

0. THE LEGENDS OF SAINT NICHOLAS - Story Preface

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**2. THE LEGENDS OF SAINT NICHOLAS**

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The story of Saint Nicholas providing a dowry for three young women in his home town has been the subject of various artwork through the centuries. One example, from the 17th century, is a fresco in a small chapel that is part of the Monastery of the Patriarchate of Pec in Kosovo. This image of that fresco was taken by Jim Forest who provides this description:

"A panel that is part of an extensive Serbian cycle showing the life of Saint Nicholas. It was painted from 1673-74 by Radul, the best-known Serbian artist in the late 17th century. The tiny Saint Nicholas Chapel, built in 1337, is part of the Monastery of the Patriarchate of Pec. The frescos have been extensively conserved and documented by the Blago Fund." Photo by Jim Forest; online via Flickr. License: [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)

Nicholas, while still a teenager, learned of a neighbor in financial trouble. The man had three daughters who wanted to marry. During those times, the father of the bride was expected to provide a dowry. Because the Pataran man had nothing to give, his daughters could not marry.

Hearing of their plight, Nicholas devised a plan (the details of which vary a bit from story to story). Wanting his gift to be anonymous, he passed by the window of his neighbor's home and threw gold coins into the house. They happened to land in stockings that were drying by the fireplace. The gift of gold was enough for the oldest daughter to marry.

Nicholas repeated his kindness for the second daughter, but when he tried to throw gold coins into the window for the youngest girl, he found the windows locked. He had no choice but to throw the coins down the chimney. Eventually learning the identity of his benefactor, the Pataran villager told everyone about Nicholas' generosity.

Now a teen-age priest, Nicholas soon moved to the nearby Lycian capital of Myra where fantastic tombs, hewn into the rocks to look like houses, can still be seen today. Soon after his arrival in the capital, Nicholas was made bishop of the town. He remains the youngest bishop ever to serve in the history of the Catholic Church.

But not everything was easy for Nicholas. He lived during the time of great persecution against the Church. And as the Bishop of Myra, he was a prime target for torture and imprisonment. (This link will take some time to load. It's worth it.)

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-LEGENDS-OF-SAINT-NICHOLAS-Miracle-on-34th-Street)

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