



small box of candy, the gift from the church, on the table.

Christmas had lost much of its childish charm when his faith in Santa Claus was shattered.

His disappointment was as nothing, compared to what happened the next morning when he came down stairs and raced to the fireplace to see what gifts had been left in his stocking.

As he took out the usual candies and nuts and some small trinkets as gifts, he suddenly came upon several chunks of hard coal instead of the usual orange at the toe of the stocking.

He couldn't believe it. A gift of coal was a symbol that he had been a bad boy throughout the year.

There was no holding back the tears. Despite the sympathy of his

knowing mother who told him that one of his neighbor friends had put the coal in his stocking as a joke — the little Dutch Boy took the coal literally — that he had been a bad boy.

There was no choking back the tears. He sobbed all through dinner. His day was ruined. It was a Black Christmas — first his faith in Santa was shattered and then a "gift" of hard coal in his Christmas stocking.

Could any day be blacker?

So you can sing all you want of White Christmas. But you'll never erase the memory of a "black" one.

How do we know about that horrible day in the long ago?

You see, that little Dutch boy was me.

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