

BRIS

We know
books



*For Winston and his mummy and daddy, Sarah and Simon.
You can't make old friends. X*

First published 2018 by Macmillan Children's Books

This edition published 2021 by Macmillan Children's Books
an imprint of Pan Macmillan

The Smithson, 6-9 Briset Street, London, EC1M 5NR
EU representative: Macmillan Publishers Ireland Ltd, 1st Floor,
The Liffey Trust Centre, 117-126 Sheriff Street Upper
Dublin 1, D01 YC43

Associated companies throughout the world
www.panmacmillan.com

Copyright © Alex T. Smith 2018
ISBN 978-1-5290-8085-8

The right of Alex T. Smith to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work has
been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise),
without the prior written permission of the publisher.

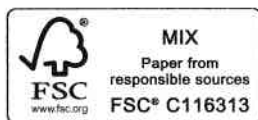
Pan Macmillan does not have any control over, or any responsibility for,
any author or third party websites referred to in or on this book.

5 7 9 8 6 4

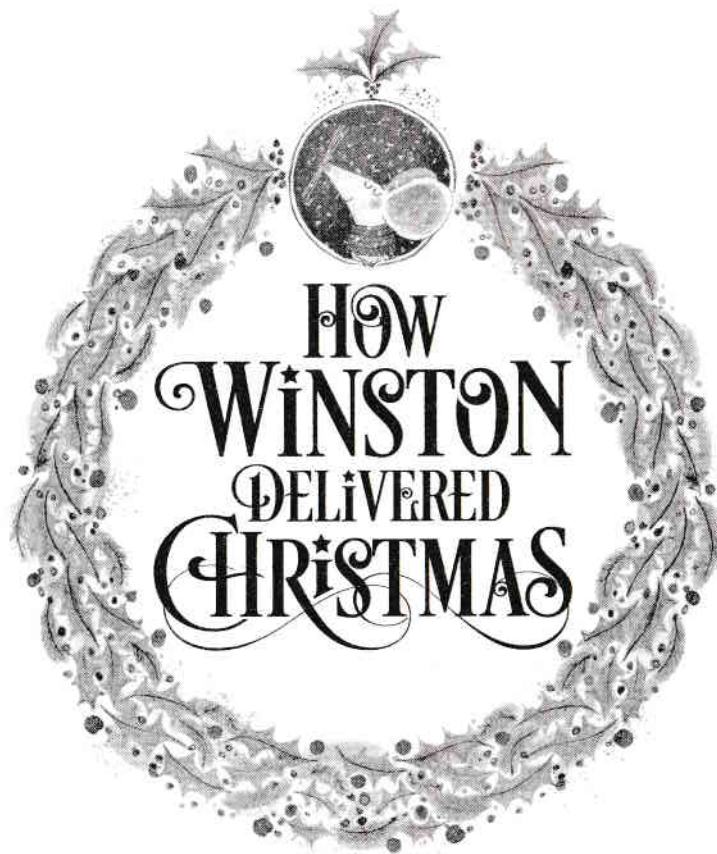
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by Alison Still

Printed and bound in CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY



This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade
or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without
the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than
that in which it is published and without a similar condition including
this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.



Alex T. Smith

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

CONTENTS

A VERY IMPORTANT MISSION.....	11
A MYSTERIOUS FLYING OBJECT.....	21
AN ENVELOPE OUT OF PLACE.....	28
WINSTON SETS OFF.....	35
WINDOW SHOPPING.....	43
THE ROOM IN THE RAFTERS.....	52
THE JOLLY HOLIDAY TRAVEL AGENTS.....	60
THINKING BIG THOUGHTS.....	68
MINCE PIES AND MOVIES.....	78
AN IMPORTANT CLUE.....	85
A COSY BED MADE OF STRAW.....	94
SPLASH AND SPLATTER!.....	102
AS FLAT AS A PANCAKE (ALMOST).....	108
YOU AREN'T A SALMON.....	114
PURVEYORS OF FINE GOODS SINCE 1847.....	126
TEAMWORK.....	134
DILLY-DALLYING.....	144
STINKY AND THEREFORE TASTY.....	153
EDUARDO FROMAGE.....	157
A NIGHT-TIME FEAST.....	167
CLOCKWORK.....	175
THE GREAT FLYING MOUSE.....	182
A LIGHT IN THE SKY.....	192
THE END.....	198
HOT BUTTERED TOAST.....	207



A VERY IMPORTANT MISSION

The toy shop on Mistletoe Street was crowded and noisy.

There were exactly twelve minutes left before it was supposed to close for the holidays, but people were



still shuffling in through the door hoping to pick up just one last present for a special someone, or to gawp at all the jolly toys sitting smartly on the shelves and admire the enormous doll's house in the window.

One person not looking at any of that was Oliver. His mum and dad owned the shop. He had been helping them all day – fetching and carrying and generally being very busy indeed. But now he quickly ducked out from under the counter where he'd been wrapping parcels. He flung his scarf around his neck and wiggled his way through the crowds and out into the busy high street.

He was on a VERY important mission.

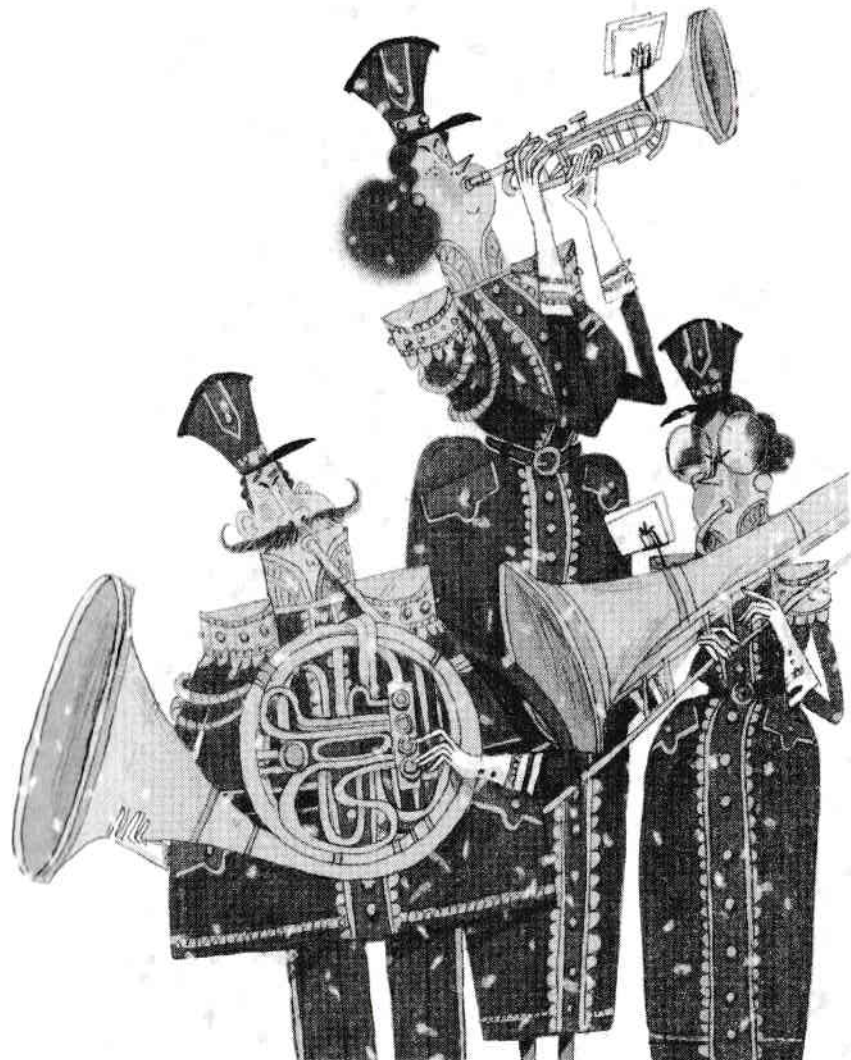
It was late afternoon, the moon was

already up and snow had started to fall. Hundreds of snowflakes twirled through the air like ballerinas before landing daintily on the blanket of snow that had fallen over the past few days.

Oliver crunched down the street. He rushed past the bakery and the butcher's shop, sidestepped customers spilling out of the general store and the cheesemonger's, and swerved neatly around the ladies bustling out of the shop that sold fancy hats and ribbons. The entire night fizzed with Christmassy excitement.



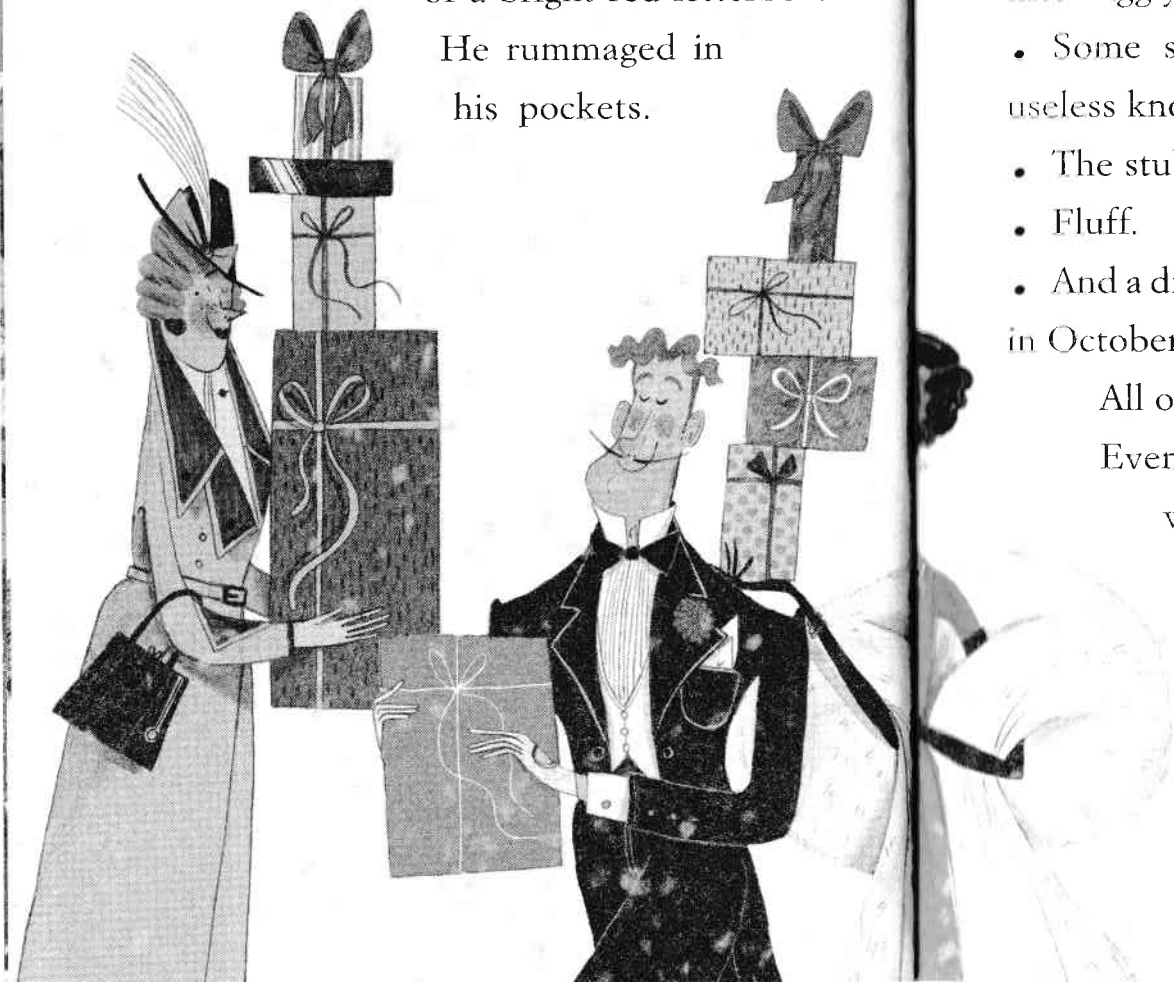
On the corner of the street a brass band was standing in the cold, filling the evening air with a jazzy, parpy rendition of Oliver's favourite Christmas song.



He stopped and listened for a moment before remembering his mission.

He weaved his way around the final knot of shoppers (their arms piled high with boxes and bags) and stopped in front of a bright red letterbox.

He rummaged in his pockets.



They were full, as usual, with all the Extremely Important Things you need to have on your person when you are eight years old:

- A couple of paperclips (twisted open into wiggly strips of metal).
- Some string tangled up into several useless knots.
- The stub of a blunt pencil.
- Fluff.
- And a dry wrinkled old conker collected in October.

All of this was Vital.

Eventually Oliver found what he was actually looking for – an envelope. It wasn't too badly crumpled and he'd written the address on the front in