

Juicy Clementines - why do we have an orange in our Christmas stocking?

The Christmas Orange

Many, many years ago there lived a young boy named Jack. His parents had died when he was a baby, so he had spent most of his short life in an orphanage.

It was a hard life for Jack and the many other boys at the orphanage. They had to work for long hours, had no toys to play with and had little in the way of comfort.

Christmas, however, brought one special treat which the boys looked forward to all year – they were each given a Christmas orange.

The oranges were the most beautiful and exotic things they had ever seen. The boys were always hungry, but the oranges were so rare and special that they did not want to eat them straight away. They held them, smelled them, and kept them for as long as they possibly could. Keeping the oranges close by gave them hope for the future and the feeling that one day life would somehow be different.

When the boys did finally eat them – sometimes weeks later – they savoured every tiny drop of the sweet succulent juice.

One Christmas Day the boys had been allowed to finish work early and were standing in line waiting patiently for their precious oranges. Jack glanced out of the window. It was snowing heavily, but he could see a stooped figure on the other side of the road. It was an old man sheltering against the cold in a doorway.



The sight of the poor old man brought tears to Jack's eyes. 'At least I have shelter and friends,' he thought to himself.

As soon as he was handed his orange, Jack rushed out and gave it to the old man. 'Please take this small gift and enjoy it, Sir,' he said.

Before the old man had a chance to reply, Jack ran back across the road. Once inside, happy with what he had done, but not wanting to see the others

with their oranges, Jack went to sit alone in the dormitory.

Not much later, the door creaked open and one of the other boys crept in. He placed a small round parcel in Jack's hand.

Jack opened it to reveal the most wonderful thing he had ever seen. It was an orange without a skin, made up of nine separate segments – one from each of his friends.

