

# AM I SANTA'S NIECE?

Having turned four years old in November of 19xx, I mostly split my time between living in reality and make believe.

My parents had company for a meal a couple of nights before Christmas. My Uncle Walter, my Aunt Celia and another couple were the guests. I was the only child there. Naturally, I was questioned about what I wanted for Christmas, what I thought I'd get and if I was being good. I was the pre-game show before an evening of Canasta.

After some time passed, we heard horse harness rattling outside. Never mind I'd heard it jingle every day of my life, but Daddy said it sounded like Santa to him. I readily agree that it sounded like jingle bells to me too.

Daddy went to the front door, opened it and sure enough, there was Santa. He had a small sack of candy for me, sat down in a chair and invited me to sit on his lap. During the ensuing conversation, I noticed that he smelled like Uncle Walter. Daddy and my uncle both wore Old Spice. His voice sounded a bit like my uncle's but not exactly.

He had on a plastic mask (they must have thought I had an IQ of -14) and I could see behind it. His glasses looked like Uncle Walter's and his wristwatch looked like Uncle Walter's too. He did have an attached beard but that was the extent of the impersonation. I never noticed that he had on regular clothes.

I briefly pondered the situation and came to the conclusion that Uncle Walter COULD be Santa and I was an extremely lucky little girl.

I was the only grandchild on my mother's side and had been told many times over that I was "special."

The fact of my uncle being Santa was proof enough for me.

My bedtime came and I went to bed happily thinking about Santa having said he thought I'd been a good girl and he felt sure I'd have plenty of presents Christmas morning.

The next morning I relieved the night before and told my mother how much Santa had looked like Uncle Walter. She just smiled. Then I said, "Is Uncle Walter really Santa?" and she said, "He was last night."

My next question was, "Does Aunt Celia know?"