

The Christmas Doll

By Marilyn Reeves

The only thing five-year-old Sarah really wanted for Christmas was a little baby doll, and she hoped that this year Santa would bring her one.

One Saturday in late November Dad said, "Come on everybody, we're going to the city!" Excited, Sarah and her big brother Michael piled into the back seat of the Oldsmobile. Mom's tummy had gotten so big that Dad had to help her get settled into the passenger seat. Then he started the car and they headed out on their journey.

When they arrived, Dad helped Mom get out of the car. She said, "Thank you, Frank. Please take the children for a walk while I spend some time shopping in this department store."

As they walked up the street, Dad and the children paused in front of each store, marveling at the pretty Christmas decorations and all the toys and gifts displayed in the windows. And right in the middle of one of those windows was the most beautiful baby doll Sarah had ever seen. "Oh, Daddy, there's the baby doll that I've always wanted! Do you think Santa might bring me that doll for Christmas?"

"We'll have to wait and see," said Dad.

An hour later, they walked back to the big department store to find Mom, who was laden with packages. After Dad stored them inside the trunk they began their trip back home.

Ever since that day, Sarah could hardly wait for Christmas. Every night she dreamed about that baby doll, hoping she would find it under the tree.

On the day before Christmas, while they were all busy cooking, decorating, and setting out food for the Holiday, Mom whispered something to Dad, and Dad ran out of the house so fast he didn't even bother to shut the door. Ten minutes later he returned with old Mrs. Blake, who was carrying a large leather satchel. She turned to the children and said, "Shoo! Shoo! Go play with your friends or something. We'll let you know when you can come home."

"Well, who is she to tell us what to do?" said eight-year-old Michael. But Dad chimed in, "Out! Out! Go over to the Thompson's and wait there until I come for you."

"What on earth is going on?" Sarah wanted to know.

"I'll bet it has something to do with Santa," said Michael. "Let's just do as they say, and see what happens."

So they went over to the Thompson's as they had been told to do, and waited for their Dad to come get them. But Dad didn't come, and didn't come, and finally the Thompsons invited them to stay for supper. When it was bedtime, the Thompsons made bedrolls for them on the living room floor.

Finally, around midnight, there was a knock at the door. Dad came in, eyes shining, and grinning ear to ear. "Okay, kids, you can come home now. There's a surprise waiting for you when you get there."

When they got home, Dad said, "Go on upstairs and see Mom."

Their mother was sitting up in bed, holding a tiny bundle next to her chest. "Sarah, Michael, come meet your new baby sister."

Sarah couldn't believe her eyes. Now she had a real-live baby doll to play with! And this one was even better than the one in the store.