

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Stockings Hung With Care

By Kelly Hashway

One of the most popular Christmas traditions is hanging stockings. It's a tradition that has been around for some time. But where did the idea come from?

According to legend, this tradition began with a wealthy nobleman. He had a loving wife and three beautiful daughters. The nobleman's life seemed perfect—



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to waste his money away on foolish things. Before long the man and his three daughters became very poor. They were forced to move into a small peasant's cottage. Their new home was worn-down, drafty, and the roof leaked. The daughters had to work very hard sewing clothing to sell for money.

When they grew up, the nobleman realized his daughters were old enough to get married. Back in those days, women couldn't marry unless the bride's father paid the groom a large sum of money or property. This was called a dowry. The man knew he didn't have enough money to pay for his daughters' marriages. He feared they would be lonely their whole lives.

One night, while the three sisters were doing their laundry, they hung

their stockings by the fireplace to dry. Saint Nicholas was a kind man who was known to give money to the poor and bring gifts to people at night. After the nobleman and his daughters had gone to sleep, Saint Nicholas stopped by the cottage. He knew the sad story of the nobleman and his daughters, and wanted to help. Through the window, he saw the stockings hung by the fireplace. He took three small bags of gold coins and dropped them down the chimney, and they landed inside the stockings.

When they found the gold coins the next morning, the three daughters were overjoyed. They gave the money to their father who began to cry tears of happiness because he now had enough money to see his daughters get married.



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1. Who died in this story?
  - a. the nobleman's daughter
  - b. the mother of the nobleman's daughters



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3. How did the daughters react when their father became poor?
  - a. They were angry at their father.
  - b. They told him they didn't want to be married.
  - c. They begged Saint Nicholas for money.
  - d. They tried to help by working hard to earn money.
4. Place these events in sequential order. Write *1st*, *2nd*, *3rd*, *4th*, and *5th* on the lines.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Saint Nicholas visits the nobleman's house.  
\_\_\_\_\_ The nobleman's wife became ill.  
\_\_\_\_\_ The three daughters find money in their stockings.  
\_\_\_\_\_ The nobleman lost all of his money and moved into a small cottage.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other people in the village begin to hang their stockings by the fireplace.



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Match each of the the vocabulary words on the left with the correct definition on the right.



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4. \_\_\_\_\_ realized

5. \_\_\_\_\_ dowry

6. \_\_\_\_\_ grief

7. \_\_\_\_\_ peasant

8. \_\_\_\_\_ cottage

d. breezy

e. understood; became aware

f. person with little or no money

g. socks

h. money paid to a groom in order for a woman to marry

**Now try this:** Reread the story and highlight each of the vocabulary words.

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In the story, "Stockings Hung With Care" you found out how the tradition of Christmas stockings began.

Write a paragraph in which you describe what you found in your Christmas stocking.



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## ANSWER KEY

# Stockings Hung



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4th The three daughters find money in their stockings.

2nd The nobleman lost all of his money and moved into a small cottage.

5th Other people in the village begin to hang their stockings by the fireplace.



## ANSWER KEY

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8. a. cottage

h. money paid to a groom in order for a woman to marry

**Now try this:** Reread the story and highlight each of the vocabulary words.