

The Old Man Who Thought He Was a Child

Once upon a winter long ago, there lived a very strange child.

He looked like a little boy on the inside—but on the outside, he looked like a very old man.

The old man-child lived in a grand palace with shiny floors and tall towers. Every morning he looked in the mirror and said,

“I am the nicest child in the world.”

As Christmas approached, he grew giddy with excitement.

“This year,” he declared, “Santa will bring me the greatest gift of all—the **Nobel Peace Prize!** I deserve it. No one has ever been nicer than me.”

He practiced his acceptance speech daily.

But Santa, who sees everything, knew the truth.

Santa had watched the old man-child shout, lie, take toys from others, and break promises. He had seen him push smaller children aside and laugh when they cried.

So when Christmas Eve came, Santa did **not** climb down the palace chimney.

The old man-child waited.

And waited.

And waited.

Morning came. No Santa. No prize.

Then came the worst news of all:

The Nobel Prize had been given to the old man-child’s **predecessor**—the one he hated most.

The palace shook with rage.

“This is unfair!” the old man-child roared.

“If I don’t get the prize I deserve, I will take Santa’s land! I will take his elves and his reindeer! I will invade the North Pole!”

He shook his fist at the sky and shouted:

“I will be naughty all the time now—just watch me!”

Then he laughed loudly and said,

“I already stole the Nobel medal and the prize money anyway. And don’t worry, Santa—I’ll donate it to the needy. You should see how much money I’ve drifted!”

He leaned closer to the chimney and whispered,

“You think I was bad last year? That was only a warm-up. This year I will take *your* job. I will decide who is good and who is naughty.”

“Seal your chimney,” he sneered,

“Because I’m coming for you.”

Far away, in the quiet North Pole, Santa shook his head sadly. The elves kept working. The reindeer slept peacefully. Christmas still came for those who were kind.

And the old man-child?

He grew older still—but never wiser.

Moral of the Story

**Do not pretend to be nice when you have money and power,
especially if you have been bad all your life.**

**In the end, you don’t get the prize—
you go down the chimney.**