

LITTLE BUT LUCKY



**A Christmas Story
By Bridget Fraser**

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By Bridget Fraser

With Pictures

By Lucy Ryan



Norman Norway was one of hundreds and hundreds of Christmas trees growing on a big plantation. He was a very little tree but, each year, he grew a little bit taller. He enjoyed growing. Tiny mice skittered about his roots nibbling seeds, hedgehogs snuffled for slugs, birds perched on his branches and sang.

But every Springtime the Two Leggeds came. They clomped up and down the rows of trees with sharp clippers - a snip here,

a clip there. Pruning, they called it but Norman called it Paining. Norman Norway always stood up extra straight and kept his branches extra tidy at Paining Time. One day a Two Legged bent down to look at him. Norman Norway held his needles tight.

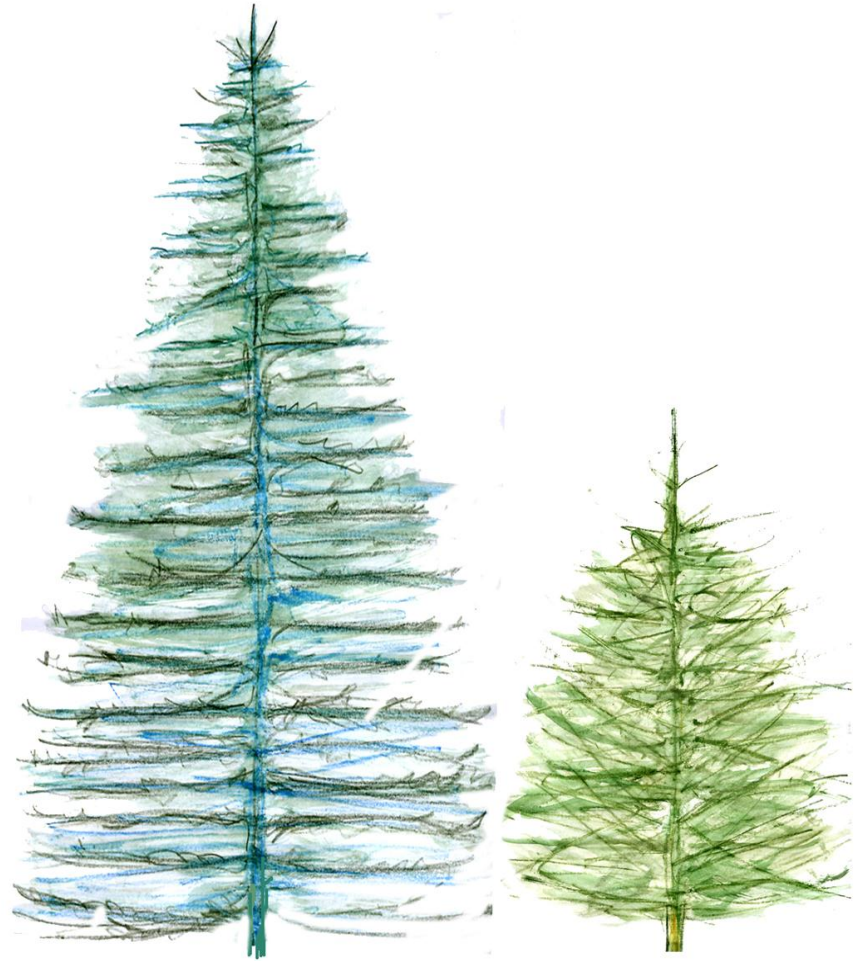
“This little fella's a bit weedy, I'd say. Let's give him a tidy up.” And before Norman could say “Own!” or “Eek!” or “Aaargh !” - snip - snip - snip and three of his newest side

shoots fell to the ground. “That's better,” said Two Legged, “we'll make a Christmas tree of you yet.”



But, worse than Pruning, was Harvest. Norman called it Horriblest. In late November, the Two Leggeds returned with sharp, shiny spades and screeching saws. They chopped down row after row of trees and took them away. One day, Norman plucked up courage to ask Naomi the Noble Fir, why. Naomi was a very superior sort of tree who knew everything about everything. “Oh dear,” Naomi sighed, “don’t you Norway Spruces know anything?”

We’re Christmas trees and it will soon be Christmas.”



“What's Christmas?” “It's when the Two Leggeds celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus, over two thousand years ago. Long before we were planted. They give each other presents and eat lots of turkey.” “Do they eat us, too?” Norman quivered.

“No, no, no. WE are things of beauty although . . .” she looked down on her little neighbour, “can only speak for myself, of course. I am a Noble Fir. You are a Norway Spruce. I am special and expensive.

I shall spend Christmas in a Very Important House indeed.” Forgetting about Norman, she whispered to herself: “Bright baubles for my branches, tinsel twirling round my trunk, presents piled at my feet and the best angel of all.”

She sighed with happiness at the thought of her own beauty then remembered Norman.

“Norman, just believe me. We're Christmas trees. For Christmas.”

“Twigless twighead,” chirped a robin, perched on Norman's top finger. “A one-Christmas-wonder, she is. She'll end up shredded like the rest of them whereas you, my lad, you just might get lucky.”



And off he flew.

The Two Leggeds were working their way down the row between Norman and Naomi.

Neeeeeaw - crash.

Neeeeeaw - crash.

One by one the power saw cut down the trees.

“Bye, Norman,” sighed Naomi Noble Fir as she fell gracefully to the ground, a pile of blue-grey branches. Norman Norway tried to make himself look very small and insignificant. The Two Leggeds passed him by without a glance. “Phew!”

Norman let his needles relax.
But then one of the Two
Leggeds turned back. “Hang on
a minute,” he called to his
mates. “This little 'un is just
what I’ve been looking for.”
And before Norman Norway
could shake a needle, a sharp
spade dug into the cold earth
around his roots.

Dig - dig - dig - aaargh!

Up he came, roots and all and -
before you could say Happy
Christmas - he found himself

slung up onto the Two Legged’s
shoulder.

Back at the Christmas Tree Barn
all the trees were unloaded and
lined up to be sold.

All except Norman.

He was left on the lorry. “Oh
no,” he thought, “maybe Naomi
Noble Fir was wrong for once.
Maybe they are going to eat me
after all!”

And all his needles quivered as
the snow began to fall.

The Barn was full of small Two Leggeds who ran from tree to tree:

“Can we have this one?”

No, this one's better!

What about this one?

Oh please can
we have this one?”



After an hour or two he spotted Naomi Noble Fir, tightly netted, being loaded onto the roof of a Very Big Car.

“Goodbye,” She mumbled to Norman through the netting,
“I am going to THE best house in the village. My Christmas will be sensational, I can’t wait to be dressed. Bye. Happy Christmas!”



But Norman Norway didn’t feel very happy at all.

Soon, all the Two Leggeds called goodnight to each other and Norman was driven away into the darkness. Bump bump bump, down the track past the plantation. Norman thought of all his tree friends there, still standing, still growing. He thought of all his animal friends, too. The mice and hedgehogs and his cheery friend, the robin.

The lorry stopped near an old caravan in the woods. The Two Legged lifted him down. The caravan door opened and

another Two Legged stood in the light. She was holding a tiny baby, wrapped warmly in a shawl. “Hello, love. Look what I've brought us.”



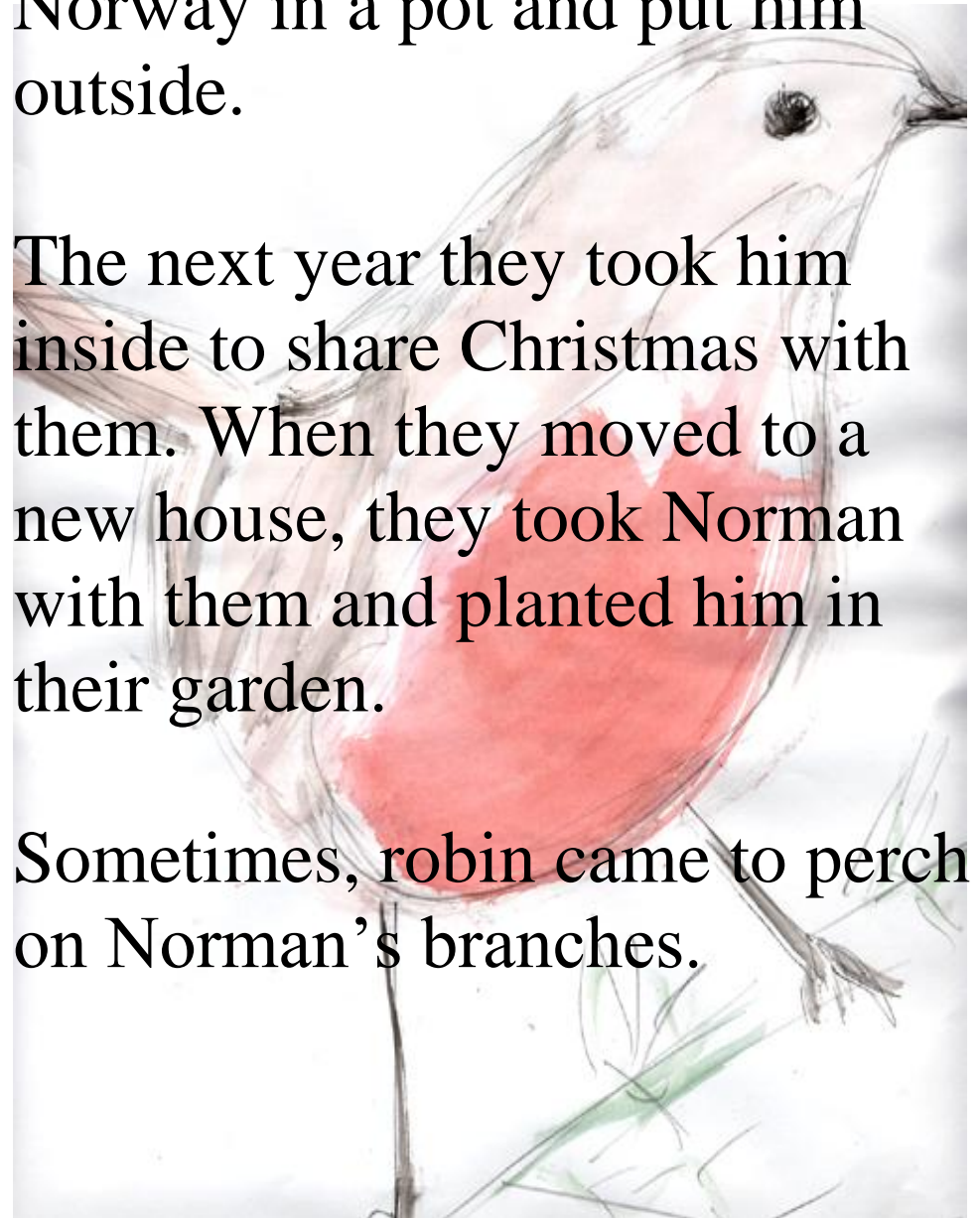
He shook Norman to sort out his branches. “Our baby's first Christmas tree.”

So, Norman Norway didn't go to a posh house like Naomi Noble Fir, but he was dressed for Christmas with bright baubles and tinsel and his own little angel. And they did pile presents at his feet and sing Christmas carols about Baby Jesus as they rocked their own tiny baby to sleep.

After Christmas the Two Leggeds planted Norman Norway in a pot and put him outside.

The next year they took him inside to share Christmas with them. When they moved to a new house, they took Norman with them and planted him in their garden.

Sometimes, robin came to perch on Norman's branches.



"Good view from here, now you're bigger," he chirped.

"Do you ever see Naomi Noble Fir when you're flying about?" asked Norman.

"Naomi Noble Fir? No. I told you, she was a one-Christmas-wonder. Got shredded like the rest of those fancy trees.

Happens every year.

You might have been little, but, see, you got lucky!

Happy Christmas!"



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