

A VIVID CHRISTMAS-EVE MEMORY

I *rushed* to bed. Me? Never. But on this night, a quiet, nothing-to-do-except-wait night a job had to be done. A discovery had to be made.

I lay in bed, still as a stone, not making the bed creak. Tonight was a night for silent waiting, waiting, until the loving family voices ceased their chatter. It was hard this waiting. It was dark. My eyes were heavy with excitement.

I counted to 100. It was time. Climbing off my creaky steel-tubed bed I tip-toed down the hallway. It wasn't easy, this sneaking down the hallway, dodging the tables and creaky floorboards but I did it and no one heard me!

And then I squatted, waiting for THAT man to come down the chimney right next to me by the fireplace. I counted to 100. Nothing.

Maybe a window was open. I checked. All our windows were locked as usual.

Maybe a door remained unbolted. I checked them both; front and back. Closed.

If I couldn't see him arrive, I would catch him emptying the sack. I hid behind the lounge, a perfect hiding spot, right in front of our silver Christmas tree. The biscuits and milk and carrots were on the table just where we left them. I waited. Not a sound. I counted to 100. Nothing.

Was that a noise, a creak on that floorboard? My eyes were wide. I counted to 100. No one entered the room.

My eye lids were heavy. I took a sip of his milk. I counted a little and took another sip and then counted some more ... but I never made it to 100.

My head snuggled on the back of the cloth covered lounge.

And that's all that I remember of that Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning my sisters entered.

"Santa's been" cried one.

"The milk's gone" cried another. I jumped up from behind the lounge ready to yell but instead saw the presents wrapped beneath our tree ... but the biscuit and the carrots remained untouched.

I never did discover THAT man. But he came every year – and still does!

This short piece first appeared on my blog <http://chrishengauthor.blogspot.com> on the 6th December, 2010 as part of the 12 Days of Christmas readings. To read the 11 other short pieces jump to

<http://tinyurl.com/ydexmsn> or <http://chrishengauthor.blogspot.com/search/label/12%20Days%20of%20Christmas>