

He was no Santa Claus. Besides it was only mid-July.

I was driving onto the driveway to my home and he was leaving the front entrance to my home. He was carrying two white garbage bags one in each hand, not one bag over the shoulder. He was no Santa. He was a Burglar.

Instead of BRINGING lots of toys and goodies; this scrawny guy was TAKING lots of toys and goodies from my home. "What are you doing," I said or yelled. "Ohhh," he uttered. "Do you need lawn service?" Then he took off, running across the street to his horse powered vehicle. No sleigh for this guy. The pace was too fast for me to catch the license registration. I got into my gasoline powered sleigh and gave chase. I lost him.

When I arrived home five, ten minutes later I called 911. When in July call the police. (The elves, at this time of year were sunning in Hawaii.) Soon the police were on the case. While police searched the neighborhood, a mild-mannered officer walked me through the house, room by room looking for empty spots where items once rested. Jewel cases were gone. All my jewelry was now in a new home crying, "Come find me." Rings, bracelets, necklaces no longer hung around my room.

"Didn't you hide them?" asked a friend later.

"No," I answered. "They were not worth thousands of dollars." Anyway where would I hide them? Not in the freezer, the burglar had rummaged in there and snatched only cold ice for his endeavors. Not in the dresser drawers, either. Nothing was sacred for this guy. He probably didn't even blush.

We looked, the officer and I, in the quilt room where a huge supply of fabric smiled at us. The wardrobe door stood open for all to see four shelves of sweet, colorful fabric pieces awaiting attention. Each folded yardage hugged each other as they laid in wait. "Well," says the officer, "He didn't like fabric."

All of the quilts in hiding in the other room stood at attention, too. Not a one was disturbed. "Well," I sighed. "At least my quilts are safe, thankfully."

Each day my husband and I discover a new empty spot. "Have you seen my camera?" he asks. "It was sitting right there. Oh no, the ..bleep got that, too." He also carried away electronic devices. He then tossed in a Japanese music /jewelry box which I put on layaway when I was ten years old. My \$5 bill put it on layaway in Kresses Varsity Store. Then, a few weeks later when I had another \$5 to pay off the debt the cherished music box was no longer at the store. When I started crying, the store sales lady informed me that my dad had come and paid it off. He was going to put it underneath the Christmas Tree. When I opened the gift a week later I acted surprised. When I opened the lid I really was surprised. My deposit of the first \$5 was inside the box. The 60 year old music box is lost, but my memories keep it close by me.

This was no "Christmas in July" Santa. This burglar was no Santa. But he brought back to me fond memories of my long ago loveable Santa Claus during the 1957 Christmas.

Lana Russ

