

SCHNITZEL'S FIRST CHRISTMAS



HANS WILHELM

SCHNITZEL'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

Hans Wilhelm

It's Schnitzel's first winter. Everything is new and exciting, and Schnitzel is as happy as any little puppy might be. Then, suddenly, the family with whom he lives doesn't seem to have time to play with him anymore—or even to have his supper ready on time!

Schnitzel complains to Gruff the cat, and is told that everyone is busy getting ready for Christmas. Since this is Schnitzel's first Christmas, he presses Gruff to tell him more. When he learns that Santa Claus brings gifts only to those who have made a wish, Schnitzel is stymied. It seems he has everything any little puppy might want or need, and none of his friends is able to help him find a wish. Schnitzel goes to sleep on Christmas Eve feeling very lonely, and sure that on Christmas morning he will be the only one without a present.

Help comes in an unexpected way in the middle of the night, and Christmas Day finds Schnitzel as happy as ever—and feeling certain that he will never be lonely again.


SCHNITZEL'S FIRST CHRISTMAS



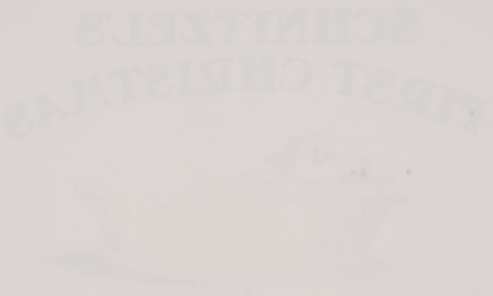
SCHNITZEL'S FIRST CHRISTMAS



Written and illustrated by Hans Wilhelm

 SIMON AND SCHUSTER BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

Published by Simon & Schuster Inc., New York



SIMON AND SCHUSTER BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS, Simon & Schuster Building, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020. Copyright © 1989 by Hans Wilhelm, Inc. All rights reserved including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form. SIMON AND SCHUSTER BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS is a trademark of Simon & Schuster Inc.
Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data. Wilhelm, Hans, 1943- Schnitzel's first Christmas. Summary: A puppy can't think what he wants for Christmas, but Santa knows just the thing. I. Christmas-Fiction. 2. Dogs-Fiction. 1. Title. PZ7 W64815c. 1989
[I] 89-3698

ISBN 0-671-67977-5



To H. H.
for being the friend he is



It was Schnitzel's first winter. He spent his days playing in the fluffy white snow, the first he had ever seen. He would jump up from time to time to catch a snowflake as it fell. On days like this, Schnitzel would come home hungry and exhausted.

But lately, he would have to wait for his supper. And no one seemed to have any time to play with him. What was happening? Why was everyone in such a rush?



He complained to Gruff, the cat.

“Oh,” yawned Gruff, “it’s Christmas again.”

Schnitzel had heard the word Christmas before, and he had heard about someone called Santa Claus, but he really didn’t know what all this meant.

“It sounds like Christmas will be a lot of fun,” he said, hoping Gruff would tell him more about it.

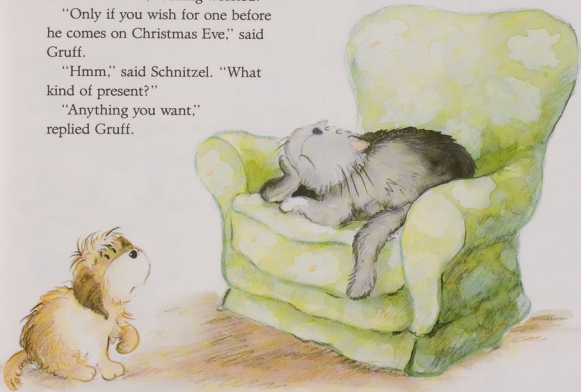
“It will be if you get a present from Santa Claus,” mumbled Gruff.

“Won’t Santa bring me one?”
asked Schnitzel, looking worried.

“Only if you wish for one before
he comes on Christmas Eve,” said
Gruff.

“Hmm,” said Schnitzel. “What
kind of present?”

“Anything you want,”
replied Gruff.





Schnitzel thought for a while. Then he asked Gruff: "Do you have a wish?"

Gruff purred: "Sure, I want a toy mouse. And you?"

"Oh, I'll have to think about it," replied Schnitzel.

"Well, you'd better hurry," Gruff yawned again. "Tonight is Christmas Eve."

"Oh, my," thought Schnitzel. "So little time." Should he wish for a toy, too? No, he already had all the toys in the world.





There were always enough shoes and socks lying around for him to chew on.



There were always so many things in the children's room to play with.



And there was always a squirrel who asked to be chased.

No, he didn't need another toy.



Perhaps there was something else he could wish for. He wondered if Humber, the goldfish, could help him.

"Do you have a Christmas wish?" he asked Humber.

"Of course I do!" bubbled Humber. "I want a beautiful water castle to sleep in. That's my wish."

"Perhaps I should wish for a new place to sleep, too," thought Schnitzel.





But he already had the most comfortable, warm, soft blanket
and cushion any dog might ask for!



If only there were someone who understood what a little puppy might wish for! Suddenly he felt very lonely.

"I'll just have to keep asking," thought Schnitzel, and went outside.



“Do you have a Christmas wish?” he asked a sparrow.

“Yes,” she chirped. “I want to have plenty of food: some nice seeds and tasty kernels, and perhaps some yummy raisin bread crumbs. In winter, there’s nothing more important than food for us birds. Believe me!”

“Maybe I should wish for some food, too,” thought Schnitzel.







“But I already have all the dog food and treats any puppy might want!”



It seemed he had everything he could wish for—except a Christmas wish!

Gruff opened one eye. “Have you made your wish yet?” he asked.

“Oh, yes,” fibbed Schnitzel, not wanting to look foolish.

“Well, what is it?” demanded Gruff.

“It’s a secret!” replied Schnitzel.

He felt awful.





That evening, the house was full of excitement. Everyone was running about, and there were boxes, papers and ribbons all over the place. But Schnitzel felt like hiding.

"I'm not so sure I like Christmas," he sighed. "No one has any time for me and no one can help me find a Christmas wish."

That night, Schnitzel went to bed feeling very sad indeed. He imagined Gruff laughing at him when he didn't get a present on Christmas morning. It was all too much for a little puppy.

Schnitzel fell asleep feeling very lonely.



In the middle of the night, Schnitzel was awakened by strange noises.

"There must be a stranger in the house," he thought. "I'd better go and see."

Someone was coming down the chimney. At first, Schnitzel thought it might be a burglar. Then he remembered.

"It must be Santa Claus," he thought, "bringing presents for everyone—except me!"







Schnitzel watched Santa Claus putting presents under the tree. When he had finished, he noticed Schnitzel.

"And what's your name, my little friend?" he asked.

"I...I'm Schnitzel," replied Schnitzel.

"Schnitzel? I don't think that name is in my big book. Didn't you make a wish, Schnitzel?" asked Santa.

"I...I couldn't think of anything to wish for," said Schnitzel, feeling a little embarrassed.



“Ho, ho, ho!” laughed Santa Claus. “In all the time I’ve been around, I can’t remember anyone who didn’t have a wish. Now let me have a look. Perhaps I have something for you anyway.”





Santa opened his bag once more, and searched among all the presents that were left.

"Aha!" he said after a while. "I knew there must be something here that would be just perfect for a little dog who has everything!"

Santa set down a beautifully wrapped present, tied with a bright ribbon.

"This is for you, Schnitzel," he said with a smile.

"For me? A present?" Schnitzel was so surprised and pleased, he could hardly speak.

"Yes, Schnitzel, a special present for you," said Santa. "Now I have lots more gifts to deliver, so I'll say goodbye until next Christmas."

And with that, he was up the chimney and gone.





Schnitzel was so excited, he couldn't wait.

"Wake up everyone!" he cried. "I got a present! Santa was here and I got a present! Come and see!"

Schnitzel danced around his present, pulling on the ribbon to open it.

What *could* be inside?



What a wonderful surprise!

"Merry Christmas," said the little puppy. "I'm Pretzel. And who are you?"

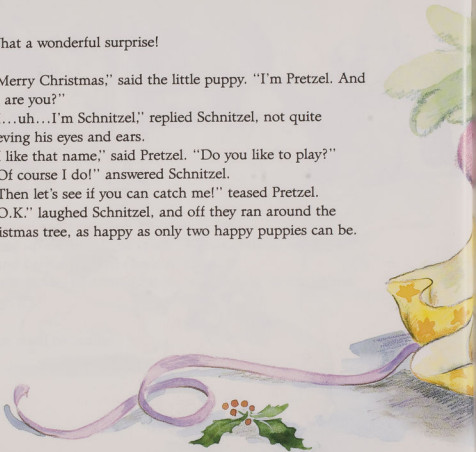
"I...uh...I'm Schnitzel," replied Schnitzel, not quite believing his eyes and ears.

"I like that name," said Pretzel. "Do you like to play?"

"Of course I do!" answered Schnitzel.

"Then let's see if you can catch me!" teased Pretzel.

"O.K." laughed Schnitzel, and off they ran around the Christmas tree, as happy as only two happy puppies can be.







Schnitzel would always remember that first Christmas, when he met his best friend.

And isn't that the best Christmas present anyone could wish for?

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

100 EAST EAST
CHICAGO, ILL. 60607

HANS WILHELM was born in Germany and, after traveling the world for many years, finally made his home in Westport, Connecticut, where he now lives and works.

Mr. Wilhelm has written and/or illustrated more than 70 books for young readers, published both here and abroad. His work has been honored by *Time* magazine, *Parent's Choice* and the International Reading Association.

Among his best-known books are *Tales from the Land Under My Table*, *I'll Always Love You* and the popular *Waldo* books.

**SIMON AND SCHUSTER
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS**

Published by Simon & Schuster Inc., New York

Guaranteed Reinforced Binding
Jacket printed in USA



ISBN 0-671-67977-5



9 780671 679774