



We got our Christmas tree early this year. *Really* early. It came in a big box from a friend of Daddy's who works for a company that makes artificial trees. It was *weeks* before Christmas, but Merry and Kerry wanted to put it up anyway, so Daddy and I spent about an hour one night poking the branches into the little holes on the pole until it finally looked like a tree. It didn't exactly *smell* like a tree—in fact, it didn't smell like much at all—but it was shiny and green, and everybody agreed that it had a nicer shape than any tree we'd ever had.

Mommy said she was glad there wouldn't be any needles to pick up off the rug, and Daddy said won't it be nice that we won't have to walk around in the snow and the cold picking out a new tree every year. But no matter how hard we tried to think of reasons why we loved it, it just didn't seem like a Christmas tree. The day before Christmas, when Mommy and Daddy were out shopping, Merry and Kerry and I suddenly got an idea. I had four dollars left from baby-sitting and the twins had some money they'd gotten from taking bottles back

to the grocery store, and we put it all together and ran down to the lot next to the church where they sold trees, and looked and looked until we found one we could afford. It was small and kind of brown around the edges, but it looked as if it needed a friend, so we bought it. Then, when we got it home, there was Daddy unloading a tree from the top of the car! Before we even had a chance to be disappointed, Daddy laughed and said this would make it the most Christmas we'd ever had. And, you know, he was right!

## BETSY McCALL'S MOST CHRISTMASY CHRISTMAS

