

About nine years ago, I had some incredible luck in a local charity shop. It was coming up to Christmas, and I had gone to Goodwill to look around at all the second hand decorations, ornaments, and housewares. As I wandered up and down the aisle, taking my time to look at the hundreds of items that were for sale, I came across a house. It was a ceramic, Christmas-style house. I picked it up and examined it. It looked like an old English pub with several people here and there playing outside in the snow. There is a frozen pond next to it, trees, and a water wheel. I had seen this sort of decoration before, but brand new in the local stores. They are normally very expensive, as they light up. They often have moving parts, and play music. In a little plastic bag, attached to the item by some sticky tape, was a wire with a plug. I decided to take a chance. Normally, electronic items that are sold in charity stores are not to be trusted. They are often donated specifically because they don't work anymore. I bought it. After cleaning it up at home, I plugged it in. I reasoned that even if it didn't work, it looked festive and pretty. So, with fingers crossed I turned it on. It worked. If I push the button in one direction, lots of twinkling lights come on that change color. If it is pushed in the opposite direction, lights and music come on, and the frozen pond turns around. The frozen pond is probably the reason that this house was donated. It had two skating figures, but one had his head missing, and the other lacked an arm and a leg. Thankfully, you can buy extra little figures in different stores, so I bought an extra snowman and boy. I very carefully twisted off the broken figures, and replaced them with the new ones. With a little help from superglue, the pond scene looked as good as new. My children would spend ages staring at it as its colors changed. They loved talking about all the details, like a story being told. It's a Christmas scene that I look forward to pulling out of the storage box, and putting on display each year.

#### Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: superglue, to stare, to cross your fingers.

1. My sister-in-law uses superglue to glue the cracked skin on her heels back together!
2. It makes me uncomfortable when people stare at me.
3. We've set up all of the fireworks. Fingers crossed that they all work when we light them.

