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My Favorite Childhood Toy

Tamela Jackson
Essay
Third Place

When I was a little girl I loved to play with dolls. Most of the dolls I owned as a child still inhabit my bedroom. They are my children in a sense, and remind me of what I like to call the "good ole days." Most of these dolls are simply Christmas and birthday gifts, with no special meaning. However, one of these dolls is more special to me than any other in my entire collection.

Dona is special because of the person who gave her to me. While growing up, I lived next door to a very old lady who had few friends and hardly any relatives. She was an extremely nice lady and very lonely. I would go next door and talk to her for what seemed to be hours at a time. She would tell me all about her childhood and her long deceased friends.

Even though she was old, she was able to do many things most people her age could not do. One such thing was hand-sewing. She crafted beautiful quilts and aprons—and also dolls.

One day while I was visiting, she told me she had a birthday surprise for me. Weeks before my birthday, however, she became very ill. During her illness I went to visit her; she gave me Dona while I was there. Knowing that her illness would be fatal, she struggled to explain to me that she would not be living to see my birthday.

Although I was happy and pleased with my gift, I felt grief and confusion. With tears in my eyes, I thanked her

with a clutching hug. I felt empty inside, and so angry. I kept asking myself why she had to die. I was angry with her for taking it so well; it was as if she were glad to be leaving her life on earth.

I soon realized that Miss Minnie **was** glad. She would soon be with the people from whom she had been separated for many years. But not forgetting me and our friendship, she had made me this doll to remember her by.

The fact of my knowing that Miss Minnie made this doll with her own hands made me love it more. It wasn't a fancy doll, nor was it perfectly made, like all my manufactured dolls. Its hair was yarn, and its dress was made from scrap materials. These things mean more because Dona was made with one thing my other dolls weren't. I knew that every stitch was sewn with love.

Oh, the memories that come back when I hold this doll. I remember all the talks on her porch in the rocking chair; I remember all the stories over big pieces of cake and pie. But most of all, I remember the hugs and kisses, and all the joy I received from this lonely old lady.

I hope one day to be able to pass my doll to a daughter of my own. By doing this, I will be sharing with her the sunshine that Miss Minnie put in my life. I hope to let Miss Minnie's last happiness live on as long as possible through this doll. □