



Finding Christmas

An Australian Christmas Story by Annie Bryant

© Annie Bryant Tales & Songs 2015

[\(To purchase the audio download of this story including a Summertime Christmas Song click here\)](#)

*Where do you find Christmas in your family?
Is it hidden within the pages of your favourite story book?
Maybe it's wrapped up in a gift made especially for someone you love?
Or perhaps, it can be found amongst the delicious smells of a Christmas feast?
Well, this is the story of a little boy who went on his own search for Christmas....and you'll never guess what he found!*

Joey had looked everywhere, but still had found no signs of Christmas. They were staying on his Grandparents farm, way out west for the whole month until after Christmas – and while Joey usually loved the tractor rides and farm adventures – this time he couldn't help but think about all the 'Christmassy' things he was missing out on back home.

First, there was the Christmas Market & the end of year school Concert. Then, there was the Santa sleighs and giant candy canes and bright lights up and down his street, not to mention the fake snow and happy carols playing in all shops.

But out here on the farm there was no shiny tinsel or red hats to be seen and he was starting to worry that maybe Christmas just wasn't going to happen at all?!

And he also missed Dad.

Dad was coming to meet Mum and Joey and his little sister May at the farm on Christmas Eve and it felt like such a long time away.

When they chatted on the phone one night Joey whispered his concerns about Christmas and Dad reassured him, "Don't worry mate, you'll find Christmas out there – you just need to know where to look."

But so far, he hadn't found anything.

So, before bed that night Joey asked Lil-Ma & Jo-Pa in a very serious voice, "Do you know where to find Christmas on your farm?"

His grandparents looked at each other with mischievous smiles before Jo-Pa turned to Joey and replied with a wink, "I think we might have a few ideas."

The next morning after breakfast, Lil-Ma handed Joey a picnic basket filled with fresh sandwiches and fruit and warm muffins straight from the oven, and with that same mysterious look on her face she said, "I hope you two are in luck today."

Then Jo-Pa and Joey hopped into the old red tractor chug chug chugged chug chug chugged all the way to the end of the farm where the last fence post stood before the wild bush land.

Together they crouched down and stepped through the old wire fence.

Swish swish swish, swish swish swish went their boots in the long grass that quickly became a crunch crunch crunch, crunch crunch crunch sound as they followed a rough track into the bush.

Before long they came to two enormous gum trees with squiggly lines all over the bark, opening up into a small grassy clearing with towering gum trees above.

Together they unfolded the picnic rug and Jo-Pa said with a smile and a wink, "We thought this might be a good spot for you to look for Christmas."

As Joey gobbled up one of Lil-Ma's famous muffins he looked around and wondered just what this place could possibly have to do with Christmas?!

Soon, Jo-Pa yawned and lay down for a rest and Joey started to explore.

At first, it didn't seem like there was much here except grass and trees and a few tiny birds flitting about but he soon noticed a slightly bigger bird watching him closely from above.

It had a white head and stripy body and seemed just as interested in him as he was in it. The bird was so still that Joey jumped in surprise when it finally let out a startled cry amidst a flurry of wings as it flew across the clearing to a mound of dirt.

The bird looked back at Joey to make sure he was watching before madly digging about in the dirt, stopping every now and then to check that Joey was still watching.

Then, with another startling cry that woke Jo-Pa from his nap, the bird flew off into the bush.

Joey excitedly told Jo-Pa all about the stripey bird, before the two of them went to inspect the mound of dirt, gasping in surprise at what they found.

There, still half-buried in the earth, was a handful of bright yellow crystals sparkling in the dappled sunlight.

That night Joey made a special table next to his bed where he gently placed the crystals. Lil-Ma then placed a shining candle on the table before singing a goodnight song.

*When the Summer Sun shines bright & high
In the long hot days of Christmas time
We thank the earth for the gifts she wills
For the rocks and the plants and the a-ni-mals*

The next morning Joey woke excitedly before begging Jo-Pa to take him to the clearing again but his Grandpa just smiled and said it's better to wait a bit.

So Joey waited and waited and waited until finally the morning came when Lil-Ma handed them another picnic basket filled with yummy food and they chug chug chugged chug chug chugged off on the tractor.

This time the little stripey bird was waiting for them on the fence post.

Quickly it darted off down the track, waiting just a moment for them to arrive in the clearing, before darting off again into the bush beyond.

When they finally caught up with the little bird it was perched on a long branch, just above a dazzling sea of bright purple flowers.

“Bush orchids!” Jo-Pa cried in surprise as they both took a closer look at the delicate flowers.

That night, Joey placed his freshly potted orchid that he’d promised Jo-Pa he would look after, next to the crystals and the candle before Lil-Ma sang them to sleep.

*When the Summer Sun shines bright & high
In the long hot days of Christmas time
We thank the earth for the gifts she wills
For the rocks and the plants and the a-ni-mals*

The next time Lil-Ma handed him the picnic basket Mum and May jumped in the red tractor too and they all laughed and chatted as they chug chug chugged chug chug chugged their way to clearing.

But after they finished munching down their lunch, there was still no sign of the bird anywhere.

Maybe the extra voices were scaring it away?

But just then, amidst a loud fluttering of wings, not just one but a whole pack of little stripey birds burst into the clearing filling the space with a beautiful song.

Cooiiook cooiiook cooiiook cooiiook cooiiook cooiiook

And when they finished, in another great flurry of wings, they took off together, leaving one single white stripey feather floating gracefully to the ground.

That night Joey carefully placed the feather next to the purple orchid and the sparkly crystals, and as Lil-Ma sang them to sleep, he was sure he could hear the birds singing along too,

*When the Summer Sun shines bright & high
In the long hot days of Christmas time
We thank the earth for the gifts she wills
For the rocks and the plants and the a-ni-mals*

The last time they visited the clearing the little bird was nowhere to be seen.

They waited and waited and waited until finally Jo-Pa said it was time to go home.

Joey sadly folded up the picnic rug when just then he heard the crunch crunch crunch crunch crunch crunch sound of footsteps approaching.

And then suddenly, before Joey realized what was happening, there was Dad strolling into the clearing.

“Surprise!”, he called, as Joey threw himself into Dad’s arms.

That night before bed, Dad gave Joey a small wrapped gift and inside was a beautifully carved wooden man.

Joey placed the figure on the table between the white stripey feather and the purple orchid and the glittering crystals before everyone sang the goodnight song together.

*When the Summer Sun shines bright & high
In the long hot days of Christmas time
We thank the earth for the life she wills
For the rocks and the plants and the a-ni-mals*

The night before Christmas Joey excitedly placed a large handful of sunflower seeds on the branch just outside his bedroom window, and on Christmas morning he woke to the sound of “cooiiook cooiiook cooiiook”.

He raced to the window, and there, singing in the morning, was the little stripey bird perched beside a slightly bigger stripey bird with a tiny white chick between them. Joey laughed as they quickly gobbled up the last of the seeds before they disappeared into the big blue sky.

Not long after Mum and Dad crept in for Christmas morning cuddles and, wrapping his big boy up in his arms, Dad whispered in Joey’s ear, “Well sweetie do you think you found Christmas out here?”

Joey looked over at the crystal and the purple orchid and the feather and the wooden man, before looking out to the big blue sky, and he nodded his head and smiled.

Then a second later he added, “But Dad I don’t know how I’ll find Christmas anywhere else but here from now on?!”

And Dad laughed and replied, “You can find Christmas anywhere love, you just need to know where to look!”

And so I wonder, where do you think you might find Christmas this year?



Annie Bryant is a storyteller & musician from Mullumbimby, Australia who loves to share her seasonally-inspired stories and songs for children at live performances and on *The Seasonal Collection of Winter, Spring, Summer & Autumn* recordings. Find out more at <http://www.talesandsongs.com>

Tales & Songs

to nourish young hearts

