

*Teacher instructions: Read this passage aloud to your learner.*

### *THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING*

Far away in the North, where the birds go in summer, there once lived a little girl whose name was Martha.

She lived with her grandmother and a servant in a lonely little house not far from the sea, and the only playmates she ever had were a few pet animals and the birds that came, as I have said, to sing in the Northern forests and fields in the summertime.

Beyond Martha's home and nearer the sea there was a town; but Martha had never been there, for when the servant, whose name was Betsy, went there to buy the sugar and flour and meat that they needed, the child always had to stay at home with her grandmother. Martha's grandmother was an old, old woman, who sat all day in her chair and knitted. She knitted stockings,—stockings for big feet and stockings for little feet, and when Betsy trudged off to town she took them with her to sell there.

Martha often wondered who bought them, but Betsy could not tell. She sold them to a storekeeper who paid her a good price — that was all she knew.

The birds told Martha the only stories she ever heard. Her grandmother was always too busy and Betsy knew none, and there was no one else to talk to the little girl.

Her father had been a sailor out on the blue sea, but his ship had been lost in a storm when Martha was a baby, and she could not remember him, nor her mother, who had gone to heaven, too.

There were many things for Martha to do in the little house, and not even the servant could help her grandmother more. Martha's eyes were so bright and her feet so swift and her hands so willing! When the balls of yarn rolled out of grandmother's lap, as they sometimes would do while she was knitting, and hid themselves away in corners or under the bed, Martha spied them before they had time to rest. Whenever grandmother needed a pair of hands to hold the skein of yarn while she wound it, Martha was ready; and no matter what was wanted, from the top of the house to the cellar, Martha brought it.

But busy as she was, she sometimes got lonely; and sometimes, as she watched the birds, she wished that she had wings so that she could fly away and take a peep at the sunny Southland and then fly back in a hurry to grandmother again.

One afternoon as she sat in the sun near the woods, a stranger with a gun on his shoulder came down the woodland path, and when he saw Martha, he stopped to speak to her. He was a merry-faced young man, and before he had been there many minutes Martha had told him about her grandmother and Betsy and the birds, and how the birds sang their stories to her.

# Listen.

## Lesson 72



*Teacher instructions: Read this passage aloud to your learner.*

“I know stories myself,” said the young man; and he sat right down on the grass and told Martha the most wonderful story she had ever heard. It was about Santa Claus; and although you have heard it many times and know how little children hang up their stockings on Christmas eve, Martha had never heard it before.

“Is it really true?” she cried.

“Yes, indeed,” said the young man, “for when I was a little boy I hung up my stocking every Christmas and in the morning” —

“Martha!” called Martha’s grandmother; and when Martha ran to see what was wanted, it was a knitting needle that was lost. It was not on the floor, or in the ball of yarn where it ought to have been, or in the work-basket. Martha began to think that the needle was never going to be found again, when she felt it among the cushions in grandmother’s chair. By this time the afternoon had grown late, and when Martha went out again the stranger was gone, and he never came back.

Soon after this the birds, too, went away. The small birds went first. “Good-by, Martha,” they called.

“Good-by,” said Martha. “Will you not get tired with your long journey?”

“Oh, we shall rest on the way. It will be well with us! Good-by!” sang the little birds; and they flew away.

Then the wild geese left. They flew in a long line, and the leader went in front. “Honk! honk!” he called; that meant “March! march!”

After the birds left it grew colder and colder. The white snow fell down from the gray clouds, till the North Country was white and shining and Martha could not sit out of doors any more. She sat in the house by the fire with her grandmother and Betsy, and thought about the stories she had heard. Sometimes she thought of the warm countries, and the birds, but oftener still she thought of the good Christmas saint, who filled the stockings for the little children on Christ’s Birthday. Perhaps some of the stockings were the very ones that grandmother had knit!

“Clickety click, clickety click,” said the knitting needles as they moved in grandmother’s hands; and as Martha watched them she told the story to grandmother, for she could keep it to herself no longer.

Martha had never thought before that her grandmother would like stories; but she liked this one. Her eyes grew bright till they looked like Martha’s eyes, and she stopped her knitting to listen.

Martha told the whole story, about the chimney and the stockings and the toys and the goodies, just as it had been told to her; and when she finished, grandmother said: —

# Listen.

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*Teacher instructions: Read this passage aloud to your learner.*

“It all happened just that way when I was a little girl.”

After that, when they sat by the fire, it was grandmother who told the stories. She never grew tired of telling or Martha of listening, and even Betsy liked to hear, although she said nothing.

Grandmother could remember everything that she found in her stockings on Christmas mornings when she was a child. Once Santa Claus had brought her a doll, and once a string of blue beads, and oh! so many things that I cannot tell of them all. She could knit as she talked, too, and the stockings grew the faster for it, Martha thought.

Grandmother was knitting red stockings for little feet then.

“Perhaps these will be Christmas stockings,” said Martha.

“Perhaps they will,” said grandmother.

But the stockings were not finished when Betsy went to town to buy the sugar and flour and tea. They were not finished until the very day before Christmas. When the last stitch was put in grandmother said to Martha: —

“You have been a good child all the year and the stockings are for you.”

They were the most beautiful stockings that Martha had ever had. She thought they were almost too beautiful to wear, but nevertheless she hung them on the chair beside her bed that night so that she might put them on in the morning. Then she said her prayers and went to bed; and when she was asleep the Christmas angels brought her sweet dreams.

It was Christmas all over the world. Christmas in the warm countries where the birds were, and Christmas in the far North where little Martha dreamed her Christmas dreams. Even the rooster seemed to know it, for when he crowed early in the morning, it sounded like: “Wake up! Wake up! ’Tis Christmas day!”

Martha heard him, and waked up and reached out her hand for her new red stockings.

One red stocking hung on the back of the chair, just where she had put it the night before, but the other one was not there. Martha jumped out of bed and felt about on the floor. Where could the other stocking be? All at once, through the dim morning light, she saw something strange and long and knobby hanging by the fireplace. It looked like a stocking, but surely, she thought, it could not be the one grandmother had made.

She went a little nearer and rubbed her eyes, for right out of the top of this stocking peeped a doll, a knitted doll, who seemed as much at home in a stocking as if she had lived there all her life. And yet it was the very stocking she had hung on the chair.

Her fingers trembled so that she could scarcely get it down from the nail where it hung; but when she did, she found, under the doll, cows and sheep and horses made of sweetest cake, and long white twisted sticks of sugar candy, and, last of all, a string of blue beads,

# *Listen.*

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just such as grandmother had found in her stocking so many years before.

“Grandmother! Grandmother! Grandmother!” called Martha; and grandmother sat up in bed, almost as excited as the child.

“The Christmas saint has been here,” cried Martha, waving her stocking like a flag.

“Of course, of course,” said grandmother, nodding her head. “He finds the good children all the world over, just as he did when I was a child.”

# Discuss.



## Lesson 72



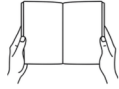
*Teacher instructions: Discuss the illustration and the passage with your learner.*



*What do you see in the illustration?*

*What do you remember from the story you just listened to? Tell me the story using your own words.*

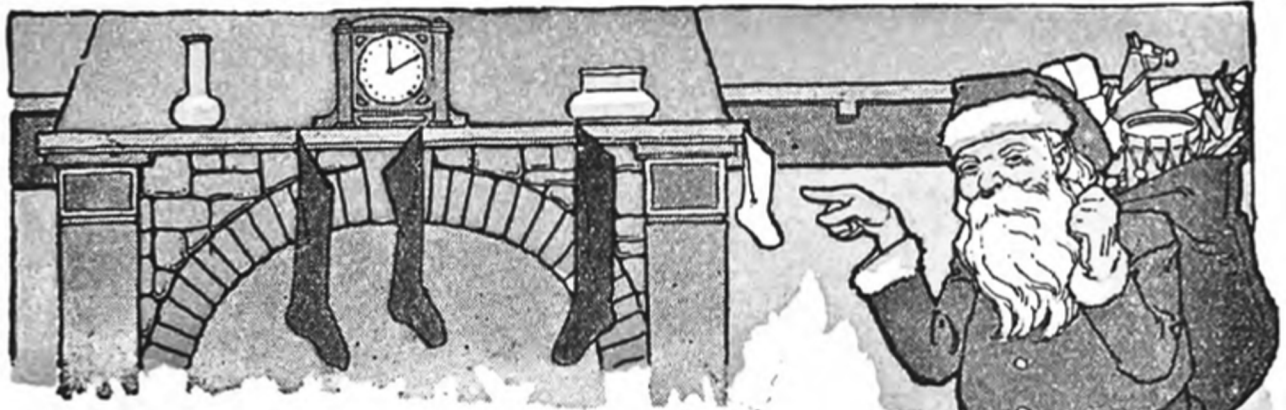
*Read.*



Lesson 72



*Read this silently and then out loud.*



## BABY'S STOCKING

*Hang up the baby's stocking,  
Be sure you don't forget.  
The dear little baby darling  
Has never seen Christmas yet.  
Write, "This is the baby's stocking  
That hangs in the corner here.  
You have never seen her, Santa,  
For she only came this year.  
But she is the prettiest baby!  
And now before you go,  
Just fill her stocking with goodies  
From the top way down to the toe."*



*Write.*



Lesson 72

*end*



*Use the illustration as inspiration to write a sentence.*



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