

A Christmas Story

As told by Kathryn Olson Cubalo to Helen Olson

It was going to be Kathryn's fourth Christmas and she was excited. Aunt Helen had helped her and Sonny write a letter to Santa Claus and Santa Claus had put the letter in the Alcona County Herald. Kathryn had asked for a doll and Sonny wanted a truck.

Now Aunt Helen had come over to visit for a few days. Everything seemed full of secrets and plans. There were always lots of projects when Aunt Helen came to visit.

One night, Kathryn woke up after she had been asleep for awhile and heard Aunt Helen and Mom still talking quietly together in the kitchen. They sounded busy. She decided to go out to see what was happening.

As soon as she stepped into the kitchen, there was a flurry of motion as things were swept away. She caught a glimpse of a doll and partly made dolls clothes before Mom took her back to her bed.

Christmas morning finally came. Sure enough, there was a doll for her and a truck for Sonny. Kathryn observed that her doll didn't look like the one she had glimpsed so briefly, so her doll must surely be from Santa, but she did wonder what had happened to that doll.

Kathryn loved her new doll, though, and wanted to go as quickly as possible to show it to her friends Patsy and Mary. Right after breakfast, Mom helped her into her snowsuit so she could go down the hill to their house. She reminded her not to stay long because later they would be going to Grandma's for dinner.

Kathryn's family didn't have much, but she knew that Patsy and Mary's family was really poor because Santa Claus didn't usually come to their house. They hadn't even had a special Christmas dinner last year. Apparently Santa didn't go to your house if you were really poor. They were fun to play with, though, and their Mom and Dad were always happy to see her and always asked her if she wanted to stay to eat.

When Kathryn got to the door, Patsy was so excited she could hardly wait to pull her in and tell her the good news.

"Guess what! Santa Claus came to our house last night, too! He left our presents in a box on the porch! Look what he left me!"

Patsy held out the doll – the one Kathryn had seen ever so briefly that night. And there on the couch were the doll clothes, now finished. Mary had a new doll, too. And Earl had a new truck.

In that instance, Kathryn understood about Santa Claus and the true meaning of Christmas.

"Oh, that's a beautiful doll! We all have a new doll from Santa Claus! Let's play house."

Kathryn has been a grownup for quite a long time, and she still thinks that was the nicest way to find out about who Santa Claus really is.