

KENNY'S CHRISTMAS

BY STEVE CONNOLLY
(Based on a true story)



He that bath two coats, let him impart to him that bath none (Luke 3:11).

One day as Christmastime approached, my parents announced that we were going to a drive-in movie. For a seven-year-old, this was very good news, but I thought I could make it even better.

“Can Kenny come too?” I asked. Kenny was my age and lived next door.

Dad smiled. “Of course, if it’s OK with his parents.”

I grew up in a small house in a small town. Mom and Dad often talked about struggling to get by on a teacher’s salary, but we must have been wealthy compared to Kenny’s family. When I invited him that afternoon, he was overjoyed.

I could tell that he seldom got to see a movie.

That night we drove up in front of Kenny’s house in our station wagon. When Dad honked the horn, Kenny came running out carrying a brown lunch bag spotted with grease stains.

“What’s in the bag?” I asked.

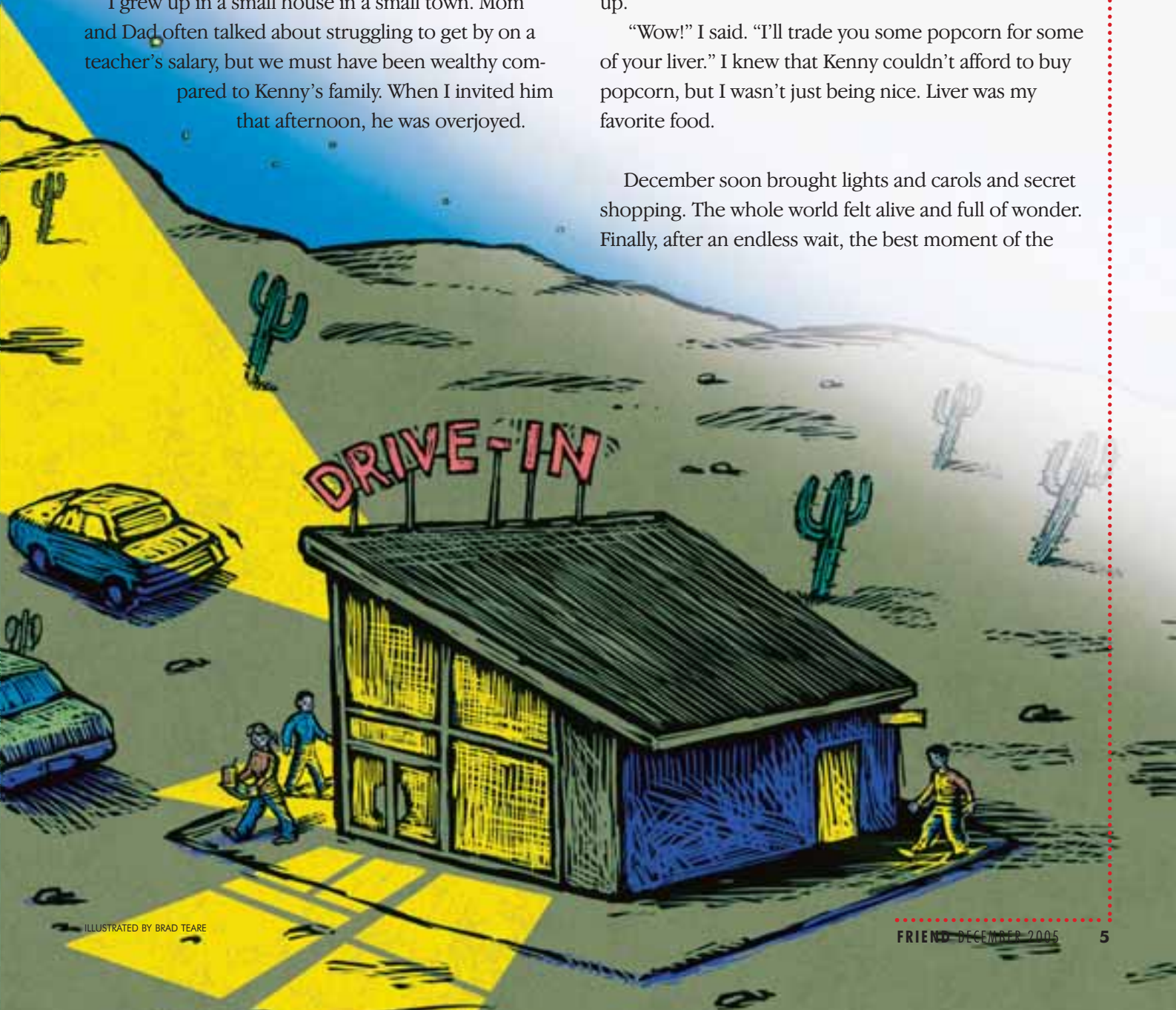
Kenny smiled shyly. “Some snacks for the movie.”

“What kind of snacks?”

“Oh, just some fried calf liver that my mom cooked up.”

“Wow!” I said. “I’ll trade you some popcorn for some of your liver.” I knew that Kenny couldn’t afford to buy popcorn, but I wasn’t just being nice. Liver was my favorite food.

December soon brought lights and carols and secret shopping. The whole world felt alive and full of wonder. Finally, after an endless wait, the best moment of the



year arrived—Christmas morning!

We awoke early, as usual, and had all the presents opened before 6:00 a.m. I got several brand-new racing cars and a new track to go with them. I also got a “supercharger” that would shoot the cars down the track at an astonishing speed. “This is the best Christmas ever!” I exclaimed.

I couldn’t wait to tell Kenny about my presents. I rushed over to his house and pounded on the door. When he opened it, I blurted out, “What did you get from Santa Claus?”

“Santa brought me this new pair of pants and this shirt for school.”

“Neat,” I said. “What cool toys did you get?”

“I didn’t get any toys this year.” He was still smiling.

I stood there speechless for seconds that felt like minutes. I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know how to feel. I don’t remember what I did or said next, but I know I didn’t mention my gifts.



When I got home, I must have looked sad. “What’s wrong?” Mom asked.

“Kenny didn’t get a single toy for Christmas.” I felt like I was sharing a tragedy.

Mom thought for a few moments, then asked a question that changed my life: “What if you were to take a couple of your new racing cars and wrap them up for Kenny?”

An hour earlier, her idea would have sounded crazy. Now it was a lifeline in a storm, and I grabbed it. I carefully chose two of my best cars and wrapped them. I wrote on a small card, “Merry Christmas, Kenny! From Steve.”

When Kenny unwrapped the gifts, his eyes lit up, and my heart grew bigger than my chest. We played with our racing cars all Christmas afternoon.

“How do you feel?” Mom asked that evening.

“Good,” I replied. “Great” would have been more like it.

I often think back on all the special Christmases I enjoyed growing up. I treasure every one of them and appreciate every gift I received—my first shiny new bike, the magnificent pump-action BB gun, and all the rest. But no Christmas gift could ever come close to the one Mom gave me by suggesting that I give away a couple of toy cars. Every time I think of that experience, all is calm, all is bright. ●

Steve Connolly is a member of the Avalon Ward, Citrus Heights Arizona Stake.



“What a glorious season is this time of Christmas. Hearts are softened. . . . Kindness and mercy are reenthroned. . . . There is a . . . reaching out to those in distress.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 2.