

# ALIENS

## UNDER THE MISTLETOE

It was a snowy night in Hollybrook, Michigan. Juniper and Orin were busy decorating the tree while their mom baked cookies in the kitchen. The smell of cinnamon and sugar filled the air, and soft Christmas music played on the radio.

Orin held up a shiny gold ornament. "Do you think Santa will like this one?"

Juniper rolled her eyes. "Santa doesn't look at the ornaments, Orin. He cares about the cookies!"

Just as she said that, a strange green glow filled the living room. The ornaments sparkled, and the snow outside seemed to shimmer like glitter.

"What's that?" Orin asked, his eyes wide.

Juniper ran to the window and gasped. "Something's in the backyard!"

They both pressed their noses to the cold glass. A round, wobbling spaceship was landing on their snowy lawn, its lights blinking in every color of the rainbow.

The door opened with a soft whoosh, and out rolled, hopped, and bounced three very strange visitors.

"Greetings, Earthlings!" Gleebo said, his shiny round body wobbling as he waved a stubby arm.

"We come in peace!"

Juniper and Orin stepped outside into the cold, their boots crunching in the snow. "Who are you?" Juniper asked, her breath puffing in white clouds.

"I'm Gleebo, and these are my friends, Zorp and Fizzix. We traveled across the galaxy to learn about your famous holiday—Christmas!"

### Explaining Christmas

"Christmas?" Orin tilted his head. "How did you hear about that?"

"Our antennae picked up Earth broadcasts," Zorp explained, blinking his Christmas-light eyes in a pattern that looked like a star. "We saw twinkling trees, delicious food, and shiny packages. We had to find out what it's all about!"

Juniper smiled. "You've come to the right place. We can show you!"

She led the aliens inside, where the warm air smelled of cookies and pine. Gleebo spun around, marveling at the lights on the tree. "These glow sticks are amazing!"

"They're not glow sticks," Orin said. "They're lights."

Gleebo picked up a shiny ornament and sniffed it. "Is this food?"

"No!" Juniper laughed. "It's just for decoration."

## **Aliens Trying Traditions**

The kids showed the aliens how to decorate the tree. Gleebo got tangled in tinsel and rolled across the floor like a shiny snowball. Zorp tried to hang a candy cane but ate it instead.

"Mmm, this is fantastic! Why do you hang them up instead of eating them?"

"It's part of the tradition," Orin said, giggling.

Fizzix used his bouncy antennae to stick a star on top of the tree, then accidentally knocked it down when he started bouncing with excitement.

When it was time to wrap presents, Zorp thought the paper was the gift and tried to wear it like a scarf. Gleebo wrapped Fizzix by mistake, and the fuzzy alien laughed until his antennae glowed bright orange.

## **Aliens' Wacky Celebrations**

"What holidays do you celebrate on your planet?" Juniper asked as they sipped hot cocoa (which the aliens found strange but delicious).

Gleebo's round body wobbled with excitement. "Oh, we have so many!"

Zorp blinked a pattern that looked like fireworks. "On Flip-Flop Festival, we trade shoes and walk backward while sprinkling glitter everywhere!"

"And during Blobfest," Fizzix added, "we sculpt our favorite memories out of goo and display them in the town square!"

The kids laughed. "Those sound so weird—but fun!"

## **A Christmas Dinner to Remember**

Juniper and Orin invited the aliens to stay for Christmas dinner. They sat around the table, which was covered in steaming dishes: mashed potatoes, green beans, and a golden turkey. Gleebo poked the mashed potatoes. "Is this for face painting?" he asked, smearing some on his round cheek.

"No! You eat it!" Juniper said, laughing so hard she spilled her cocoa.

Fizzix tried cranberry sauce but accidentally bounced it onto the ceiling, where it stuck like a red star.

Despite the chaos, everyone had a great time, sharing laughs and stories.

## **A Galactic Gift**

Before leaving, the aliens presented the kids with a glowing orb. "This will let you share your Christmas traditions with the galaxy," Gleebo said.

In return, Juniper and Orin gave the aliens a small Christmas tree decorated with ornaments they made together. "Take this back to your planet so you can remember us," Juniper said.

As the spaceship lifted into the sky, it left a trail of sparkling stardust. The snow glittered like diamonds, and Juniper and Orin waved until the glow disappeared.

"Do you think they'll really share Christmas with the galaxy?" Orin asked.

Juniper grinned. "I bet they will."

And with that, they headed back inside, ready to add "hosting aliens" to their list of favorite Christmas memories.

Why do the aliens visit Earth, and what are they curious about?

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What funny things do the aliens do while learning about Christmas traditions?

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What are some of the aliens' unique celebrations? Which one would you want to try?

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If you could teach someone from another planet about Christmas, what would you show them first?

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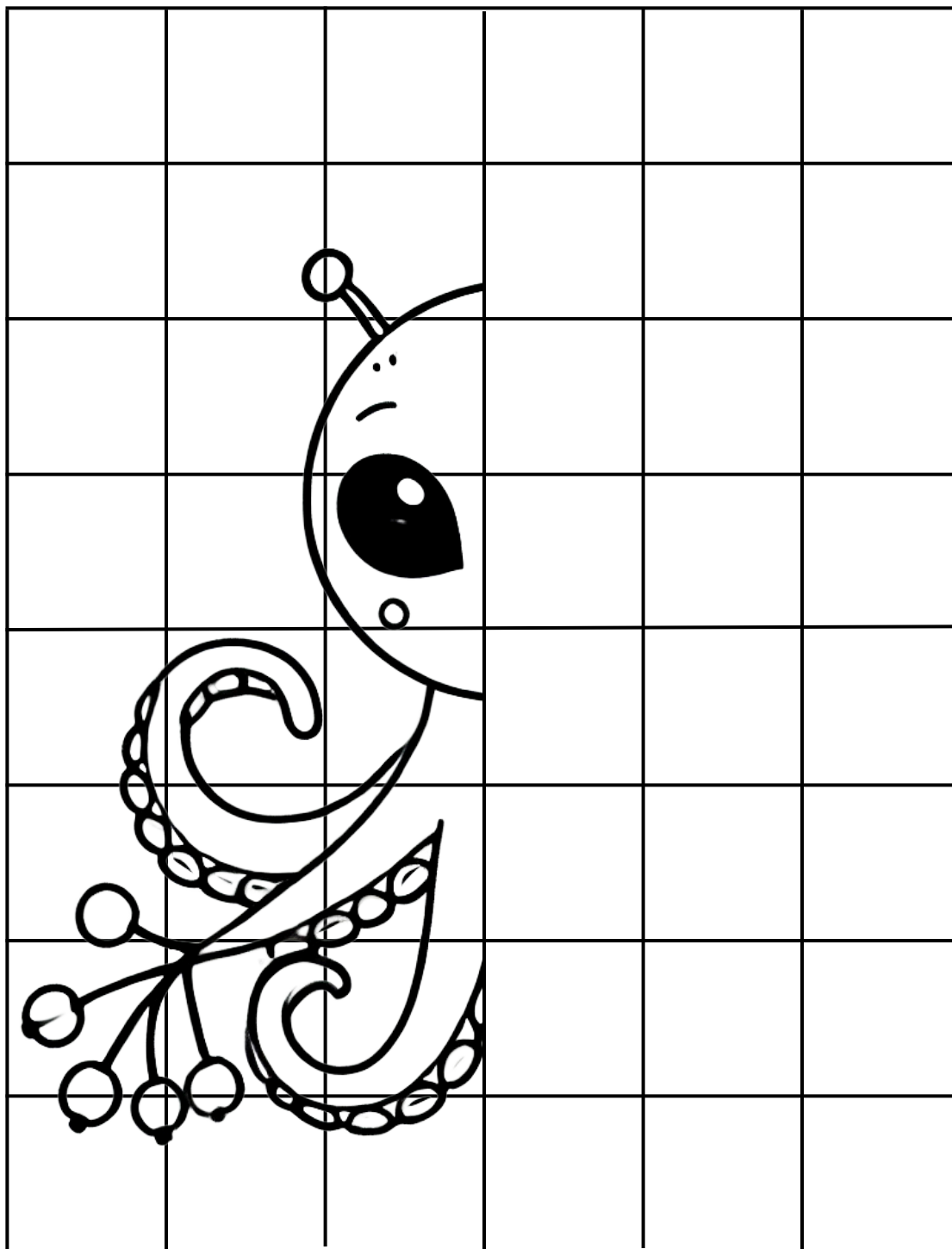
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What do you think the aliens will tell others about Christmas when they go home?

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Draw the other half of this shape.



# Aliens Under the Mistletoe



# Christmas Traditions Around the World

## **Mexico – Las Posadas**

In Mexico, Christmas celebrations include a tradition called Las Posadas, which means "The Inns." For nine nights, families and neighbors reenact Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. They go from house to house, singing and asking for shelter, until one house lets them in to celebrate with music, food, and a piñata.

## **Sweden – St. Lucia's Day**

In Sweden, Christmas begins with St. Lucia's Day on December 13. Girls dress in white robes with red sashes and wear crowns of candles on their heads to honor St. Lucia, who brought food to people in need. Families celebrate with saffron buns and a special parade

## **Australia – Beach BBQs and Carols by Candlelight**

Since Christmas falls during summer in Australia, many families celebrate with beach barbecues, swimming, and outdoor fun. At night, people gather to sing carols by candlelight under the stars, creating a magical atmosphere.

## **Philippines – Giant Lantern Festival**

In the Philippines, the Giant Lantern Festival is a special part of Christmas. Families and towns compete to make the biggest, brightest lanterns, which are displayed during the nine-day celebration leading up to Christmas.

## **Italy – La Befana**

In Italy, instead of Santa Claus, many children receive gifts from La Befana, a kind old woman who flies on a broomstick. On January 5, she leaves treats for good kids and coal for the naughty ones.

## **Iceland – Yule Lads**

Icelandic kids are visited by 13 mischievous Yule Lads in the days before Christmas. Each lad has a unique personality, like Spoon Licker or Door Slammer. They leave gifts for good kids in their shoes, but naughty kids might get a potato!

## **Japan – KFC Christmas Dinner**

In Japan, Christmas isn't a traditional holiday, but many families celebrate by eating fried chicken from KFC! This unique tradition started with a clever marketing campaign and has become a beloved Christmas custom.