

The Twinns Bake Christmas Cookies

Amelia Rose was trying to plan a Christmas program for the Twinns. She had found an old songbook in a trunk in the attic, and she, Candace, and Ramona, along with Lucy the Goose, were paging through it, trying to find a good song to lead in the show.

"Here is one called 'The Song of the Sunbeams,'" suggested Ramona. "Let's try it."

"On a golden ray of light
Come the little sunbeams bright
From the skies so blue and fair,
Bringing gladness everywhere,"

the girls sang

"I think we'll get hooted off the stage. Besides, it's not very Christmas-y," said Amelia. "Everybody knows that a good Christmas song should have a goose in it," Lucy observed. They quickly passed by "The Rowing Song," "Fairy Bells," and "Whistle Your Cares Away." "Here's one with a goose," said Candace. She began to sing and Amelia and Ramona joined in.

"Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat
Please to put a penny in an old man's hat.
If you've no penny, a ha'penny will do.
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you."

"The part about the goose isn't very nice," Lucy complained. "After all, geese have feelings too."

"And I wonder who is the old man collecting the money. This song has a lot of mysteries. What's a ha-penny anyway?" Ramona wondered.

"Maybe they are talking about the Salvation Army people with the kettles at Wal-Mart. And they laugh, ha ha, if someone throws in a penny."



"I've heard this song," said Candace, who had a big collection of Christmas CDs, "And they say it HAY-Penny, Ramona."

"Well, if there is a place where pennies are made of hay, we'd better talk to Annette because she could grow a lot of grass and dry it and make a bunch of pennies and we'd be rich," Amelia decided. "Listen, let's not discount this song altogether. We could rewrite the line about the goose. How about 'Christmas is coming, the goose is looking... uh... flat?' No, well, we'll work on that part later. Ha'penny sounds British -what if I go send an e-mail over to Dawn and see if she's heard of them. Candace, you go to the library and get the dictionary. Ramona, I think you and Lucy had better get the book tape and fix the binding on our songbook in case someday we do want to sing the Sunbeam song."

"OK, Amelia," said Candace, hurrying off, while Ramona went to get the tape.

"The goose is looking flat," said Lucy to herself. "The goose is singing flat. No, I don't like that either. How about, the goose has a new hat?!"

Amelia went to the computer and started typing a note to Dawn.

"Dear Dawn, how are you? Have you ever heard of a ha'penny, and is it something you would sing about? We think of you often and hope everyone is not too busy getting ready for Christmas. The Emmas send their love to Brenda, and the Caities to you too, and we all send our best wishes to everybody back in sunny South Africa. Love to all, Amelia Rose."



Dawn was surprised to get the email from Amelia and being a conscientious Twinn replied almost immediately.

"Dear Amelia," (she wrote).

"Thanks for your email, alas I cannot help you, South Africa is all decimal and we have things called "Rands and Cents". From what the bossman says there used to be something called a "tickey" in the pre-decimal days and it was supposedly worth half a penny, which I suppose is the same as a ha'penny. Have you asked Penny yet? she may be able to give you some insight. I dont think I would sing about one though, not when everybody is using credit cards and internet bank transfers.

Unfortunately, you know us dollies, we dont have any money to spend unless somebody offers us a job (like stock taking). I must go throw hints at the bossman again.

We are not very busy for Christmas, although hard at work on our at the C&D Detective Agency. You wouldn't believe how many people mislay their umbrellas, budgies and cellphones over the holiday period. The bossman is on leave over the Christmas period and we are going to pester him to try his hand at sewing again. Oh, and I have my Christmas hair on too. The one consolation about a quiet Christmas is that its nice and peaceful, but I am sure its going to be great fun there in PA. Do you think it will snow? We have a 100% chance of it not snowing. Strange to be having Christmas in such hot weather.

Anyhoo... the one thing I know about singing is that people are more interested in the ghost of the song and not the actual words... and, if singing makes you happy.. then SING!!!! and just ignore the dogs when they howl, they are enjoying the tune themselves.

Best wishes to everybody at the Continuum (especially the Caities)

Dawn and the gang.

PS: Brenda asks whether Wendy has been knitting everybody stockings again?"



"There," Amelia said to Willow the cat, "even Dawn isn't too sure of these ha'penny things."

"I think you should forget about geese and pennies and just sing Christmas carols about cats," suggested Willow. "How about "Deck the halls with fur and whiskers..." or "Hark the Herald Angels Meowing."

"I don't think so Willow, you know how finicky people get about Christmas carols, its bad enough that the shepherds washed their socks by night..."

But Willow just yawned and lost interest in the topic.

Candace went to the library where she met Corky. "Hey, Corky, what's up?"
"Oh, hi, Candace. I was just doing some reading. Can I get you a book?"
"Yes please, I am looking for the dictionary."
"Sorry, Wendy took it to block a sweater that wouldn't lie flat," said Corky.
"Darn," said Candace. "Either people are balancing it on their heads or using it to block sweaters. We seekers after knowledge are just out of luck. What are you reading, Corky?"
"A cookbook," Corky replied. "I heard we are having broccoli pizza for supper again and I thought I would see if I could find some better recipes."
Candace sank down on a nearby bench. "I hope you did." Broccoli pizza was not high on anyone's list of favorites, yet somehow it kept occurring on the supper menu on a regular basis.
"Look at this," said Corky. "I didn't find any good pizza recipes, but here is a feature with photos of a Betsy McCall doll making cookies."
"No kidding. I thought she was almost as air-headed as Barbie. I can't believe she cooks," Candace looked at the cookbook. "I really like her apron. I'll bet we could make cookies that are just as good or even better than those."



"The recipe looks easy," said Corky. "I'd like to try it. Want to help?"
"Sure," said Candace. "After all, you and I ought to have natural talent at baking cookies since we are both Cookies ourselves. Let's ask Amelia and Ramona to help, too. It will be more fun than finding out what a ha'penny is."
"It's a coin," said Corky, who read a lot. "They have or had them in England. It just means a half penny."
No kidding," Candace helped Corky to her feet. "I'll bet you couldn't buy much with one of those. Well, now that that mystery is solved, let's go find out whether Twinns can bake better cookies than Betsy McCall!"
They collected Amelia and Ramona and headed to the kitchen. Corky read out the ingredients while Candace rummaged in the pantry for what they needed. Amelia climbed up to the high cabinet where the cookie cutters were kept. "Carumba, Amelia, be careful," said Ramona, who came from Ecuador and sometimes lapsed into Spanish.



"Don't worry, Ramona, I've done this many times before. Look, here is a cow cookie cutter, and here is a cat!"
"I can't wait to find out whether we have a Croc cookie cutter," Corky chuckled. "Hey, Amelia, while you are up there, would you hand down the vanilla, please?"
"Sure." Amelia handed it down to Ramona, and then she carefully lowered a big box of cookie cutters to Candace and Ramona who set it on the table while Amelia clambered down again. "I'm glad that Lucy went back to the lake. I don't think she would like the idea that this recipe has eggs in it."



Candace stirred while Corky measured the sugar. Meanwhile, Ramona and Amelia sorted out the cookie cutters. "Here is a star, and a bird, and even a cookie cutter shaped like the state of Pennsylvania. These are pretty cool, Amelia." "Some of them have been in the family for generations," Amelia replied. "The one that looks like a deer is my favorite." The girls carefully followed Betsy's recipe and soon were rolling out the dough. They cut cookies and topped them with colored sugar and sprinkles. It was determined that they did not have a croc cookie cutter but they managed to make some crocs anyway, cutting the shape with a knife. They made birds and deer and hearts and even a few Pennsylvanias with the city of Reading carefully marked by sprinkles. They made a special mutant radish shaped cookie for Carlisle.



They chattered away as the cookies baked. Fortunately none got burned and everyone was very happy with the results. Of course, everyone had to sample the cookies as they came out of the oven. "This was a great idea, Corky," said Candace as the girls relaxed after all the dishes were washed and ingredients put back in the cabinet.



"Yes, it was, but it still doesn't give me a song for our pageant," sighed Amelia, wondering whether she had room to eat one more cat cookie.

"I've got one. 'I'm dreaming of a croc cookie,'" sang Corky. "Just like the ones I used to know."

"Where the teeth are jagged and tail is... uh, ragged," contributed Candace

"And eyes are flashingly aglow," giggled Amelia. "I'm dreaming of a croc cookie. One that looks just like our Carlisle."



"It will make our Christmas the best one ever," Ramona contributed. "So let's bake up a giant pile!"

"I think 'a giant pile,' needs work, Ramona. But we've got the idea," Amelia agreed, still smiling. "Now if we could just work in a goose, we'd be all set!"



Merry Christmas

