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DOUGHNUT HOLES

Tommy Miller burst into the kitchen, letting the door bang behind him. “Oh, Mommy, I’m so hungry, I could nearly eat a-a-a elephant,” he announced.

Mother paused from her doughnut rolling and smiled her understanding smile. “You may have one of the warm doughnuts in that bowl,” she offered. “And take one along outside for Mary too.”

“Oh, goody, thanks, Mommy,” said Tommy dashing back outside with two fat doughnuts.

When Mary saw the doughnuts, a smile spread over her plump face showing her pretty dimples. “Oh, Tommy, please give me one of your doughnuts,” she begged.

Right then a naughty thought popped into Tommy’s mind. *Why not keep Mary’s doughnut for myself? She thinks they are both mine. She’ll never know it was hers.* Tommy took a big bite and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “No, Mary, I’m so hungry, I need both of them,” he answered.

Mary’s smile and her dimples disappeared like the sun going behind a cloud. “Then give me a bite,” she coaxed, “just a teeny little bite, please, Tommy!”

Tommy's brown eyes seemed to be dancing with mischief. "Wait a minute and you can have the holes," he answered.

Mary was too small to realize Tommy was playing a trick on her. Her smile and dimples were back in place and her blue eyes sparkled as she waited happily for the promised holes. When she saw the last bite of doughnut disappearing into Tommy's mouth, her eyes stopped sparkling and filled with tears. "There's none left, not one little bit," she sobbed.

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed Tommy. "You silly girl! Can't you see that the holes are still left? The holes are just air. I can't eat air and neither can you. The doughnuts are all gone, but I didn't eat the holes." Tommy slipped away still laughing at his joke.

What Tommy didn't know was that Mother had stepped out on the porch to see if there was enough wood in the woodbox to cook supper. She saw the whole thing and heard Mary crying. This was not the first time Tommy had played a mean trick on his little sister. Right there and then Mother decided to do something special for Mary.

During the afternoon the children could hear Mother beating, scraping, and whipping in the kitchen. They could smell vanilla, black walnut, and maple flavorings. But Mother would not allow them even to peep into the kitchen.

At supper time when they came into the dining room, a pretty tin box with Japanese

pictures on it stood at Mary's place. Tommy's eyes shone with curiosity. "Why don't you open it, Mary?" he asked.

Mary opened the box, and inside were the dearest little doughnut cakes they had ever seen. Mother had saved the round centers of the doughnuts and covered some with pink, some with green, and some with yellow icing. Some were rolled in coconut, and some had fat walnut halves stuck on them.

"O-ooh, yum yum!" exclaimed Tommy. "Where's mine, Mother?"

"Why," said Mother, pretending to look surprised, "I'm sure I heard you giving the holes to Mary this afternoon. So I fixed them up especially for her."

Tommy looked ashamed. His cheeks and neck and ears turned red. He felt hot all over and squirmed in his chair.

"Do you think you deserve any of the little cakes after the trick you played this afternoon, Tommy?" asked Mother.

"No, Mother," Tommy answered in a very small voice.

"I want this to be a lesson you will always remember, Tommy," Mother explained. "The Bible tells us to be kind to each other. That means to little sisters too. I will not allow you to cheat Mary just because she is small. I hope you will try to treat her better."

Tommy wiggled in his chair and played with the button on his blue shirt. “Yes, Mother, I really will try,” he said very soberly. Then turning to Mary he said, “I’m sorry I took your doughnut this afternoon, and I won’t ever, ever do it again!”

When little Mary saw how sorry Tommy was for mistreating her, her blue eyes grew thoughtful. She pushed back her blond curls and brushed a crumb off her pink dress. Then she looked up at Tommy, her blue eyes sparkling. “Here,” she said, holding the box over to him. “I’ll share my doughnut holes with you.

Mother smiled as she watched the children happily sharing and enjoying the goodies.

THE SHINY DIME

Bobby and Billy were twins. Their brown eyes sparkled with mischief. Bobby's cowlick made his brown hair stand up on the left side. Billy's cowlick made his brown hair stand up on the left side. Each of them had five freckles on his nose. Even Mother had to look twice to see which was Bobby and which was Billy. But when she gave them each an apple, she knew which was Billy, because he always crowded in and grabbed the larger one.

Mother tried hard to help Billy overcome his selfish habit, but nothing seemed to work. As for Bobby, he never seemed to mind having the smaller share of things. He cheerfully let his twin brother have anything he wanted.

As Daddy watched his sons, he felt very sorry to see Billy becoming so selfish. He tried hard to think of some way to help Billy with his problem.

One day when Daddy was looking over his coin collection, he came across an old dime. "This is it!" he said aloud, "the very thing I need."

He called the twins in from their play and said, "I wonder if there are two little boys who will clean the basement for Daddy."