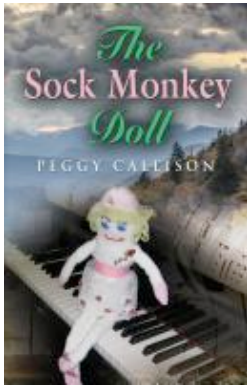


*The*  
Sock Monkey  
*Doll*

PEGGY CALLISON





*Not a children's narrative...The Sock Monkey Doll, based a true story, is set in the Appalachian Mountains where "Hittie" struggles with a boilerplate code that prescribes her life in the early 1900s. North Tazewell, a coalfield town dependent upon the N&W Railroad, is in the flux that progress brings. A tale of bigotry, betrayal, courage, determinism, and unconditional love, The Sock Monkey Doll focuses on life for women living in a culture immersed in absolutes.*

## **The Sock Monkey Doll**

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# The Sock Monkey Doll

A NOVEL

PEGGY CALLISON

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Quietly, and ever so slowly, she was returning from a dark place that felt and smelled like death, a place that, when in the light, would demand a reckoning.

She held her breath, fearful that when she breathed she would not feel the rush of air that meant life; finally, she gasped. The air rushed in, cold, yet reassuring. She sighed; then, moaned at the vague suggestion her body and mind offered that something ominous was approaching.

Her eyes opened, and when she could focus, she saw the rolling, gray-white fog that settled in the valleys and hollows of the Appalachian mountains in autumn. Much like an apparition, the vapor floated along, changing shapes as it lazily stretched itself over the evergreens, the naked trees, and ancient rocks to seek and caress the towering mountains. Then it reached for her, wrapping her in its arms. She felt safe. She was home. Abruptly, it began to separate, allowing her to see that she was, in fact, lying on a hard, flat surface.

Light assaulted her from above, and a dull, red throbbing in her back began a steady beat. She closed her eyes again; she lay still...listening...feeling...the fog returned in her mind's eye...she watched its mesmerizing movements. Suddenly, the parlor at home began to materialize, and the gray-white fog became the gray and white striped wallpaper of the room she knew so well. She saw the Oriental rug, the Duncan Phyfe sofa, alive with tiny flowers, the secretary, mahogany tables, and her piano. She was really home! She willed herself to get up from the flat surface beneath her, but the effort caused the parlor to tilt. One wall rose oddly upward until the doorway became a fulcrum at the threshold. The room teetered there, tottering dangerously back and forth as if a powerful, silent earthquake played recklessly with the house. Strangely, the metronome did not move from its place on the piano; the sheet music did not fly away, and Frank's picture did not slide off the oval

mahogany table by the fireplace which still offered the warmth of a fire.

There was little time to marvel at the strange scene before the black roaring in her ears and the dull red throbbing in her back imploded. The reckoning was coming! Oh, God! The light, the light! The screaming! She heard screaming! Who was screaming? Consciousness was coming...strong and merciless! The light! The pain! She felt it now...everywhere...Oh, God, everywhere! Her eyes flew open to the blinding lights of the emergency room, and it was herself who was screaming. She sucked the screams into her throat. She fought to focus. At her side, someone said something she did not understand. Voices! Strange voices! Suddenly, everything cleared, allowing her a full, but sickening, view of herself where she lay on the emergency room table surrounded by doctors and nurses.

One arm lay contorted to her left; her back still shrieked; her body glistened under the lights from its shower of glass; her stomach swollen so that she could not see her feet.

"I'm pregnant," she whispered. "After all these years, I'm pregnant. Am I having a baby?"

She managed a little smile, but the fog claimed her again, mercifully pulling her back, back into the place she had just been. The bright overhead lights began to dim, the fulcrum released, and the parlor was slowly righted. Daddy was there.

Daddy was there pacing back and forth from the piano to the fireplace. She watched him, jerking his gold watch out of his vest pocket, then stuffing it in again at each point of his journey...back and forth, the chain on the watch dancing as he went.

Then, she heard the screams. So did Daddy. He froze with his face lifted to the rooms above. Another scream overwhelmed his entire frame, and he dropped into the Queen Anne chair, burying his face in his hands.

The familiar, brown face of Beulah suddenly appeared around the doorframe as she was passing in her hurry to the kitchen. "It's gonna' be alrite, Daddy Bob! It's gonna' be alrite. We done had babies befo. Dis un's a little bad. It's a breech, but Doc knows what he's a doin.' He's turnin' it. We's gonna' be alrite! Maybe you git 'nother girl!" she added in an effort to lessen his fear as she disappeared.

The dreadful screams from the bedroom upstairs continued, and Doc Weston's voice could be heard above it all, "Ellen, spread your legs more or I'll have to tie them to the bed posts. I have to get to the baby.

"Get it out! Just get it out! Please just get it out!"

"You've had children before, Ellen. The baby will deliver this way."

"Oh, God, help me! Help me! Help me, Doc!"

Beulah was back with fresh sheets. Her ample figure hurried around the side of the bed. Leaning over, her face was inches away from Ellen's. "Now you listen to Beulah, Miss Ellie. You stop dat hollerin' and have dis baby. You gots to stop dat bellerin'. It be 'nough to wake de dead en Daddy Bob is 'bout to have a fit, en de younguns' be scared to death. Dey done run off to de spring house to hide. I says hush now!"

The two women looked deep into the other's face, Ellen saw both empathy and sympathy, and her cries ceased. One last low, guttural groan brought the baby. A healthy wail that sounded a lot like, "La...la...la," filled the house.

"Well, you've got another little split tail," announced Doc with a rarely seen smile.

"Praise de Lord! Lordy, Lordy! It be a girl!" shouted Beulah.

"I've got a girl," Ellen said breathlessly. "I've got my girl!"

Beulah took the baby from Doc Weston and placed her on the flannel blankets on the wash stand. She began to clean the

infant with oil. "Dis uns a beauty! Lordy, Lordy, she be a beauty! Whup, Lord, she be!"

They had not seen Bob standing at the door. "I heard the baby cry. Is Ellen alright? Is the baby alright?"

"Come on in, Bob. Ellen's fine, and your little split tail is fine. Beulah'll have her ready for you in a minute. Now, Bob, Ellen, there can't be anymore babies. Let this be the last one. This one was too hard on Ellen, and after all, this makes four boys and two girls. That ought to be enough."

"There won't be anymore, Doc." Carefully, he sat on the side of the bed, taking Ellen's hand. "So it's a girl is it?"

Beulah crossed the room and laid the baby, wrapped in a receiving blanket, in Ellen's arms. The infant was fully awake, searching out sounds and peering into faces with huge, round violet eyes. Ellen kissed each pink finger and toe as the little one wiggled with incredible energy. "She's perfect," she whispered, offering the baby to her father.

Tiny fingers clasped Bob's thumb tightly. He was captivated. He loved children. That's why everyone in town called him Daddy Bob. The children were his pride and joy, but Ellen had not seen this expression of admiration on his face at the birth of any of the others. The bond between father and daughter was instant. He took the tiny hand, "Look, Mother. Look at these long fingers. We have a musician! We have a pianist!" He laughed, and his face glowed with delight at the bright-eyed vision in his arms.

Ellen laughed too at the scene before her. "Those fingers are made for housework like the rest of us. They'll wring out a lot of clothes from the washboard and stain will cover those long fingers when we can cherry preserves."

"No...no! This one's special. She is too beautiful for such things. We can't stain these hands with cherry juice. And she



mustn't climb those trees in the yard with the boys either. She's obviously meant to be a lady, Mother. Just look at her!"

"I thought we'd name her 'Jane.' How do you like 'Jane'?"

"Absolutely not! 'Jane' is too ordinary. People will call her 'Plain Jane.' I won't have it, Ellen. We need a better name."

"Mercy me! Does you heah dat!" Beulah exclaimed.

"What is a 'better' name, Bob?" Ellen asked.

Even though Ellen's energy had rallied momentarily after the birth, the pain in her belly began a rude conversation with her. At the moment, she didn't have much patience with Bob's obvious partiality for this child. He had taken no interest in naming the other children.

"Well, like 'Josephine' or 'Margaret Ellen' or 'Suellen.' How about 'Suellen' after you?"

"No. I don't want her named after me," she sighed.

"Well, then, we won't give her a name. We'll wait until she's old enough to name herself! In the meantime, we'll give her a nickname. Everybody in town has a nickname anyway."

"Dat youngun' sho is a big hit wid her daddy now, ain' she! Lets her name hersef! I ain' never heah of no sich a thing. Even in de coalfields everybody gots a proper name," declared Beulah as she busied herself cleaning the room.

"She is a big hit with her daddy," said Bob. "That's it! We'll call her 'Hit'...or 'Hittie'...how about Miss Hittie?"

"Those names don't sound very special to me," Ellen offered facetiously. But she decided not to argue. It occurred to her that if they waited to name the child, she might still get her choice of names for the baby later.

"Sounds downrite outlandish to me. Has you lost yo mind, Daddy Bob?"

"You may as well wait to name her," interrupted Doc Weston as he packed his black bag. "The state hasn't asked for birth statistics since 1896. Well, it's 1904, and they still aren't

being kept. I don't know when I applied for a birth certificate last. Right now, Richmond isn't interested in infants born in one-horse towns like North Tazewell, Virginia. The folks up there have little use for Appalachian, coalfield babies. They think Virginia stops at Roanoke. And if it weren't for the Norfolk and Western, they wouldn't know that! I don't know when the state will tell me to send in statistics again. Record her birth in your Bible, and you can wait as long as you like to name her. At least you can wait until the state is ready for people to apply for birth certificates again. Anyway, Ellen needs to rest, and I have other split tails to deliver tonight. You know I'd rather deliver boys. They have a fighting chance in these hills, and I know what's in store for 'last' girls."

"Now, Doc, we won't discuss that issue. 'Last' girls are taken care of. You're a flat-lander, and you don't really understand our ways. I respect your feelings though. I'll be over to settle up with you tomorrow. I thank you for everything. I don't know what we'd do without you. Would you please send the children up as you go out. They're hiding out in the spring house. They're scared to death...hearing their mother yelling and all. Tell them everything's alright or they won't come in the house."

"Good night, and congratulations, Ellen. Call me if you need me, but I'll see you in a couple of days."

Shortly, one red headed girl and four towheaded, blue-eyed, stair-stepped boys in bibbed overalls peeped around the edge of the door frame. Lane was the oldest at eleven. Tumps was ten. William Moore was six, Jack Whitley was three and Kate was eight. They had mounted the steps as quietly as ghosts.

"Come in children!" invited their father. "Come in and see your little sister!"

"Come on, ya'll. She woan bite you...yit!" laughed Beulah.

The children rushed into the room and gathered around the bundle now in their mother's arms.

"She sure is ugly," declared William Moore. "Why's she so pink?"

"Why *isn't* she wrinkled up?" questioned Tumps. "Jack Whitley was all purple and wrinkled up."

"Shut up, Tumps. You popped out of a crawdad hole. You were the ugliest one of all," retorted Lane.

"Can I take her fishin' down at the Clinch? I won't let her drown, and I'll help her with the worms?" asked Tumps with obvious excitement at the prospect.

"No, you're not! She's a girl, Tumps Ireson. She's going to play dolls with me! She's a *girl!*" declared Kate emphatically. "I'll make her a pretty sock monkey doll!"

"What's her name, Mama?" asked Jack Whitley.

"Her name is 'Miss Hittie,'" answered Daddy Bob.

"Miss Hittie!?" was the chorus. It began as an uncontrollable giggle from Kate, but it erupted into near hysterics that was too much for the exhausted mother.

"Now, chilin', you stop dat rite now! You heah me?" ordered Beulah through a smile she couldn't hide.

"What an awful name! We're not really going to call her that are we?" asked Lane who was first to settle down.

"Consider us fortunate," said Ellen. "Your father wanted to call her 'Josephine.'"

More childish giggles followed, but William Moore saw possibilities in it. "That's a good name. We can shorten it to 'Joe,' and we won't have to tell people we got stuck with a girl."

"Yeh," said Jack Whitley. "She can have some of my clothes if she don't pee on 'em."

Daddy Bob saw nothing funny. "Now that is quite enough! 'Miss Hittie' is a perfectly respectable name. It's a temporary name. We'll wait and see what fits her...what she likes."

"Daddy, can I name myself?" asked Tumps. "I don't like 'Tumps.' Nobody's ever heard of it, and they tease me all the time."

This declaration was followed by a sibling chorus of "Tumps the Mumps! Tumps the Mumps!"

"Hush up dat noise rite now!" stormed Beulah.

"No, you can't name yourself," said Ellen. "I named you, and I like your name and you very much. Tumpsaford is a good, strong name."

Ellen's calming voice brought quiet to the room. Jack Whitley crawled up on the bed and lay down beside his mother and the baby. Cautiously, he touched the pink cheek. "Mama, can I call her 'Sister.' I'd like to call her 'Sister.'"

The word 'Sister' trailed off into an echo as the fog began to bleed out of the corners of the bedroom. It rose to cover her family where they stood. As it came again for her, she realized she had witnessed her own birth. Jack Whitley had always called her 'Sister' and the others had called her 'Miss Hittie.' As a child she had often said to Beulah, "Tell me about the day I was born," and Beulah told and re-told the story of her arrival throughout her childhood. She couldn't explain seeing it so clearly now or even how it was possible. While she struggled with Confusion, her own pain came thundering back again. "Help me. Help me!" she screamed at Unconsciousness who had mercy and offered her refuge.

She did not know how long she was blessed with peace and rest, but when her mind awoke, the parlor was still there and a huge Christmas tree filled the corner by the fireplace. She saw her mother sitting at the piano. Her fingers were moving across the keys, but there was only silence. Gradually, the

notes began to have sound until music filled the room. It was “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

Lane was oblivious to everything as he worked to arrange the toy train around the base of the Christmas tree. He handled the cars and sections of track as if they were glass. He loved trains as much as Daddy Bob loved them, and he wanted to be a Norfolk and Western train conductor when he grew up. The long, poignant wail of an approaching engine, roaring through town on the tracks that ran within sight of the house, summoned body and soul to action. He always ran to the front windows to watch the magnificent machine thunder past on its way, ultimately, to the magic city—Cincinnati. He longed to go to that far off place, and a promise was extracted from Daddy Bob that, one day, he would go there.

Tumps lay on his back on the Oriental rug that Daddy Bob had ordered from the magic city. Tumps always made a place for himself to stretch out before the fireplace. The book in his hands featured a huge Santa on the cover, and he was engrossed in reading it. He was more and more the studious introvert. Mostly he silently observed the interactions of his family. It was difficult to read his thoughts, and he seldom offered them up.

Kate watched her mother play Christmas carols from a stool beside the piano bench. Sometimes she sang along. Kate was two years younger than Tumps. Her red hair and freckles announced her Irish heritage, and she turned heads wherever she went. Her spirit matched the fire in her complexion. Often she ordered the boys about and somehow she had assumed a sense of responsibility for them. The boys, however, had not accepted her as a surrogate. Kate could often be found shaking her authoritarian finger in the faces of rebellious brothers. Ellen watched with amusement. She saw no harm or threat to the seat of true authority in it.

William Moore was another matter entirely. Early on, it was clear he would not reach the stature of his brothers who were tall and slender. He would initiate physical confrontations only to discover that size did matter. He was not a happy child, and more than his siblings was the object of Daddy Bob's discipline. Especially fond of smoking, he was frequently discovered enjoying a pipe or cigarette in the spring house. When Lane's name appeared painted on the side of the Methodist church, William Moore was the primary suspect. He said he didn't do it, adding the sin of lying to his other vices. He enjoyed hiding his sisters' dolls when he didn't feed them to the dogs. He sat in the gooseneck rocker in the corner, watching the scene before him. Much went on behind those eyes.

Suddenly, Jack Whitley burst into the room. He was chased by a screaming toddler, her flaxen curls flying in all directions as she bobbed along after her brother. Dodging here and there, Jack Whitley carried Miss Hittie's sock monkey doll by its leg high above his head. Miss Hittie's round blue eyes sparkled with tears, and her little arms stretched as high as they would go to reach the toy.

"Monkey! Monkey!" she squealed.

William Moore came alive. He rushed out of the rocker into Miss Hittie's path. She fell on her back, and William Moore came down over her. Straddling her little body, he was inches from her wet face.

"You're a monkey! You're a monkey! You are an ugly little monkey!" he screamed at her. The music stopped.

Lane turned to see as Kate and Ellen jumped from their seats; Tumps threw his book aside and sat up. Miss Hittie lay still and quiet for a moment, fear washing across her baby face. William Moore was still over her, pinning her shoulders to the floor, his knees on either side of her, hatred screwed his eyes

nearly shut. His crooked smile said he was enjoying his assault on his little sister. Finally, the silence exploded with Hittie's screams.

Ellen was suddenly across the room. She grabbed William Moore by the shirt collar and threw him off. She swept the toddler up into her arms. Miss Hittie's cries disappeared inside her tiny being. Her face contorted, her mouth opened, but no sound came forth. After what seemed an eternity, she sucked air and buried her sobs into her mother's shoulder.

"William Moore, what are you doing?" Ellen shouted in disbelief. "What are you doing?" She turned her back and carried the limp Hittie from the room, her cries trailing off as they mounted the stairs. Lane was up and covered the space between himself and William Moore before anyone else could move. William Moore sat on the floor where his mother had dropped him, his arms propping him up from behind as he looked in the direction of the doorway through which his mother had disappeared. Suddenly, Lane was on him. The sound that an object makes as it strikes the human skull could be heard across the room where Tumps and Kate stood, open mouthed, frozen, watching. Now, Lane's train engine was on the floor beside William Moore. It landed there after the thud that came from a direct hit to the side of William Moore's head. He fell backward, writhing in white hot pain, holding his breath. Lane went down, straddling William Moore and in his face, as William Moore had done his sister. The rage in Lane's voice was understated, barely audible, but very clear...

"Don't you ever touch Hittie again, you evil little devil. Daddy won't kill you, but you can think about whether I will."

Just to the right of William Moore's head, he saw that a wheel of his prized engine had broken off in the attack. He slapped William Moore across the face. "That's for having a

hard head and breaking my train.” Lane stood up and left the room.

Kate ran to William Moore’s aid. Blood gushed from the cut to the side of his head, and the slap across the face had thrown his head down on the rug which was now wet with blood. "Get me a towel," she yelled at Tumps who had not moved during the entire scene. Now, he came to life and ran out, seemingly to follow Kate’s directions.

"Are you okay? Are you okay?" she repeated, as she knelt beside William Moore.

He pushed her aside as roughly as he could under the circumstances and sat up.

"I’m okay! I’m okay! I hate Hittie! I hate all of you!! But I hate that little crybaby most of all! Leave me alone," he shrieked at Kate as he staggered to his feet. At the doorway he stopped, turned to her and said, "Lane and Hittie will pay for this. I swear it!"

Kate sat helpless on the rug now stained permanently with William Moore’s blood. She started to wipe it up with the skirt of her dress, but it was her Christmas dress, and she had to wear it to church. Tumps had not returned. She just knew he wouldn’t! She thought about it for a moment and decided that neither William Moore nor the rug were worth staining her Christmas dress. After all, it was an Oriental rug with lots of colors, red among them, and it likely would not show—much.

Then, she heard muffled crying. It startled her. She thought she was alone. And then she remembered Jack Whitley. She found him curled up in a ball behind the Christmas tree. He hugged the sock monkey doll tightly to his chest. His face was red and wet. He said nothing when he saw her. Kate’s motherly instincts surfaced once again. She sat on the rug beside him, and wrapping her arms around five-year old Jackie, she pulled



him onto her lap. "I sorry...I sorry," he snubbed, barely audible in broken sentences. "I just play...I just play with Sister."

"It's okay. Don't cry. Don't cry, Jackie. Remember, Santa is coming tonight." For once, her attempts to comfort the child were gratefully accepted as he relaxed into her lap...there behind the tree...and fell asleep as she rocked him gently in her arms.

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After Beulah had cleared the dishes from Christmas dinner and the children had gone off to play with their gifts from Santa, Daddy Bob called William Moore and Lane to the dining room table. He stood by the door as the boys entered and closed it behind them. He waited as they took their seats, heads bowed and silent.

Daddy Bob walked slowly around the huge mahogany table and stood across from the boys. His demeanor was characteristically authoritarian. Always dressed in a dark suit and matching vest, white shirt and tie, the gold pocket watch and chain draped across his chest, he conveyed the impression that he expected compliance. His manner alone kept them obedient in his presence. Even though it was the custom in most homes to readily administer corporal punishment, Daddy Bob never touched them except to shake hands with the boys and pat the girls on top of their heads when he deemed it appropriate. The control he had over all of them was a phenomenon well known and often discussed among his neighbors. His children did not fear him, but they often wondered what lay behind the neatly trimmed, dress mustache.

"Lane, it is a serious thing to threaten to kill your brother," he began. "I am surprised and disappointed that you carry such

hatred and that it would erupt in such violence. I require an explanation.”

“Daddy, Hittie is a baby. I am the oldest boy, and when you are away, I think I need to help Mother watch over the little ones. William Moore is mean. He has never liked Hittie, but I won’t let him hurt her. I’m sorry I hurt William Moore. I was very angry.”

William Moore’s bandaged head dropped lower and lower.

“William Moore, why did you attack your little sister so violently?” he asked in his quiet, measured tone.

William Moore did not answer straight away. Only the ticking of the mantle clock was audible. Finally...

“You like her more than me,” he breathed the answer, hardly discernible.

Lane turned and stared at William Moore’s bowed head.

Daddy Bob said nothing for what seemed an eternity. His clear blue eyes penetrated to William Moore’s very soul as his mind took in his failure as a father.

“So you thought to punish your sister because you believe I show a partiality to little Hittie?”

“I guess, Sir. I really don’t know. I think it’s something like that. I can’t explain it much. I love my sister...I just sometimes don’t love her. I thought she would get more presents than me, and...”

“Did she?” Daddy Bob asked.

“No, Sir.”

“You counted the presents?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Are you satisfied that I love you as much as I love Hittie, based, of course, on your Christmas gift inventory?”

“I think so, Sir, but what’s an ‘inventory’?”

“It means you counted the presents.”

“Yes, Sir. I think we are loved the same.”

“Very well, then. William Moore, there will be no more such violence in this house. I love all my children. I give Hittie a lot of attention because she is a baby. And because she is a baby, you cannot mistreat her for any reason, real or imagined. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Lane, while I commend you on your willingness to help your Mother and protect your little sister, you cannot think to kill your brother. You boys will remember that I will not tolerate the behavior the two of you visited upon this house last night. I expect a gentleman’s handshake and your word of honor in this.”

And so it was done as tears slipped down William Moore’s face and Lane offered him a napkin from the table.

---

Ellen’s long, auburn hair done up in a bun served as a sort of pillow for her head. She lay back in the rocker as she watched the children play with their Christmas gifts in the parlor. She was waiting for the conference in the dining room to end. She had seen this trouble coming for some time. It was never good for a parent to favor one child over another, and she knew it was hard to conceal from children less favored, but she knew it was happening in her house. Bob had been unable to hide his preference for Hittie. Ellen could not explain why she was so special. Maybe it was that he knew Hittie was their last child. Maybe it was because the child, by nature, was more affectionate than any of the others. Maybe it was because she was the most beautiful child they had had. It was hard to look away from that cherub face, those huge blue eyes, and those bouncing blonde curls. All of her brothers and sister loved her,

except William Moore. Ellen couldn't explain William Moore's nature which seemed to offer frequent contradictions.

She had been through a litany of possibilities. The only one that seemed reasonable and the only one that didn't frighten her to consider was that William Moore needed more attention than the others, and Hittie was getting more attention. While he could be violent...he was most often a fearful, timid child who needed extra support, extra approval. She gave him as much of both as she could. She sighed as she saw no remedy for the present situation. She could tell Bob not to show partiality, but it would out. She could not change William Moore's personality. She thought it was better not to look too far into the future. She would deal with it day-to-day.

Then, there was Lane. His behavior was a complete surprise to everyone. He was a kind, easy-going child. His "terrible twos" were a mere bump in the road. Never any trouble; few temper tantrums in all of his life. She could not make sense of it, and she did not know what was happening to her family. She was growing more and more concerned. She had to shake it off.

She got up and went to the piano. Music always made her feel better. She had to concentrate on the keys, and she couldn't think about her problems when she played. Usually, it soothed the children as well. They listened while they amused themselves with their individual interests. As soon as she began to play, Hittie was beside her, pulling her little body, chubby legs flailing behind her, onto the piano bench. Ellen smiled down into the happy little face. She sang the words of "Rose of Tralee." Hittie pulled at her sleeve to stop her. "I tweet Rosae! I tweet Rosae!" she exclaimed, delighted with her discovery.

Suddenly, Bob, Lane, and William Moore were behind them. The meeting in the dining room was over. Bob laughed

heartily at Hittie's joyful declaration. "So, you are Sweet Rosalie are you?"

"Yeth," came the reply.

"Ellen, I do believe we have found a name for her at last. 'Rosalie' suits her very well. We can have Doc send for the birth certificate now. What do you think?"

Ellen remembered the "Josephine" suggestion. She quickly agreed. "Rosalie is a lovely name. But I don't think we'll ever stop calling her 'Hittie.' We're so used to it, and it's so much her name. Even so, it shall be 'Rosalie'...officially."

"Beulah, Beulah!" Bob called from the doorway. "Come here!"

She could be heard bustling down the hall. "What you want, Daddy Bob? I be busy wid supper! I gots stuff on de stove!"

"We have a name for Hittie. It is to be 'Rosalie.'"

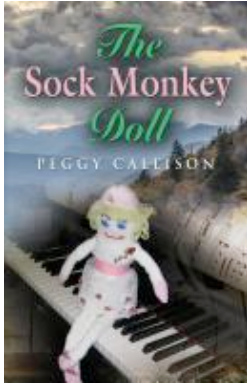
"Lordy, Lordy! Dat's a fine name fer dat chile, but I doan knows if I can change over. I try! But I be used to 'Miss Hittie.'"

"I tweet Rosaeel!"

Everyone laughed including William Moore. Ellen remembered the evening before and the conference in the dining room today. She saw her family's happy faces and was grateful, but her soul was not content.

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The early morning fog hovered just above the Clinch. Its cotton fingers inched their way across the bridge and encircled the legs of the children as they walked to school at the River Jack. It was Rosalie's first day at school. Her hand locked firmly in Kate's while the boys laughed and played along the way in front of them. Anxious, Rosalie felt the chill in the



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