Santa’s Very Busy Night

Left Right Game

Everyone sits in a circle holding a wrapped gift. Each time you hear **LEFT**, pass the gift you are holding one seat to the left; each time you hear **RIGHT**, pass it one seat to the right. When the story ends, keep the gift in your hands.

Reader: go slowly and pause after every LEFT and RIGHT so the gifts can move. About 5 minutes · LEFT 16 times · RIGHT 15 times. Every gift ends up one seat to the left of where it started, so each player goes home with the gift from the person on their right.

It was the night before Christmas at the North Pole, and Santa was running late. “Where did I leave my list?” he called. “I had it here just a minute ago!”

Mrs. Claus pointed to the kitchen. “You **LEFT** it on the counter, **RIGHT** next to the cookie jar.” Santa grabbed the list, and a cookie, and hurried out the door.

Out in the barn, the elves were loading the sleigh. “Toys on the **LEFT**, books on the **RIGHT**!” called Pip, the head elf. The elves passed the presents from **LEFT** to **RIGHT** and from **RIGHT** to **LEFT** until the sleigh was piled high.

Santa climbed in and took the reins. “Is everything ready?” he asked. “All set,” said Pip, “but you **LEFT** your hat on the hook.” So Santa ran back for his hat and climbed in again.

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Up, up into the sky they flew. Over the first town, Santa turned **LEFT**. Over the second town, he turned **RIGHT**. Over the third town, he could not remember which way to go, so he turned **LEFT**, then **RIGHT**, then **LEFT** once more, until the reindeer were dizzy.

“Santa,” said the lead reindeer, “I think we should have turned **RIGHT** at that tall pine tree.” Santa looked at his map. “You are **RIGHT**,” he said, and he turned the sleigh around.

At the first house, Santa slid down the chimney. He **LEFT** a doll under the tree and a sled beside it. On the table he found milk and two cookies with a note: “Dear Santa, the cookie on the **LEFT** is for you. The cookie on the **RIGHT** is for the reindeer.” Santa ate the one on the **LEFT** and tucked the one on the **RIGHT** in his pocket.

House after house, the night went on: a train set to the **LEFT** of one tree, a pair of skates to the **RIGHT** of another. By the time the sky turned pink, the big sack was nearly empty. Only one small box was **LEFT**.

“Who is this one for?” Santa wondered. He turned the tag to the **LEFT** and to the **RIGHT**, but the name had worn off. Then he remembered. It was for Mrs. Claus. He had wrapped it himself, **RIGHT** before he **LEFT**.

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continued

Santa landed back at the North Pole just as the sun came up. Mrs. Claus was waiting at the door with a mug of cocoa. Inside the little box was a silver bell, just the **RIGHT** size for her charm bracelet.

“Merry Christmas, dear,” said Santa. “Now, is there any cocoa **LEFT** for me?” Mrs. Claus smiled. “**RIGHT** here,” she said. “I saved you the last cup.”

Bonus line: read it only if someone is holding their own gift

And before Santa goes to bed, everybody pass your gift one more time, to the **LEFT**. Merry Christmas!