


the Golden Name Day

Jennie D. Lindquist



Purple House Press
GOLDEN AGE
LIBRARY

the
Golden
Name Day



Jennie D. Lindquist

illustrated by Yvetta Douarin



Purple House Press
Kentucky

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Chapter 1

A Name Day



“PERHAPS IT IS A GOOD THING AFTER ALL that we didn’t have this room papered last fall,” said Grandma. “Nancy will enjoy picking out paper herself, and if she helps me put it on, it will seem more like her own room. And maybe it will help to keep her from being homesick.”

“I’m sure it will,” said Grandpa. “You have made the room look pretty anyway. Where do you want the bureau moved?”

“Just a little this way, toward the bed. I thought we’d put the little rocking chair here by the window. It will be a nice place for Nancy to sit when she wants to read, and later in the spring she can look out and see the lilacs coming into blossom.”

Grandma looked around the room. "That's better," she said. "I will bring up my bowl of narcissus that is budding and put it on the window sill so that Nancy will have something to watch now. It will be good to have a child in the house again."

"Yes, it will," said Grandpa, "but I hope it won't be too hard on you. I hope we did right in saying we could take Nancy."

"Of course we did right," said Grandma. "This is where she should come. Don't worry about me. I kept waking up in the night thinking how hard it was going to be for her traveling all by herself this morning. This has happened so suddenly she must be pretty upset. After all, she's only nine. When you go to meet her, be sure you stand where she can see you as soon as she gets off the train."

Grandma leaned down and picked up the big cat who was rubbing against their ankles. "Poor little Nancy," she said, "once we get her here things will be all right. (Yes, yes, Teddy, you shall have your breakfast in a minute.) The animals will be a comfort to her."

"Yes, they will," said Grandpa, "and Sigrid and Elsa and Helga, too." He smiled. "I expect they'll be up here most of the time now."

Grandma smiled too. "That will be good," she said, and they went downstairs together.

It was not only Teddy who was in a hurry for his breakfast. Oscar, Grandpa's dog, was hungry, too; and Karl the

Twelfth was waiting impatiently for his oats and hay. Grandpa had given his animals unusual names. Karl the Twelfth and Oscar were named after famous kings of Sweden; and Teddy's real name was the same as that of the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, whom Grandpa admired very much. Now he fed them all, petting each one as he did so, and making sure that everything was well with them. Then, after he and Grandma had had their breakfast, he harnessed Karl the Twelfth to the grocery wagon. It had been newly painted a dark red with white lettering:

E. A. BENSON MEATS AND GROCERIES

"I'll stop at Anna's on my way to work now," he said to Grandma, "and I'll be sure to be at the station in good time for Nancy's train."

Sigrid and Elsa and Helga were just getting up when he opened the Carlsons' kitchen door. "Good morning, everybody!" he said.

"It's Grandpa!" cried Elsa and came running out of the bedroom with Sigrid and Helga following. "Oh, Grandpa, it's really the day. Nancy's coming today!"

"Are you going to meet her now, Grandpa?" asked Helga.

"Not now," he answered, trying to hug all three little girls at once. "She isn't coming until after eleven. I only

stopped to do an errand for Grandma.” He turned to their mother. “She wants to know if she may borrow your silver cake plate for this afternoon, Anna.”

“Of course she may. I’ll get it right off.”

“I wish I could stay out of school and go to the station with you, Grandpa,” said Elsa. “I really ought to go, because in two weeks I will be nine. In two weeks Nancy and I will be twins. I really ought to go to meet my twin.”

“I’d like to have you all go,” said Grandpa, “but school must come first. Nancy will be waiting for you this afternoon and Grandma says for you to come as soon as you can.”

“We’ll run,” said Elsa, “but I wish we lived nearer you. I wish we lived right next door.”

“It isn’t so very far,” said Grandpa, smiling at her. “It doesn’t take you more than fifteen minutes to get there.”

“Fifteen minutes is too far between friends,” said Elsa decidedly.

“But you know the luckiest thing, Grandpa,” said Sigrid. “We’re getting out early today. It’s teachers’ meeting day and we get out at three and we’ll be at your house by half-past. Oh, I can hardly wait!”

“We have three excited little girls today,” said their mother, coming back with the cake plate. “You must tell Nancy how glad they are she is coming. Poor child, I’m afraid she’s going to be pretty homesick; I don’t believe she’s ever been away from her mother and father before.”

“But, Mamma,” said Elsa, “you know what I was thinking? I was thinking that in stories when a little girl has to go away from home because her mother is sick, she always has to go somewhere where nobody wants a little girl at all. That’s worse. Nancy is coming to a place where everybody wants her.”

“I want her,” said little Helga.

“We all want her,” said Sigrid.

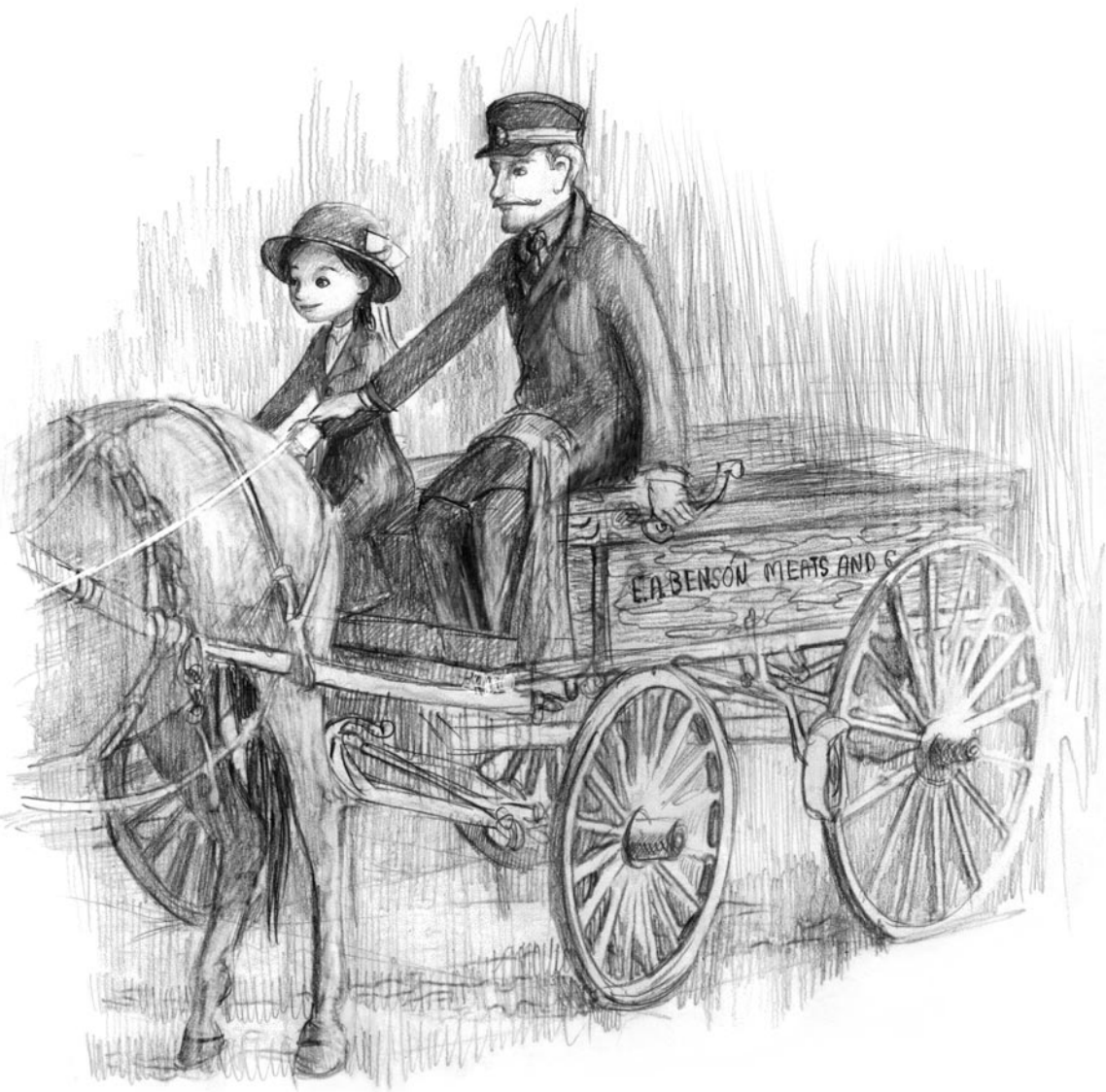
“I will tell her,” said Grandpa, “and it is a good feeling to be wanted. And it is a good thing, too, that Grandma and I have you three to help us this year. We will all do our best to make Nancy happy.”

Grandpa saw Nancy even before the train stopped. Her sad little face was pressed against the window. As soon as she got off the train, he picked her up and kissed her.

“Well, well, here’s my girl,” he said, “and here’s Karl the Twelfth to meet you and Grandma waiting at home. She says to tell you she’s glad you came today because she needs a little girl to help her. It’s her name day and she’s having a party.”

He saw that Nancy was close to tears, but he pretended not to notice. He set her gently down on the ground, put his hand in his pocket and took out two pieces of sugar.

“I’ll get your baggage,” he said, “while you run give these to Karl the Twelfth. He’s been asking and asking, ‘When is Nancy coming? You grownups never give me enough treats.’”



Nancy smiled a little as she took the sugar. When she was very small, she had thought the animals really did talk to Grandpa because he so often told her what they said. Last summer Elsa had confessed that she had thought so, too. “In fact,” she had added, “even now I don’t think I’d be surprised if I came into the barn some day and found Grandpa and Karl the Twelfth and Oscar and Teddy, too, deep in conversation.” Elsa had read a great many library books and so was able to use interesting phrases like “deep in conversation,” when most people would simply have said “talking.”

Nancy fed Karl the Twelfth his sugar, and then stood with her cheek against his nose while she waited for Grandpa. He soon came back with her baggage, and they got into the wagon.

“Who’s going to drive?” he asked.

Nancy brightened a little. “Oh, may I?” she said. Not that anybody needed to drive, really, for if there was one thing Karl the Twelfth knew better than anything else it was the way home at mealtime. Nancy would have had a hard time to make him go in any other direction, but she liked to hold the reins anyway.

“Grandma has been busy this morning,” said Grandpa. “She has been baking her name day cake.”

“What is a name day?” Nancy asked.

Grandpa looked at her in astonishment.

“Do you mean to tell me you have never been with us when we have been celebrating a name day?”

the Golden Name Day

A name day all her own! Nine-year-old Nancy had never heard of this Swedish custom—much like a big birthday party—until she came to live with Grandma and Grandpa Benson on their farm. To her disappointment, Nancy learns that her name is not in the Swedish Almanac, so there is no day set aside especially for her.

Although the problem of a name day for Nancy is never far from anyone's mind, her life on the Benson farm is a busy one filled with delight. Living with family where the slightest occasion calls for celebration—complete with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and animals—it's impossible to be unhappy.

Fresh new illustrations make this classic tale as sunny as the yellow roses Nancy loves, and as memorable as the marvelous way in which she, at last, gets a name day all her own.

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