

Immaculate Conception - 2023

In the December 1995 issue of *Guideposts*, Elizabeth King English tells of a very special Christmas that she once experienced. The year was 1949. She and her husband Herman owned an appliance store that sold just about everything a person could need in their home. They also sold a number of smaller things, such as toys.

That particular Christmas, they had practically sold out of their toys. Elizabeth had been uneasy about leaving the shop that Christmas Eve because one package on layaway had not been claimed yet. It might not have been anything important, but on the other hand, it might be some child's only gift. So Elizabeth and Herman stayed open as long as they could, but finally they decided to close the store and head home.

The next day, Christmas day, Elizabeth couldn't seem to get into the Christmas spirit. She cleaned a little around the house, but she felt restless. Strangely enough, she began to get the urge to go to the store that morning. Now Herman and Elizabeth never opened the store on Christmas, and the weather outside was a freezing mix of snow and sleet, but still Elizabeth felt drawn to go to the store.

After an hour, Elizabeth gave up fighting the urge and told Herman she was going down to the store. He wasn't very encouraging, but she had made up her mind. As Elizabeth slid along the snowy sidewalks to the store, her numb body mocked the urgent sensation she had about that day. But as she got to the store, she noticed two small boys, about six and nine years old, standing in front of the store. The little fellows got very excited when they saw Elizabeth coming. They were two little African-American children, and they were almost frozen. The younger one was crying, but he stopped when he saw Elizabeth. When Elizabeth scolded them for being out in the cold, they explained that they had been waiting for her.

The older boy explained to Elizabeth that his younger brother didn't get anything for Christmas, and so they had come there to get the little boy, Jimmy, some skates. He pulled out three dollars and placed them in front of her.

Sadly, Elizabeth explained to them that she had sold almost all the toys in the store, and they were out of skates. But as she glanced around the store, she noticed the lone package on the lay away shelf. She walked over and ripped off the wrapping to find that it contained a pair of child's skates! Jimmy reached for them and tried them on. They fit perfectly. When the boys tried to pay Elizabeth for the skates,

she told them to use their money for a couple of pairs of good gloves instead. The boys grinned in amazement at this gift of free skates.

After the children were all warm, Elizabeth began to close up the shop again. She remarked to the boys that it was so lucky they had not frozen out there that morning.

She asked, ". . . how did you boys know I would come?"

The older boy answered, "I knew you would come. I asked Jesus to send you."

Elizabeth went home to her family, but now she was in the Christmas spirit.

"I Knew You Would Come", by Elizabeth King English. *Guideposts*, December 1995, pp. 33-35.