

Original



Paraphrase



Summary

SPORTSCENTER

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Paraphrase



Summary

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Main Idea



Cinderella

Summary

Cinderella

wanted to go to the ball,

but her evil stepmother wouldn't allow her to go until she finished all her chores.

So her fairy godmother showed up and used magic to help her finish her chores quickly and get a dress, glass slippers, and a coach.

Then she met her prince charming at the ball and they lived happily ever after.

Main Idea

Cinderella **wanted** to go to the ball, **but** her stepmother wouldn't allow it, **so** her fairy godmother helped; **then** she met her prince charming.

Little Red Riding Hood

Summary

Little Red Riding Hood

wanted to take cookies to her sick grandmother.

But she encountered a wolf pretending to be her grandmother lying in her bed.

So she questioned the wolf's eyes, ears, and nose before running for help.

Then a woodsman heard her crying, saved her from the wolf, and she was reunited with her grandmother.

Main Idea

Little Red Riding Hood **wanted** to take cookies to her grandmother, **but** she encountered a wolf, **so** she ran away; **then** a woodsman saved her.

A Baker's Dozen

A New York Christmas Story

Back in the old days, I had a successful bake-shop in Albany. I had a good business, a plump wife, and a big family. I was a happy man. But trouble came to my shop one year in the guise of an ugly old woman. She entered my shop a few minutes before closing and said: "I wish to have a dozen cookies." She pointed to my special Saint Nicholas cookies that were sitting out on a tray. So I counted out twelve cookies for her.

The old woman's eyes narrowed when she saw the cookies. "Only twelve?" she asked.

I knew at once what she wanted. There were some bakers in town who sometimes gave an extra cookie to their customers, but I was appalled by the custom. What man of sense would give away an extra cookie for free?

"I asked for a dozen cookies, and you only give me twelve," the woman said.

"A dozen is twelve, my good woman, and that is what I have given you," I replied.

"I ordered a dozen cookies, not twelve," said the old woman.

I was upset by this demand. I always gave my customers exactly what they paid for. But I was a thrifty man, and it was against my nature to give away something for nothing.

"I have a family to support," I said stiffly. "If I give away all my cookies, how can I feed my family? A dozen is twelve, not thirteen! Take it or leave it!"

"Very well," said she, and left the shop without taking the cookies.

From that moment, my luck changed. The next day, my cakes were stolen out of my shop, and the thieves were never found. Then my bread refused to rise. For a week, every loaf of bread I made was so heavy that it fell right through the oven and into the fire. The next week, the bread rose so high that it actually floated up the chimney. I was frightened when I saw the loaves

floating away across the rooftops. That was the first moment I realized I had been bewitched. It was then that I remembered the old woman who came to my shop, and I was afraid.

The next week, the old woman appeared again in my shop and demanded a baker's dozen of the latest batch of my cookies. I was angry. How dare she show her face in my shop after all the bad luck she sent my way? I cursed her soundly and showed her the door.

Things became worse for me then. My bread soured, and my olykoeks (donuts) were a disgrace. Every cake I made collapsed as soon as it came out of the oven, and my gingerbread children and my cookies lost their flavor. Word was getting around that my bake-shop was no good, and one by one, my customers were falling away. I was angry now, and stubborn. No witch was going to defeat me. When she came to my bake-shop a third time to demand a baker's dozen of cookies, I told her to go to the devil and I locked the door behind her.

After that day, everything I baked was either burnt or soggy, too light or too heavy. My customers began to avoid my cursed shop, even those who had come to me every day for years. Finally, my family and I were the only ones eating my baking, and my money was running out. I was desperate. I took myself to church and began to pray to Saint Nicholas, the patron Saint of merchants, to lift the witch's curse from myself and my family.

"Come and advise me, Saint Nicholas, for my family is in dire straights and I need good counsel against this evil witch who stands against us," I prayed. Then I trudged wearily back to my empty shop, wondering what to do.

I stirred up a batch of Saint Nicholas cookies and put them into the oven to bake, wondering how this lot would turn out. Too much cinnamon? Too little?

Burnt? Under-done? To my surprise, they came out perfectly. I frosted them carefully, and put my first successful baking in weeks onto a tray where they could be seen through the window. When I looked up, Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas) was standing in front of me.

I knew him at once, this patron Saint of merchants, sailors, and children. He was not carrying his gold staff or wearing the red bishop's robes and mitred hat that appeared on the figure I had just frosted on my cookies. But the white beard and the kindly eyes were the same. I was trembling so much my legs would not hold me, so I sat down on a stool and looked up at the Saint standing so near I could have touched him. His eyes regarded me with such sadness it made me want to weep.

Saint Nicholas said softly: "I spent my whole life giving money to those in need, helping the sick and suffering, and caring for little children, just as our Lord taught us. God, in his mercy, has been generous to us, and we should be generous to those around us."

I could not bear to look into his eyes, so I buried my face in my hands.

"Is an extra cookie such a terrible price to pay for the generosity God has shown to us?" he asked gently, touching my head with his hand.

Then he was gone. A moment later, I heard the shop door open, and footsteps approached the counter. I knew before I looked up that the ugly old woman had returned to asked me for a dozen Saint Nicholas cookies. I got up slowly, counted out thirteen cookies, and gave them to the old woman, free of charge.

She nodded her head briskly. "The spell is broken," she said. "From this time onward, a dozen is thirteen."

And from that day onward, I gave generously of my baking and of my money, and thirteen was always, for me, a baker's dozen.

A Baker's Dozen

A New York Christmas Story

Summary

A bakery owner

wanted to run a successful and profitable business.

But an ugly, old woman put a spell on him when he didn't give her 13 cookies when she'd ask for "a dozen."

So, after many bad batches of baking, St. Nicholas appeared to the baker and reminded him to be more generous to others.

Then, when the old woman appeared again, he gave her 13 cookies and forever defined "a baker's dozen" to mean thirteen.

Main Idea

The Carpet Fitter, a common urban legend

Eddie was a carpet fitter, and he hated it. For ten years he had spent his days sitting, squatting, kneeling, or crawling on floors, in houses, offices, shops, factories, and restaurants. Ten years of his life, cutting and fitting carpets for other people to walk on, without even seeing them. When his work was done, no one ever appreciated it. No one ever said, "Oh, that's a beautiful job, the carpet fits so neatly." They just walked all over it. Eddie was sick of it.

He was especially sick of it on this hot, humid day in August, as he worked to put the finishing touches to today's job. He was just cutting and fixing the last edge on a huge red carpet which he had fitted in the living room of Mrs. Vanbrugh's house. Rich Mrs. Vanbrugh, who changed her carpets every year and always bought the best. Rich Mrs. Vanbrugh, who had never even given him a cup of tea all day and who made him go outside when he wanted to smoke. Ah well, it was four o'clock, and he had nearly finished. At least he would be able to get home early today. He began to day dream about the weekend, about the Saturday football game he always played for the local team, where he was known as "Ed the Head" for his skill in heading goals from corner kicks. Eddie sat back and sighed. The job was done, and it was time for a last cigarette. He began tapping the pockets of his overalls, looking for the new packet of Marlboro he had bought that morning. They were not there.

It was as he swung around to look in his toolbox for the cigarettes that Eddie saw the lump. Right in the middle of the brand new bright red carpet, there was a lump. A very visible lump.

A lump the size of— the size of a packet of cigarettes.

"Blast!" said Eddie angrily. "I've done it again! I've left the cigarettes under the blasted carpet!"

He had done this once before, and taking up and refitting the carpet had taken him two hours. Eddie was determined that he was not going to spend another two hours in this house. He decided to get rid of the lump another way. It would mean wasting a good packet of cigarettes, nearly full, but anything was better than taking up the whole carpet and fitting it again. He turned to his toolbox for a large hammer.

Holding the hammer, Eddie approached the lump in the carpet. He didn't want to damage the carpet itself, so he took a block of wood and placed it on top of the lump. Then he began to beat the block of wood as hard as he could. He kept beating, hoping Mrs. Vanbrugh wouldn't hear the noise and come to see what he was doing. It would be difficult to explain why he was hammering the middle of her beautiful new carpet.

After three or four minutes, the lump was beginning to flatten out. Eddie imagined the cigarette box breaking up, and the crushed cigarettes spreading out under the carpet. Soon, he judged that the lump was almost invisible. Clearing up his tools, he began to move the furniture back into the living room, and he was careful to place one of the coffee tables over the place where the lump had been, just to make sure that no one would see the spot where his cigarettes had been lost. Finally, the job was finished, and

he called Mrs. Vanbrugh from the dining room to inspect his work.

"Yes, dear, very nice," said the lady, peering around the room briefly. "You'll be sending me a bill, then?"

"Yes madam, as soon as I report to the office tomorrow that the job is done." Eddie picked up his tools and began to walk out to the van. Mrs. Vanbrugh accompanied him. She seemed a little worried about something.

"Young man," she began, as he climbed into the cab of his van, laying his toolbox on the passenger seat beside him, "while you were working today, you didn't by any chance see any sign of Armand, did you? Armand is my parakeet. A beautiful bird, just beautiful, such colors in his feathers ... I let him out of his cage, you see, this morning, and he's disappeared. He likes to walk around the house, and he's so good, he usually just comes back to his cage after an hour or so and gets right in. Only today he didn't come back. He's never done such a thing before, it's most peculiar ..."

"No, madam, I haven't seen him anywhere," said Eddie, as he reached to start the van.

And saw his packet of Marlboro cigarettes on the dashboard, where he had left it at lunch-time...

And remembered the lump in the carpet ...
And realized what the lump was ...
And remembered the hammering ...
And began to feel rather sick ...

***The Carpet Fitter*, a common urban legend**

Summary

Main Idea

(Somebody)

wanted

But

So,

Then

The Yellow Ribbon, A Wisconsin Legend

Jane wore a yellow ribbon around her neck everyday. And I mean everyday, rain or shine, whether it matched her outfit or not. It annoyed her best friend Johnny after awhile. He was her next door neighbor and had known Jane since she was three. When he was young, he had barely noticed the yellow ribbon, but now they were in high school together, it bothered him.

"Why do you wear that yellow ribbon around your neck, Jane?" he'd ask her every day. But she wouldn't tell him.

Still, in spite of this aggravation, Johnny thought she was cute. He asked her to the soda shoppe for an ice cream sundae. Then he asked her to watch him play in the football game. Then he started seeing her home. And come the spring, he asked her to the dance. Jane always said yes when he asked her out. And she always wore a yellow dress to match the ribbon around her neck.

It finally occurred to Johnny that he and Jane were going steady, and he still didn't know why she wore the yellow ribbon around her neck. So he asked her about it yet again, and yet again she did not tell him.

"Maybe someday I'll tell you about it," she'd reply. Someday! That answer annoyed Johnny, but he shrugged it off, because Jane was so cute and fun to be with.

Well, time flew past, as it has a habit of doing, and one day Johnny proposed to Jane and was accepted. They planned a big wedding,

and Jane hinted that she might tell him about the yellow ribbon around her neck on their wedding day. But somehow, what with the preparations and his beautiful bride, and the lovely reception, Johnny never got around to asking Jane about it. And when he did remember, she got a bit teary-eyed, and said: "We are so happy together, what difference does it make?" And Johnny decided she was right.

Johnny and Jane raised a family of four, with the usual ups and downs, laughter and tears. When their golden anniversary rolled around, Johnny once again asked Jane about the yellow ribbon around her neck. It was the first time he'd brought it up since the week after their wedding. Whenever their children asked him about it, he'd always hushed them, and somehow none of the kids had dared ask their mother. Jane gave Johnny a sad look and said: "Johnny, you've waited this long. You can wait awhile longer."

And Johnny agreed. It was not until Jane was on her death bed a year later that Johnny, seeing his last chance slip away, asked Jane one final time about the yellow ribbon she wore around her neck. She shook her head a bit at his persistence, and then said with a sad smile: "Okay Johnny, you can go ahead and untie it."

With shaking hands, Johnny fumbled for the knot and untied the yellow ribbon around his wife's neck.

And Jane's head fell off.

The Yellow Ribbon, A Wisconsin Legend

Summary

Main Idea

(Somebody)

wanted

But

So,

Then