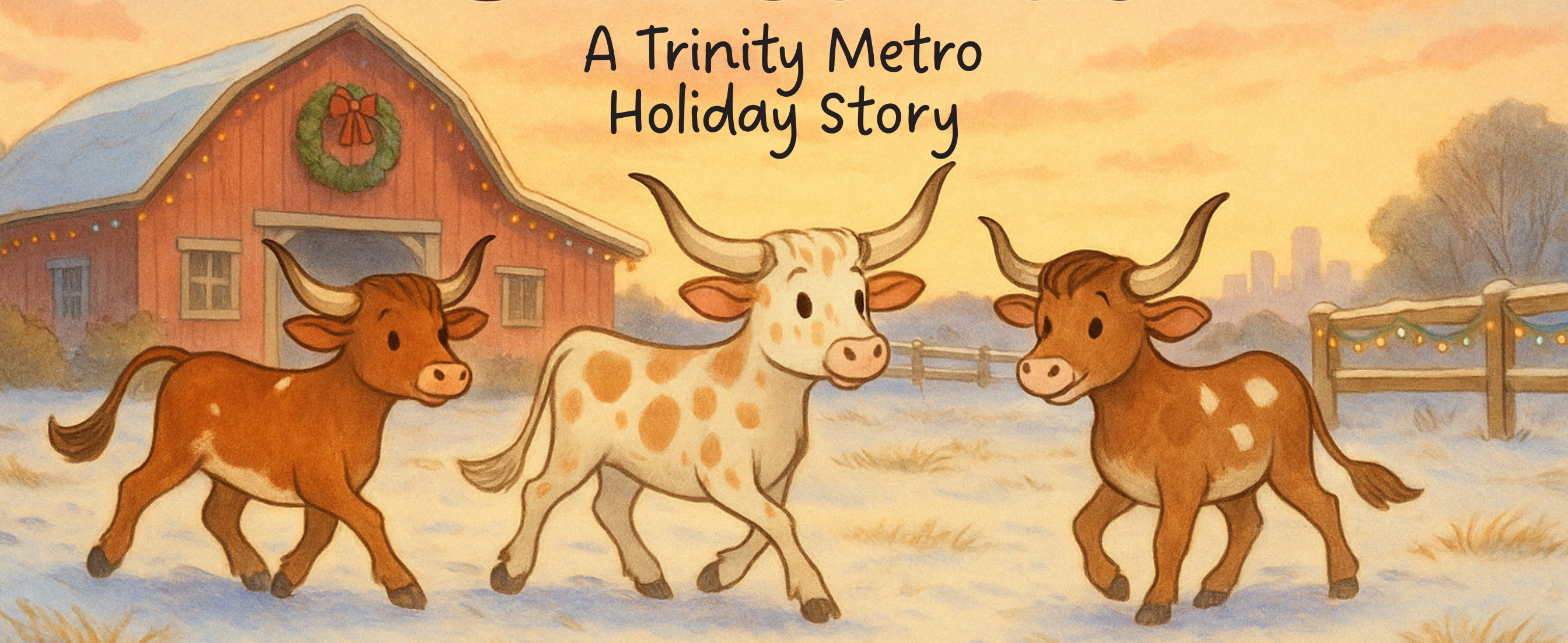


# A Longhorn Christmas

A Trinity Metro  
Holiday Story





On a sprawling ranch near Fort Worth, Texas, three young longhorns dreamed of greatness. Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine spent their days practicing their "cattle drive walk," hoping to one day join the famous Stockyard herd.

"Keep your head high, and step together!" Sparkle called out, leading the way.

Dazzle tilted her head thoughtfully. "Do you think we'll ever be ready?"

Shine trotted behind them, humming a familiar holiday tune.  
"Of course we will! We just need a chance."







Eli and Lila loved the longhorns like family. Every morning, they fed Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine and cheered them on as they practiced.

Their dad, a Trinity Metro bus operator and part-time rancher, often said, "These longhorns are the pride of Fort Worth! One day, they'll make history." Eli grinned. "Maybe they'll even be in the Christmas parade!" Lila giggled. "I bet they'd look great with jingle bells!"



One sunny afternoon, Sparkle declared, "One day, we'll lead the cattle drive!"

Tex, an older longhorn, snorted. "You kids have a long way to go."

Maggie, another seasoned longhorn, added, "You're too young right now, the cattle drive is for professionals."

Sparkle started to feel a little nervous, but Shine whispered, "We'll show them. We just need a chance."







That evening, Eli and Lila overheard their dad on the phone. They didn't know he was also one of Santa's helpers during the busy holiday season.

"All the reindeer? Sick? That's going to be a problem... No, I don't know how you will be part of the parade or deliver the presents, Santa!"

Eli's eyes widened. "Santa's in trouble!" Lila gasped.  
"The parade and Christmas can't be canceled!"

Their dad sighed. "If only Santa had a backup plan"



Outside the window, Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine listened closely. "This is it!" Sparkle whispered. "We can help Santa!" Dazzle hesitated. "But... what if we mess up?"

Shine stepped forward, his eyes shining with determination. "We won't. We'll figure it out together."







The next morning, the younger longhorns practiced pulling an old wagon. It didn't go very well.

"Whoa!" Sparkle yelped as the wagon tipped over.

Tex and Maggie were watching from under a shady tree and decided they should step in and give Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine some lessons. Finally, Tex cleared his throat.

"You young'uns are going to need some help." Maggie smiled. "We'll teach you everything we know." Sparkle blinked in surprise. "You will?"

Tex nodded. "You've got heart. Now let's see if you've got what it takes."



Under the older longhorns' guidance, Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine learned how to pull a wagon, navigate obstacles, and stay together.

"Keep your heads up!" Tex called.

"Work together!" Maggie added.

There were plenty of mishaps—like the time Shine got tangled in tinsel—but the young longhorns didn't give up. A few mistakes weren't going to stand in the way of them reaching their dream job.

They were ready for the Christmas parade.







The next day, the Christmas parade was the grandest Fort Worth had ever seen. Sparkle and Dazzle stood proudly in front of the decorated bus, their bells jingling as they prepared to pull Santa's makeshift sleigh. Shine, however, stood off to the side, his head hanging low.

The night before, Shine had twisted his hoof during practice. "I can't pull the bus," he said quietly. "I'll just slow everyone down." Sparkle nudged him gently. "You don't have to pull the bus to be part of the team." Dazzle added, "You're the heart of this group, Shine. We need you with us."

Santa smiled warmly. "Why don't you ride on top of the bus? You can cheer them on and keep the Christmas spirit alive."

Shine's eyes lit up. "Really? You think that'll help?"  
"Of course!" Sparkle said. "We can't do this without you."



And so, as the parade began, Shine was perched on top of the bus, his bells jingling and his voice ringing out. "You've got this, Sparkle and Dazzle! Keep your heads up and stay in together!" The crowd cheered as the longhorns pulled the bus through the streets of Fort Worth, their steps steady and strong. Sparkle and Dazzle worked together seamlessly, inspired by Shine's encouragement.

"Look at those longhorns!" a spectator exclaimed. "They're pulling that bus like it's as light as a feather!" "And the one on top—he's leading the charge!" another added.

Tex and Maggie, leading the cattle drive behind the bus, watched with pride.

"Maybe those young'uns taught us a thing or two," Tex said. Maggie nodded. "And they've reminded us what it means to work as a team."

"Those longhorns look great!" a spectator exclaimed. "They're walking like they own the town!" "They've always been impressive," another added, "but today they're downright majestic!"

As the parade came to an end, Santa waved to the crowd, his voice booming. "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"







The decorated bus gleamed with lights and tinsel, and a big wreath hung on the front. Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine were harnessed to the bus, their bells jingling softly.

Santa climbed aboard, his eyes twinkling. "Ho, ho, ho! Let's save Christmas!" As the bus rolled through Fort Worth, the younger longhorns pulled with all their might. They delivered presents to every house, guided by the older longhorns' advice.

"Keep your heads up!" Sparkle reminded the others.

"Work together!" Dazzle added.

"We can do this!" Shine cheered.



Back at the ranch, the family and longhorns gathered around a cozy fire. The children sipped hot cocoa while the longhorns rested in the barn, their bells jingling softly.

"We couldn't have done it without you,"  
Sparkle said to Tex and Maggie.

Tex nodded. "And we couldn't have done it without you reminding us  
what it means to believe in yourself."

Maggie added, "You three have a lot to be proud of. And so do we."

Sparkle smiled. "Helping Santa was even better than joining the cattle  
drive."

"And we got to do it together!" Exclaimed Shine.







That night, under the big Texas sky, the longhorns and the family reflected on the lessons learned while helping Santa. Helping others, believing in yourself, and finding joy in working together is important any time of the year."

This story ends but your story continues. Believe in yourself. Find your joy in working with others to make Fort Worth a better place to live, work and play!

Wishing you a happy and safe holiday season.  
Trinity Metro Family & Team



# Discussion Questions

- What do you think Sparkle, Dazzle, and Shine learned from their journey?
- How did the older longhorns change by the end of the story?
  - What's something you've done to help someone else?







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