

The Wishing Elf

By

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The Wishing Elf  
(a short story by Wesley Tallant)

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EXT. CAR - WINDING COUNTRY ROAD - SUNNY FALL AFTERNOON

The sun shined bright in the blue autumn sky as the Thompson family drives along the winding mountain road. The air is cool. Leaves on trees have started turning fall colors.

BILL THOMPSON (aged 32) sits behind the steering wheel.

RUTH THOMPSON (aged 30) sits in the passenger side front seat.

ANDREA THOMPSON (aged 6) sits in the back seat.

Andrea, strains her neck to see through the window at the passing scenery.

Ruth, a city child, seems bored at first, but soon begins to wonder about what it was like for her husband Bill, to grow up in these mountains.

BILL  
(pointing)  
There's the McMurtry Farm

Bill points to a rundown farmhouse with a barn behind it as they drive by. The barn has a door hanging off its hinges.

BILL  
Old Mr. McMurtry used to grow some of the biggest juiciest water melons around. People would come from everywhere to get one of his melons. I wish we had one now.

They drive a little further down the road. They pass a small country store in need of a paint job. It has one gas pump in front of it. An old soda machine sits on the front porch. A bench sits beside the door.

BILL  
(pointing at the store)  
We used to sit for hours and drink cold soda-pop in the shade of that porch. I wonder if they still gather on saturday night and play music like we used to do.

They drive pass a small white church and cemetery. Ruth notices a single tear run down Bill's cheek, caused by the thought of his mother and relatives being buried there. Ruth hands him a tissue.

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Further down the road, they turn of onto a dirt road that leads them into the forest of trees. Another mile and they turn into the driveway of a small, single story frame house. The house is white with blue trim. A single oak tree grows in the front yard. A picnic table and bench sit under the tree.

Ruth turns around and speaks to Andrea

RUTH

Remember sweetie, this is your first time here. These people are family. you be nice.

ANDREA

Yes, maam.

EXT. - FRONT PORCH OF HOUSE - AFTERNOON

ANDREW THOMPSON (aged 60) swings in the porch swing. He stands as they drive up the driveway. Bill brings the car to a stop and opens the door.

ANDREW

Been expecting you all day long.

Bill, Ruth, and Andrea exit the car. Andrew walks down the steps and shakes hands with Bill.

PEGGY THOMPSON (aged 40) bursts from the front door and comes running out. She grabs Bill and hugs him tight. He fakes a gasp for air. He struggles to break free. Andrew and Ruth hug.

BILL

Peggy, Andrew.

PEGGY

Ruth, how nice to see you again.

The two women hug.

Andrea is hiding behind her father. Bill steps aside and urges her forward.

BILL

And this is Andrea.

Peggy kneels in front of Andrea.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

Hello Andrea. My name is Peggy.

Peggy holds out her hand and Andrea timidly shakes it.

PEGGY

We're going to have such fun this week.

Andrea releases Peggy's hand and grasps her father's hand.

ANDREW

Dad's inside waiting for you. We'll get your luggage later. Come on in.

They walk up the steps and Andrew holds the door open. A large sofa sits against one wall, a small TV sits on a table across from the sofa, and in the corner is an upholstered chair upon which sits eighty two year old William Thompson, Grandpa.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

WILLIAM THOMPSON (age 82) is sitting in his chair in the corner of the living room.

Bill leads Andrea up to him.

BILL

Andrea, this is your grandpa.

Adrea holds out her small hand.

ANDREA

Nice to meet you, sir.

William, while old in years, has excellent eyesight. A single tear rolls down his cheek as he holds Andrea's hand.

ANDREA

What's wrong, Grandpa?

WILLIAM

You look just like your grandmother. She was named Andrea, too.

William reaches for a photo beside his chair on a side table. He hands it to Andrea. The photo is William and his wife, Andrea, at their wedding.

Bill looks at the photo and then at his daughter. A tear rolls down his cheek as he too sees the resemblance.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

She passed away right before you  
were born.

Bill kneels beside Andrea.

BILL

I came to her funeral by myself  
because your mother was to close to  
you being born to travel.

Andrea smiles and hands the photo back to her grandfather.  
She knows they will be good friends.

INT. - BED ROOM - MORNING

Andrea, in the bed where she slept with her mother and  
father, rubbing the sleep from her eyes, hears a knock at  
the front door.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

WANDA

Yoo hoo, anybody home.

Bill comes to the door from a room in the back of the house.  
He recognizes the woman at the door and holds his arms out.

BILL

Wanda.

WANDA WITHERS (age 42) enters the house followed by her two  
children. JOSEPH WITHERS (age 13) and ELLEN WITHERS (age 11).

Wanda hugs Bill. Bill looks out the door and turns back to  
Wanda.

BILL

Where's James?

WANDA

He has to work, Something happened  
at one of the out of state plants  
and he had to go take care of it.  
He says to tell you hi.

She reaches down and places her hands on her children's  
shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

WANDA

You remember Joseph and Ellen?

Wanda turns and urges her two children forward.

BILL

Sure I do. But the last time I saw them they weren't quite this big.

Bill reaches down and shakes hands with Joseph and then Ellen.

BILL

You're what, thirteen now?

JOSEPH

Yes, sir.

BILL

Then that must make Ellen, what, eleven?

Ruth enters the living room.

RUTH

Hello, Wanda.

Wanda gives Ruth a friendly hug and backs away.

WANDA

Ruth, how are you.

Before Ruth can answer Wanda, Bill sees Andrea standing in the doorway to the bedroom. He steps over and ushers her up to her aunt.

BILL

Andrea, this is your Aunt Wanda and her kids, Joseph and Ellen.

Wanda bends down and studies Andrea's face.

WANDA

Why she looks just like....

BILL

We know. Dad was the first to see the resemblance.

Wanda stands back up.

WANDA

Where is Dad?

BILL

In the kitchen drinking his coffee with Andrew.

WANDA

Has Elizabeth been over yet?

BILL

No, but I talked to her on the phone last night. They'll be over tomorrow. It's too bad Tommy couldn't be here. I hear he was promoted to major last month.

WANDA

Yes, the Army sure has been good for him. He's no longer the trouble maker he was around here.

William yells from the kitchen.

WILLIAM

Wanda, is that you?

WANDA

Yes Dad.

WILLIAM

Well get in here and give your old man a hug.

WANDA

I'm talking to Bill, Dad.

WILLIAM

Well say what you want to say and get in here.

Wanda looks and sees William's cane leaning against the big chair in the corner. She whispers to Bill.

WANDA

The old coot, he knows he's supposed to use that cane to get around. He's going to fall again one of these days and hurt himself.

BILL

Now sis, it's my fault. I helped him into the kitchen this morning. Don't get mad at him.

(CONTINUED)

Wanda pats Bill on the shoulder and walks to the kitchen.  
Ruth takes Andrea by the hand and leads her to the bedroom.

RUTH  
Come on sweety, let's get you  
dressed.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

ELIZABETH MONROE (age 46) comes in the door without knocking.

BOB MONROE (age 45) follows her in and their son JEFF  
MONROE (age 16) is following him.

ELIZABETH  
Where is everybody?

ANDREW  
We're in the kitchen. Come on back,  
Sis.

Elizabeth, the oldest sister, enters the kitchen followed by  
her son Jeff and her husband Bob.

Bill, Ruth, Andrea, William, and Andrew are sitting at the  
table eating breakfast. Bill rises to greet his sister.

BILL  
Morning, Sis.

ELIZABETH  
You get over here and hug me, you  
rascal. You go away to college and  
only come back for one visit six  
years ago. There had better be lots  
of hugs saved up in your arms.

Bill and Elizabeth hug and separate. Bill reaches his hand  
out for Bob to shake. Elizabeth walks around the table and  
hugs William.

BILL  
How are you doing, Bob?

BOB  
Not bad, now that we have gotten  
the mine safety...

Elizabeth turns to Bob and interrupts him.

ELIZABETH

Bob, I told you no business talk while Bill is here. He doesn't want to hear about your old coal mine.

BOB

Might I remind that that old coal mine is what puts clothes on your back and all those rings on you fingers.

Elizabeth waves him off and returns her attention to the people sitting at the table.

ELIZABETH

Hello, Ruth. And this must be little Andr...

She stops in midword when she sees how much Andrea looks like her own mother.

ELIZABETH

Oh my, the pictures you sent do her no justice, she could be mother's twin.

BILL-

Dad pointed that out yesterday when we got here.

Bill turns to Andrea.

BILL

Andrea, say hello to your Aunt Elizabeth, Uncle Bob, and Cousin Jeff.

ANDREA

Hello.

Andrea waves to them, eats her last piece of bacon and turns to Ruth.

ANDREA

May I be excused now?

RUTH

Yes dear. Don't forget to wash your face. You have pancake syrup all over it.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

Yes, maam.

Andrea leaves the room.

Andrew stands.

ANDREW

Anybody want more coffee?

BILL

I'll take a warm up.

ANDREW

Liz, Bob, Ruth?

RUTH

No thank you.

ELIZABETH

Andrew, I told you not to call me  
that. My name is  
Elizabeth.

Andrew pours coffee for himself and Bill.

ANDREW

It was Liz up until you married Bob  
and he inherited the coal mine from  
his uncle. To me, it will be Liz  
until the day I die.

BILL

Elizabeth, you know the more you  
fight him over it, the more he'll  
call you that just to make you mad.

WILLIAM

All the troubles in the world and  
you two bicker about a name. If  
your momma was here now...

William's voice cracks. The others fall silent.

WILLIAM

Six years she's been gone and I  
still...

William wipes a tear from his cheek and looks around his  
chair.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM  
My cane. Where's my cane.

Ruth picks it up from the floor.

RUTH  
Here it is Mister Thompson.

WILLIAM  
Thank you, Ruth. But please, call  
me Dad.

RUTH  
Dad.

William stands to leave the room.

WILLIAM  
I'll be in my chair in the front  
room if anybody needs me.

Andrew reaches to take his father's arm.

ANDREW  
Dad, let me help you.

WILLIAM  
I been getting around this house by  
myself for sixty two years. I can  
make it another minute to get to my  
chair.

William leaves the kitchen.

BOB  
How long are you going to be here?

BILL  
Just a few days. I've got to get  
back and work. Since they made me  
partner in the company, it seems I  
work just that much more.

BOB  
I know what you mean. When Uncle  
Elroy owned the mine, the hardest  
job I had was to look busy. But  
now...

Elizabeth taps Bob on the shoulder.

ELIZABETH

Bob, you'd better get going if your going to get Jeff to that party on time.

BOB

Yeah, well I may not get to see you again, Bill, so come on back sooner.

Bill and Bob shake hands.

BILL

We will.

Bob and Jeff leave.

The conversation in the kitchen fades.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - WILLIAM'S CHAIR - MORNING

William walks to his chair and sits down. He sees through the window that Andrea is swinging in the porch swing. Bob and Jeff walk by and wave on the way out the door.

BOB

See you later Mr. Thompson.

William waves back with a look of contempt on his face. He picks up the TV remote and turns the TV on.

WILLIAM

Yeah, later.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Wanda has returned with her children and is helping Ruth, Peggy, and Elizabeth in cooking supper in the kitchen. William is sitting in his chair. Bill and Andrew are sitting at the picnic table under the old oak tree. William sees Andrea sitting in the swing. Wanda's two children are riding bikes up and down the dirt road.

WILLIAM

Andrea, come in here.

Andrea turns to see William gesturing to her. She gets down from the swing and slowly walks into the house.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM

You look kind of lonely out there.  
Nobody to play with, huh.

ANDREA

No, sir.

WILLIAM

Well, climb up here on this chair  
with me and I'll tell you a secret  
that only a few people know.

Andrea climbs up and sits on the arm of the big over stuffed chair.

William points out the window to the tree under which Bill and Andrew are sitting on the picnic table bench.

WILLIAM

Do you see that tree out there?

ANDREA

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM

Well that tree is full of 'em.

ANDREA

Full of what, Grandpa?

WILLIAM

Why, it's full of elves. Wishing  
Elves to be exact.

ANDREA

I've never heard of Wishing Elves  
before. Isn't an elf an elf?

William sits upright.

WILLIAM

Why, of course not. There are all  
kinds of elves. Santa's workshop is  
full of Christmas Elves. Then  
there's the shoe making elves,  
Leprechauns, and the elves that  
look after the forests of the  
world. But these are called Wishing  
Elves.

(CONTINUED)

Andrea looks out the window at the tree again and returns her gaze to William.

ANDREA

What do they do, Grandpa?

WILLIAM

Why, they go all over the world and grant wishes.

ANDREA

To everyone.

WILLIAM

Oh, no. Only to children who are in need of a wish granted.

ANDREA

Why?

WILLIAM

Because children are special to them. Grown ups can't see or hear them, but on special occasions, children can.

ANDREA

But you're a grown up, how do you know that they live there?

WILLIAM

Because I found one once.

Andrea opens her mouth to ask a question. William holds up his hand to stop her.

WILLIAM

I know, I know. If I'm a grown up, how did I see him? Well, he was only an Apprentice Wishing Elf. He wasn't very good with his elf magic yet. His name was Peter.

ANDREA

Like the rabbit?

WILLIAM

Yes, like the rabbit. But of no relation of course.

Andrea smiles and giggles.

WILLIAM

Well, anyway, like I said, he wasn't very good with his magic yet. One day, years ago, I was sitting on that bench right there where your daddy is sitting now, and Peter just fell right into my lap.

ANDREA

Wow, what happened then?

WILLIAM

Well I had never seen anyone as small as him before. He was less than two feet tall, had on a brown shirt, green pants, and yellow shoes. On top of his head was a little pointy green hat and on his forehead was two little bumps, one over each eye.

ANDREA

What were those for, Grandpa?

WILLIAM

Well now just slow down and I'll get to that. Now, where was I? Oh yea, now I had never seen anything like him before and I could tell he was scared of me. Well we just sat there a bit, neither one of us knowing what to do.

William puts his index fingers up to his temples.

WILLIAM

All of a sudden, he puts his fingers up to the side of his head, like this, squints his eyes and grunts. But nothing happens. He opens his eyes, looks around and does it again. But still nothing happens. Then he spoke. 'You're not going to eat me are you?' 'Why shucks no,' I answered, 'What are you anyway?'

Andrea giggles.

ANDREA

He's a Wishing Elf.

William makes like he's upset.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

Now just who's telling this story,  
me or you.

Andrea giggles some more.

ANDREA

You are, Grandpa.

WILLIAM

Well, OK. Then he says, 'My name is  
Peter. I'm a Wishing Elf, well,  
Apprentice Wishing Elf anyway.'

William leans closer to Andrea and says in a lower voice.

WILLIAM

I think he may have been a little  
embarrassed about that part,  
because he lowered his head when he  
said that.

William straightens back up.

WILLIAM

'Apprentice Wishing Elf? What's  
that?' I asked. That's when he told  
me of how they go all over the  
world granting wishes for special  
children with special needs. He  
told me that that old tree has been  
their headquarters for over ten  
thousand years. And as long as they  
live there, it will never die.

Andrea looks out the window at the tree again.

ANDREA

Wow.

WILLIAM

Then I asked him about those two  
bumps on his forehead. He lowered  
his head again and said, 'That's  
why I'm only an Apprentice Elf. I  
haven't earned my antennae yet and  
I've been trying for over two  
hundred years.'

Andrea follows William's story with amazement.

WILLIAM

'Wait a minute,' I said. 'I've never heard of an elf with antennae before.' 'We're the only ones that have them,' he said, 'We use them to find the children that need a wish granted.' 'But for over two hundred years?' I asked. 'How old are you?'

Ruth looks in to see andrea sitting on William's lap and smiles. She returns to the kitchen.

WILLIAM

'I'm only two hundred and eighty five.' he says. 'But other elves have earned their antennae in a lot less time. I'm just not very good with my magic and it's not from the lack of trying. I practice every day. The best way to earn them is to find a child that needs a wish granted. The Head Elf says I'm not very lucky at finding such a child. I wish there was a Wishing Elf for Wishing Elves.'

Andrea giggles some more.

WILLIAM

'Well, you just hang in there. I'm sure that some day you'll find that child and become a full fledged Wishing Elf. Now, how do we get you back into that tree?' I asked. 'Just put me on that limb right there. There's a magical door I can use to get back in.' So I put him on that tree limb, you see the very one right over your father's head. He felt around a bit, then he waved bye, and walked right into the tree and disappeared.

ANDREA

Wow, do you think he's still there?

WILLIAM

He did say that it was their head quarters and as long as they were there, the tree would live for ever. And all those leaves on it look mighty green to me.

(CONTINUED)

Andrea jumps from the chair and runs to the door saying.

ANDREA  
I'm going to go look for him.

WILLIAM  
If you find him, say hi for me.

Andrea turns around at the front door.

ANDREA  
I sure will, Grandpa.

William smiles and settles back into his chair.

Peggy enters the room.

PEGGY  
What's going on in here?

WILLIAM  
Just telling Andrea about the  
Wishing Elf.

Peggy smiles in remembrance of younger days and returns to the kitchen.

EXT. - UNDER TREE - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrea is walking in circles around the tree looking up into its limbs. Bill and Andrew watching her.

BILL  
What are you looking for, Andrea?

ANDREA  
I'm looking for Wishing Elves.  
Grandpa says they live up there.

Andrea continues to walk around the tree looking up.

Bill leans over to Andrew and speaks just above a whisper.

BILL  
Do you remember when dad told us  
that story?

ANDREW  
Yeah, I think he still believes in  
them to this day.

The two men chuckle.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Andrea, come over here and sit with Uncle Andrew and me.

ANDREA

But I want to find the Wishing Elf. Grandpa says his name is Peter.

Andrea climbs onto the bench beside her father.

BILL

Your grandpa told me about Peter when I was a little boy. I spent a lot of time looking for him.

ANDREW

Your father even climbed up into the tree many times looking for him.

ANDREA

Did you find him? Grandpa says there's a magical door by that limb there.

Andrea points into the tree.

BILL

No, I never did find him. Maybe I just never needed a wish granted. But then, I've got you and your mother, maybe I did get a wish granted after all.

Andrea hugs her father's neck.

BILL

You go on, see if you can find him.

Andrea jumps from the bench and continues her search around the tree.

EXT. - FRONT PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Ruth steps out the door onto the porch and calls out.

RUTH

Bill, Andrea, Andrew, come on in now, supper's ready. Joseph, Ellen, you, too.

EXT. - FRONT LAWN - UNDER TREE - LATE AFTERNOON

Bill and Andrew stand up. Andrew walks toward the house. Andrea continues circling the tree looking up into its branches. Jeff and Ellen ride into the yard and lay the bikes down and enter the house.

BILL

Come on Andrea. Time to eat.

ANDREA

What about Peter?

BILL

I'm sure they've got food inside the tree. Come on now, time to get washed up. You can look for him again tomorrow.

Andrea follows her father towards the house.

ANDREA

Alright. But I'll find him before we leave. Just you watch and see.

Bill reaches down and takes Andrea's hand.

BILL

I'm sure you will.

Andrea turns and takes one final look at the tree before entering the house.

INT. - LIVING ROOM -MID MORNING

Elizabeth has returned with her son Jeff. The grown ups are in the living room talking. Jeff is sitting in the porch swing. Andrea is circling the tree looking into its branches.

EXT. - FRONT LAWN - UNDER TREE - MID MORNING

Jeff gets up and walks over and takes a seat on the picnic table bench.

JEFF

What are you doing?

Andrea stops and looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

I'm looking for Peter the Wishing Elf. Grandpa says he lives in the tree.

Jeff laughs.

JEFF

You little simpleton, there's no such thing as elves.

Andrea scowls at Jeff and places her hands on her hips.

ANDREA

There is too. Grandpa says so.

JEFF

That old man is as crazy as you are. There is no such a thing as Wishing Elves.

ANDREA

There is so. If Grandpa says there is, then there is.

JEFF

That's just a story that old man made up in his head. I tell you, he's crazy.

Jeff makes circles around his ear with a finger.

Andrea pouts, a tear begins to roll down her cheek. She turns and runs towards the house.

Jeff sits under the tree smiling as he watches Andrea run into the house.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - MID MORNING

Bill, Ruth, Andrew, William, and Elizabeth are talking. Andrea bursts in the door crying and climbs into Ruth's lap.

RUTH

What's the matter, Sweetie?

ANDREA

Jeff says there is no such thing as Wishing Elves and that Grandpa is crazy.

Andrea buries her face in Ruth's shoulder, sobbing.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Andrea, come over here and sit with me.

Andrea climbs down from her mother's lap, sobbing, and goes to sit by her father on the sofa.

BILL

Some people think that because you can't see something, that means it doesn't exist. But that's not true. You can't see the air, but you can feel the wind. You can't see love, but you can feel it in your heart.

Andrea slowly stops sobbing as she listens to Bill.

BILL

Jeff is one of those people who have to see proof before he will believe something exists.

WILLIAM

Listen to your father.

William winks at Andrea and points his finger at himself and then at Andrea several times.

WILLIAM

You and me, we believe in them elves, don't we?

Andrea smiles at William and wipes a tear from her face.

ANDREA

Yes, Grandpa.

WILLIAM

Good, then you just go on and look for them elves and pay no mind to that boy.

Andrea gets off the couch and goes back out to the tree.

William scowls at Elizabeth.

WILLIAM

He's just a spoiled brat.

Elizabeth opens her mouth in shock but says nothing. Andrew tries not to giggle at Elizabeth.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH

Well she's going to learn some day  
that those type of things don't  
exist.

Bill looks scornfully at Elizabeth.

BILL

And when it comes that time it  
should be Ruth or me to tell her.

WILLIAM

You give that boy way too much  
attention. He's just a spoiled  
brat.

Elizabeth stands, grabs her purse and storms out the door.

William yells at Elizabeth as she walks out the door.

WILLIAM

And he's a bully, too

Elizabeth can be heard yelling to her son as she walks  
across the yard to her car.

ELIZABETH

Get in the car, Jeff. We're going  
home.

Andrew can no longer hold it in and bursts out laughing.

INT. - KITCHEN TABLE - MORNING

The family is sitting at the breakfast table. Andrea is  
pouting and picking at her plate.

ANDREA

Do we have to go home today?

RUTH

Yes, dear. Daddy has to work  
tomorrow. You knew we would be  
leaving today.

ANDREA

But I haven't found Peter yet.

BILL

We won't be leaving for another  
hour or so. You have until then to  
look for him.

(CONTINUED)

Bill pats Andrea on the back.

WILLIAM  
(leaning towards Andrea)  
Tell you what, you get me my cane  
and I'll go look for him with you.

Andrea smiles at William.

ANDREA  
Okay, Grandpa.

Andrea jumps from her seat at the table and runs into the living room and returns with William's cane.

ANDREA  
Here you go, Grandpa.

William struggles to stand while using the cane.

BILL  
You need any help, Dad?

WILLIAM  
To tell you the truth, this little girl has made me feel ten years younger.

William looks at Andrea.

WILLIAM  
Let's go.

Andrea takes William's free hand and the two slowly make their way to the bench under the tree.

EXT. - BENCH - UNDER TREE - MID MORNING

WILLIAM  
Now let's just sit here and see if we can see him.

ANDREA  
When was the last time you saw him?

WILLIAM  
Oh, that was many years ago, even before Andrew was born. But, every now and then, I'll be sitting here and I will hear the leaves rustle, even when there's no wind.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA

Wow.

The two sit silently and look into the limbs of the tree.

EXT. - FRONT PORCH

Andrew, Bill and Ruth watch them from the front porch of the house. Andrew has his hand on Bill's shoulder.

ANDREW

He really does look better now than he has in some time. She's almost like a fountain of youth for him.

BILL

She is something.

The three turn and go back into the house. Ruth can be heard as they enter the door.

RUTH

Bill, you get the packing done and I'll clean up the mess in the kitchen.

ANDREW

Now, Ruth. You go help Bill. I can do the Kitchen by myself.

BILL

Are you trying to get rid of us that much faster?

The three laugh as they enter the house.

EXT. - DRIVEWAY - MID MORNING

Bill closes the trunk lid of the car after placing their suitcases in it. Andrea is still circling the tree. Bill and Ruth turn and start talking to Andrew, who is standing, and William, who is seated on the bench.

ANDREW

When are you coming back?

BILL

I've got a big contract that I'm working on. After I get it done I plan on taking some time off. So maybe in about six months or so, we'll be back.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH  
I'd love that.

BILL  
Well, bye Dad, Andrew. Give my best  
to Peggy, Wanda, and Elizabeth.

WILLIAM  
You take it easy on the way home.  
And take care of the little girl.

Ruth leans over and hugs William.

RUTH  
Bye Mr....Dad.

William hugs her back. Bill bends over and hugs his father.  
Ruth hugs Andrew.

BILL  
Andrea, come say goodbye to your  
grandpa. It's time to leave.

Andrea kicks at the dirt at the bottom of the tree and pouts  
as she walks over to hug William.

ANDREA  
Bye, Grandpa. Take care of that  
tree and keep an eye out for that  
Peter for me.

WILLIAM  
Well, I'm an old man now, but I'll  
get Andrew to help me. How does  
that sound?

Andrea smiles and looks at Andrew.

ANDREA  
That sounds OK.

Andrew squats down in front of Andrea.

ANDREW-  
You bet it does. I'll see to it  
that that old tree gets the best  
care in the world.

Andrea hugs Andrew's neck.

BILL  
Let's go. We've got a long drive  
ahead of us.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREA  
Bye, Grandpa.

Bill holds the back door of the car open as Andrea climbs in. Bill and Ruth take their seats in the front. Andrea is kneeling in the back seat looking out the rear window.

The car slowly rolls down the dirt road. Andrea is waving at William and Andrew when she sees something in the tree through the dust.

EXT. - TREE LIMB - MID MORNING

A tiny face is smiling at Andrea from behind a leaf. He lifts his tiny hand and waives good-bye.

INT. - CAR - MID MORNING

Andrea gasps and turns around.

ANDREA  
Daddy, I just saw peter.

Bill and Ruth smile at each other.

RUTH  
That's good, dear. Now turn around  
and fasten your seat belt.

ANDREA  
But I did. He's right there above  
Grandpa. And he waived at me.

BILL  
Okay, but your mom told you to  
buckle up. If you did see him,  
he'll still be there when we come  
back.

Andrea turns around, pouting, and sits down and buckles her seat belt.

ANDREA  
Okay.

INT. OF HOUSE - AFTERNOON

William is sitting in his chair watching TV. Andrew is on the couch reading a newspaper. The telephone rings. Andrew gets up and answers it.

ANDREW

Hello.

A look of fear comes over Andrew's face. William looks at him. Andrew hangs up the phone.

WILLIAM

Well, who was it?

ANDREW

There's been an accident, Dad.  
Bill's brakes failed on Jacob's  
Grade.

William turns off the TV.

WILLIAM

(his voice quivering with  
fear)

Well, what happened?

ANDREW

About half way down, the car left  
the road. It tumbled down a ravine.  
Bill has a broken leg and shoulder.  
Ruth is scratched up and has  
several bad cuts.

A tear comes to William's eye.

WILLIAM

And Andrea? What about my  
granddaughter?

Andrew swallows the lump that has grown in his throat.

ANDREW

(his voice shaking)

She's unconscious, dad. Her back is  
broken. And if she lives, she may  
never walk again.

William wipes away the tears that have grown in his eyes.

WILLIAM

You get down to that hospital. Keep  
me informed of everything those  
quack doctors do.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

What about you?

WILLIAM

I'll be fine. If I need anything  
I'll call Peggy. She's just down  
the road.

Andrew leaves through the front door. William watches as he drives away in an old beat up pick-up. He sits and stares out the window.

A look of remembrance comes over William's face as he turns his focus to the tree. He grabs his cane and struggles to stand. He makes his way out to the tree and looks up into the branches.

EXT. - UNDER THE TREE - AFTERNOON

WILLIAM

Peter....Peter....I know you can  
hear me Peter and I'm not going  
away until you come out and talk to  
me.

He pauses in his rant but nothing happens.

WILLIAM

Dad burn it, Peter. My  
granddaughter needs your help, so  
come on out here and talk to me.

He stands staring into the tree. Still no response.

WILLIAM

Peter, remember when you fell from  
the tree and I helped you get back  
in. Well, you owe me a favor now so  
come on out.

A leaf rustles in the tree. Peter appears at the same limb he disappeared from so many years before.

PETER the WISHING ELF (age 285, pointed ears, green and brown clothes)

WILLIAM

My granddaughter, her mother, and  
her father were in a bad accident.  
She's hurt real bad, Peter. If you  
want your antennae, now's the time.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

(looking down at his feet)  
We know about the accident. But  
there's nothing we can do until she  
wakes up.

WILLIAM

(pointing his finger at Peter)  
Peter, now you know there is the  
possibility that she won't wake up.

PETER

I know, but there is nothing we can  
do until she wakes up and makes the  
wish to live and walk again  
herself.

William sits down on the bench and thinks.

WILLIAM

Then what about me? Grant me a  
wish.

PETER

But you're an adult. We can't grant  
wishes to adults.

WILLIAM

What is an adult anyway? An adult  
is a person who doesn't believe in  
elves, isn't he, Peter?

The two stay silent for a second.

WILLIAM

Well I still believe in Santa  
Claus, the Tooth Fairy, the Easter  
Bunny, and such, don't I? Doesn't  
that make me a child at heart?

Peter rubs his chin in thought. He paces back and forth on  
the tree limb.

PETER

Wait here.

Peter disappears back into the tree. William sits and waits.

Peter reappears with a much older elf at his side that is  
dressed in gold trimmed clothes.

PHILIP the HEAD ELF (age 955, long gray beard and hair, gold  
trimmed clothes, large belly)

(CONTINUED)

PETER

William, this is Philip, the Head Elf. Tell him what you just told me.

WILLIAM

An adult is a person who doesn't believe in elves. But I do. How else can you explain me standing here talking to you?

Philip looks at Peter. His hands clasped behind his back.

PETER

A human feels only as old as their heart lets them feel. William must feel pretty young to be able to stand here and talk to us.

WILLIAM

She's my granddaughter and I just met her for the first time and I don't want it to be the only time. Can't you help me, please?

Philip looks at William, then at Peter, then back at William.

PHILIP

You're right. Adults, true adults, can't believe in us anymore because their hearts have outgrown us.

Philip looks between Peter and William several more times.

PHILIP

By golly, I'm the Head Elf. If anybody can change the rules, it's me. William, your wish will be granted. But, a wish of this size just might drain all the belief in us out of you.

WILLIAM

It'll be worth it for Andrea's sake. Thank you.

Philip then turns to Peter.

PHILIP

Peter, this can also do it for you. You can get your antennae with this wish, so don't blow it.

(CONTINUED)

Peter snaps to attention and salutes the head elf.

PETER

Yes, sir. You can count on me, sir.

Peter fades away.

PHILIP

I think he just might make it this time, if he doesn't get lost.

WILLIAM

Can I make my wish now?

Philip stands silent, looking off into the distance, as if listening for something. He smiles and points a finger at William.

PHILIP

Now.

William closes his eyes, holds his clasped hands up under his chin.

WILLIAM

I wish that Andrea will live and walk again, please.

William slumps forward as if he's tired.

Philip smiles and speaks.

PHILIP

Wish granted.

William looks around. Wonderment shows on his face as he tries to figure out how he got out from his chair and under the tree. He stands and slowly makes his way back to the house. From the front porch, he turns and looks back at the tree. He sees a small figure standing on a tree limb whose clothes are trimmed in gold. The figure waves as he fades away. William smiles, waves, chuckles, and enters the house.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Instruments and machines beep and whir around a bed that Andrea lies in. Outside the door, a doctor is talking to a bandaged Ruth and Andrew.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

DOCTOR

Her spine is separated just above her waist. It has badly bruised her spinal cord. Exactly how much damage has been done, we don't know. We're just a small country hospital. She needs to be taken to a hospital that can do some tests and give her the proper treatment that we can't do here. But, I'm afraid that if we move her, she will be paralyzed permanently.

ANDREW

Thanks, Doc.

Ruth cups her face in her hands and sobs. She leans into Andrews shoulder. The doctor and Andrew shake hands. The doctor walks away.

Andrew carefully sits the sobbing Ruth in a chair outside of the hospital room door.

Andrew then looks in at Andrea but doesn't see the tiny figure at the foot of her bed holding her big toe. He turns back to the nurses desk and picks up the phone.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Andrea blinks her eyes open and looks around. At the foot of the bed she sees a small figure. Peter removes his hand from Andrea's toe.

PETER

You'll be fine now.

ANDREA

What happened?

PETER

You were in a car wreck. Dreadful invention of modern man, cars. But you'll be OK now.

Peter begins to fade away and Andrea sees two new antennae as they begin to grow from the bumps on his head and she smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

33.

THE END