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Winnie is a happy little Christmas elf who doesn't have much to do with Christmas. Instead, he loves spring, colorful flowers, and sandy beaches (especially the Maldives, which he has never seen himself). While the other elves are busy with the Christmas preparations, Winnie prefers to sing spring songs, paint pictures of the beach, and decorate his room with colorful confetti flowers and Hawaiian flower necklaces. Feeling frequently frustrated by Winnie, Santa feels it is time to give Winnie a new job. Winnie is assigned to bring Christmas closer to an orphan who doesn't like anything about Christmas. As expected, Winnie is initially indignant about playing babysitter to a little girl, but after a brief thought, he agrees.

Lilly is a small, cheeky, eight-year-old orphan, who doesn't like anything and anyone and calls herself angry. She steals, is cheeky, breaks everything, and obviously enjoys annoying others. She is a loner

and does everything to ensure that it stays that way. The other children are afraid of her and try to avoid her as best they can. When Winnie shows up, Lilly quickly shows that she is not happy about it. She also tries to show him that it is better to avoid her and leave her alone. Winnie doesn't even think about it and so their story begins to unfold. After a dispute Lilly runs away from the orphanage. Winnie can follow her just in time and accompanies despite Lilly's initial resistance. Together they experience an emotional day with many important lessons. With Winnie and Lilly, the readers meets a wide variety of people who change the way they think, act, and feel. Lilly also later learns the real reason why she is in the orphanage, and it changes her tremendously. What the two experience and whether the original Christmas grouches will eventually become two little Christmas helpers remains to be seen...

Extract



“Again, this stupid Christmas!” Angry Lilly kicks the craft table. “Lilly, pull yourself together now!” Sister Maria warns her. “Pull yourself together? Do I look like a sheet of paper or what?” Lilly replies cheekily. “Lilly, that’s it, go to your room and immediately!” Sister Maria points with her index finger towards the door. “Oh, what a shame! I would have loved to continue making these Emperor Nero wreaths,” Lilly replies in a mock outraged voice. “These are Advent wreaths, Lilly, Advent wreaths. And you may no longer make handicrafts, but go to your room and think about your misbehavior,” replies Sister Maria angrily. Lilly puts her right hand on the fir branches, “Sorry, Nero, but you have to get by without your wreaths now.” Lilly pushes the fir branches over the edge of the table. These fall to the ground. “Lilly!” shouts Sister Maria. “Stay calm, Penguin,

I'm now going to my room to think about my misbehavior... maybe." With her tongue out, Lilly leaves the art room. "This child still drives me crazy." Exhausted, Sister Maria looks at the fir branches on the floor.



"Bovine spongiform encephalopathy comes from cattle and not from children," Lilly explains to sister Maria, who put her head into the door again. "Lilly!" Sister Maria shouts again. "Keep calm, Penguin, keep calm. I'm already gone." With these words, Lilly turns and slowly trots into her room.

At the same time...



“321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, three hundred twenty...” Santa Claus hesitates. He looks at Christmas Elf 327 and 329 alternately. “Sepp, Hugo, where’s Winnie?” he asks the two Christmas elves. “So, Winnie...yes...,” Sepp hesitates. “He didn’t want to help,” Hugo cut him off. “Why? Don’t help?” asks Santa Claus indignantly. Hugo shrugs and raises his arms, “We tried to persuade him, but he just didn’t want to.” “He just didn’t want...Such a thing doesn’t exist at Santa Claus!” Angry Santa stalks off to look for Winnie.

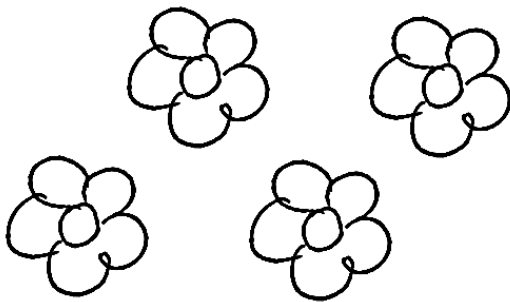


“If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands

If you're happy and you know it
And you really want to show it
If you're happy and you know it, clap your..."

"Winnie! What are you doing there?" Santa Claus calls out in a loud voice. "Aaahhhhh!" Winnie is startled. Pink and light blue confetti flowers fly in a high arc through the from the bag Winnie was holding in his hand. Winnie looks innocently at the confetti pile that has landed at Santa's feet. "Great, thanks, Santa Claus, now I have to start again," Winnie says indignantly. "Start again?" Santa Claus doesn't seem to believe his ears, "What does it mean to start again? Nothing is going to start over here. You explain to me what's going on here!" Winnie looks around proudly in his room, "You see that, bad...um...dear Santa...I decorate." Santa Claus snorts angrily, "Winnie, does it look *Christmasy* in here as it should?" Winnie snorts playfully, "Does it look like your room? Or maybe like that of the other 1294 Christmas elves?" Winnie shakes his head,

“Nooooo, this looks like my room...and this is my room, too,” he states energetically. To reinforce it, Winnie crosses his arms over his chest. “Winnie...it’s *Christmas*...you are a *Christmas* Elf,” Santa tries to explain in a calm but determined tone, “that means that you have to help with the preparations and decorate everything for Christmas.” Winnie defiantly goes to his closet and pulls out another bag of confetti flowers. “But I don’t like to have Christmas. I want to have spring!” With these words, he reaches into the bag with his right hand and throws a handful of confetti flowers into the air.



At the sight of the confetti flowers, which are slowly falling to the ground, Winnie's mood changes suddenly. "Whee...that's nice! Look, Santa Claus, how they fly!" Without words, Santa Claus leaves Winnie's room and goes into the large living room.