

Silverwings at Christmas

by Frank Richards



Silverwings the Fairy woke up early on Christmas morning, and jumped out of bed in a great hurry.

“Why are you getting up so early, Silverwings?” called out Fairy Appleblossom.

“Because I must go and see the woodman who lives by the Great Green Forest, and take a Christmas present to his little boy and his little girl,” answered Silverwings.

And she dressed very quickly, and put her fairy wand under her arm, and took a Big Teddy for the woodman’s little boy, and a Baby Doll for the woodman’s little girl, and flew away from Fairyland.

When she came to the Great Green Forest, it was still very early, and the woodman and his family were not yet awake. The door was locked, but Silverwings touched it with her fairy wand, and it opened at once. She went into the little house very quickly, because she did not want to wake up the children. She placed the Big Teddy against the door of the little boy’s room, and the Baby Doll against the door of the little girl’s room, so that when the children woke up and came out of their rooms, they would find them. Then she walked out of the house: and was just going to shut the door, when she saw Redneck the Fox.

“Good morning, Silverwings,” said Redneck the Fox.

“Good morning, Redneck,” answered Silverwings politely. She did not like Redneck because he was a very naughty fox, but Silverwings always had very nice manners, so she answered him politely.

“Do you know that the White Rabbit has fallen into the lake?” asked Redneck the Fox.

“Oh dear! I must go and get him out at once,” said Silverwings, and she flew away, and she was so anxious about Mr White Rabbit that she quite forgot to shut the door of the woodman’s cottage.

Redneck the Fox watched her go with a very sly grin. When she was out of sight, he crept very quietly towards the woodman’s house.

“These good people aren’t awake yet,” said Redneck to himself; “It would be rather a lark to carry off those Christmas presents, and hide them in the wood,” and Redneck laughed, being a very naughty and mischievous fox, and fond of playing wicked tricks on everybody.

So he went very softly into the woodman’s house, and picked up the big Teddy in his teeth, and crept out with it, and hid it very carefully under a heap of leaves in the wood. Then he went back to the house to fetch the Baby Doll.

Now as Silverwings was flying towards the lake, all of a sudden she heard a little squeaky voice say:

“Why, bless my ears and spectacles, it’s Silverwings! Good morning, my little dear.”

And she looked round and saw Mr White Rabbit.

"Why, how did you get out of the lake, Mr White Rabbit?" asked Silverwings in surprise.

"Bless my ears and whiskers! I've never been in the lake," said Mr White Rabbit.

"Didn't you fall into the lake in the Great Green Forest?" exclaimed Silverwings.

"Bless my toes and tail, I haven't been near the lake," answered Mr White Rabbit.

Then Silverwings knew that Redneck the Fox had told her a story, and she guessed that he was going to play some trick at the woodman's house, and she flew back as quick as anything. She was just in time to see him hide the Big Teddy under a heap of leaves, and go back to the house. Then Silverwings picked up the Teddy, and touched him with her fairy wand, and said:

"Go back to your place!"

And as the Teddy was filled with magic by the touch of the fairy wand, he made just one jump, so fast that he could not be seen, and immediately dropped into his place at the door of the little boy's room in the woodman's house.

By that time Redneck the Fox had reached the house again, and he went in to pick up the Baby Doll: and gave a jump when he saw that the Big Teddy was in its place, where he had first seen it.

"Why I must be dreaming!" said Redneck, staring at the Big Teddy, and rubbing his long sharp nose. "I'm sure that I took that Teddy out and hid him under the leaves. I'm sure there weren't two Teddies. At least, almost sure. Anyway, I'll take this one out too."

So he picked up the Big Teddy in his teeth again, and carried him out into the wood, and dropped him under a tree, and covered him up with leaves. Silverwings made herself invisible, so Redneck the Fox did not see her, or know that she was there. He covered up the Teddy and went back to the house again. Then Silverwings touched Teddy again with her wand, and made him jump back into his place at the little boy's bedroom door. He went as quick as a flash of lightning, and Redneck did not see him passing over his head. Redneck went on into the house, and when he found the Teddy in his place again, he was so astonished that his mouth came wide open, and he stared at Teddy with his eyes bulging out of his head.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Redneck. "Here he is again! I've taken out two Teddies, and there's still one here. I'm absolutely certain that there weren't three, yet I've taken out two, and there's still one left. I can't make this out."

However, he picked up Teddy in his teeth once more, and carried him out, and buried him in leaves, and went back for the Baby Doll. But Silverwings touched the Teddy as before, and he

jumped back, so Redneck found him there when he got to the house again.

This time Redneck was so astonished that his eyes came wide open like saucers, and he gasped for breath.

"This beats me," he said. "I've carried away three Teddies, one after another, and now here's a fourth. It seems to be raining Teddy Bears this morning! I wonder where they are all coming from."

He looked at the Teddy for a long time, very much puzzled, and scratching his nose. But at last he picked up Teddy and carried him out to the wood, and buried him under more leaves.

"No, that does it," said Redneck as he went back to the house. "This makes four Teddies that I've buried under the leaves, and there can't be any more."

But when he went in for the Baby Doll, Silverwings had made the Teddy jump back again, and there he was, leaning against the door of the little boy's room, as large as life.

Redneck the Fox was so astonished that he jumped right off the floor, and came down on his tail so hard that he squeaked:

"Wow!"

That noise awoke the woodman, and he came out of his room very quickly, and caught hold of Redneck by the back of the neck.

"Now, what are you doing here?" he asked, picking up a stick.

Redneck wriggled but he could not get away.

"You've been playing tricks!" said the woodman, lifting the stick.

"Oh! No! Not at all!" said Redneck, in a great hurry, "the - fact is, I came here to give you some Christmas presents, old chap."

"Nonsense!" said the woodman.

"Honest Injun!" said Redneck, "I've got four beautiful big Teddies outside, just like that one standing against your little boy's door . . . one for you, and one for Mrs Woodman, and one for your little boy, and one for your little girl."

"Nonsense!" said the woodman again.

"Keep that stick away!" said Redneck, "Seeing is believing, Mr Woodman. Come and see."

So the woodman went out of the house with Redneck, to the place where he had hidden the Teddies, under the heaps of leaves. Redneck was sure that they were still there, because he remembered burying them under the leaves one after another.

"Here's the place," he said, pointing with his nose to the four heaps of leaves.

"Nonsense!" said the woodman.

“Well, look under those heaps of leaves,” said Redneck, “and if you don’t find a big Teddy under each heap, you can whack me as hard as you like with that stick.”

So the woodman turned over the first heap with his stick, and there was no Teddy underneath the leaves, and he brought down the stick across Redneck’s back with a loud WHACK!

“Ow!” howled Redneck, “I know I put it there! I remember putting it there.”

Then the woodman turned over the second heap of leaves, and there was no Teddy, and he brought down the stick again. WHACK!

“Wow!” roared Redneck. “I can’t understand this! I distinctly remember putting a Teddy there!”

Then the woodman turned over the third heap of leaves, and there was no Teddy, and he gave Redneck another WHACK!

“Whoop!” roared Redneck, “I tell you I put a Teddy there! Wow!”

Then the woodman turned over the fourth heap of leaves, and still there was no Teddy, and he brought down the stick on Redneck’s back so hard that it broke into two pieces.

WHACK! CRACK!

“Whooooooooooh!” bellowed Redneck, and he wriggled so hard that he got loose, and ran away into the Great Green Forest.

Then the woodman went back to his house, and called his little boy and girl, and they got up, and found the Christmas presents that Silverwings had brought for them. And Redneck crawled home to his den in the wood, and wondered what had become of those Teddies he had buried under the leaves. And he never found out, so he is still wondering.

(Copyright Una Hamilton Wright)

