The tree and decorations came down last night, much to Ollie and Fred's disappointment. The last remnants of our Christmas holiday are my unfinished December Daily, some stale cookies and the last pieces of peppermint bark in the fridge.

The peppermint bark was something new for me. I'm not sure I've ever eaten it before but I saw this blog post and recipe about it last spring and wanted to give it a try. It's so pretty and Christmasy and sounded like something I could manage pretty well as long as I paid attention and didn't let the chocolate burn. It turned out that the hardest part was finding peppermint candies to sprinkle over the white chocolate. No where in town, as far as I know, stocks those round, red and white peppermint candies the recipe calls for but it was December and I was sure candy canes would be an excellent substitute. I was also sure they would be easy to find but it took me nearly three weeks.

I seem to be afflicted with candy cane blindness. It is similar to colour blindness but instead of being unable to see red and green I can't find candy canes no matter how hard I look. Actually, maybe it is more like colour blindness than I thought. Candy canes are red and green after all. At least the ones I was looking for are. The few I found were pink or orange and correspondingly un-mint flavours. I went to three grocery stores, two drug stores, Walmart and Canadian Tire. I saw every kind of Christmas chocolate you can imagine, and a few I'd never thought of, but never once saw a box of ordinary candy canes. Eventually I found mini candy canes in the bulk food bins at one of the grocery stores. When I mentioned my problem to other people they almost always answered with something along the lines of "That's weird, I saw lots of boxes of mint candy canes at (enter name of store here)". It seems I am the only one affected by this strange malady.

To make things even funnier (in retrospect) I had to buy my mini candy canes twice. Since the recipe called for red and white peppermint candies - and I *really* liked the look of the little red flecks on the white chocolate - the first batch of mini candy canes I brought home were just red and white and had been carefully pulled out of a bulk bin of multi-coloured candy canes (though the label claimed they were all gold). Fortunately I decided to nibble a bit of one that broke off while I was peeling off all the wrappers because it turned out they were cherry flavoured. I checked the bin label when I went back for the red and green candy canes the next day and

there was no mention of cherry flavouring. That I might have made a whole batch of peppermint flavoured chocolate with bits of cherry candy in it is repulsive. It wasn't even a very good cherry flavour.

In the end - with the right candy canes - the peppermint bark turned out wonderfully. I read through the directions a few times before I started and a few more times whenever it was resting in the fridge and didn't have any problems putting it together. The flavour combination and texture are both fantastic and it looks so pretty on a plate of goodies. I plan on making it a regular part of December for us.

… but I think next year I'll ask Rob to pick up the candy canes for me.