

Ellie B.
9/2/05
Period 7

It was Magic to Me

As I sit in church, I can't help but think about how close Christmas is. In just a few hours, I'll be asleep, and when I wake up, it will be Christmas. I watch all the children who were a part of the nativity scene, something I had once participated in, and wonder if they are as excited as I am. I can't help but think about it—I love it too much. As the mass progresses, I feel like I'm inching my way towards the moment that I have been looking forward to since my first sighting of Christmas decorations, which marked the start of the holiday season. After what seems like an eternity, I hear the organ produce the familiar sounds of *Joy to the World*, the dismissal hymn. I enthusiastically belt out the words with the rest of the congregation as I watch all of the mass's participants exit. I make it to the car as quickly as I can. "I'm one step closer," I think to myself, "and only one more to go—Aunt Sue's." We get to my aunt's house where I mix and mingle with family and friends, sure to let them know how excited I am about Christmas. I pick at my dinner but indulge in fudge and sugar cookies—a perfect Christmas Eve treat. When it's finally time to go, I'm home free, and before I know it, it will be Christmas morning. My brother, Alex, and I race up to our rooms to change into our pajamas and then dive into my parent's bed for the final part of the night. My mom squeezes in between us to read *Santa Mouse* and *The Night Before Christmas*. Both books bring the magic of Christmas to life, and another surge of excitement comes over me as I realize that the moment I've been waiting for is finally upon me: it's time for Santa.

I spent the latter part of the year perfecting the list that I would stick in the mail box addressed to the North Pole, sure that I had been good enough to get the items specified as “*have to have’s*.” My best behavior was always practiced as well, because, as my mom told me, Santa would be disappointed if I was a naughty girl. As Christmas day grew closer and closer, in addition to my stellar behavior, my room became cleaner and cleaner, because, after all, once again according to my mom, Santa wouldn’t want to leave as many presents if he saw that I couldn’t keep a tidy room. Now, was my mom using Santa as a way to get me to do what she asked? Was I really that gullible? Definitely not. Santa was as real as I was as far as I knew. And if he wasn’t real, then whose lap did I sit in year after year at Cherokee? The thought of that man being someone other than Santa didn’t even cross my mind. I can’t really explain why I was such an avid believer in Santa Claus, especially since so many kids insisted that he wasn’t real. “Santa’s *not* real,” declared Evie in first grade. My *mom* even said that, and she wouldn’t lie to me.”

“Well,” I answered defiantly, “My mom said that Santa won’t come unless you believe in him, and he knows who believes in him and who doesn’t, so of course he won’t go to your house. He comes to mine though. I know it.” Maybe I learned that mentality from *The Polar Express*, where the picture of Santa is painted so magically, and his portrayal so perfectly, that I found it hard not to believe, just like the boy in the story. Clearly, I took pretty much everything about Christmas literally, including the elf that came to visit me from the North Pole.

“Ya’ll! Guess what?! One of Santa’s actual *elves* came to my house last night!” Lindsay exclaimed to me and other friends of hers who happened to be listening.

“What do you mean one of Santa’s elves? A real elf? Like a live one?” I asked her ambivalently.

“Yeah! Well kind of. It’s real, but it doesn’t move when you’re around. It only does that at night,” she continued to tell us. She had really grabbed my attention, and I was fascinated by the prospect of a real elf in my own house.

“So how did you get it?”

“Well what you do is put out crackers and water out at night, and then one just comes to where you left it all. Then it’s there to stay till Christmas. You write it letters, and it writes letters back to you, and it hides every night around the house, so you can find it in the morning.” I couldn’t wait to get home and tell my mom. I knew she’d think it was exciting, especially since she had always told me that she never stopped believing in Santa. I set out crackers and water on my desk, just like I had been told, and tried my hardest to fall asleep so that the morning would come faster, and my magical elf would reveal itself.

When the morning finally came, my eyes shot open directly towards my desk. There was nothing there. No elf. I immediately felt a great surge of disappointment but managed to drag myself out of bed and over to my desk to clean up what I had left out. Then I saw it: a piece of paper that hadn’t been there the night before. If I didn’t put it there, then who else could have? An elf, of course! There, in what looked like the

handwriting of a small child, were the words, “Dear Ellie, I can’t wait to come stay with you. I’ve got some things I need to take care of at the North Pole, but I’ll be back tomorrow! Love, Alf.”

“Mom! Mom!” I screamed while simultaneously sprinting out of my room, down the stairs, through the living room, and into the kitchen. “An elf came! I’m getting an elf!”

“Are you serious, Ellie? That’s so great!” she replied. She obviously didn’t understand the extent of my excitement. I guess no one really would have. I continued on to school, where the elves were all the rage among the fourth grade girls. Some girls were as ecstatic as I was, while some were devastated that they didn’t “get one.” I knew I would be even more excited the next morning when Alf arrived at my house the next morning.

Just as I had been hoping, I woke up the next morning to a green and red plaid bag sitting on my desk complete with Alf and little notes to go along with her explaining how she “worked.” Every night she would hide around the house, and I would look for her in the morning. She would even write me notes or leave me little surprises but would never, ever, move in my presence. Since that was the case, I decided to set up an old doll’s bed for her. After all, she would be sitting still for most of the day, so I wanted her to be comfortable to make her stay most enjoyable.

Since a few of my friends were lucky enough to have elves of their own, talking about them took up most of our time. “So where did your elf hide last night?” “Look at

this note that mine wrote me!” and, “I got a present from mine!” were heard very often. Since my friends and I had such a common interest, it was expected that our free time would be based around the elves, which was the case when Lindsay came over to my house one afternoon after school to play. She didn’t have her elf with her, but we sat in my room wondering what we should do next with Alf. We wanted something exciting, something magical to happen. The smell of freshly baked cookies drifted upstairs from the kitchen and immediately caught our attention. We left my room to satisfy our cravings for warm chocolate chip cookies, and while we were enjoying them, we thought to ourselves, “If we think these are so good, then Alf will probably think so, too.”

Without even saying much, we had devised a plan to further prove to ourselves that the magic of the elves was real. We grabbed a handful of cookies and a glass of water and headed back up to my room where we broke the cookies into smaller pieces to form a trail going from Alf to the glass of water. We didn’t tell my mom or my brother about it, who were the only other people in my house, and ran outside to play. For the brief time that we were outside, all I could think about was what was going on in my room. As soon as Alf knew we were gone, she would eat the cookies as fast as she could and make her way to the water. I loved imagining the doll magically coming to life and dancing her way across my room. I wished so badly that I could see what it was like when she was alive, but imaging it was the best I could do. Lindsay and I returned to my room, slowly cracked open my door, and stood there in a state of shock. The cookies were gone and Alf sat right by the glass of water in a pose that clearly expressed contentment. I was almost positive that my mom had been in the shower while we were outside, and my brother had no idea what was going on. “It’s real!” I thought to myself. “How can anyone

not believe in Santa? It's magic! It really, really is!" It was at that moment that I was one-hundred percent convinced that I was experiencing something magical. It may not have been something that anyone else could understand, but I understood it, and that's all that mattered to me. I believed it was real, and I didn't care what anyone else tried to tell me. The magic of Alf was more meaningful to me than the magic feeling of opening that present I just had to have because without Alf, there would be no present, and without Santa, there would be no Alf.