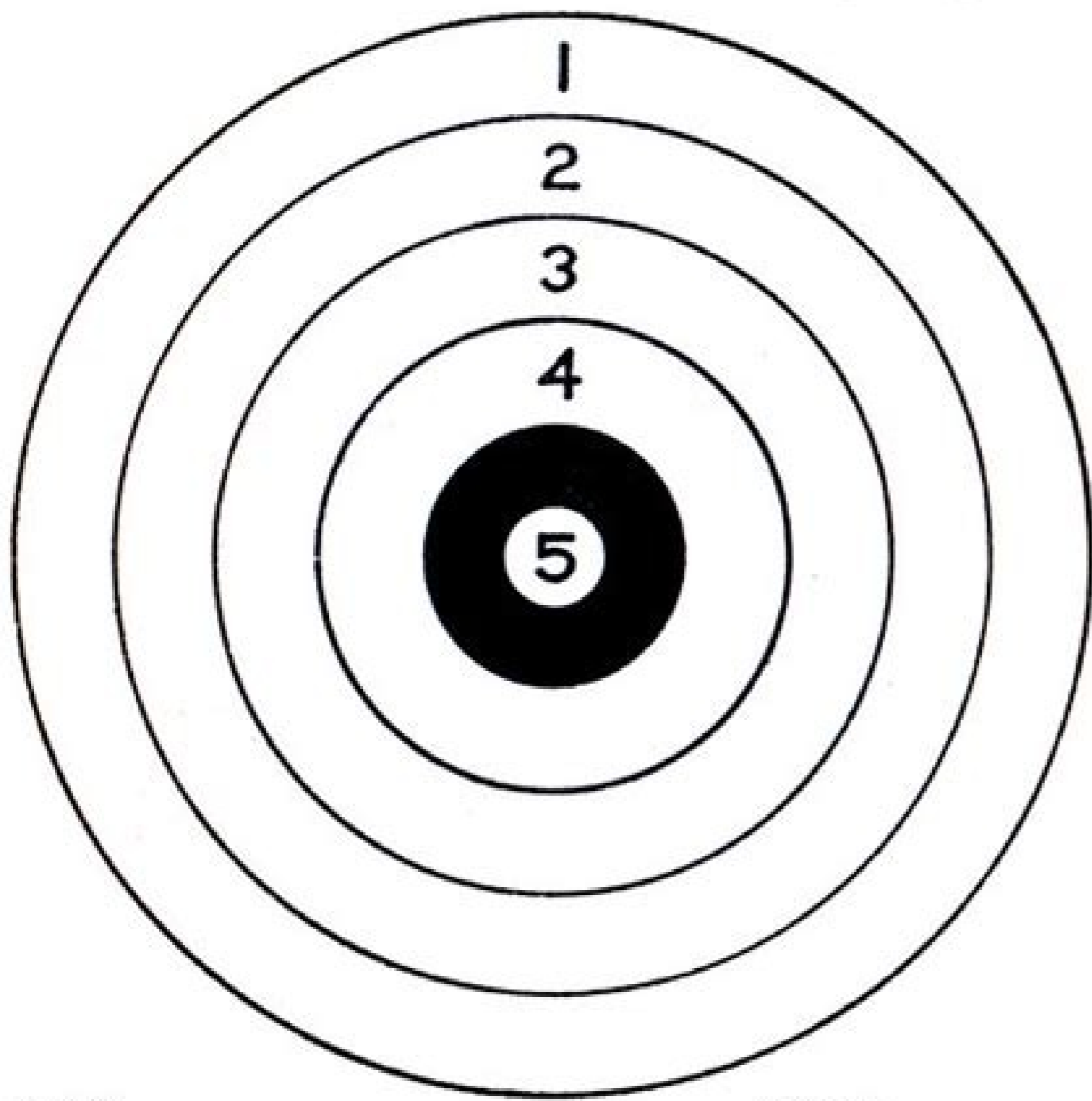


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**The Real Santa**

The real Santa had a long time ago in a place called East About. It is now the country of Turkey. His name was Nicholas.

Nicholas' parents died when he was just a teenager. His parents left him a lot of money which made him a rich young man. He used to live with his uncle who was a priest.

Nicholas heard about a man who had lost all his money. He had three daughters who were old enough to get married. But in those days young women had to have money to marry. So the father had to sell his house to get money. This money was a "dowry" and it was used to help the new family get started. If you didn't have dowry money, you didn't get married.

This family was so poor they had nothing left to eat. The daughters were going to be sold as slaves because they couldn't live all winter any longer. They were very sad. They couldn't see how to have husbands of their own. And they would have to be slaves, no longer able to decide where they would live or what they would do.

One night when the oldest daughter was in bed, she noticed her stockings and put them at the end of the fire to dry. Then all of them went to sleep—the father and the three daughters.

In the morning the daughter saw a heap of her stockings hanging in the room. She found a small money bag. It had gold money enough to provide food for the family and money for her dowry. Oh, how happy they were!

The next morning, another bag with gold and food brought them of the night before. And the next day...

And the next night, the father...

is small "elves" or gnomes (gnomes) in the room. Quickly he jumped up and ran out the door. Who did he catch looking around the corner?

Nicholas, the young man who lived with the uncle. "Nicholas, it is you! Thank you for helping us—I hardly know what to say!" Nicholas said. "Thank you for helping me—thank you! But your parents have been possessed! Do you not think about me?"

Nicholas continued helping people. He always tried to help secretly. He didn't want any attention or thanks. Years passed and he was chosen to be a bishop. Perhaps look after them might be impossible look after their money. And that is what Nicholas did. When there wasn't any food, he found a way. So he was never hungry. He always helped people in trouble. All the old Nicholas should remind him to the Lord and give for each other.

Everyone wants Nicholas. When he died, they had stories of the good and kind things Nicholas had done. Later on, his story came about Nicholas everywhere they went. Some of the stories were about his special care for children—helping and protecting them when danger threatened. And so more and more people named their good, kind children. They wanted to be like him. He is an example of love and goodness. And that is why he became a saint.

This is the story of the real Santa Claus, or Nicholas. He first got popular long ago in Turkey, or Greece in the second half of the 14th century.



[stnicholascenter.org](http://stnicholascenter.org)



