

STORY-TIME

with
Zorro the Mouse



The Holiday Collection

Compiled and edited by DotRot

Many thanks to VacaDude, without whom the chatroom would not exist.

Without the chat, the chatters would not have remained together.

Without the chatters, the stories would never have happened.

Without the stories, life would be much duller and more humorless.

And many thanks also go to Zorro for bringing our stories to life in his own inimitable way.

The stories are presented as written with only minor editing to preserve continuity of owl gender and verb tense and to correct punctuation. The plots (or lack thereof) have not been changed.

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A collection of stories written Round-Robin style by the chatters in the VacaChat chatroom. The collective minds, wit and humor of the chatters have blended into ten funny, touching and delightful tales.

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The Owlets' Halloween Adventure

Basking in the warmth on the sand at the Royal Palmz Resort, but, of course, careful to stay out of direct sunlight, Carrie thought to herself, "Why did I wait so long to come here?" Then suddenly, . . .

she had an idea. Mom, where is Grouman's theatre? Maybe we can find some wet cement and become famous. Molly looked back and said, . . .

that Warner brothers had contacted them about making a movie but did not know what the title would be. They had a band Johnny and the Horkers. But who could be their Agent? They knew it would be . . .

of course, V.McDude himself -- but wait princess Wesley would rather go shopping on Rodeo Drive, but . . .

this caused dissent amongst the rest of the family (Molly, McGee, and the 6 owlets). So, a family meeting was held and the decison was made to . . .

put off the shopping until later, since the shops would be open for hours yet. But then Austin saw . . .

them and told them about the movie. It's going to be called . . .

Molly and the Kidz go to Hollywood! Ashley, of course, was hungry, so on the way to the studios, they all flew out to the famous "Hollywood" sign. McGee circled twice, then came up with a huge . . .

big Rat in his mouth, looking around for princess Wesley, but Wesley was nowhere to be seen flying over Hollywood or Beverly Hills . . .

So he looked and looked and found Wesley asleep in a box behind the W of the sign . . .

and as McGee was looking higher up he saw shadows....oh yes, it was Halloween . . .

Wesley awoke and hissed and asked.....what are those shadows??? . . .

The shadow scared him. It had a something in its hand. It was a camera. He knew who it was. It was Daddy Carlos. He was so glad to see him he then . . .

joyously flew to Daddy Carlos and asked him, why am I so far away from home? I miss my suburban barn owl box. Daddy Carlos, smiled at Wesleigh and said . . .

"did you leave your Horks at home?? are you lonely tonight?? -- when suddenly . . .

A flock of crows flew by and they all dove for cover. Then they all reached into their knapsacks and pulled out their Halloween costumes. Wesley's was a vampire costume. Wesleigh refused to wear such a costume. She told Carlos . . .

"I'm a lady, and I am NOT into that lame vampire stuff. "I'm wearing my Barbie outfit, and that's final." Austin rolled his eyes, pulling out a . . .

crushed brown paper bag. "This is my costume," he said. Look, I step inside and raise my wings over my head and I am a corn cob. They all laughed until, from below them came . . .

Max as Cowlnt Dracula. McGee took the owlets trick or tweeting. Molly stayed at the owl box behind the W. She gave out Horkel pops. She needed some help so . . .

she looked inside the costume bag. She knew that they all were in danger. She quickly handed out costumes to the owlets and McGee. These costumes saved them all from the crows. The costumes were . . .

part of the Johhny & the Horkers Rock band --- but the largest Owlets you ever did see with daggers and chest plates and -- oh wait . . .

they were one costume short, but Wes had her Barbie costume, so McGee took them Trick-or-treating. Then they saw a Halloween parade and decided to join it, but . . .

it led them through Rodeo Drive and Wesleigh thought "Now, I can shop!" She started to leave the parade when . . .

she saw Mrs. Donna shopping away on Rodeo Drive and Mrs. Donna and Mr.

Carlos were in their . . .

RV heading out on vacation. They all wanted to follow, but suddenly . . .

they were all spotted by an agent! Molly was hired to play the mother in the new Lassie remake: McGee is slated to be the next Terminator, Max, Pattison, and Ashley will be the new MOD Squad;

Austin has been chosen to be a stunt pilot for the new Star Wars trilogy. Wesley, of course, has been cast as the star of the new sleeper, "The Gowl Who Couldn't Wake Up!" Carrie didn't get cast. She had gone out for coffee.

THE END

Spring Forward, Fall Back Why Wesley Hates the Time Change

Wesley awoke with a start! Wait! It's time for the world to be waking up! Where are all those two-leggers in the neighborhood? And why aren't they out and making noise?

Wesley looked out the door and saw . . . Nothing!

She heard a noise. She didn't have a clue what that noise was. Hmmmmmm I wonder what it is? What Wesley didn't know was that people had forgotten to change their clocks and were late for..

something. Then Wesley heard Max!

Max explained, "Aaahhhh - two-legged critters do not walk in the dark! It must be the rodentia community still out and about! Soon, very soon, Mom and Pops must be coming, but for what????"

Wesley wondered, "Why is it still dark, did I forget to change my clocks forward?"

"Mom and Dad are sitting in palmz smooching and here I sit over here starving. Do they have to do that mushy stuff when I am croaking for a fat rat?" All of a sudden . . .

Wesley heard Tauntz hopping below the owlbox. Tauntz was singing "Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to work I go." Why was Tauntz working on a Sunday? Wes stuck her head out of the box, and called to Tauntz.

Wes thought she might have time for a fly by but she really had no idea when the sun would come up. She wanted to tell Tauntz . . .

to hold still! She said, "Tauntz, I wanna' come down and talk to you!!!" But Tauntz wasn't born yesterday, so he . . .

looked up at the OwlBox and winked at Wesley and said, "Look! Fly over to that window and see the command center to tell me the time." But . . .

Wesley was wise to Tauntz and decided she would stay put and just Google the time. When she did she . . .

saw that she would still have to go to Command Central - where Carlos was trying to tell her the time - but the sound was off and . . .

suddenly, Lil Wes hears a fling and fly from McGee with a vork report stating the sky is falling and then . . .

Wesley decided to flap her wings at Carlos. She went back to the box where it was safe and suddenly . . .

Wesley realized the clocks were incorrect. How could Carlos be up yet?

Poor Weslely was so confused by Carlos, Tauntz and the time change that she decided to just stay in the box a little while longer, much to the dismay of Molly and McGee!

Wesley was a little worried, now that she was back in her box she wondered, "What if Mom and Dad forgotten to change their clocks too? My dinner could be late! I might have to . . .

go out myself and find out where they are, but then . . .

there's still an hour more darkness. I can tell from the light of the moon!! shining - 'Shine on harvest moon!' No wait! Concentrate - I could spend this extra hour to learn how to fly!!!! Eeeewww!" but . . .

a flash of light caught her attention. Who is Carlos taking a picture of? Then she looked down and saw Zorro with some . . .

tiny micettes following him. Wesley was thinking that she could swoop down and get one of them. It would not be too far and then, oops . . .

she found she was thinking so hard that she lost her balance and slipped out of owlbox door. Fortunately, her wings snapped into action and helped glide safely down to the Zorro's family. Then . . .

Wesley found she liked walking on the ground. She decided it was just going to stay night all the time. This was good because she could always . . .

find dinner in the grass at night - little mice and rodentzia and hmmm maybe a rabbit? But wait - who is that??

Could it be? Maybe . . . Possibly be . . . Tauntz!!! "Oh no! He is my friend and I could not possibly . . . No! I love him . . . "

Oh no! It's Daddy McGee! "No Dad! He is my friend! Go find Mom's regifted rabbit instead!" What is that?

For a moment, Wes thinks back and remembers how good the grass feel between her talons. She decides to call for her buddy Max so Max can feel the same.

Max showed Wesley how to get back to the box by climbing up the ladder, then . . .

Wesley followed Max. The sun started coming up . . .

but there was just enough time for one more treat delivery. Instead of hearing the "deet, deet, deet" of Molly, all the owlets heard was an ominous "tick tock" coming from outside the box.

What could it be? Wes quietly crept to the door of the box. She looked out and saw . . .

a giant clock tower! Carlos had added more to the playground! Wes quickly jumped to the second hand and as she rode it around the clock she hollered,

"Wheeeee! This is great! Who knew playing with time could be such fun?? Can we do this all again tomorrow?"

THE END

Autumn Leaves . . . But Chat Remains Forever!

Molly called her children to her and said, "I think you're old enough now for The Talk. I want to tell you about the Birds and the Trees. Each year, we both go through a stage called 'molting'.

It's perfectly natural and a part of growing up. There's nothing to fear or be ashamed of. Look at the trees now, and you'll see their leaves falling. That is natural."

She explained to them the special mysterious force that surrounded the box. She didn't know where it came from, but there was a force of love and power around them. Just then, she heard . . .

McGee. McGee asked, "Whats going on?" Then Molly said, "The leaves are falling." McGee said, "Then its almost winter. It's going to be colder." Molly said, "We will need to be in the Owl Box more. But what about the owlets?" Then suddenly . . .

Molly heard a shovel below the owl box. She heard digging, digging, and suddenly she heard Zorro saying to himself, "I'm the Leading Mouse of Story Hour and not just a puppet in VacaDude's hand. And . . .

why must I dig this hole for the Vaca? We can't Tauntz do it?" Zorro turned around and saw that something is different.

Zorro didn't know that the West wind had come to tell the owlets that it was time to develop their winter wing feathers so that they could catch Zorro and family.

Tauntz wanted to give a gift to his nice friends from on high so he collected some feathers, some leaves, some gag shag, and a pretty mimosa flower and tied them up in a large feather

bed so Zorro would have a nice soft bed warm bed for the winter. Zorro was so touched that Tanutz would make a warm place for him for the winter that he . . .

made a pact with Tauntz that for as long as they were alive no harm would come to either one. They were BFF's.

But, in the meantime in the Owl Box the family and McGee were still wondering what to do about the upcoming winter and their talk turned to . . .

keeping warm without a door to the owl box. "Does any one know how to build a fire? Only Molly knows the secret."

All the McGee Family's feathers were falling out (molting) so Molly gathered them all up into a pile and pushed them all out the door along with the 12 inches of gagshag.

Then Molly flew to Vaca's house and grabbed a hot coal from left over barbeque to start the fire. McGee said to the family, "Let's get us some Mousies and make mousie s'mores!"

Horrors! This sent Zorro scurrying, for . . .

little mice everywhere will have nightmares of this incident for years to come.

Once Zorro found Tauntz, he said, "We have to change the owls' and owlets' minds. We need to explain the importance of getting along with one another. So, . . .

we should call a meeting and use our favorite moderator Carlos - who will decide who lives where and who can keep each other warm", but . . . Carlos wasn't available. He was off taking pictures of some other creatures so Tauntz and Zorro decided to . . .

take it upon themselves to talk to Molly and McGee about their plan. When suddenly . . .

Molly and McGee, were watching their every move. Thinking fast, Zorro sees Donna. They rush to Donna but then . . .

What to do? What to do? Zorro tries to leap into Donna's arms but she screams, "A Mouse!" Tauntz takes a nose dive into the gagshag now on the ground below the box. The feathers tickle his nose and . . .

he falls right into the talons of McGee. This startles McGee and he lets go of Tauntz but . . .

they still needed marshmallows. Zorro stole them from Donna's kitchen. The west wind blew the fire higher, so the owlets could soar to their new homes in wine country where . . .

a wet wind blows on Zorro's face. He wakes realizing that it was a VacaSneeze. "I ate too much pumpkin from the floor!! So Zorro . . .

is near a tree. Mockz has been watching all the goings on. He is laughing at Zorro with the pumpkin all over his face and almost fell out of the tree when Tauntz dove into the feathers, raising a big cloud. He decided to go and help . . .

but realizing that there was really nothing he could do he went back to the Owl Box to see that there was some new construction going on. Carlos and Donna, with Austin's help, were building an addition to the owlbox. Maybe it would be for . . .

all their friends in need in the San Marcos area. It would be warm and have lots of room for everyone. But just then . . .

Zorro got the idea in his head that the addition was for him and his friend Tauntz, so they slowly crawled up the 14 foot pole and . . .

there was Carrie staring at them at the doorway. Carrie said "Oh, my! I'm tired of sharing this place with Ashley, but I think we can learn to be friends here. Don't you?" Zorro and Tauntz looked at each other and wondered . . .

"Carrie?" "OK," say Zorro and Tauntz, "If we can make a deal. We'll lure Ashley off at feeding time, and you can get more treats. Would that make it better?" Carrie tips her head, thinking . . .

"hmmm, I love to eat and sleep. But Ashley is my big sister. Look, with the extra rooms we are going to have, there will be room for all of us including . . ."

all the Punks left over in the area and maybe even a new clutch - but only if . . .

Molly agrees. Just then, Molly flew back to the owl box and wanted to know what in the world were Zorro and Tauntz doing here? Carrie answered . . .

"They are here to enlighten us about how all creatures should get along and now that we have more room in the box . . .

we thought that we could all live together as friends. You know how you were telling us about that mysterious force of love and power that surrounds our box?

We feel it now, too! We don't know where it comes from, but we like it. We want that all the time! Maybe Carlos and Donna know where it comes from. Maybe they have something to do with it??"

Molly just nodded and thought to herself, "My babies are growing up!"

The END!

The Great Thanksgiving Debate What Should Molly Serve for Dinner?

Molly turned to McGee and said, "I'm so pleased. All six of the children will be home for Thanksgiving dinner. I want it to be special. I've been debating what I should serve.

"A nice, fat, juicy roasted bunny would be nice, but you've not had much luck in that area have you?" McGee hung his head sheepishly and said . . .

I was thinking about a gopher with snake gravy. Gophers are good eatin' this time of year, but . . .

rat and mice are plentiful also. "Hmm" said McGee. "But I have my heart on a nice, luscious rabbit. Maybe if the kids and I went further afield . . ."

"You know," said Molly, "now that I think about it, our family has grown so much since last year, I think we'll need something MUCH bigger. I was thinking along the lines of a small sheep." McGee, aghast, said . . .

"Molly, I have a great idea! Why cook? I hear that Carlos and Donna are going to a big luau (loo-owl) - I saw a picture on his computer in Command Central! Now that was a BIG pocket gopher." Molly . . .

was suddenly energized with the idea . . . "Lets go see him!" McGee followed Molly to Carlos' front door. She pecked it and . . .

scratched her head. "How can we manage to get all 6 children across the ocean?

"Maybe Carlos and Donna will have an idea on how to get the whole family to Hawaii." Molly wondered if the airplane would let them ride as it was such a long way for the owlets to fly. But then . . .

Molly and McGee thought that maybe since flying was expensive and dangerous that they just might stay and have Thanksgiving in the Owl Box.

Molly pictured all 8 big owls in that little box. "No we MUST get to Hawaii!" Carlos opened the door and in his hand he had 8 extra tickets! What will I do

with these?

Just then the FedEx man came to Carlos' door and yelled, "Mr. Royal! Here is the crate you wanted. We'll pick it up in a few hours and send it to Hawaii for you.

Carlos was surprised. The crate was to be delivered. It is filled with gagshag friteroles and carmelized rat tails for Molly and McGee and the kids. "Now what am I going to do?"

Carlos turned to Molly & McGee and asked them if these travel plans were satisfactory to them? "If they are," Carlos said, "I'll have to think of what to do with the 8 tickets I have." Molly & McGee said . . .

"Send the tickets to your friends since we have a crate to go in and . . .

"Or wait," said Molly, "we could use the tickets and send the sheep in the crate! Although, . . .

who needs sheep in Hawaii?", she said. Suddenly, Molly looked at the crate and at the cap on the FedEx delivery man's head. It said "Fling and Fly". Molly looked at McGee and said, "What is going on here?"

OK, Carlos, is there something hidden in the gag shag?" It was Carlos' turn to look sheepish.

Carlos thought, these Owls are used to first class accomodations. If they're going to travel to Hawaii in a crate, I must add upgrades! So he put in . . .

cameras, gag shag, leftovers and a return trip ticket to San Marcos, CA, which is where Thanksgiving should be held in their original home!! But what happened after that was . . .

Molly and McGee thought about it. Should they go to Hawaii or stay home in the owl box with all the owlets and their friends, Tauntz, Zorro and Mockz? The owl box was too small for everyone, but the house would be empty. What to do? . . .

They spoke with the owlets and the owlets agreed that Hawaii was where they wanted to be, with the Royal Family. After all, their last name is Royal too. They hopped in the box, Wes and Carrie being cautious at first, then . . .

Wesley had an idea. She grabbed Tauntz and his family and put them in Donna's suitcase. She wanted all her friends to be there in Hawaii with them. Who else would be able to watch over them? Jackson and Cassie might eat . . . rabbit for dinner?

Wesley looked at Carrie and they started laughing. We will bring the whole Royal Yard to Hawaii. Tell Dad to take down the owlbox and bring it to Hawaii. Just as McGee went up the ladder he saw . . .

Molly in the box. She said, "Uh, . . . McGee? You might wanna have a talk with Carlos. I think our trip plans might need to be put on hold again for about 4 or 5 months."

McGee fell to the floor in a dead faint, but just before he totally blacked out, he could be heard to say . . . "Carlos!!! Here we go again!!"

THE END

Even Ashley's Full!

As Ashley kicked back on the gopher sopher, she thought to herself, "Mom says this weird new feeling in my belly means my tummy, gullet and gizzard are all full."

"I just don't understand how that could have happened. I only had 7 helpings today at dinner. And what do I do now? I've never felt this way before. What if . . ."

"I ate more? My tummy would explode." Then suddenly Molly came in and said, "Looks like you've had too much." Then Ashley said, "No, I didn't." Then McGee came in and asked, "What's going on here?" Then Ashley said, "Mommy said I've ate too much for Thanksgiving." Then McGee said to Molly, . . .

"What if Ashley swallowed something sideways? I know it doesn't happen often, but you know it does happen once in a while. Do you think we should have her lie down?" Molly answered, "No, I think . . ."

Ashley should stand for awhile." Ashley felt like doing a faceplant but she stood and felt something moving up her throat as she stretched her neck upwards. "Dear Great Ceiling Owl", she said. "I know . . ."

I will just hork a pellet and then I can eat three more helpings - this time with snake gravy if . . .

I can get in a little snooze beforehand. I'm going to do a faceplant and dream about . . .

eating more snake gravy and gopher chops. "Not so fast," McGee chimed in. "Lets go hunting for that snake and gopher. We'll head over to see if Max and Wesley have any hunting suggestions. Lets go."

"Hmmm," thought Carrie. "With everyone gone, I can have those 3 more helpings. Let's see, is she sleeping? faceplant? Yes! I'm just going to . . ."

help myself to Ashley's leftovers." But then Carrie didn't feel well and Molly said, "I have to get my owlets to the Owltella Hospitowl to see what is wrong."

There Carrie saw a big Horned Owl Doctor who . . .

asked "Good Afternoon. Do you know where I could find Ms. Molly and Mr. McGee?" Then Carrie said, "No I don't. I think they went that way (or to the left)." Then he said, "My name is . . .

Dr. Feelgood Owl - I'm a distant relative of Molly's. I hear you and your sister aren't feeling well. Tell me all about it." Then Carrie said, . . .

"You are related to us? That is so neat! I wondered what I would do when I learned how to fly. Can I be a Dr. Owl just like you?" Dr. Feelgood Owl thought about it and said to Carrie, . . .

if you study hard and really want to help . . . You could start by teaching Ashley good habits about eating and . . .

listening to your mom and dad." Over at the happy hunting grounds, Papa McGee is trying to get Ashley to hunt with her sibs, Max and Wesley. Since Ashley is dawdling and groaning that her stomach hurts, McGee decides to . . .

let Carrie stay with Dr Feelgood Owl and heads off with Ashley for the snake hunt with her big sisters Max and Wes in the northern hunting grounds. Then . . .

"Deet. deet. deet!" Molly hears the plaintive cries of her precious owlet at the hospital. With that, she gathers her brood, with McGee in tow and flies quickly to the hospital. With a flurry of feathers and wings they swoop into the hospital and land face to face with their long lost relative, Dr. Feelgood. "Happy Thanksgiving!" he hooted. In disbelief . . .

Dr. Feelgood looked down at the entire Molly & McGee family and said, "But I have bad news. Carrie and Ashley are coming down with Owlfluenza and now you all need to be quarantined." "Oh," cried Molly "but we have to . . ."

move to the owl box if we're going to be quarantined. The palm tree is just too exposed. I'm not sure Mr. Carlos and Ms. Donna are ready for us to move back in.

Perhaps there's another owl box somewhere?" Dr. Feelgood thought for a moment and said, "I remember reading somewhere about a box going up in Missouri. Maybe that would suit?"

Molly thought and said, "Missouri? I don't think so! I think we'll just move in with YOU and you can teach Carrie all she needs to know."

THE END

Carrie Makes a List for Santa

Carrie hummed to herself as she looked around and thought about the holidays. "Hmmm," she thought, "Ashley says that Santa is only for the big two-leggers, but I don't think so.

I'm gonna make a list for Santa of all the things I want. First, I need . . .

a camera to take pictures. Second I need a net to catch rats. Third I need a blanket to keep me warm this Christmas." Then Molly came in and asked "Carrie? What are you doing? Then Carrie said . . .

I'm making a list for Santa, but how will he get here if we don't have any snow? Where will he land?" Then Molly said . . .

"Santa will throw out his safety snow that he uses in emergencies. We should ask Santa for a basket to store any extra furs we get to keep warm." Then Carrie said . . .

"That is a great idea to store the extra fur." Molly said, "Carrie, you have such a great singing voice, why dont you ask Santa to send you a Karaoke machine? You could . . .

unwrap your present right in front of Santa and ask him to sit down and have some mousy mousse while you sing your favorite song. Ashley can sing harmony! Oh this will be so much fun!" Just then . . .

Ashley flew to the kestral box and started to sing the "Ashley Bobble" song with her horks in her talons with bells on them. Carrie watched and listened in horror when all of a sudden . . .

she noticed that Ashley was garnering attention from the other birds in the neighborhood! Carrie thought, "Oh, big sis Ashley is getting all the attention! I'd better . . .

finish my list." Carrie picked up her pencil and scrowled, "coffee, coffee, cofffffeeeee!" Suddenly her attention was diverted by a SPLASH in Cassie and Jackson's pool. "WHOA!" she exclaimed.

She looked out and saw Tauntz swimming for his life to escape the hawk. "I'll divert the hawk," thought Carrie. "I'll get attention and Santa will for sure give me all I ask for!"

Carrie flew out of the box and swooped down on the hawk saying, "You're gonna' be on Santa's Naughty list you bad Hawk! You'd better be a good hawk or Santa will bring you . . .

coal." So Carrie distracted the hawk and Tauntz swam to safety. Carrie smugly thought to herself, "Well, this deed oughta' put me in the center of attention." However,

Ashley would not be outdone by her little Sis, so Ashley grabbed Tauntz and gave him a big hug. Then she put him safely in his hole, returned to the owl box and started calling her owl family to come and share in this wonderful season. She watched as Carrie, Wesley, Austin, Max, Pattison, Molly and McGee all came together to sing.

Carrie was still working on her list for Santa. She checked out the ads in the Sunday paper and decided that she would visit the Santa in the mall and tell him she wanted . . .

to sing her favorite song to him, the reindeer, and all who could hear her. As her mamma told her, she had a great singing voice (and she had been selfish to only want for herself). She belted out her favorite song "Joy to the World".

She wanted to sing another, but the karaoke operator loaded the wrong song. Carrie was red faced and then started to cry. Then McGee came in and asked, "What's wrong?" Then Molly said . . .

"Oh, nothing. That song just makes us cry every time. Let's sing something more joyful." Just then, Ashley flew by and announced that . . .

she heard that Santa really DOES give gifts to owls and not just the big two leggers. She told Carrie she was sorry and that . . .

it was time for a nap. It had been a long day's journey into night and everyone was tired. Molly said, "We still have 20 days until Santa comes! After our nap we will think more clearly." Molly looked

and saw the sky was getting light, so had Ashley and Carrie head for home. When they got there, Carrie decided to start to decorate the box. She grabbed some horks, lil' twinkly fireflies, and . . .

Glowz! Glowz lit the owbox like never before. It was magical. It was so magical that . . .

first Molly, then McGee, then all six babies raised their voices to sing, "HORK! the Herald Angels Sing . . ."

Wesley tilted her head sideways to lean against Austin, and then she saw Carrie's list. She hissed, "You selfish little owl! You've only put things on for yourself! Why don't you add . . .

things for Mom and Dad too?" It was then that she heard Carlos say "Uh oh! Not again!" as Ustream horked. Wesley said "Why don't you ask Santa for a fix for Ustream for the two leggers?" So Carrie took her pencil and added the fix for Ustream and then she added . . .

to the list gifts for her family, the Royals, Tauntz, and Mockz. After a moment's hesitation, Carrie looked at her list one more time, and scratched most of the items she had wanted for herself off the list because she realized what really is important.

She said, "It is that we owls are healthy and happy and . . . but, waaah, I want a VacaDude BobbleHead for Christmas." Molly saw her list and started to laugh and said to Carrie

"You've got a good list. Maybe you'll get a bobblehead, but maybe you should add some new fangled computers and cameras for the Royals so they can keep broadcasting our antics. Now we could show them."

"What are computers?" Carrie asked. Then Max, Austin, Pattison, Wesley, Ashley, Carrie, Callie, Glowz, Tauntz, Molly & McGee looked into each other's eyes & came together for a big group hug fest and said . . .

"Is there really anything we need? A karaoke machine would be nice to entertain each other and a water slide would be great fun . . . but, maybe not."

Carrie looked around her and saw the warm owl box and all her family and friends and said, "Who needs Santa? I've got everything I'll ever need right here!"

THE END

The Owlets Shop for Carlos' and Donna's Gifts

The six owlets huddled with serious expressions on their faces. Max said, "With me being the eldest, it is only right that I begin. This is our first Christmas. We need to make it memorable."

We need to find wonderful gifts for all of those who are special in our lives. Mom and Dad are easy - a nice quiet dinner for two at the Royal Palmz resort.

They can bring home a salad for Tauntz. But what about Mr. Carlos and Mrs. Donna? What can we give them that they can't buy for themselves? What should their gift be?" . . .

Then Wesley said, "Maybe a new computer." But Max said "That's too much money." Patterson said, "What about a Molly and McGee shirt?" Max said, "No, Carlos already has one and Donna would barely wear it." Ashley said, "Maybe a vacation to VacaVille for Carlos and Donna." Max said . . .

"Wait! I know what we can do. Do you remember the day when Carlos had his phone camera and was giving a tour of the Royal Gardens? I could fly into Command Central and borrow that so we can make a movie about . . .

the Six owlets and their first Christmas with the Royals. But first, we must make it look like Christmas and surprise Carlos and Donna with lights, and lots of horks for snow. But where will we get the lights? How about . . .

going to the neighboring owl boxes and seeing if we can borrow some twinkly lights and some more horks and hang them on our owl box. However . . .

Austin looked up from his book, "How to Decorate Your Box For Christmas," and said, "I can't think of any box around here that has lights. It says in this book that we can use holly leaves and berries, and maybe someone has some poinsettias around here." But then Pattison said, . . .

"We'll all head to Wal-mart and see what they have for decorations." Of course when they got there, Wesley had to sit on Santa's lap. Meanwhile the other olwets became frustrated. Back at the owl box they heard . . .

a noise on the side wall of the owlbox. It sounded like seven little tapping feeties. Then GLOWZ said, "No one ever asks me nuttin'. I say you clean up this gag shag for a change, and put up a small tree, then you can . . ."

Carrie interrupted and said, "A small tree will be great, with berries for colors. We could gather leaves and squish berries on them for oraments." Just then . . .

Pattison thought, "Glowz is grumpy. How can we pass on the Christmas spirit to Glowz?" "I know," Pattison said. "Glowz, would you make some beautiful spider webs for outside of the owlbox? They would shine brightly."

Glowz was now very happy. He had a job to do and one he could do well. He started slipping back and forth on his webbing and added little pieces of shredded hork at each intersection, but then he looked down and yelled, "Oh No!" . . .

"Shredded hork is just not sparkly enough!" And Glowz thought, "I know! I'll just order eleven tree ornaments from VacaDude. Let's see, there's Tauntz, Dudley, all 6 owlets and Molly and McGee. Those would be great hanging from the web." Suddenly, Wesley spoke up and said . . .

"Mom? Where are you?" Then Molly came in and asked, "What happened?" Wesley said . . .

"Mom we need help. Getting ready for Christmas is not as easy as it looks. We want this to be special for Carlos and Donna. Do you think VacaDude would drive from VacaVille to help us?" McGee was listening to all this and thinking . . .

"I know VacaDude would help us, but let us not forget this gift is to be special from all of us. Why don't we take that phone camera and . . .

quickly snap a picture of us and also of Tauntz and Glowz? It's only 13 days until Christmas and we need to have the picture wrapped nicely." The picture was taken, when suddenly . . .

Max had BIG idea! "What if we get some more owlboxes for Carlos and Donna to give to other people in San Marcos? The people would get to watch owls, and we could have new homes nearby and could raise little grandowlets for Carlos and Donna! Something for everybody!"

And they collectively said, "Yippee! That's the gift!" McGee said, "Now let's get all the chatters together for a group pic under the main owlbox to make the announcement!!!"

For the picture, the lights need to be right. Let's do a late afternoon shot with the California sunset in the background. We will need a lot of food for all the chatters. I'll bring snake gravy and . . .

pocket gophers." Carrie, who had been quiet, turned to her mom and dad and said, "I want this to be a special first Christmas for all of us. Could we, with the help of Mockz, Tauntz, Glowz, and some of the two foot walkers help decorate the outside of Carlos' and Donna's house?"

The chatters started arriving. Some brought with them food, others owlboxes, lights, decorations for the house, and feathered, furred and two foot walkers all came together to make the place a magical land.

But what were they going to do when Carlos and Donna showed up?

Ashley now had an idea. "What if we build a huge snowman and all yell 'Merry Christmas!' from behind it when Carlos and Donna come outside? But, hmm, where are we going to get that much snow?" Then Austin had a brilliant idea. He said . . .

"Let's just sing 'Let it Snow' and other owl holiday carols - like 'Joy to the Owlets' and 'Hark! The Herald Owlets Sing.'" Right then, VacaDude arrived and he said, "I have a copy of Zorro's story time booklet to give to Mr. Carlos and Mrs. Donna. Why don't we all . . .

gather around Carlos' rocker and he can and Zorro can read us the Owlbox stories and "The Night Before Christmas" and other great stories of the season.

We can light a fire in the fireplace and pretend that it's snowing. We can make some popcorn and hot cocoa and we'll just be together. That's the best part of Christmas anyway . . .

being with those you love!"

THE END

A White Christmas in San Marcos

Molly sat in the owl box, listening to Carlos whistle as he worked in the yard. Suddenly, Carlos began singing. "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas," he crooned, ever so slightly off-key.

Molly listened in wonderment, then turned to McGee and asked, "What does that mean - white Christmas?" McGee shrugged and said . . .

"Oh Molly, just take a look outside." To her amazement, close to an inch of snow was sitting on the porch. Of course the owl babies wanted nothing more than to . . .

go out and see what that was. Ashley said, "I'm the oldest, so I think I should step out first!" Ashley stretched her leg and with her talon extended, touched the white stuff. She exclaimed . . .

"Whoa! It's cold and fluffy and kinda' fun. Let's all go out and frolic for awhile." McGee looked at Molly and smiled and asked, "What are you thinking?" Molly replied, "I am just wondering why Carlos chose that song! It's so beautiful and look outside! It truly is white out there!" And then . . .

all of a sudden Ashley and Carrie stepped into the snow and started to kick it and went bouncing around. Their lil' talons were getting cold by then and they decided to step back in the box. Molly and McGee asked what the white stuff felt like.

They decided to go check it out for themselves. It was then that Max, Pattison, Austin and Wesley flew by and seeing Mom and Dad playing in the snow they decided to go have a snowball fight with them. Max went into Jackson's yard and made a snow ball and flew over Mom and Dad and dropped it on them. It was then that . . .

Carlos and Donna and Jackson's family came out to see what all the fuss was about. Max turned and flew over Carlos and dropped a snowball on his head! But then . . .

suddenly, Wesley woke up and said to herself, "Wow! What a dream I had! It

doesn't snow in San Marcos -- what was I thinking?" But Carlos was still humming the White Christmas song. All of a sudden . . .

Wesley heard Donna Royal come out of the house and say to Carlos, "Why are you singing that song? You know it doesn't snow in San Marcos!" And Carlos answered, "I can always hope! I love the snow, and who knows, with the wonderful luck we've had this year, it just might." Then Donna answered him . . .

"Well, it better not this year! The wedding is in a week, and how are we going to have it out here if there's snow all over the place? All our plans will be ruined! What do you have to say to that?"

"Well, since it is only December 19, maybe the snow could come and go before the wedding," Carlos said. At that very moment, the local San Marcos TV station made a breaking weather announcement stating . . .

"Well it looks like the sun will be shining on Christmas Day with temperatures in the 80's!" Carlos and Donna thought about it and Carlos said, "Let's fill the yard with white poinsettias - like on our Christmas tree! We can also . . .

put up a tent, my love. No matter - rain, sleet, snow or 80 degree weather, I know you'll make it the most wonderful time of Ashley's life. It will be memorable to say the least. You and I have been married a long time - together we can do anything. Don't fret about the weather and let's just keep singing Christmas carols. Somehow, I think the Kidz love it." Then . . .

Molly and McGee flew over Carlos and Donna and heard what they were saying. They were wondering if maybe they could help and went to look for Tauntz and Glowz to see if they could help too. It was getting colder and colder as they looked for them, and all of a sudden . . .

the sky began to grow dark with clouds and it kept getting colder. Donna thought, "Well now you have done it, Carlos, with all your singing of White Christmas. We are, for sure, going to have snow. But how could there be snow in San Marcos? It has never snowed here before." It was then that . . .

Carlos thought, "Well maybe it will only snow tonight and all the Kidz can frolic in it and so can we! Wouldn't a snowman be a great decoration for the wedding?" But Donna said, "How would . . .

it be if we made a styrofoam snowman and placed him outside the window, looking in?" Donna was thinking to herself, "Carlos is happiest when he has a big project to do." Just then a brilliant idea occurred to Molly . . .

who turned to McGee and said, "I think we should help decorate the back yard with gag shag. We really need to clean out the owl box anyway. It will be fun. We'll take turns and . . .

Tauntz can help us drape it artistically." By this time a cold rain was falling, so it looked like it wouldn't be cold enough for snow. But how else to have a white Christmas but not spoil the plans for the wedding?

Carlos, being the thinking man that he is, stated, "Everyone can just wear boots with their wedding attire. Thank goodness, because the national weather station just stated . . .

that this year the weather is going to be a Christmas Surprise! Suddenly the phone rang. Donna handed the phone to Carlos, "It is Gov. Schwarzenegger. He wants to come to the wedding of the famous Owl Box Family and the Royal Family of San Marcos!"

Carlos and Donna were amazed. Noticing that things are starting to turn around, Carlos spoke to the governor and told him that while this is a small family gathering, he could certainly come to the wedding as an honored guest. They spoke for a few moments longer and they hung up in laughter as the governor exclaimed, "Owl Call Back." Donna began to think, "Ya' know what? Carlos was right. Everything is going to be just fine as long as we do it together."

Meanwhile Molly and McGee found Glowz and Tauntz. They discussed their thoughts and decided to get all the other owlets to help too. They just wished it would snow just a little to leave a soft blanket on the ground. All of a sudden . . .

they saw that there is white stuff falling from the sky. Could it be snow? But not in Southern California! It just couldn't be snow. But there was something white falling from the sky! What was it?

It seems that the owls had called all the other owls and owlets together - they were circling overhead and flapping all their wings to make beautiful soft white particles to make that carpet that Carlos wanted - and it wasn't even

cold. But then . . .

Carlos suddenly realized and shouted to Donna, "We will have the most wonderful Christmas and wedding ever. -- because we have a beautiful bride, Ashley. It will be owl feathers and a bride dressed in white." Donna answered . . .

"Oh, Carlos - that will be perfect - no snow, just wonderful owl feathers! I think they brought in some gagshag, too - okay as long as it's on the outskirts of the yard - it is kind of pretty and fluffy like snow. Just then all the owls . . .

took a good look at the yard and saw that while all this had been going on, Glowz had been quietly festooning the yard with beautiful webz! The smallest feathers were sticking to them, making a delicate lacy display. Donna gasped, saying "How perfect for a wedding! Now if only . . .

Carlos could also have his dream of a white Christmas." But then . . .

Carlos and Donna looked around in amazement. There was snow falling in their yard! REAL snow!! But wait! The neighbors weren't getting any snow! What could be happening here?

Then they heard it. A soft giggle from behind the RV garage. There crouched VacaDude with a snow machine. He told them, "Just a little surprise for you. It'll all be gone by Christmas evening."

Then they heard Zorro, in his best Ricardowl Montowlbahn imitation singing, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas . . . " THE END

Look What I Got in My Stocking!

The owls were all lounging in the owl box, totally stuffed and exhausted after all the hullabaloo of Christmas Day. The festivities were so much more exciting than they ever dreamed they'd be.

Then they heard a shout! It was Tauntz and the tauntzlets. The little ones were bouncing with glee at the base of the owl box. "Look!" they exclaimed! "Santa came! Look what he brought me!"

Hobby said, "Santa brung me a firetruck." Jamie said, "Santa brung me a stuff animal." Andy said, "Santa brung me some bobble heads." Adam said, "Santa brung me a movie."

Tauntz said, "Santa brung me a cell phone so I can call for help the next time McGee tries to take me away." Then the owlets said . . .

"I got pocket gophers, and a CD about us." Molly said, "Let's go around the owl box and show what we got from Santa." Max, being the oldest was first. He said . . .

"I got the best stocking gift ever! Lots of lottery tickets and the winnings would be for a permanent new house in Carlos' backyard - but . . .

first we have to win, and see if Carlos and Donna will let us make the owl box permanent. We should have some dinner and discuss it. I made snake gravy over gopher giblets with worm cranberry juice, chilled with our emergency snow. Could you help me serve?" . . .

Just then, Tauntz said, "Well, I'd like to see what else is in my stocking. Let me look. Whoa, kidz and Mrs. Tauntz, check this out! It's a wingless video recorder, very small. Guess what we are going to do?" . . .

"We are going to film Ashley's wedding. I can't wait. I think Vacadude's chatters will be amazed at what we did and no one will miss a thing. What do ya' think

about that?" Just then . . .

Wesley opened her stocking and found something that made everyone jump for joy! It was a new camera for the owlbox that will never breakdown and 2 new computers for Carlos so he wouldn't have to worry while filming in the spring. All the other owls in the box . . .

were hoping that Carlos would still be filming. The owlets noticed the huge white tent in the yard. They flew in the opening and saw how pretty it was decorated. They were wondering if maybe they could add a few more decorations when all of a sudden . . .

they saw Carlos walking hand in hand with Donna coming toward the tent. They stepped through the tent door and did not see the owlets watching. Donna looked into Carlos' eyes and leaned close, whispering . . .

"Don't you wish we'd invited all the chatters to the wedding? What wedding doesn't need 1000's of owl maniacs?" Carlos gave Donna a hug and told her, "But I would have needed a lot more tents - I don't know if enough would fit in the yard! And Austin can't do a video, because he's participating in the ceremony. If only there was someone nearby with a video camera." And just then . . .

it started to rain. Then Max said, "Everybody inside! I HATE rain!" Then all of a sudden . . .

Vacadude arrived with a videorecorder. While things were being set up, the owlets showed the wedding guests all of their gifts. The gifts inside the owlets' stockings included a beautiful family photo of Molly, McGee and the owlets and some delicious marinated rabbit. By this time the wedding ceremony was ready to begin . . .

but the owlets noticed all of the other beautiful gifts inside the tent! "Are these ours too?" all the owlets asked. Like the little children they are, they thought that . . .

all the gifts were for them. Oddly enough, they decided to sit with their gifts until the wedding was over and then they could all tell what they had gotten.

Carrie was missing the wedding festivities because she was still opening her stocking. At that very moment, a shriek came from the owl box because Carrie had received in her stocking one of her favorite things . . .

a muzzle so she could shut Wes up with all her whining. "Yes, Wes still whines all the time," she thought, "and I've had enough. Mom, can you please put this over Wesley's nose?" Then . . .

Carrie looked deeper into her stocking and noticed rat parts, rabbit's feet, which are lucky you know, and other delicacies. Carrie remembers the true meaning of Christmas and decides to share her goodies with Ashley who is pouting in the corner with her empty stocking. Carrie wonders . . .

where everyone else is. Suddenly they hear a loud cry from Papa McGee coming from the wedding tent! "Everyone to The Owl Box for one last gift from Mama Molly that could not fit in the stockings!"

All the owlets flew to the Owl Box. In the corner was an Easter Basket filled with eggs. The owlets looked at Molly and said,

"Mom? Are these our new brothers and sisters?"

Molly said "Yes! Aren't they adorable?" All the kidz ooohed and ahhhed and petted the eggs affectionately. Then Wesley, who had finally gotten to the bottom of her stocking, said, "You guys shouldn't . . .

be so mean to me, because I did something nice for you. I heard that owls in the far north eat lots of lemmings, so I asked Santowl to bring us each one to try - and he did! I hope you all found yours in your stockings!" Then . . .

they all turned to the basket because they could hear the faint pipping sound. "A hole! It's being born right now! This is better than what's in our stockings, we now will have . . .

chickens?? These are chicken eggs! MOM!!!"

Molly pulled out a stocking that she had been hiding. "Look here!" she exclaimed. "There's one more stocking we didn't check out! I wonder what could be in it?" She smiled coyly and

handed the stocking to McGee and said, "Why don't you check it out?" McGee reached into the very bottom of the stocking and pulled out . . .

four beautiful white eggs! He looked at Molly with adoration in his eyes and said, "This is the perfect ending to a perfect year . . . and a perfect beginning to a whole new year!"

THE END

Max Makes a New Year's Resolution

Max awoke on New Year's Day to find Carrie and Wesley twirling crazily all around the owl box. They were spinning like tops, bouncing off the walls and each other, giggling the whole time.

Max looked at them askance and asked, "WHAT are you doing??" Carrie said, "We're making our New Year's Revolutions." Max again asked, "WHAT?" Wesley went on to explain . . .

We heard Donna telling Carlos that she didn't plan on making any revolutions for New Year's this day. We thought that if she wasn't going to, maybe we should revolve for her so . . .

Max said, "You silly birds! You're supposed to make resolutions! Not revolutions!" So Carrie said, "I'm going to put take care of Carlos." Then Wesley said, "My New Years Revolutions for Donna would be to take Carlos on a trip." Then Max said . . .

"Now wait! You are supposed to make your own revolutons/resolutions - not resolutions for other people! Mine for me would be to help mom clean out the gag shag. So, Pattison, now it is your turn - what is yours?" Pattison turned to everyone and said "You know we have all those chatters out there that have watched us for a long time, my resolution would be for all to be in good health and to be happy." Pattison turned to Austin and gave him a wink . . . "Austin think really hard about yours . . ."

Max said, "OK, guys. Since it is revolutions, we owls should all take Donna and Carlos on a revolution around the world. We owls could fly them around the world, but first, we must . . .

Wesley woke up and said, "I think we need to get a dictionary. Some of us owls do not seem to understand the difference between revolutions and resolutions. Look, the baby girls are still twirling around! My resolution is to try to wake up when someone from my family nudges me. Ashley! Ashley! Stop twirling! What do you want your resolution to be?"

Max says " If you had paid attention in class instead of watching "Commander

Hork & the Killer Millepedes" you'd know the difference between revolutions and resolutions, silly."

Max tried to explain that a resolution is to "resolve" or change something from bad to good, something they had done in the past and make it better. Like stop teasing Tauntz and help Molly around the house. But just then . . .

Carrie stopped twirling to ask for some coffee, coffee, coffee and a donut. Max asked Carrie, "What is your resolution for this year?" Carrie said, "I will work on sleeping and demanding food less." Max acknowledged Carrie's resolutions with a nod and then . . .

she said "That's better, Carrie. You are our dear baby sister and we love you, but it's good that you're thinking about acting more grown up. You know, since I'm the oldest, maybe my resolution should be to set the best example I can for all you younger kidz, especially Ashley and Carrie. But then Austin piped up.

Austin said, "Wesley should be the one to give the example since she was the last one out. She can relate to Carrie wanting to be taken care of but now she is enjoying her freedom. Wesley would be a great example of how to "leave the nest" when you really don't want to because you like it there."

All the little owls put their heads together and decided that they should defer to Max, the wise one. Max re-stated that they should resolve to make their world a better place by helping other little owlets learn how to be on their own. Then Max, shouted, . . .

"Look gutz!! It's Daddy McGee coming in with a treat!" McGee flew down and looked at his brood. "Well, little ones," he said, "you will learn to make resolutions for sure. My first resolution was to . . .

help you guys hunt and my second resolution is . . .

to make sure Molly is safe and secure in our box and that we will wait to have any more little ones until Carlos and Donna have all the new equipment up for all the chatters to watch and then

to teach you all the ABC's (which "may" include the birds and bees) in fledge and spirit, as we are all together sheltered under the Magic Feather."

Molly flew in asked, "Are you hungry? I am ready to give another hunting lesson." The owlets all cheered, flapped their wings and said . . .

"Mama, what is your resolution? Is it to take care of us the rest of our lives? Is it to shred and feed us every meal?" Molly said, "You will always be my little babies, but in fact, you are growing up. Daddy McGee and I have a few more hunting lessons to teach you. Then Max will need to step in for the little ones to learn to be away from the box. But you are welcome home whenever you want, but I will NOT be shredding your food any longer. Do you understand?" Carrie sobbed and said . . .

"Mom, you're the best, we love you so much!" Then Ashley piped up and said, "My resolution is to lose weight and to share my mousies with others - every time I walk across the floor it squeals!

Yes, I found a reflector glass that the two-leggers had and saw that my talons were getting a little thick, so I shall swear off the Snake Gravy for at least one year....uh...(thinking)...maybe a year is too long, ...ok a few months.....alright, alright....one month. NO SNAKE GRAVY !!" McGee chimed in, laughing, and decided he would join Molly with her resolution and then . . .

all the young adult owls chimed in that they too would be more conscientious about not wasting food. While Molly, McGee and their young adult children were discussing new year's resolutions, Carlos came out the back door.

Wesley said, "I think we've done a really good job of coming up with good resolutions. But look - here comes Carlos! Shall we see what he thinks of what we have so far?" The owl family all agreed, so they sent Austin down to bring Carlos over to the Owl Box. Then . . .

"Look! There's our Man!" the owlets said! Carlos put his finger gently to his lips. "Donna is sleeping," he said. "But one more thing . . . This box will always be your home.. but what would you like for a gift in 2011? My gift in 2011 would be for serenity - calm skies."

With that, Max flew out of the owlbox and made one REvolution around the Royal's backyard, winking as he passed the camera. Returning to the owlbox, he puffed up his chest and said, "We should all remember the chatters who made us famous world-wide and resolve to continue to entertain them." With that, the other owlets screeched," . . .

"We resolve to wear mohawks, tutus, stand on one talon, sing songs without screeching, and last of all, let the chatters who love us keep on loving us."

Carlos looked at Donna and said, "You know, the owls have given me a good idea. I don't usually make New Year's Resolutions, but this year I'm going to. I resolve to

continue to share the adventures of Molly and her brood(s) with the world and to also provide owl boxes for any who want them so that no owls will ever go homeless."

Donna smiled at Carlos with adoration streaming from her eyes and said, "Is it any wonder I fell in love with you all those years ago? I'll make a resolution too.

I resolve to be the best grandma (and someday great-grandma) that I can - to the whole world!"

THE END

On Writing and Story Telling . . .

In good writing, words become one with things.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Writers aren't exactly people.... they're a whole bunch of people trying to be one person.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Keep in mind that the person to write for is yourself. Tell the story that you most desperately want to read.

Susan Isaacs

Writing is a socially acceptable form of schizophrenia.

E.L. Doctorow

I love writing. I love the swirl and swing of words as they tangle with human emotions.

James Michener

Writing is my time machine, takes me to the precise time and place I belong.

Jeb Dickerson, www.howtomatter.com

To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the inner music the words make.

Truman Capote

