

# One Solitary Life

Here is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family.

He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat.

When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race

and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon the earth as has that ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

Author Unknown



## The Christmas Bazaar Santa

By D. L. Alexander

He stood in the middle of the block with a group of children about him. Passersby would glance at him and the children, and go on their way smiling. He was dressed in the regulation Santa Claus uniform, whiskers and all, and carried a small bell in one hand. Across his front hung a large cardboard with the lettering: 'Christmas Bazaar open at the Methodist Church.'

He had stood in the place, before the Union Bank, all morning, talking to the admiring children, asking them what they wanted him to bring them, laughing as he promised their requests.

### Strangers

Two men came down the street, apparently window shopping. One of them lingered in front of a store, but the other proceeded slowly onward. He glanced at Santa Claus and the crowd and



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without hesitating moved on.

Santa looked up shortly afterward to see both men coming through the crowd toward him. He turned pale under his mask as he recognized them and turned about as if to go across the street. At that moment a car came silently up and the door was opened.

'Inside, Mister,' one of the men coming through the crowd said.

Santa stepped into the car and was whisked away leaving the disappointed children behind.

It was the noon hour when Santa again took his station in front of the bank. A group of watchful kids immediately gathered, and Santa began laughing and joking with them.

### Intruders

A half hour went by, and a car pulled to the curb behind Santa. Two men alighted, cast searching looks up and down the street, and walked toward the bank door. Santa raised one arm and began ringing his bell. The four men along the street came alive instantly and converged on him.

Santa turned to face the car behind him. Only one man was in it, and the motor was running. Santa pulled a gun and covered him.

'Hold it, Buddy. Cross your hands on the steering wheel and keep them there.'

'What's coming off, Bill?' he demanded.

'Bill isn't here,' Santa replied. 'He's at central station cooling off his feet and answering questions. I'm taking his place temporarily.'

A minute later the crowd was amazed to see the six men come out of the bank, two of them handcuffed. They went across the walk to the car and two of the men and the handcuffed men entered. Santa Claus crowded into the front seat, the gun still in his hand.

'To the central police station,' he directed.

At the station Captain Hensley, who had just come on duty, sat behind the desk glowering at the men lined before him.

'Who are you?' he asked Santa Claus.

'Just a plain private eye by the name of Richard Layne,' was the answer.

'All right. Take that hideous mask off.'

'Layne removed it. 'You see, it's this way, Cap. I was suspicious of the Santa Claus in front of the bank. I went inside and talked to the cashier. He said the man had been out front all day yesterday, too, and he was uneasy. He said what made him suspicious was that the Methodist Church had made no arrangements to hold a Christmas Bazaar this year.'

### Prepared

'I then talked to my friend, Detective Hammer, and we made arrangements to guard the bank.'

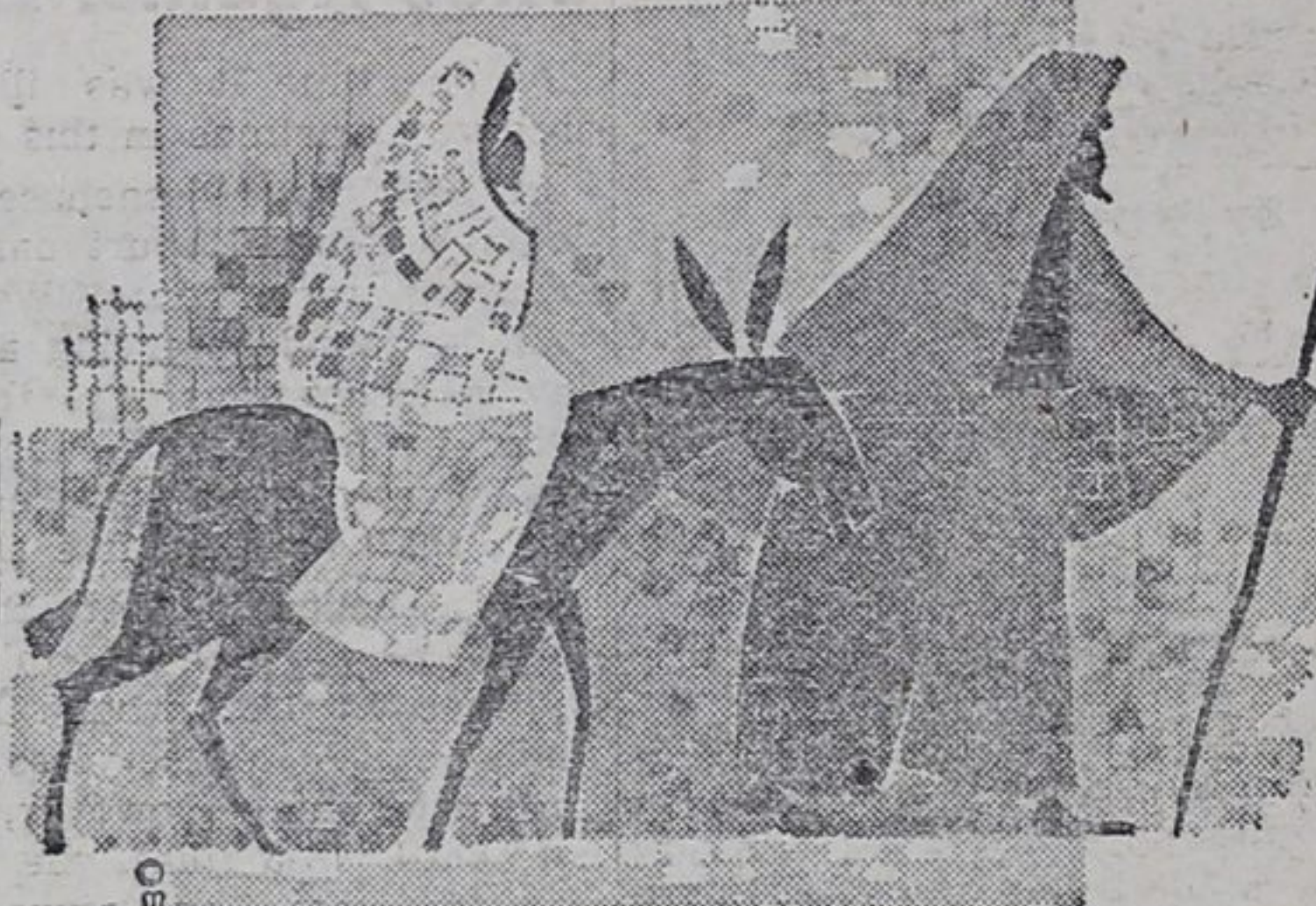
'Where's the loot?' asked Captain Hensley.

'At the bank. They promised to keep it intact for the prosecution.'

'Very well. That's good work.' He beamed at the men. 'But what do you get out of this,' he turned to Layne.

'The bank said they would take care of me,' was the answer.

# Christmas 1960



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