

## The Advent Diary of Amanda Brown, Aged 10 years and 1 month.

### 1. Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November

At last, it's Advent tomorrow! It seems to have taken AGES to have come. I think it was because I have a really cool Advent Calendar this year. My twin brothers have the usual chocolate Power Rangers calendars, just like they had last year! They have no imagination, but what can you expect of six year old boys. Now that I'm ten, I have a superior taste in advent calendars. I don't want chocolate in mine, so Mum let me choose this really nice one with lovely pictures. I can't wait to see the first picture tomorrow. We put our calendars up on the wall. They look funny, being the only Christmassy decorations up at the moment. I'm going to bed now so tomorrow morning comes quickly.

### Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December

Hurrah, it's DECEMBER at last. Only twenty-four more sleeps till Christmas day. The first picture on my advent calendar had a lovely snowflake. I wish it would snow.

### 2. Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

Everyone at school has been talking about Christmas all day. Everyone is so excited. I like hearing how different people do things differently at Christmas. Like my best friend, Molly. She has two chocolate advent calendars. She says both her grannies like to send her one every year. Toby Matthews has a Lego advent calendar. I'd quite like one of those, but my Mum and Dad said they were too expensive. It seems that everyone has a chocolate calendar except me, but I don't care. My picture this morning was a beautiful dove.

Why are doves Christmassy?

### 3. Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

The main reason for writing this diary is to keep a record of being good. Mum and Dad say that Father Christmas only brings presents for good children, so I want to be absolutely sure that I get some presents. Ed and George say that last year, they were a bit naughty before Christmas but still got presents, and so they're not too worried. They think it doesn't matter if you're naughty or good. But my teacher, Mrs Armitage, said that her cousin was very naughty when she was a girl and she didn't get ANY PRESENTS one year. I'm not going to take that chance. Wouldn't it be funny if we got up on Christmas Day and I had all the presents and Ed and George had none! I'd love to see the look on their faces. That would teach them a lesson. So, to prove that I can be good, I helped Dad lay the table for tea, and ate up all my cabbage (yuck, I hate cabbage) and cleared the table after tea. Dad said I was very helpful. Hope Father Christmas was watching.

My picture this morning was a bell. I do still like my calendar, but I wish the pictures were a bit more exciting.

#### 4. Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December

Went to Church this morning with Molly and her mum. We go to the Sunday Club which is just for kids. It's good, because we get to play games and do arts and crafts. But this morning was evening better than usual. Mrs Lott, who runs the Sunday Club, told us about a special service for Christmas Eve. It's going to be in the evening, when it's dark outside, and the church will be all lit up with hundreds of candles. And instead of everyone all singing the carols, there will be small groups singing in different parts of the church, and some solos. It sounds really lovely. Mrs Lott says that everyone can have a part and everyone was really excited and shouted out what they wanted to do. Mrs Lott made a list. Molly is going to play her violin. Tom Burrows said he wanted to play his trombone but Mrs Lott thought that might be a bit loud. She wants it to be beautiful and peaceful. Her idea is to start the service with a solo of *Once in Royal David's City*, sung by one of us standing up in the gallery. Imagine that. I knew immediately that I want to do this. I think I'd be perfect for that. Unfortunately, so did most of the other girls, and some of the boys. Even Tom Burrows said he would rather do that than play his trombone! Mrs Lott says she will hold an audition next week and then decide who is going to do what. So I have a week to practise - I REALLY WANT THAT PART.

The picture this morning was a snowman. Why are Christmas Calendar makers so obsessed with snowy pictures? It never snows in December.

#### 5. Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December

I have done lots of singing at school today. We've been practising carols in class. Some the boys, including Toby Matthews, were singing the silly words to *We Three Kings* and *While Shepherds Watched Their flocks*. Mrs Armitage wasn't very impressed. She said that the joke words were actually very boring because everyone has heard them so many times before. She made the boys come out to the front and challenged them to make up some new funny words. Needless to say, the boys were very embarrassed and couldn't think of anything funny to sing, so Mrs Armitage told them to sit down and stop being silly. I love Mrs Armitage, she is very clever.

I was glad that we sang *Once in Royal David's City*, so I could have a good practice. Mrs Armitage played it to us on a CD, of a choir boy singing on his own. It was beautiful. I'm not sure if I could sing as well as that, but I think I could do almost as good.

The picture this morning was holly and ivy. I know what is Christmassy about holly, but what about ivy? It grows on the side of our house all year round.

## 6. Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December

I remembered about being extra specially good, so I tidied up in the living room today. I had just picked up all the toys and books when the twins came down with HUNDREDS of cars and messed it all up again. I was so angry that I shouted, and then Mum came and shouted at me for losing my temper. It's not fair, I was trying to be good! When I explained to Mum, she apologised and then told the twins that they should be more like me. She made them take all their cars back upstairs. Ha, that told them. But then, they started saying "Look, we're being good, we're tidying up", as if that made a difference. They are so annoying. Sometime I hate having younger twin brothers. I warned them that Father Christmas will be expecting more than just that.

The picture this morning was an angel. Mum said I was an angel for tidying up.

## 7. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December

HA. Ed and George are in real trouble. They were meant to be playing two of the kings in their class Nativity Play, but they were messing around with the presents and kept getting told off. Then, instead of saying "I bring gold", Ed said "I've brought an X-Box" and George said "I've brought a football." Everybody thought it was funny - everyone except the teachers, who were getting very fed up with Ed and George being silly. So now the twins don't get to be kings anymore. They have to be boring old sheep, who don't even get to say baa. They tried to pretend that they didn't care, but I think they do really. I can always tell when they're really sorry.

I remember when my class did the Nativity. I was Mary. I've always known I was going to be a star!

Funnily enough, there was a star in my calendar this morning. It *is* my destiny.

## 8. Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December

I got SIX Christmas cards at school today. I will have to get on and write mine. There is a special post box in the school hall where we post all our cards and then they get delivered at the end of the day. The Year Six children get the job of delivering all the cards. I can't wait for next year and I get to do it. I know everyone in the school so I think I'll be pretty good.

Mum got me a pack of Christmas cards to send to all my friends. They're really nice, with angels and stars, but there are only twenty-four, so I will have to think very carefully who to send them to. I definitely won't be sending one to Toby Matthews. He was being VERY annoying today, pretending to sing like a choir boy in a silly high voice. He thinks he's so funny, but I think Father Christmas would disagree.

The picture was a post box covered in snow - more snow!

## 9. Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December

I went to Molly's house after school and we practised for the audition on Sunday. Molly can play *Away in a Manger* on her violin really nicely, and I'm sure Mrs Lott will let her do that. However, Molly also wants to sing the opening solo, like I do. It's a good job that we're such good friends and won't fall out over it, but I can't help hoping that she won't get it instead of me. It's not like I can play an instrument. We've also come up with a dance that we could do, to *Silent Night*. Molly's older sister, Maria, is going to play the music on the piano and we're going to dance through the aisles in the church. We've even designed some costumes. I hope Mrs Lott likes our idea.

Maybe I should start playing an instrument. I did start learning the recorder once but I didn't keep it up. I wouldn't want to play the recorder now, but I don't know what I would like to play. Not a violin, because Molly already does that. And we don't have a piano at home, so that's no good. Maybe I could play the flute. I like the sound of flutes.

The picture this morning was a Christmas cracker. Surely it's too early for crackers?

## 10. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December

I asked Mum about playing the flute. She said "Maybe", which in Mum language really means "no". I'll just have to concentrate on singing for now. When the twins heard me rehearsing for the solo, they started saying that they wanted to take part in the Christmas Eve service. I asked them what they were planning on doing. Ed said he was going to play the electric guitar and George said he would play drums. That was their excuse to make lots of noise. Dad wasn't happy because he was trying to watch a cookery programme on the television.

Later, I did some cooking with Dad. He wanted to try out a recipe from the programme he had been watching, a lovely chocolate dessert with cranberries. I like cooking with Dad. He lets me do the interesting things, like crack the eggs and use the electric whisk. And we ate the dessert for tea. It was delicious. Dan says I can help him make it again for Boxing Day.

The picture this morning was Christmas Pudding. I think my Chocolate Cranberry Dessert was nicer.

### 11. Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Today was the BIG DAY. Everyone in Sunday Club was very excited and a little bit nervous. Molly was so nervous that she made loads of mistakes when she was playing her violin. Mrs Lott was really nice about it and let her play it again, and she played it perfectly the second time. So Mrs Lott said Molly could definitely play it in the Christmas Eve service. She also liked our dance and said it would be very nice. Then it was time for solo audition. One by one, we had to go up to the gallery on our own and sing the first verse. Mrs Lott listened from the pews. She said she was going to choose the person whose voice carried the best. It was very nerve-wracking standing in the gallery on my own and singing into the big church. But I think it went well. Mrs Lott said she would let us know next week. In the meantime, we had plenty to do. Molly, Maria and I practised our dance, and I'm also going to be singing *Oh Little Town of Bethlehem* with three others, as well the finale, when we all sing *Hark the Herald Angels*. So even if I don't get the solo, I will have lots to do.

Today's picture was a choir boy singing. I hope it's an omen.

### 12. Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December

Today is the half-way point on the advent calendar - twelve windows opened and twelve to go. The picture was actually rather beautiful today, the kings' gifts, all golden and shiny. I showed Ed and George and it reminded them of their parts in the Nativity play. Ed said if the gifts had been as beautiful as that, they might not have been so silly about them. He said he knew his gift wasn't really gold but a cornflake box wrapped up in red, shiny paper. George said it wasn't fair because he knew his gift really was a football wrapped up in silver foil. I suppose he has a point. They said it was really boring being silent sheep. I said if they tried to be really good at school, they might get something better to do in the Nativity, but I don't think there's much chance of them being good.

### 13. Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December

I was right, it is impossible for the twins to be good. It turns out that they have already eaten all the chocolates in their Power Rangers calendars. Mum noticed that all the doors had been opened and closed up again, and that every window was empty. Then the twins admitted that they had eaten all the chocolates on the second day! Mum was furious. I was very shocked - don't they know that Father Christmas doesn't come if you cheat on your Advent calendar? When they heard this, they were both very scared and started to cry. So it seems they're not so confident about Father Christmas coming after all. Mum sent them to their rooms until teatime. It was very quiet without them. I almost felt sorry for them. I wouldn't really want Father Christmas to leave them out. Dad said they could come down at teatime, and they were still very quiet. Mum said that they should really think about being very, very, VERY good from now until Christmas.

The picture this morning was mistletoe. Dad says it is to do with kissing. Yuck!

#### **14. Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Everything at school is looking very Christmassy now. Mrs Armitage has decorated our classroom, including a Christmas tree. It was looking really nice until Toby Matthews knocked it over! Mrs Armitage made him stay in at lunch time to fix it. He was allowed to pick someone to stay and help him and he picked me! Actually, we had quite a nice time, fixing all the decorations, and I think it looked even nicer when we were finished. I told Toby about the special Christmas Eve service and he said he would come and watch. Maybe Toby isn't so bad after all.

There was a Christmas tree in the Advent calendar this morning. I asked Mum when we were going to put our tree up. She said we could do it on Saturday. Hurrah!

#### **15. Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

I've been looking back through this diary and realised that I haven't been doing very many good deeds. So tonight, I helped Mum make tea. The twins were watching me and I saw them whispering together. I suspected that they were up to something, but I have to admit, they surprised me. They came up to me and said they wanted to be good, like me. Me and Mum were gobsmacked! Ed said he thought that maybe I was right and that they should start showing Father Christmas that they could be good. Mum said that it might be too late, but they could start by helping me set the table. I let them carry the glasses of water and they did it very carefully and didn't spill a drop. Dad said that maybe the twins should try copying me all the time. Unfortunately, during tea, I accidentally spilled my glass and spilt water on the table. Then those stupid boys copied me and soon there was water all over the table. Mum and Dad were really cross until George said they were just copying me. Then Dad started laughing, and so did I, and of course the twins joined in, and then finally, even Mum laughed too. We all laughed and laughed and the mess didn't matter after all.

Tinsel and baubles in the calendar today. I can't wait for Saturday.

#### **16. Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

Year One did their Nativity play today. It was so cute. The little girl playing Mary forgot her lines and started to cry and one of the shepherds asked if he could go to the toilet! We were all trying very hard not to giggle, even the teachers. The twins were VERY well behaved and they even got to say baa at the end.

I handed out my Christmas cards today. In the end, I solved the problem of not having enough cards by making some special cards for my best friends. I made a lovely one for Molly, with glitter. I even made one for Toby Matthews; I drew a picture of an upside Christmas tree on it!

I made Dad promise we could put our Christmas tree up tomorrow. I can't wait. There was a picture of presents in the calendar today. I'm getting so excited.

### **17. Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

Hurrah, our house looks really Christmassy now. I love it when Dad gets the box of decorations down from the loft and we see all our favourite decorations again. It's funny how you can forget all about them for a whole year. I love our Christmas tree. It's really big and is absolutely covered in baubles and tinsel. The best bit is when we switch the fairy lights on and turn all the house lights off, so the tree twinkles in the dark. I could just sit and look at it for hours. The twins got over-excited and I was worried that they were going to knock it over. But then they sang a song about a Christmas tree that they had learnt at school and it was really nice. I suppose they're not so bad, after all. I went Christmas shopping with Mum this afternoon and I've bought their Christmas presents - I got them each a Power Ranger toy. I think they'll be happy with them.

Tomorrow we find out who's going to sing the solo. I'm really nervous. There was even a snowy church picture in the Advent calendar, which made me even more nervous.

### **18. Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

YAY, I GOT THE PART!!

Mrs Lott said I had a lovely, strong voice and I was just what was needed to start the service. Molly said she didn't mind because she is playing her violin solo. She's such a good friend. I'm glad I've got her a nice present.

We spent all afternoon at the church, rehearsing the Christmas Eve service. I had to stand in the gallery and sing my solo while the other children practised walking to their places in the church. They have to carry special lights that look like little candles. I have a candle light too. We had to keep the church lights on for the practise but I think it's going to look lovely in the dark.

There were candles in my Advent calendar too. I can't wait for Christmas Eve.

## 19. Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December

It was party day at school today. Everyone was wearing their best clothes. I wore my favourite dress, which is black with red stars all over it and a twirly out skirt. In the morning, we played lots of games and I won musical bumps. I should have won musical statues too but Toby Matthews made me giggle so I was out. He was jealous because he hadn't won anything. At lunchtime, we had party food and it was lovely - sandwiches, crisps, sausage rolls, pizza, and lots of cakes and chocolate biscuits. There was even lemonade to drink. After lunch, there was a disco in the hall and we all danced; well, the girls danced and the boys ran around making lots of noise! Then we all had a big surprise. Toby Matthews and some other boys got up and sang a song - it was their new funny version of *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*. Toby has been working on it since Mrs Armitage challenged him back at the beginning of December. It was really good, it went like this:

Wild shepherds who got lost one night  
Went wandering to and fro  
The Angel of the Lord came down  
And showed them where to go.

Mrs Armitage said she was very pleased with them for their effort. As a reward, she got the whole school to sing Toby's new words. Toby was dead chuffed. I was pleased for him.

There was a picture of a lamb in the Advent calendar. I hope it didn't get lost!

## 20. Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL, HURRAH!!!! We didn't do any work today, we just played games and helped Mrs Armitage tidy up the classroom. It felt very strange to taking down the Christmas decorations before Christmas - it was almost as if we'd been asleep for a week and missed Christmas Day! But then Molly and me swapped presents and we were happy again. Molly gave me a writing set, with a notebook, pencil case and pen. I love it. And Molly liked the present I gave her - it was a little teddy bear wearing a Christmas hat. Molly said she's going to call him Nicholas. I wasn't expecting any other presents but then Toby Matthews gave me a Lego figure from his Advent calendar! It was a girl figure in a red dress. Toby said wanted me to have it because he had really liked his upside-down Christmas tree card (and he admitted that he didn't really like the girl figures, but I still thought it was very kind of him).

The twins must have been being good at school because their teacher made them joint Star of the Week. They were very pleased with themselves. They keep asking me if I think they've been good enough for Father Christmas. I said they had to keep being good until bedtime on Christmas Eve.

Robin redbreast in the calendar - my favourite bird.



## **21. Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

Today was Tidy Up Day. Mum said if we helped with the tidying and cleaning, she would take us out somewhere nice tomorrow. The twins moaned about it, until I reminded them about being good, and then they ran upstairs to tidy their bedrooms. To give them more encouragement, I made it into a competition - who could do the best job and have the tidiest bedroom by the end of the day. I had to tidy my own room too, of course. I worked really hard all day. I even got a duster and polished the surfaces, and hoovered the carpet. By teatime, it was looking really lovely. I do like it when my room is tidy - I think I'll make it my New Year's Resolution to keep it tidy all year round! Mum came up to have a look and she was really pleased with me. Then we went to see the twins' rooms. Ed's room looked pretty good. The floor was clear and it looked like everything had been put away - until we looked under the bed and saw that he had pushed everything out of sight! George's room also looked pretty tidy, even when we checked under the bed. But then Mum opened the wardrobe and a big pile of stuff fell out. George burst into tears and said he had tried really hard. And then Ed started crying too. So Mum and I helped them finish off and put things away properly. By the end of the day, all our rooms looked nice. Mum said we had done a good job and she was sure Father Christmas would be pleased.

There was a Christmas cake in the Advent calendar today. Dad has made our Christmas cake and he finished icing it today. It looks lovely.

## **22. Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Mum's special day out was shopping in the city! We looked around the clothes shops and I was allowed to choose a new outfit for Christmas. I tried lots of things on and it was very hard to choose, but in the end, I went for a black frilly tutu like skirt and a silky red blouse. I even got some shiny black shoes to go with it. The twins were not so pleased with going shopping, but were happy to get Power Ranger t-shirts and new jeans. And we all enjoyed going for a pizza in a restaurant. I had loads of pizza and garlic bread and salad, followed by chocolate fudge cake and ice cream, and a huge glass of lemonade. I was absolutely stuffed. When we came out of the restaurant, it was dark and all the Christmas lights were lit up. We walked around the streets to see them all, and looking in the shop windows, all dressed-up for Christmas. On the High Street, there was a giant Christmas tree covered in coloured lights and there was a brass band playing carols and we all sang along. It felt so magical.

I can't believe there are only two windows left on my Advent calendar. It's gone so quickly! This morning there was a red flower. Mum says it is called a poinsettia.

### 23. Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December

Today we had a last, big rehearsal in the church. Lots of things kept going wrong. Molly said her fingers were shaking too much to play her violin and everyone seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Even the dance that Molly and I made up didn't seem to go so well. Mrs Lott said it was normal to get nervous and make mistakes in the dress rehearsal and that we shouldn't worry about it. *But I am quite nervous!*

Back at home, Mum was wrapping presents and so I helped her. Then we piled them all up under the tree and it looked really amazing. The twins came down with a rather raggedy looking present that they had wrapped themselves. It was their present to me. They let me have a quick look and then hid it at the back so I wouldn't try and guess what it is. But I didn't want to guess because I like surprises. Then we sent Mum and Dad upstairs so we could wrap their presents. We have got Mum a CD by the singer she likes and Dad a DVD of his favourite film.

The picture in the Advent calendar this morning was children throwing snowballs. Only one more window to go. I am excited about Christmas day, but I'm also REALLY excited about tomorrow. The service in the church is going to be amazing. I can't wait.

### 24. Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December

I love Christmas Eve. There's something so special about it, even if it is really frustrating waiting for Christmas Day. But at least I had the Christmas Eve service to look forward.

Molly and I had to be at the church early so we could get ready. Mrs Lott had us singing *Jingle Bells* and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* to make us all feel jolly. So when the time came for it to begin, I didn't feel nervous, just really, really happy. I had to wait up in the gallery, so I had a good view as the church filled up. I saw Mum, Dad and the twins, and Toby Matthews with his family. Then, all the lights were turned off so the church was lit up by all the candles. It looked so beautiful. The church went completely quiet and that was the cue for my solo. It was amazing, and so magical when all the other children walked through the church with their candle lights. After that, everything went perfectly. I came down and did my dance with Molly and nothing went wrong. One of the best bits was when Sarah Smith made a big announcement that the new king was born and Tom Burrows played a fanfare on his trombone - it was really dramatic. And when we finished with *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, everyone joined in and it was really loud and wonderful.

Mum and Dad said it was a brilliant service, better than anything they had ever seen before. Even Ed and George said they liked it and that they wanted to join the Sunday Club too.

Then we went home and it was nearly time for bed. At last I feel like I can really look forward to Christmas Day. The twins and I have put out a drink and a mince pie for Father Christmas, and hung up our stockings. I hope I fall asleep really quickly so tomorrow comes soon.

And what was the picture in my calendar this morning? A Nativity scene, of course!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**