

The Golden Gift

Christmas in anybody's mind is an exciting time of year, especially for the poor Riegel family. Two years ago, in 1920, Hans Riegel Senior had taken the risk of starting up his own candy business. Hans called his business HARIBO, an acronym of Hans Riegel of Bonn. At the time, Hans was producing hard colorful candies which his wife, Gertrude, would then deliver, in the basket of her bike, to customers. The company was doing well, but Hans knew he was going to need an edge on the market if he wanted to succeed in the candy business.

It was now two years later, and Christmas was only three weeks away. Hans Riegel Senior hadn't gotten his son, Hans Riegel Jr., anything yet! You see, Hans Senior was never good at buying gifts for his son, but this year he had promised himself that he was going to find the best present ever for his son. The next day, Hans Senior decided to take his son out for a walk in downtown Bonn, Germany, to find out what he actually wanted for Christmas. They had been walking forever, and Hans Jr. was complaining about his feet hurting. Hans Senior was beginning to lose hope in ever finding the perfect Christmas present for his son, when all of a sudden something happened.

Hans Jr. had stopped in front of a huge store window, and with eyes growing bigger by the second, he pointed up. There, in the center of the store window sat a giant Steiff teddy bear. It was chocolate brown with big black eyes and a beautiful, red bow tied around its neck. Steiff bears are the classic German teddy bear. If a German kid has a teddy bear, chances are it's a Steiff bear. Watching his son stare in awe at the bear, Hans Senior's heart broke as he realized that there was absolutely no way he could afford the bear. Hans Jr. had dreams that night that

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were filled with thoughts of himself opening his present on Christmas morning to find the Steiff bear of his dreams.

Over the past few weeks the Riegel family had been noticing a dramatic increase in the sales of gummy candies from competing companies. While Hans Senior wanted to try his hand at making gummy candies, he knew that if he was going to make gummies, he would need to add something special in order for people to buy his candy rather than anyone else's. His mind had been pondering the thought of making the gummies into some sort of shape. What shape? He had no idea what-so-ever. How about a circle or a triangle or a square? No, all of these were too boring and easy. After the night he went walking with his son, he knew exactly what would give him the competitive edge he needed.

The next morning Hans Senior stayed late after work in his small little workspace and started to experiment with making gelatin candy. It took awhile, but Hans Senior finally found the perfect combination of ingredients to make his gummies taste better than anyone else's. This formula has remained a family secret up until this very day, so no one can duplicate its taste exactly. Now, with the recipe perfected, Hans could begin to mold the gummy candy into the desired shape. To do this, Hans called up a friend of his and asked him to create a mold that he could pour the fruit-flavored gelatin into so that it would take the shape he wanted it to take.

Hans worked hard day and night to finish his creation that would become his son's Christmas present. Finally, the day came; it was Christmas morning, and the Riegel family had chopped down a large tree and placed it in the center of their house. It was decorated with bright white lights; red garland snaked its way down to the tree's trunk, and underneath the tree sat a single gift. The present was about two feet tall, was wrapped in brown paper, and there was a

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yellow bow sitting on top of it. Hans Jr.'s eyes lit up brighter than the sun as he saw that it was addressed to him. As soon as his father gave him the ok, Hans Jr. rushed over to the gift and ripped off the wrapping paper to find a two foot tall, yellow gummy candy staring up at him. The expression on the face of Hans Senior's son was priceless.

It was on that day, thanks to Hans Riegel Jr., that the HARIBO dancing bear (later the world famous Gold Bear) was born. The dancing bear (tanzbär) became so popular that year, that the Riegel family fortune grew tremendously. This was the best thing that had ever happened to the Riegel family, and it was all because of Hans Jr. and his love for teddy bears. In fact, the next year for Christmas, Hans Jr. received the teddy bear in the window of the shop that he had seen the year before. It was the very bear that had started the family fortune growing; it had gone from teddy bear to gummy bear.

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