Christmas, Then and Now (Literature)
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Christmas, Then and Now
Karen Donaldson, 1st Place (Tie)
Essay

As we get older, we must give up some of the sweeter things in life. We learn that there is no Tooth Fairy, no Easter Bunny, and no Santa Claus. Well, maybe they do exist; they just don't look much like we thought they did. The biggest difference I see is in Christmas. The Christmas times of my childhood were much more exciting than the Christmas times of my adult years.

Those childhood holidays seemed to be almost electric with excitement. Our house seemed like a post office with greeting cards coming and going every day. Almost every other day would bring a new smell wafting past my nose. Mother always had cinnamon tea, spiced cakes, and dressing with lots of sage cooking in the kitchen. Family and friends were constantly popping in and out with Christmas cheer. I remember lots of laughter and loud voices. But also I remember my parents whispering a lot. Just to know it had something to do with me was enough to make me giggle with glee.

My sister, who is ten years older, did much to help my parents out with the legend of Jolly Old Saint Nick. She was forever adding little bits and pieces of information about Santa. Of course, I hung on her every word. She was so much older and wiser than I; she was at least thirteen! I'll never forget one night about a week before the big day. She came running into my room and woke me out of a sound sleep. She picked me up in her arms and took me to a window. It was very foggy that night, but she pointed out a red light and assured me it was Rudolph's nose. Christmas in those days seemed almost too exciting to stand.

However, my recent Christmas times have lost some of their magic. Santa gave his suit away to the Salvation Army when he and my mother got a divorce. I was twelve. That's when things really started to change. Mother still cooks all those good things to eat, but people don't seem to visit friends and family like they used to. With postage being so high now, people don't mail as many cards. Most of the whispering has stopped, too. Now Daddy just says, "Honey, why don't I give you money this year?"