

The Aardsma Weekly

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Writer: Rachel Aardsma



Quiet Winter Evenings?



I'm sure someone somewhere enjoys quiet winter evenings, but we evidently aren't of that lucky class. Sure, we have the winter, and of course we have the evenings, but somehow 'quiet' isn't exactly the word I'd use to describe them. But I'll tell you about some of our winter evenings, and let you decide about the quiet or lack of it.

Of course, the girls in this household spend their winter evenings with quiet amusements. Rebekah gets out her latch-hook and embroidery, while I dig up a stack of books just right for winter evenings. And then she sits in one rocking chair with her needlecraft on her lap, and I sit in the other with a book, reading to her or to myself, and we peacefully wile away the long winter nights with our cozy pastimes.

The boys, however, are not so good at quietly amusing themselves. Timothy and Caleb, for example, find winter evenings a splendid time to throw each other around, show off their muscles, and abuse the furniture. I can't even begin to count the number of evenings I've spent sitting in the rocking chair, my book lying idle in my lap, as I watch, referee, and cheer as Timmy and Caleb enjoy their version of a 'quiet' winter evening. Matthew often joins me, encouraging the loser and giving tips to whoever needs them. Rebekah doesn't join us very often, but we always run to her room to relate hilarious events. (These evenings always end sooner than they should because the referee and coach start dying of laughter and the wrestlers can't continue without them. That usually happens after Timmy says something like: "Oh, I'm hurt!" after receiving a punch, and then adding in a thoughtful tone, "I think I'm more hurt emotionally than physically, though.")

Matthew does not always stick to the sidelines, though. He loves spending his evenings fooling around with the boys, and anything from a pillow fight to a rubber band war can begin when he gets involved. Of course, he's always the one who ends up on the bottom of every pile and is pummeled by small, yet unrelenting, fists, but I don't think he minds much. Besides, all he has to do is sit up and exert himself and he'll have both the young warriors pleading for mercy.

Not all evenings are spent this way, however. Many are spent with more worthwhile and healthy amusements. For example, Beka and I sometimes get out the Uno cards and play a two-person game. Or, Timmy and Caleb grab a jump rope and get me to referee a contest.

Matthew spends most of his winter evenings doing school. With his busy schedule, night is the best time to do school. Every night you can see him glued to his chair, reading away in a monotonous tone about molecules, medieval history, and proper sentence structure. Rebekah often joins him on these evenings, and every now and again, I'll wander in and join them as well. But an active person can only sit still so long, and after an hour of atoms and nuclei, one can see Matthew rolling around on the floor with Caleb, or exhibiting Freckles' amazing skill at catching Milk-Bone pieces.

So, our evenings are not quiet, peaceful, or anything related to those relaxing adjectives. But they are certainly not lacking in noise, excitement, or fun; three things this family cannot do without.



Bits and Pieces



Christmas is nearing rapidly. I suppose you thought I'd say something about it this week, but you will have to come back next week if you want to hear all about our Christmas.

We wrapped presents this week, re-decorated the tree (the cat really finished it off, and flying pillows and people didn't help much either), baked, cleaned, sang carols, ate Christmas goodies from friends, and all in all we've been doing pretty well as far as Christmas is concerned.

Mom got a cleaning fit two days before Christmas, and she had the house in an uproar. We cleaned everything imaginable, from the furnace closet to under the couch. Of course, Beka and I did most of the cleaning, but hey, what are girls for? (That's Caleb's opinion, anyway.)

As far as presents are concerned... well, if you want to hear about presents, just talk to Caleb. He's the present expert over here.

We wrapped presents this week, all at the same time. I managed to nab the wrapping paper, the tape, the scissors, and the black marker just before everyone else started looking for them. I hadn't wrapped one present before people starting knocking on my door. Pretty soon, I'd given out everything I had, and it was my turn to go knocking on doors for materials!

But anyway, the presents are all out under the tree. The words: "You'll just *love* what I got for you!" seem to be quite popular at the moment. Caleb and Timmy have pawed over every present they've got, and are driving the rest of us crazy talking about them.

I've got a few mysterious packages myself, but, of course, I am entirely too old to be paying any attention to them. ("Oh, good grief." Timmy says.)

Matthew has discovered one lovely aspect of working at the vet clinic: you get lots of food over the holidays! Every day he comes home with tales of all the goodies that were brought into work. This week he went to the Christmas party at work, and I made some candy bars for him to bring.

Matthew always has some funny tale to tell of his morning work at the clinic, and he keeps us laughing over lunch. Whether it's about his 'Christmas Houseplant' (he put a candy-cane on a houseplant and calls it his Christmas Houseplant) or about the bratty clinic cat named Tucker, he never fails to tell us something amusing.

We keep encouraging him to bring home any extra treats from the clinic, but so far, we haven't seen anything except candy wrappers and empty chocolate boxes.



A Word About The Weather



It has been drizzly, cold, and gray this week. It was nice and warm for the first two or three days and the grass was actually beginning to turn green again! But now it has become cold once more, and, though we are hoping for snow on Christmas, it doesn't look like we're going to get anything but a few mud puddles.



A Word of Wisdom



Cutout pictures from old wrapping paper make cute nametags on Christmas presents.