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Chocolate Game for Christmas Fun by Anita Zuber

The chocolate game can be played by any number of children and adults who sit around a table and take turns rolling a pair of dice. A large wrapped chocolate candy bar, i.e. "Toblorone" is placed in the middle of the table for all to see, as are a hat of any kind, a long scarf and a pair of thick gloves. The first person to roll a double quickly dons the hat, scarf and gloves, then opens and begins to eat the chocolate with a knife and fork. That person can continue to eat the chocolate until another player rolls a double and then must release the clothing and chocolate to that player. Play continues until the chocolate is gone.

We had lots of fun with a large Toblerone for us 4 players it took a long time!!!-Ed.



Oscar rolling the dice



Desperate to roll a double



Editor trying to eat chocolate with fork and knife



Disappointment



Equipment

Graueli's Christmas

a Christmas story from Marta Wild

A lovely, white-haired old lady told me this story which she experienced when she was a small and cute Emmeli with brown curls. I'll let her tell it to you:

Yes, a lot was different in the old days! My brother Noldi and I weren't spoiled and I'm still thankful for that today. As soon as we were able to do some work we were helping our parents from morning till evening. We had a very humble and quite poor upbringing, but we never realised that. It was the opposite - we thought we were rich, because we had Graueli!

You're wondering who Graueli (little grey one) is? Our one and only cow! Oh, how much we loved our Graueli! Noldi and I always cleaned the stable. Mother had to laugh and said it was much cleaner than in many farmers' living rooms. Nearly every evening we enjoyed singing to Graueli all the songs we learnt at school and from our mother. Our worries left us as soon as we started singing! And I can tell you it actually sounded very nice. Graueli enjoyed the singing as she was always lying happily on her clean straw and looking at us with her

beautiful eyes. We would sing songs until we didn't know of any more or our mother would call us for bed and of course in those days one had to obey.

One day our father noticed new neighbours moving in and we were very excited as we lived fairly isolated and until then there were never other kids in our neighbourhood. We were too shy to go and say hello but then a friendly woman came outside and introduced her three children and said "We hope you will get along as you will be attending the same school".

After that, we weren't that shy anymore and greeted them. We didn't say a lot but helped to unload and bring things into the house - we had never seen so many beautiful things. However when we told our parents about all the expensive things they weren't interested and our father said "We hope the new neighbours aren't the type of people who like to be wealthy and noble on the outside but are actually quite poor on the inside."

We were happy when winter school started the next day and we could see the neighbour's children every day. One day on our way home we were talking about Christmas because our teacher taught us some new Christmas songs. Then the

neighbour's boy Roebi asked us: "Do you usually have a Christmas tree at school?" "What?" we asked blankly. "A Christmas tree!" "What is this?" both of us asked. "My goodness - you don't even know what a Christmas tree is! Our father was right yesterday when he said it feels like we're living behind the moon here!" Roebi started scoffing.

"You better tell us what a Christmas tree is!"

"We have one every year", he said, "and it's the most beautiful for miles around! Our father gets a well-grown pine from the forest and our mother then puts a lot of colourful candles on it and ties red apples onto the branches. Christmas cookies and golden nuts get tied on it too. And we've got a big box full of shiny Christmas balls in different colours and golden stars. Even an angel with real hair and wings. All of it gets tied onto the Christmas tree and on Christmas we light the candles and it looks beautiful..." Yes, we totally believed him and mentioned that we would love to see their Christmas tree. "I can't promise you anything, but I'll see what I can do", Roebi said a bit pretentious.

From then on we were only thinking about this wonderful tree. Until now we didn't



know any better than each one of us getting a pair of thick new socks knitted by our mother and father would get the big bible down from the cabinet in the evening to read us the Christmas story. But now we thought a Christmas tree must be a lot better.

At school we were practising Christmas carols and my brother and I were asked to sing in front of the class. It was strange but we always blossomed and lost our shyness when singing. We put our whole heart into the beautiful songs. It seemed Roebi heard us singing the first time. On our way home he said he would ask his mother if we could come and sing to them on Christmas Day and that would give us the opportunity to see their Christmas tree. When we told our mother she didn't seem that happy and wanted to talk to our father first.

And indeed on Christmas day we were invited to our neighbours place – they had seen how poor we were and that we hadn't ever seen a Christmas tree. Our father mumbled that we were not poor because of that! So far we had got along well without a tree but he did let us go.

We quickly got everything done in the stable that evening! Because I was so happy I cuddled Graueli and said: "O Graueli, it is Christmas!"

We wore our Sunday clothes and ran through the snow to the neighbours and then we were able to see our first Christmas tree! I was so happy and my heart was racing when we stood in front of that wonder-tree. Noldi even had tears running down his cheeks without realising. For a very long time we just marvelled at the tree until the children started laughing and commanded that we had to sing now.

Singing! Oh yes, we definitely had to sing next to this Christmas tree, that was a lot easier for us than talking! We started singing beautiful songs with all of our hearts. We only knew two Christmas songs so we continued singing some other school-songs.

Then the children started unpacking beautiful presents and it was loud and lively. What incredible things came to light! Coloured pencils, books, even ice skates! We never saw ice skates before, we sometimes used our iron-studded wooden-shoes to slide across the frozen fire brigade pond and were happy with that.

Then suddenly we noticed a present with "Noldi and Emmeli" written on it with beautiful letters! Oh, I've never seen such a beautiful present, something flat was packed in a colourful paper with a golden string. The father said that the singers deserved a present

whilst the children laughed out loud and we felt a bit uncomfortable but thanked them. We were told that we could open it at home and they started giggling again. So we hurried home after having another glimpse at that wonder-tree.

Our mother was waiting in the heated living room and we told her how wonderful it was and that we even got a present. She said not to be so noisy otherwise our father would wake up but she was happy for us when she saw our present, which Noldi laid on the table. We were guessing what it might be - today's kids would have certainly said Chocolate! But we didn't even know what that was back then.

Very carefully and without breathing we opened the present. As soon as it was unwrapped on the table we looked at each other confused. Noldi smelt it to make sure he didn't deceive himself. Yes, it was true: a piece of turnip was lying on the table...

Our neighbours made fools out of us. Not very nice... Now we knew why they were laughing and giggling. I nearly had to cry. Our mother looked compassionately at the turnip but didn't say a word. Suddenly Noldi was alert, he was such a sensitive, lovely boy. With shiny eyes he called out:

"This is meant to be for Graueli! We were so lucky to see the Christmas tree it would be sad if Graueli wouldn't get anything. Oh please mum, can we go and give it to her?"

She didn't mind so we quickly lit the old lantern in the stable and brought the Christmas present to Graueli. She was very happy about it. While she was eating Noldi stroked her head: "Dear Graueli, think about it, this turnip was lying under the Christmas tree!"

Obviously the cow didn't care about that but it made us feel good. Happy and peaceful we went to bed and I'm sure we dreamt of our first Christmas tree!

Many years later when I became a mother myself I always made sure we had a Christmas tree and told them the story about Graueli. One day our children were looking at a nice Christmas picture when suddenly our youngest called: "See, next to Baby Jesus in the crib there's Graueli! Yes it is her - she was already there at the first Christmas!" And I didn't deny it!

From the book "E Lebchueche, noei u alti Weihnachtsgschichte" © Blaukreuz-Verlag-Bern
Abridged version - translated by Brigitte Hofer and Anita Zuber.

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