

Left right Christmas game

The Pennywhistles' Christmas Eve · 21 LEFTs, 20 RIGHTs ·
about 6 minutes



Everyone sits in a circle holding a wrapped gift. Read slowly. On every **← LEFT** pass your gift one place to the left; on every **→ RIGHT** one place to the right. When the story ends, open what you're holding.

On Christmas Eve, the Pennywhistle family had just one job **← LEFT**: get everything **→ RIGHT** before Gran arrived at six.

Dad looked at the list on the fridge and groaned. "Turkey, tree, presents, pudding. There's a lot **← LEFT** to do."

Mum said, "**→ RIGHT**, everyone. Coats on. We'll start with the tree."

They drove to the farm, turned **← LEFT** at the church and **→ RIGHT** at the duck pond, and found the last tree **← LEFT** on the lot.

"It leans a little to the **← LEFT**," said Rosie.

"It's just **→ RIGHT**," said Dad, and he tied it to the roof before anyone could argue.

Back home, Max held the tree straight while Rosie shouted, "**← LEFT** a bit! No, **→ RIGHT** a bit! No, back to the **← LEFT**!"

At last it stood up **→ RIGHT** in the corner, only slightly crooked.

Then came the lights. Every single string had a knot in it, and the box of spare bulbs had been **← LEFT** in the attic.

Dad climbed the ladder, reached **→ RIGHT** to the back of the attic, and found the bulbs **→ RIGHT** next to last year's wrapping paper.

Meanwhile, Mum put the turkey in the oven and set the timer on the **→ RIGHT**-hand side of the cooker.

Biscuit the dog sat **→ RIGHT** beside the oven door and did not move all afternoon.

Rosie wrapped the last presents. She had paper, tape and ribbon, but no scissors **← LEFT**.

"Use the ones on the **← LEFT** of the sink," called Mum.

Max wrapped his present for Gran in a hurry and **← LEFT** it **→ RIGHT** under the tree, with the label upside down.

At five o'clock, the doorbell rang. "That can't be Gran, **→ RIGHT**?" said Dad. "She's never early."

But it was Gran, with a suitcase in her **← LEFT** hand and a tin of mince pies in her **→ RIGHT**.

“I **← LEFT** early to beat the snow,” she said, “and I brought the pies, because I know you never get the pastry **→ RIGHT**.”

Everyone laughed, because she was **→ RIGHT**.

Then Dad remembered the turkey and ran to the kitchen. Was there any time **← LEFT**?

He opened the oven. The turkey was golden on the **← LEFT** side and pale on the **→ RIGHT** side.

“Turn it round and give it twenty minutes,” said Gran. “It’ll come **→ RIGHT**.”

While they waited, Gran looked up at the tree. “Where’s the star?” There was nothing on top but one bit of tinsel **← LEFT** from years ago.

Rosie checked the box on the **← LEFT**. Max checked the box on the **→ RIGHT**. No star.

Then Biscuit trotted in from the hall with something shiny in his mouth, and dropped it **→ RIGHT** at Gran’s feet.

It was the star! He’d found it where Max had **← LEFT** it, under the stairs, last January.

Gran polished it on her sleeve and handed it to Rosie. “Youngest puts it on. That’s the rule.”

Dad lifted Rosie up, and she set the star on top, a little to the **← LEFT**, which everyone agreed was exactly **→ RIGHT**.

They ate turkey and Gran’s mince pies until there was not a single crumb **← LEFT**.

And at the end of the night, the Pennywhistles sat by the tree, warm and full and happy.

“Merry Christmas, everyone,” said Gran. “Now pass your present to the **← LEFT**, and open it!”

Every gift ends one seat from where it started, so nobody keeps the gift they brought. More stories and a big-screen reader: playatyours.com/left-right-christmas-game/