

## Henry and Mudge in the Sparkle Days

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## Sparkle Days

It was winter. Winter! Henry and his big dog Mudge loved winter, because Henry and his big dog Mudge loved snow. This winter they were still waiting for the first snow. Henry looked out his window every morning. "Not yet, Mudge," he would say. Henry looked out his window every night. "Not yet, Mudge," he would say again. Then one morning Henry looked out his window and he shouted, "Snow, Mudge, snow!" He and Mudge put their noses against the window. They watched the snow

sparkle. They were ready for a sparkle day. When Henry got dressed to go outside, there wasn't much of Henry to see. He wore snow boots, snow pants a snow jacket, snow mittens, and a snow scarf. He also wore a snow mask that let only his eyes and mouth show.

When Mudge saw Henry in his snow clothes, he barked and barked and barked at the strange creature. Then Henry took off his mask and showed Mudge his face. Mudge wagged his tail and followed Henry outside. The snow made Henry and Mudge want to run. So, they ran in circles around the yard. Mudge poked his big black nose into the snow. He used his nose to dig a little hole. Ah-choo! Went Mudge. Snow always made him sneeze.

Henry lay down and made snow angels. Mudge lay down and messed them up. So Henry threw a snowball at him. But Mudge just wagged his tail. "Aw, Mudge," Henry said, giving him a hug. Henry built an icy hideout, and they were snow spies. There were many snow spies in the neighborhood. After four hours of playing, they went back inside. Henry's hands were wet and his nose was drippy. Mudge's paws were wet and his nose was drippy. Henry's mother wiped Henry's nose. Henry's mother wiped Mudge's nose. Then she put a blanket on the floor, and Henry and Mudge curled up on it and fell asleep. Oh, did they love sparkle days.

## Christmas Eve Dinner

Every Christmas Henry's house sparkled. It sparkled silver. It sparkled gold. It had a Christmas tree that sparkled millions of colors. The day before Christmas, Henry's mother and father always cooked a lot. They cooked all day, and the house smelled wonderful. Henry's mother liked to bake the cookies. Henry helped her cut them and decorate them. She gave a lot of them away. Henry's father liked to bake the turkey. He took a long time "dressing" it. Henry thought this was a very funny idea. He told Mudge, "Dad's dressing the turkey." Then he giggled and giggled. In the evening it was time for Christmas Eve dinner. This dinner was always fancy. They

always ate in the dining room instead of the kitchen. And they liked to dress up. Even Henry. It was the only time he liked fancy things.

Henry's father put a bright red cloth on the table. He put shiny white dishes on top of the cloth. Henry's mother brought out two green candlesticks, Sge put them in the center of the table. Then Henry's father carried in all the food. Henry, his mother, and his father sat down to eat. They looked at each other. They looked at all the food. "Wow!" Henry said. His mother lit candles, and they began eating. But while they ate, they could hear Mudge crying. He hadn't been invited to the fancy Christmas Eve dinner because he was a dog. He had to stay in Henry's room. *Poor*

*Mudge*, thought Henry. *Poor Mudge*, thought Henry's parents. They all looked at each other. Then Henry's father smiled. He got up to find an extra plate. Henry and his mother and his father filled the plate with food.

Then Henry let *Mudge* out of his room. When *Mudge* came to the table, Henry's father put the plate of food on the floor. Henry's mother held one of the candles beside the plate. *Mudge* wagged his tail and began eating as fast as he could. It was his first fancy dinner in the dining room. It was his first fancy dinner by candlelight. "Merry Christmas, *Mudge*!" said Henry. *Mudge* looked at Henry and sneezed some fancy turkey on him. And they laughed about that all night long.

## Firelight

On winter nights Henry and Henry's parents and Mudge loved to take walks. They loved to see the warm lights in the houses. They loved to see the winter stars in the sky. They loved to see the sparkle of the moon on the white yards. They felt happy on these walks. Mudge never stopped wagging. One night they even saw a shooting star. "Make a wish," said Henry's mother. Henry's father wished for peace on earth. Henry's mother wished for her favorite basketball team to win. Henry wished for chocolate pudding every day for the rest of his life. They all wondered what Mudge wished for. "Probably for half of

my chocolate pudding said Henry.

After their walk, they loved coming home to their fireplace. Henry's father and mother sat on the couch, hugging. Henry and Mudge lay on the floor. The wood popped and cracked. No one talked much. They just watched the flames and thought about sparkle days. The house was quiet, the room was dark, the fire was red, and everything was warm. On a winter night, Henry and Henry's father and Henry's mother and Henry's big dog Mudge rested.