

Otto's Tales



Today Is
Christmas

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Ruff Ruff!

I'm Otto. It's almost **Christmas!**

In homes all across America, Christmas trees are covered in ornaments and twinkling lights. Families come together to celebrate. But first, it's time for another big adventure.



My best friend, Dennis, climbed into his father's big, red, leather chair. "This is our sled," he said.



"Can it be our time machine?" I asked.

"Yes, Otto. We can use it to go back in time and learn about Christmas."

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" I barked. "Here we go!"

ZOOM... We flew in our sled to the first Christmas night.

“Weeee! This is fun, be sure to hold on tight!”



A night scene with a city skyline in the background. A bright, multi-pointed star shines in the sky, with a long, thin trail of light leading down towards the city. Several smaller, five-pointed stars are scattered across the dark blue sky. In the foreground, a cartoon character with light blue hair and large black-rimmed glasses is pointing towards the star. Next to him is a cartoon dog with orange fur and a purple collar, looking up at the star.

We arrived in a place known as the **Holy Land**.

"A special location," said Dennis as I reached for his hand.

A big, bright light lit up the midnight sky.

"It looks like a star," I said, pointing up high.

We came upon **three wise men**
who appeared to be kings.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh
they carried, along with other things.

They introduced themselves as
Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthazar.

Long had they traveled, following
that big, bright star.

Together we walked as far as our feet were able,
'til we came upon a young family resting in a stable.



"Who's that?" I asked, pointing at a newborn baby boy.

Gaspar said, "We believe he's our Savior; his birth fills us with joy."

Melchior said, "We followed that star up in the sky so bright;

it led us to a baby called **Jesus** on this first Christmas night."

Dennis said, "Thank you for teaching us about this special day.

We've learned so much, but we must be on our way."



We said goodbye and exchanged some pleasantries.
Then **ZOOM...** flew forward a full three centuries.



We saw a man there, walking on the street.
He looked like a bishop, with a robe down to his feet.
He grinned to himself as down the street he strolled.
Into an open window, he tossed a bag of gold.



The bag landed in stockings hung by the fire.

His generosity was truly a thing to admire.

He said, "I'm helping the poor by giving them gifts.

That's why I came to be known as **Saint Nicholas.**"



“Saint Nick,” I asked, “are the stories about you true?”

He replied, “Some say they’re legends, but I’ll share them with you.”



“I created the stocking stuffer,” he said with a smile.

Dennis added: “That tradition has lasted all this long while.”

We bade him goodbye, got into our sled, and off we flew...

We ***ZOOMED...*** forward through time to 1962.

We landed at the White House and saw a big Christmas tree.

“Otto, there’s the president, **John F. Kennedy.**”





"Daddy!" shouted two small children, and into the room they raced.

They ran to the president and wrapped their arms around his waist.

"Mr. President," we said. "How do you do?"

"We're Dennis and Otto. It's an honor to meet you."



"Welcome to the White House," said JFK.

"We're getting ready for Christmas, a very special day."



Dennis said, "We're traveling through time to learn about the Christmas season."

"It seems important," I said. "Can you tell us the reason?"

The children's response was instant: "We get gifts and sweets!
There's popcorn and candy canes and lots of other treats!"



"Presents are nice," their father agreed, "but there's more to this day.
It's a special time for families to gather, worship, and pray."

Said his wife **Jackie**, entering gracefully through the open door,
“We must also remember, this time of year, to give to the poor.”



"I love the Christmas season," said Dennis, "and I'm a Jew."

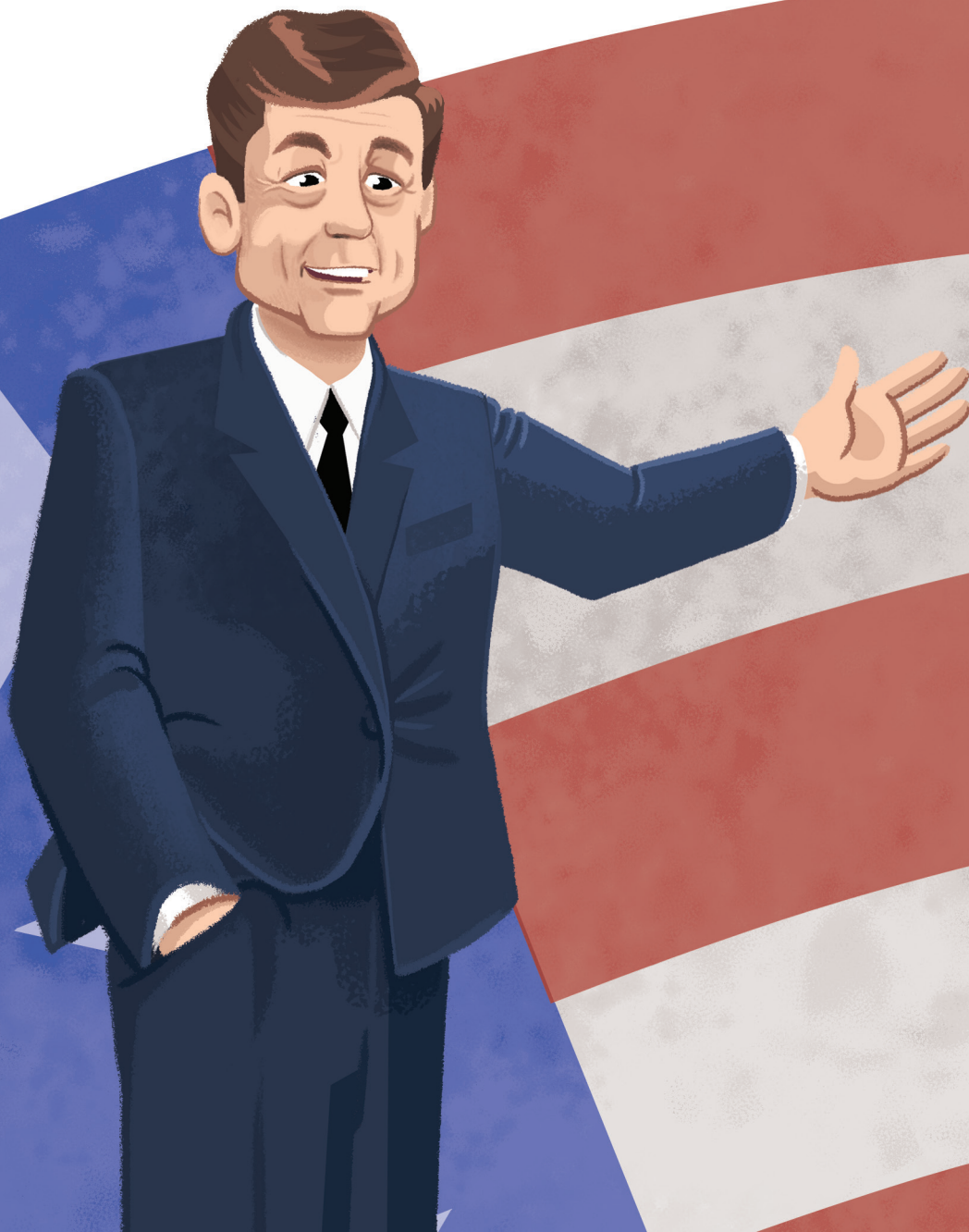
"Really?" I asked. "So, the phrase 'Merry Christmas' doesn't exclude you?"

"Not at all," said Dennis. "I say it frequently—in fact, all the time!

What's more, another Jew—**Irving Berlin**—composed 'White Christmas' and even made it rhyme."

I asked, "Is it only Christians who celebrate this day?"

"Christmas is a national holiday for all Americans," answered JFK.



An illustration featuring a man in a white shirt in the background and a boy with glasses and a blue jacket in the foreground. The boy is standing next to a happy, barking dog wearing a striped scarf. A line of musical notes flows from the man's head down towards the boy. The background has abstract red and grey shapes.

Dennis said, "Boy, is that ever true!
So, let me say 'A very Merry Christmas' to all of you."

“Thank you, Mr. President,” said Dennis. “You’ve made this evening so bright.”

Again, Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”



Then we got into our sled and ***ZOOM...***
“Ho! Ho! Ho! Off we go!” and back to Dennis’s room.



"That was my favorite adventure yet!" I barked.

"You say that every time, Otto."



“Well, I loved learning about Christmas.”

“It is an incredible story,” said Dennis, “going back 2,000 years from the Holy Land to almost every country in the world.”



"Plus, all those presents and tasty treats!"

"That's true, Otto, but more importantly,
Christmas is about faith, family, and charity."

"You mean giving to other people?" I asked.



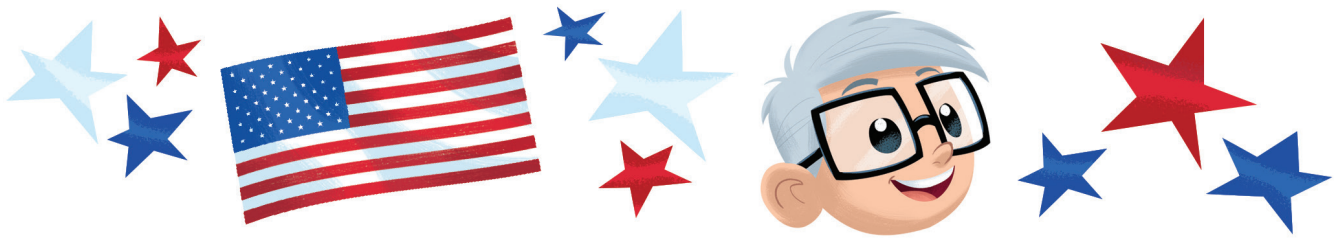
"That's right, Otto. Giving to others brings out the Christmas spirit in everyone."

"I love the Christmas spirit!" I barked.

"Me too, Otto! Merry Christmas!"

"Merry Christmas! **Ruff Ruff!**"





We Love Our History

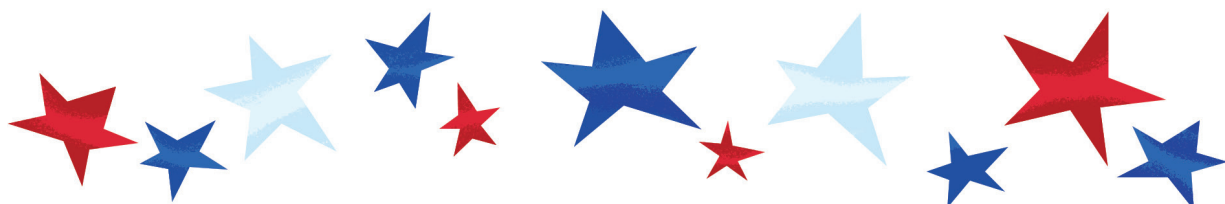
Christmas: The day Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. On this day, people enjoy traditions, sing carols, and exchange gifts with their families and friends.

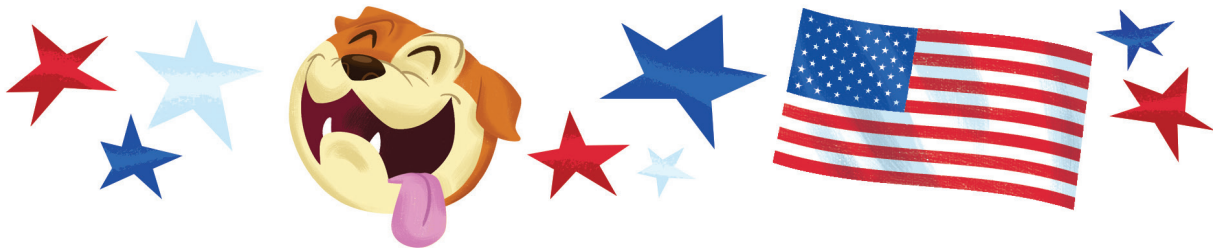
Holy Land: The area in the Middle East where many important events in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim history occurred. Jesus, a Jew, lived his entire life in the area.

Three Wise Men: Three individuals, sometimes called “the Magi,” who Christians believe traveled very far to worship Jesus when he was born. Some believe their names were Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthazar.

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh: The gifts that the three wise men gave to Jesus. Gold is a precious metal that is used to make jewelry and money. Frankincense and myrrh are substances from trees that release a pleasing scent when burned as incense. They are often used in religious ceremonies.

Jesus: A religious leader from the Holy Land in the first century who Christians regard as the Son of God and Savior of all who believe in Him. Although He was, at first, a carpenter from Nazareth, He began preaching about God’s kingdom. According to Christian belief, He was crucified for the sins of humanity, and, three days later, rose from the dead, thereby conquering death.





Saint Nicholas: A Christian bishop from Greece who lived in modern-day Turkey from 270 AD-343 AD. Legend has it that he would anonymously throw bags of gold coins into the windows of the poor. The coins supposedly landed in the shoes or stockings that were drying by the fireplace, giving rise to the Christmas tradition of the “stocking stuffer.” After Nicholas died and was declared a saint, his popularity and positive Christmas message spread across Europe. Some believe he is Santa Claus.

John F. Kennedy: The 35th President of the United States, from 1961-1963. He was the youngest man ever elected president and was very popular.

Jackie: Jacqueline Kennedy was the wife of John F. Kennedy and First Lady of the United States. She began the tradition of selecting a theme for the official White House Christmas tree in the Blue Room in 1961.

Irving Berlin: A Jewish American composer and songwriter who wrote many famous songs for musicals and movies during the early ragtime and jazz periods. Two of his most famous songs are “White Christmas” and “God Bless America.”



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**See you in
our *next* adventure!**

- Dennis and Otto

ABOUT

Otto's Tales

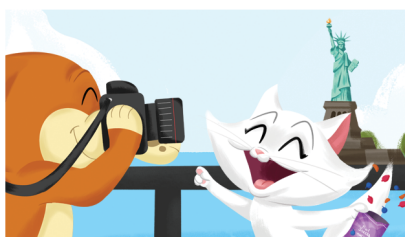
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TODAY IS

Celebrating American
holidays & traditions



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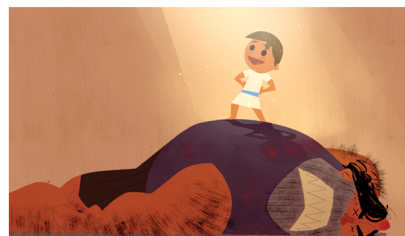
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