

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

A Reading

(author unknown, edited generously by Robert Fitt)

DAY ONE: Partridge in a pear tree

December 13

My dearest, darling Charlie;

Just a note to tell you that your present came today. My goodness, what a surprise. The landlady said it is a pear tree and that we should get fruit from it next summer. Won't that be wonderful! Every time I eat a pear I'll think of you. That chubby little bird had us stuck for a while, though; I thought it was a parakeet but the fellow upstairs said that it's a partridge. Do they sing or anything? It's a cute bird; but all it seems to do is sit in the pear tree. Maybe it's shy.

Oh, by the way, I had lunch with Sue Ann today, and guess what her boyfriend is getting her for Christmas? A mink, no less! Now don't get me wrong. I think pear trees are nice, and the Bird's great; but, still, it is different....*different!* But then, I guess that's why I love you so much. You're so...unusual.

With love and kisses, Magnolia

DAY TWO: Two turtle doves

December 14

My dearest Charlie;

Goodness, what a thoughtful gift. Two turtle doves. They remind me of us, Charlie, love birds...get it? They're adorable. It would help if you had a cage for them, though. They sit on top of the china closet above my white carpet, and I'm afraid they might...uh...fly away if I leave the door open.

Oh, by the way, I went to the doctor today. I caught a bad cold out in the draft. I guess I'll have to dress warmer, this old cloth coat of mine just isn't much good anymore. Dillards has such wonderfully warm looking furs. I'll bet a girl wouldn't be cold in one of them, now would she?!

With all my love forever, Magnolia

DAY THREE: Three french hens

December 15

My darling Charlie;

You *are* full of surprises. Three chickens!

I wouldn't have thought of that. I gave them to Mr. Katz, the butcher. He says that they're French chickens and he thinks maybe he can sell them for me. If Mr. Katz isn't able to sell them, I guess we could have them for Christmas dinner. After all, turkey's just a tradition, and we could eat chicken instead. They're really very good eating.

I can use the money because I've decided to save for a fur coat from Dillards

With love Magnolia

DAY FOUR: Four calling birds

December 16

Dear Charlie;

What is it with you and all these birds? The delivery man just dropped off four more of the noisy rascals. What in the dickens are they? Even Mr. Katz, the butcher, doesn't know. It's a mess—with all these birds fluttering around calling back and forth to each other.

Frankly, Charlie, I'd like it if you could find another home for them. It isn't like I don't enjoy all that nature stuff; but enough is enough.

It cost me \$10.00 to have that silly pear tree planted. And I don't even own the yard it's in; and what does the partridge do? It just sits in that little stick of a tree like a lazy lump, is what! It's already broken off the two best branches!

The turtle doves are cute enough; but without a cage it gets awfully messy on the white carpet, if you know what I mean. And now Mr. Katz wants to give the three chickens back because they won't sell—what a pretty mess that'll be!

Don't try so hard, Charlie. I have simple tastes. I like mink coats, for example.

With warm personal regards, Magnolia

DAY FIVE: Five gold rings

December 17

My darling Charlie;

Boy, do I feel better!

For a while there you had me worried...what with all those crazy birds and everything; but today - thank goodness - when the delivery boy came, he didn't bring me a fowl delivery . . . get it?

The rings are beautiful. Are they really gold? But why five of them, and why are they so huge? We'll need to have them sized to fit tiny fingers like mine...fragile and delicate...the kind that look so good when they're resting on a mink coat.

With love, Magnolia

DAY SIX: Six geese a laying

December 18

Dear Charlie;

I knew it couldn't last. You're back to those dumb birds again.

Six geese yet? And they're all expecting or something because they've done nothing but lay eggs all over the house. One of them thought the toilet was a nest and so I had to use the bathroom next door. I tried selling the eggs to Mr. Katz; but he's already stuck with the chickens and he doesn't see much of a market for goose eggs in West Jordan.

Count 'em Charlie. I've now got *sixteen* birds waddling, flying, piddling and puddling all over my house. I have to watch where I walk, where I sit. I even have to watch where I sleep . . . that is I would if a sane person could ever get any sleep around this nuthouse!

Stay with the jewelry, Charlie, or furs...you can't go wrong with furs . . . or something.

Sincerely, Magnolia

DAY SEVEN: Seven swans a swimming

December 19

Charlie!

Are you some kind of a kook or something? Are you? Are you *crazy* or something?

Now you've sent me seven more swans to join the menagerie—honking and waddling through the house—Charlie?!! They're mean. They pinch me—and it hurts!

They're always looking for water to swim in...even a drop seems to be enough. They're in my bath tub, in my wash dish. And now my drain boards and table are all piled up with pots and pans because I can't wash the dishes...and you know why? *The geese are swimming in the sink.* Have you ever tried to get near the drain board when seven geese are trying to swim in the same sink?!!

I try to stop them, but they get me wet; and when I'm wet, I'm cold, Charlie. A mink would sure feel great at a time like this . . . or something.

I still . . . like you . . . sorta. Magnolia

DAY EIGHT: Eight maids a milking

December 20

Charlie;

So you're finally off birds, are you? But why cows? I can't keep eight cows in my apartment? My vacuum won't begin to handle the problems they'll leave. And I certainly don't know what to do with those happy-go-lucky girls that you sent along to milk them. Where are *they* going to sleep, and what will they eat?!

Charlie . . . please. Do you know the brand name of a good air freshener that I can buy by the gallon? I really wanted mink . . . not stink . . .Charlie.

Yours truly, Magnolia

DAY NINE: Nine dancers dancing

December 21

Dear Chuck:

Now cut it out!

This morning nine girls showed up here and they started dancing - and slipping and sliding - all over the front room. I'll never get my carpet clean now!

The added music, together with the clucking and cooing and honking of all these birds is so loud that my landlady's raising a ruckus about all the noise.

I'll tell you what to do: You send a truck over and get this menagerie out of here before the cops come.

And once they're gone, I'll tell you where to go—get lost, Charles, get lost!

Magnolia

P.S. Just forget about the mink, Charles, my old woolen coat is suddenly much more appealing . . . or something.

DAY TEN: Ten Lords a leaping

December 22

Charles!

You sure are a great problem solver, aren't you. I ask you to get this menagerie out of here, and what do you do? You send ten guys over to dance with the girls you sent yesterday. And do they quietly dance the minuet? No. They're always jumping around - leaping even! One of them even tried to do a slam-dunk in the chandelier today! What do you think my landlady thought about that?!

Just what kind of a place to you think I have here? Do you think this is the Rockefeller Center or something?

Now look! Just forget you ever saw me, Charles. Just pretend that we never met. We're just not compatible, or something.

Goodbye, Magnolia

P.S. I wouldn't wear your smelly old mink even if you bought me one.

DAY ELEVEN: Eleven pipers piping

December 23

Charles Adams:

You're crazy as a loon. (That *is* a bird, isn't it!)

Today eleven, count 'em . . . eleven . . . guys showed up here playing bagpipes. What the heck is that for? So that I can have a live orchestra to rooty-toot around while these other nutty people stomp doo-doo into the carpet?

The only good thing that's happening is that the pear tree is growing very well, thank you. It must be all that fertilizer!!

Look, Charles, you've forgotten about the mink, now forget about me; play like I don't exist. Between the dancers, the cows, and these 23 birds I'm gonna go nuts!

Goodbye forever, Magnolia

P.S. You know what, Charles, even remembering that I ever wanted a mink makes me all bewildered, or something.

DAY TWELVE: Twelve drummers drumming

December 24

Mr. Charles Hershel Adams:

Forget it. Forget me—entirely, see?

I told you we're through—through! Are you too stupid to understand or something? I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore!

NO MORE PRESENTS!!!!!! None! Stop! Cease! Quit! Discontinue! Desist! And get these stupid drummers out of here, and get them out fast!

Can you imagine what it's like here with twelve drummers hammering the heads off of their drums while the bagpipes play and the chickens squawk and poop, and nineteen dancers stomp the plaster off my landlady's ceiling?

It's getting to me, Charlie. Please help me....please? I just can't stand it anymore . . . or something . . .

Magnolia

P.S. Oh, yes . . . Charles . . . if you have a cuddly little mink hidden somewhere among your animals . . . stuff it!

EPILOGUE : After Christmas

HAPPY VALLEY FUNNY FARM

1463 Fox Pointe Drive, West Jordan, Utah

December 26

Mr. Charles H. Adams
11177 Lynford Drive
Sandy, Utah

Dear Mr. Adams:

At the request of Magnolia Hagan we are shipping to you this day the following items:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 damaged pear tree | 7 swans |
| 1 partridge | 8 barn maids |
| 2 turtle doves | 8 cows |
| 3 French hens | 9 dancing girls |
| 4 noisy birds (species unknown) | 10 leaping lords |
| 5 golden rings | 11 pipers (complete with bagpipes) |
| 6 geese (with assorted eggs) | 12 drummers (with assorted drums) |

Miss Magnolia is now residing with us here at Happy Valley funny farm and may be visited on Sunday afternoons between the hours of three and five. Please avoid wearing a mink coat, and do not speak of birds or animals in her presence, as this triggers episodes of profound emotional distress.

Very truly yours, (signature)

Superintendent

P.S. Patients are not permitted to accept gifts!!