

## The Legend of the Christmas Star

It was a beautiful day in a far corner of Heaven. God was busy making the stars. He made big ones and small ones, medium sized ones and tall ones. He made them all shapes and sizes. Some, He put into the night sky right away and others were stored in a special place to be used later. The angels sang as they hurried to get the stuff He needed to make them. Then, one angel stopped. She nudged her brother and pointed to the workbench. They watched as He made one huge, huge star.

"Must be a mistake," she said. "It's too big. It'll never work."

Everyone stopped to watch the Creator as He worked on His latest creation. They began to murmur to one another.

"You know, she's right! He must have made a mistake," said one.

"It's a monster! What a shame. It would be quite pretty otherwise," said another.

The Big Star heard their remarks and was ashamed of himself. Why was he different? Why wasn't he like the other stars? The angels were embarrassed and he was sure everyone on Earth would laugh at him when it was his turn to shine in the night sky.

When He finished, God turned to His angels and smiled.

"This is Elliott. Please, move him to the resting area, but be careful. I don't want him damaged. He's very special to me."

The angels did as they were told and carried Elliott to the waiting room. The other stars, who were already there, began to laugh and tease him.

"Look at King Kong," laughed one.

"Help. If he falls, he'll squish us," cried several of the smaller stars.

Poor Elliott! He was so hurt. The angels looked at one another and blushed. They decided to save him any further embarrassment they would put him in a back corner and cover him with a lovely white blanket.

Soon everyone forgot about him. Weeks went by and gradually the other stars were used one by one and new stars came to take their place, but Elliott just stayed in the corner and cried. He became so dull he could hardly shine at all.

"What good am I? Why was I created? No one loves me. I don't like being different," cried Elliott. "I wish I'd never been made!"

A little star named Betty spoke to him.

"Someone does love you," she said.

"Right!" said Elliott. "Who?"

"God," answered Betty.

Elliott laughed. "Look at me! I'm so big and clumsy. No one will play with me. The other stars laugh or they're so frightened, they run and hide. Even the angels are ashamed of me. I'm stuck way back in this corner, covered in a blanket. God has forgotten all about me. Even He's ashamed of me. He made a mistake, and I'm it."

"Elliott, that's not true," said Betty. "Nothing God makes is ever a mistake. Everyone is unique. We all have different talents. Even little things done to bring joy to others are important in His eyes. Everyone has a special place in the world no one else can fill. Come out from under that blanket and find yours. Accept yourself as you are and you never know what you might become."

Elliott listened to what Betty was saying.

"Maybe you're right," he said. "I'm not very happy right now. I guess I could try something else."

Elliott put away his blanket and walked to where the angels were putting smaller stars in the night sky.

Soon, everyone noticed a change in him.

"Elliott," said an angel. "What's happened to you? You're happy and glowing much brighter."

Elliott laughed. "I found my special talent. Because I'm so big, I can stretch into space and put new stars where the angels can't reach. It's great."

Elliott turned to comfort a baby star who had fallen off the shelf and was crying. He continued to help the angels in that corner of Heaven. Everyone loved his warm smile and gentleness.

One day, God came to visit. He spoke with the angels and inspected the stars. He strolled the place where Elliott was telling a story to a group of new stars who had just arrived.

"Elliott," He said. "I'm very proud of you. I know you were worried I'd made a mistake when I designed you, but I made you the way you are for a very special reason. Everything is now ready. Tonight, my Son will be born on Earth. I needed you to be large, Elliott, to shine in the night sky and show some of My friends the place where He will be. Men will call you the Star of Bethlehem. Whenever the story of the Christ child is told, you will be mentioned as the guiding light who led the Magi to the stable. Shine bright, my friend, for now it is your turn to tell the world that Jesus is born!"

Elliott was so excited, he thought he would burst. All that time, God was caring for him and he didn't even know it. He had not been forgotten. He was so glad he hadn't stayed hidden

under the blanket feeling sorry for himself. If he'd stayed there, he would've been too dull for his great announcement.

"Boy, it IS great to be me," he thought. "This night, I will shine as brightly as I can. Maybe those who see me or hear of me will know they are loved, just like me; and maybe the tiny baby who is born this night will be able to help others on Earth understand no matter what size they are, what colour they are, what shape they are or where they live, they all have a special place in the heart of God and in the world, He created."