

Just then Mother came into the room, carrying two cardboard boxes, one stacked carefully on top of the other, and the twins looked up from their letters at once.

"Have you finished those letters to Santa Claus?" she asked, and when they told her that they had, she said, "That's good, because we have something very important to do. What do you suppose I have in these cardboard boxes here?"

"I know!" cried Jimmy, jumping up. "Our Christmas tree ornaments!"

Judy reminded her that she had promised they could help go through the ornaments, to see whether any were broken. Mother set the boxes down on the table, and the twins crowded close on either side of her.

Out came the tinsel first, bright and silver and tangled. Out came the big gold balls that Judy liked best of all, and the colored lights, and the little pink Santa Claus she had worried about ever since last Christmas. "I do hope he didn't get broken," she said, lifting him out gently, and Mother assured her that he was perfectly fine.

Everything seemed to be in order — tinsel, lights, gold balls, and the pink Santa not even chipped. But as Mother looked into the first box and then into the second, her smile slowly faded away.

"Everything seems to be here except..." She stopped, and looked again.

"Except what, Mother?" said the twins together.

"Well," said Mother slowly, "I can't see the silver star anywhere."

"The big one?" said Jimmy. "You mean the one we always put way up on top of the tree?"

"Yes, that one. But I don't see it in any of the boxes."

The twins searched too, but there was no silver star anywhere to be found.

"Oh, gee," said Jimmy quietly. "I'd feel just awful if anything happened to that old silver star."

"Me too," said Judy, and her eyes filled with tears, because they had had the silver star on top of their tree for years and years. "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the silver star."

Mother put an arm around her and told her not to cry, because the star was probably only mislaid: Uncle Jed had taken some things up to the attic last year, after Christmas, and perhaps he had put the star

away up there too.

"Could we go up and look for it, Mother?" begged Judy. "Please?"

At first Mother shook her head: the attic was no place for children, and far too cold besides. But the twins said they had their sweaters on, and that they just had to find the star, and at last Mother sighed the way mothers do when they have already decided to give in.

"All right," she said. "But you've got to promise to be careful, and not stay too long."

"We won't, Mother. Honest, we won't!"



The tinsel was there, and the big gold balls — but no silver star.

Chapter Three: The Big Trunk

At the bottom of the narrow attic stairs, Judy asked where they ought to look first. Mother called after them that if Uncle Jed had put the star away, it was probably in the big trunk in the corner by the window, and to be careful of their fingers when they opened it.

"Last one up's a fraidy cat!" shouted Judy, and away they went up the steep, narrow stairs as fast as their legs could carry them, in spite of Mother calling after them not to run.

At the top, Jimmy announced that he had beaten her; Judy answered that she had arrived at exactly the same moment and was not a fraidy cat; and they settled it in the only possible way — Charlie Simpson was the fraidy cat instead.

The attic was a wonderful, dusty place, crowded with suitcases and boxes and all sorts of forgotten things. There was an old spinning wheel standing in one corner like a great wooden spider, and there was a music box, and there, under the little window at the far end, stood the big trunk. Its lid was not even closed all the way down, it was so stuffed with things.

"You get on one side, Jimmy, and I'll get on the other, and then we can both lift at the same time."

They lifted together, and the heavy lid creaked slowly open. Right on top lay an old crazy quilt, folded up neatly, all patches and colors. Underneath were piles of old clothes, and the whole trunk smelled strongly of mothballs.

They dug down through the clothes together, but there were only more clothes underneath. Then, under the last layer, they discovered a small box of ornaments — and every single one of them was broken. Every one, that is, except one.

"Gee, here's one that's not broken," said Jimmy, holding it up to the light from the window. "It's a pretty little airplane, and it's made out of gold glass or something."

Judy set the little airplane carefully on top of the old dresser, where it would be safe. Then Jimmy asked whether there was anything else in the trunk, and Judy pushed the last of the clothes aside — and stopped, and spoke very quietly.

"You bet there is," she said. "Look at this, Jimmy. A little teddy bear, with a green ribbon around his neck."



They lifted the heavy lid together.

Chapter Four: Through the Telescope

"Gee," said Jimmy, staring down into the trunk, "he isn't any more than four inches high. I wonder where he came from."

The little bear was the tiniest they had ever seen. He had round shoe-button eyes and a green ribbon tied around his neck, and he sat among the old clothes as if he had been asleep for a hundred years.

Then Jimmy found something else, half buried under a pile of old coats, and he pulled it out with a shout. "Look what I found, Judy! A real, honest-to-goodness telescope!"

It was a dandy — long and brass and heavy — and it must have belonged to Uncle Jed when he was a sailor, long ago. Jimmy raised it to his eye and pointed it toward the attic window.

"When I look through it, everything seems a million times bigger!" he announced. "Boy, if I was out on the roof, I bet I could see clear over to England — farther than that, maybe!"

Judy, who was still looking at the little bear, said he was the tiniest she had ever seen. Then an idea came

to her. "Say, Jimmy, I bet if we looked at him through this telescope, he'd be a lot bigger."

Jimmy set the tiny bear upright at the far end of the open trunk, and Judy raised the telescope and aimed it carefully down the trunk's length, while Jimmy danced with impatience beside her.

"He looks bigger than anything!" Judy reported. "Take a look, Jimmy."

Jimmy looked, and agreed that the bear was enormous — almost as big as the twins themselves, only of course he really wasn't. He squeezed in beside Judy so that they could both look at the same time, one eye each, and Judy whispered that she could see him plain as day.

And then she grabbed Jimmy's arm so suddenly that he nearly dropped the telescope. "Jimmy," she whispered. "He moved. The bear moved. Didn't you see him moving?"

Jimmy said he thought he had, but surely he couldn't have; then both of them heard it — a small sound from the trunk that was certainly not a creaky board. Jimmy declared that it was the bear, and that he was going to talk back to him. Judy caught at his sleeve and said maybe he'd better not, but Jimmy only laughed and told her not to be scared, because the bear couldn't possibly hurt them — he was really only

four inches high.

He leaned toward the trunk and called out, bold as brass: "Hey, you! You tiny bear!"

From the trunk came a small, fierce sound: "Garo!"

Jimmy jumped back, half frightened and half delighted. The bear had growled at them — there was no mistaking it. Judy said Jimmy ought to ask whether he was a really, truly, live real bear, and Jimmy called out as bravely as he could: "Hey, teddy bear! Tell us — who are you?"

And the little bear stood up in the trunk, all four inches of him, straightened his green ribbon, and sang:

> *I'm the Cinnamon Bear with the shoe-button eyes,*
> *and I'm looking for someone to take by surprise.*
> *I go prowling and prowling each night —*
> *Garo!*
> *But the folks say my growl's just a cinnamon bark.*
> *Though I growled, Garo! and I growled,*
> *Garo!*
> *my victims only say, "Oh, who's afraid of you?"*
> *I'm the Cinnamon Bear with the shoe-button*

eyes,
and I'm happy and floppy and tough for my size!

When the song was finished, Jimmy whispered that they ought to pretend to be frightened, because it would make the little bear feel good. Judy understood at once: she put both hands in the air and cried, "Oh! Don't give us a scare like that again, Mr. Bear!"

"Garo!" said the bear.

"Oh, Judy, I'm scared!" cried Jimmy, clutching at his sister.

"Garo!"



Through the telescope, the tiny bear looked as big as the twins.

Chapter Five: Paddy O'Cinnamon

"Did I really frighten you?" asked the bear anxiously, when the twins had caught their breath again.

"Terribly," Judy assured him. "You just about scared the daylight out of us."

"Well, I promise not to frighten you anymore," said the bear. "That is — not until my ferocious nature gets the better of me again. Now, would you be kind enough to tell me your names? I always keep a record of the people I scare."

Jimmy introduced himself, and then he introduced Judy, and the little bear bowed as well as a four-inch bear can bow. "I'm much obliged to meet you, I'm sure. My name's Paddy O'Cinnamon."

"That sounds Irish," said Judy.

"Sure, and I'm slightly Irish," said Paddy proudly. "That's why I wear this green ribbon around my neck. But tell me — what are you two doing up here in this attic?"

Jimmy explained about the silver star that went on top of their Christmas tree, and asked whether the Cinnamon Bear had ever seen it. Paddy asked whether it had five points, and Jimmy said he thought

so.

"Sure, I've seen it lots of times," he said. "Oh, but it's not here now. It's gone."

The twins cried out together and demanded to know who had taken it, and Paddy told them: "Why, the Crazy Quilt Dragon, to be sure."

Jimmy wanted to know who the Crazy Quilt Dragon was. Paddy said he was just a dragon — not a very good one at that — who was terribly fond of shiny, bright things, and who had been coming into the trunk every day for a month to admire the silver star. That very afternoon, admiration had got the best of him, and he had simply up and run off with it.

"Oh," said Judy, nearly crying. "Now we'll never, never see the silver star again."

"Now, now — don't carry on like that," said Paddy quickly. "You can get the silver star back. By going after the Crazy Quilt Dragon and chasing him, that's how. And I'll help you."

"Will you really?" cried Jimmy.

"Sure, I will. Crazy Quilt's no great friend of mine. And besides — you were both very obliging, and got perfectly terrified when I growled at you."

Judy declared that he was the most wonderful Cinnamon Bear in the whole wide world. Paddy said that was very nice of her, and that if they were going to catch the dragon, they had better get going at once. He thought Crazy Quilt had probably headed for the Lollipop Mountains.

"The Lollipop Mountains!" said the twins, looking at each other with round eyes. "But how do we get there?"

"You see that little hole in the wall, by the music box?" said Paddy, pointing with one small paw.

The twins looked where he pointed, and there it was: a little round hole in the attic wall, no bigger around than a dinner plate, with something bright and green shining far away on the other side of it.

"But Paddy," said Judy, "Jimmy and I can't get through that little hole. We're much too big."

"Oh, yes, you can. It's very simple, really. All you and Jimmy have to do is de-grow."

"What do you mean, de-grow?" asked Jimmy.

"Just de-grow. Get smaller and smaller and smaller, until you're only four inches high — like me."

Jimmy said that was impossible, but Paddy shook his head: nothing was impossible, and he could show

them how to do it in a way. The twins begged him to tell them quickly, and Paddy settled himself on the edge of the trunk.

"All right," he said. "Now listen very carefully, both of you, and I'll tell you exactly how to de-grow."

And whether Judy and Jimmy really did get to be only four inches high — and whether they won back their precious silver star — well, that is what the next story is for.



The little hole in the wall, by the music box.

Adapted from The Cinnamon Bear, Episode One, "Paddy O'Cinnamon," first broadcast in 1937.