

# THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

BY WILFRIED F. VOSS

**FROM** her lap, his shiny blue eyes stared up at her as she admired his permanent red smile. Fingering his tiny overalls, she pictured the little ones' faces, pressed against the icy windowpanes, waiting for her to arrive with another basket of her lifelike homemade gifts.

It was a cold Christmas Eve, and you'd expect people to be done with their Christmas shopping, but Siobhan's little shop saw an endless stream of visitors, and she had to keep her eyes on the door.

The little doll was the last of an order for a good customer who had been buying her crafts for many years. All of his children had her dolls and toys, and now she was making them for his grandchildren. She had dropped off most of his order yesterday and just had this one to finish. She'd bring it to church tonight and give it to Mr. Cash.

She was hoping to finish up soon and then drop off some gifts to her nephews. Thinking of her nephews made Siobhan's thoughts wander. Her greatest desire in life was to have kids on her own, and it had been difficult for her and Will to deal with infertility. Perhaps, she thought, they could adopt, but that would be expensive. She sighed and remembered how grateful she was to have her nephews. Between them visiting and the neighborhood children coming into the shop, she had abundant company and it helped ease the pain. After Christmas maybe she'd feel strong enough to look into adoption.

But now it was time to finish the gifts. This last one was the most adorable one yet. He had beautiful blond hair and large blue eyes along with a strikingly angelic face. He was indeed a masterpiece. All her customers commented repeatedly that her dolls appeared so lifelike and beautiful, they made everyone smile, and this one was no exception. "You really are beautiful," she whispered at him, pressing him close to her chest.

The last strand of hair was finally in place. As she gently inserted the needle to tie a knot, he lurched in her hand, and she heard a high-pitched voice, "Please, don't prick

me with that needle again! It hurts!”

Siobhan’s first instinct told her, she had been working too hard. It was late and the shop was quiet now. She looked at the doll in her lap as he spoke to her again, “Please, don’t prick me with your needle – that hurts!”

Siobhan looked at the little man and, although she felt foolish, she asked, “Excuse me, did you say something?” “Yes!” he replied. “Please, don’t stick me again.” “Oh I won’t,” Siobhan assured him. “Uhm, where did you come from, little angel? I’m sure you weren’t alive when I started you.”

“No, I came alive in response to your wish. You do want a child, don’t you?” the little creature asked.

“Well yes,” said Siobhan. “But we can’t have children.” “Well,” said the little man, “It is Christmas and your faith and goodness are being rewarded. God is looking down on you with favor and, like the Christ child, He wanted to bring me into your life as your son. This will be our first Christmas together and we can all give thanks.”

At that moment, Will entered the shop and heard the little voice. “Whom are you talking to, Siobhan?” he asked. Then he saw the little man on Siobhan’s lap. “What on earth--?”

Siobhan looked at Will, sheepishly. “Well, I’m not sure how to explain this. He asked me to stop pricking him with the needle. I’m still not sure what is happening...”

The little man looked up at Siobhan and Will, and he smiled an angelic and beatific smile, without guile.

“It’s really quite simple,” he explained. “You wished and wished, and God smiled down on you and sent me. You wanted a child, and He decided that you should have one. Me.”

He looked around, and then he continued, “I am so glad to finally be part of a

family. I've always wanted to have a Mama and a Papa and I sure hope you will keep me."

"Of course we'll keep you, won't we Will? We've always wanted to be parents and you are indeed a dream come true."

Will, still struck with disbelief, mumbled it was Christmas, after all. After the holidays they would sort it all out.

It was late and Siobhan and Will set out for church with Patrick, as he told them he was called. They rushed to the church and, once inside, were greeted by the ushers.

"Hello, Siobhan and Will," said Mr. Cash. "And a special welcome to little Mr. Patrick here. It is always a pleasure to see you and your parents."

Siobhan felt embarrassed. "I am sorry, Mr. Cash," she said to him, "But I was unable to finish your order today, and..."

Mr. Cash looked perplexed. "But, Siobhan, you delivered everything. There was nothing missing."

Siobhan stood there without a word, her thoughts swirling in her head, and then everything made sense.

Mr. Cash guided them to their seats. "You all have a very Merry Christmas!"  
And a Merry Christmas it was...

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