

God's Gifts

3rd Place

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“Ma! Ma, come ‘ere quick!

I felt my heart leap into my throat at the sound of my son’s frantic voice. My book dropped to the floor as I lurched to my feet and ran to the front door.

“What?” I cried. I slid to a halting stop on the front porch, nearly hitting him. “What, Seth?” My hand found its way to my chest, trying to still my racing heart.

“Look, Ma! It’s snowin’!” He all but shouted, jumping and pointing at the sky. I looked up and felt something cold and wet rest on my cheek. I smiled and looked back at my son.

His flaming red hair was dusted white, and his freckled cheeks were tinted a rosy pink.

“He takes after his father,” I mused in my thoughts. “Not only in his looks, but the way he speaks as well.”

“...He must dream a lot, huh, Ma?” I heard him say, bringing back reality.

“Who, honey?” I questioned curiously.

“God, Ma. He must dream a lot to think up such purty things.” He said with a smile.

My eyes widened in surprise as I stared down at my eight-year-old son. I couldn’t comprehend what had just happened. In the beat of a heart, my son had grown before my eyes.

I watched in awe as Seth took off running and jumping for joy when Toby, our dog, went bounding out to meet him. I backed up a few steps and sat down on the wooden porch swing.

“Seth! Be careful!” I called absentmindedly. My mind drifted back to last Sunday’s sermon at church. Father Nightroad had talked about the many ways in which God

worked. He claimed that most instances of God's work came through our very own children, but many were too busy to notice.

I focused on Seth as he tackled Toby and rolled around on the ground with him. I felt my brow furrow as I slipped back into thought. Seth was dyslexic, which pulled him from regular classes. However, it never kept him from trying. Every day he would come home from school and ask for help. He wanted to learn. He wanted to learn so he could be back with his friends.

Reading and writing were my favorite past times; of course, I agreed to help him. His father, Tim, always sat with us, helping where he could. Tim had been raised on a farm and had dropped out of school to help his own father. We were an odd couple, Tim and I, but we connected.

It was a year ago today that Tim was called out to serve our country. I had been devastated when Tim received the letter informing him that his service was needed. He had only one week before he was to leave in preparation for his turn in the war being fought overseas.

The week didn't last nearly long enough to satisfy any woman whose husband was leaving. The fear of losing Tim gripped me tighter than I would have imagined.

Before he was to leave, Tim and I stood together, Seth asleep in my arms, at the bus station. Neither of us said a word, for fear the other would cry. My lip was trembling as I looked up at my husband. He smiled gently and leaned forward, placing a kiss on my cheek.

"Don' worry. I'll be back before ya know it. Nothin's gonna happ'n to me, so don' be upset. You hafta be strong for Seth. Please. If you're sad, then I'll be sad. People shouldn' be sad when they know they'll see each other again."

I had nodded and blinked back tears, a smile forming. I knew he was right. We would see each other again; I had to be strong for Seth. I watched as Tim bent and kissed Seth on his head and then picked up his luggage. With a small wave, I watched my husband walk proudly forward to help keep us safe.

"Ma, what're ya smilin' fer?" I blinked and focused my eyes on the bright blue ones in front of me. They danced about in joy, which seemed to be radiating from him. I

couldn't help but let my smile broaden as I opened my arms.

"Nothing, honey. Mommy's just thinking about something, that's all. Come here a second. I want to ask you something." I said, shifting slightly on the swing. Seth smiled broadly and bounded onto my lap, curling into my arms. He leaned his head backwards onto my arm and looked up at me, eyes shining.

"Seth, where did you hear that God makes pretty things?" I questioned. My guess was that he learned it in his Sunday school class, but I was curious all the same. His smile broadened, dimples forming.

"Pa, told me." He said, looking away into the yard. My eyes widened slightly at the mention of Tim.

"Daddy told you that?" I asked, wanting to make sure. Seth turned his gaze back to me and nodded.

"Yeah, Ma. Pa told me that God made everythin' nice'n purty. An' that's why I have you, Ma. Pa told me that God made you nice'n special so that you could love me an' Pa lots'n lots. He also said that he couldn't thank God enough fer it."

I felt the tears spill down my cheeks before I had the chance to stop them. I pulled Seth close to me, burying my face into his unruly hair.

"Daddy's right, Seth. I do love you both lots and lots. And I can't thank God enough either for giving you both to me." I pulled Seth back to look at him. His brow was furrowed slightly into a look of puzzlement.

"Why ya cryin', Ma? Are ya sad 'bout somethin'?" He asked, reaching up and touching my cheek. I smiled and tilted my head into his hand.

"No, I'm not sad. I'm happy. I'm happy that I have so many wonderful gifts in my life."