

An Unlikely Place for a Miracle to Happen

THE CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

A dark, stone-walled tunnel with a bright light at the end where several people are silhouetted.

*“Marsha Frederick encourages us
to step up as a champion for children.”*

— DR. WESS STAFFORD,
Compassion International

MARSHA FREDERICK

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MARSHA FREDERICK

After walking through the snowy streets, Anna saw a bridge in the distance. Since everyone was so tired, she decided this was a good place to stop and make everyone as comfortable as possible.

Ben was the first to notice in this place they would call home that someone had left some old furniture. It wasn't worth much. Just a very crude, homemade table, a few chairs and even an old camping cook stove.

Tears of laughter and gratitude filled this bleak, desolate

THE CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

place. What most would scorn and complain about, these children saw as an answer from heaven itself.

“Children,” Anna said, “let’s thank God for His wonderful provision.” Once again, all the children knelt down; only this time they were kneeling under a bridge, possessing nothing of any earthly value, but having hearts full of faith toward God. After all, hadn’t Mama told them God would take care of them and she would be watching from heaven? After the children got up from prayer, they looked around, wondering what they would do next.

“Anna,” Rebecca excitedly spoke her name. “Can we give a special gift to Jesus like we used to do when Mama was still with us?”

“Rebecca,” answered Anna, “What kind of gift are you thinking about?”

“Remember what Mama taught us to do? Every Christmas we would act out the First Christmas Story. We can have a play, a living nativity. There’s enough of us. James and Matthew can be the wise men. Anna, you can be Mary. Ben can be Joseph. Katie can be Baby Jesus. Beth and I can be the shepherds. We can pretend the angels are watching from heaven with Mama.”

MARSHA FREDERICK

If these children had looked a little closer, I think they would have seen their own angels looking in wonder while they, in their simple childlike faith and hope, began enacting the miracle of the First Christmas Story.

Meanwhile, in the Stevenson's home, Mary and Lydia were finishing up the last touches on their already magnificent tree by adding silver tinsel. Their dad called them into the kitchen. "Mary, Lydia, come here please. Your mom and I have decided to celebrate Christmas differently this year. Instead of going to the candlelight service at church, we are going Christmas caroling. And not just in our neighborhood. We have many beautiful Christmas presents under the tree. Now we want to celebrate Christmas this year by singing Christmas carols on the streets of our city. Something Jesus would do!"

As the family was getting ready to go, Lydia said, "Dad, can I pray before we go? My Sunday School teacher, Miss Hannah, told us on Sunday we should always ask God to show us the way we should go."

"Of course, Lydia," Dad said. "That's a wonderful idea!"

"Lord Jesus, please show us the way and help us to know what Christmas really means," Lydia prayed.

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As the family started walking down Jefferson Street, snow began falling all around them creating a most awesome sight on Christmas Eve. The beauty of the snow transformed the drab city streets into a winter wonderland. The longer they walked, singing along the way, the spirit of Christmas filled their hearts to overflowing. They felt an Unseen Presence walking among them and the presents under their tree no longer held any significance, even for the children.

All of a sudden, Lydia began squealing with delight as she pointed to a bridge in the distance. “Look! See those puppies and kittens, and bunnies and that beautiful white bird. They’re all going over there. Let’s go see what’s going on.”

Dad took Lydia by the hand while Mom and Mary walked close behind in a wonder of anticipation. The closer they came to the bridge, a radiance enveloped this forsaken, out of the way place. What could it mean?

The family reverently moved closer to the bridge and what unfolded was nothing less than a miracle. These seven homeless children had transformed the desolate bridge into a living Nativity. The miracle of the Christ Child was being portrayed powerfully as these children acted out the First Christmas Story. It seemed as if every stray animal found their

MARSHA FREDERICK

place in this amazing and poignant, holy place. As the family of carolers drew near, the homeless children miraculously captured the wonderment, the simplicity of the Holy Family so long ago.

Even when the moment was broken and the children realized they were not alone, there remained a peace and quiet joy the Stevenson family had never experienced. Suddenly all their earthly treasures seemed so meaningless and hollow. For before them and for the first time ever, Mary and Lydia discovered the true meaning of Christmas. So did their parents.

Mr. Stevenson was so overpowered by this “miracle moment” that he felt as though heaven had come down and filled this lowly place. He heard himself say, “Surely, this must have been what it was like 2,000 years ago when Jesus first came!” The children’s Christmas wish lists were totally forgotten in this special, holy moment.