

*Merry
Christmas*



ROTTENSTEINER

THE DOLL

A CHRISTMAS STORY BY HANNES ROTTENSTEINER

I only realized the magic of that Christmas much later on. Then there used to be a commercial on TV all day long about a doll that said “Hi, mommy” when you pressed her tummy. Of course, all the little girls back then wanted that special doll.

The only problem was that dad had lost his job, there was never enough money, and the mere thought of Christmas made him get a headache. So that Christmas we could just afford the last Christmas tree that no one wanted, because it was crooked and had too few branches. At dinner we didn’t have the Christmas goose, but rather had chicken. Naturally there wasn’t any doll that said “Hi, mommy!”.

So it was that on Christmas Eve we stood before our crooked, mangy Christmas tree. Last year’s candles were lit and filled the room with their warm light. The fragrance of the chicken wafted from the kitchen—let’s be honest, what kid prefers goose over chicken?—and then we went on to the gifts. I’ve rarely seen my parents so excited while I slowly unwrapped my gift. It was a doll: but not one you can buy in a store.

It was a homemade doll, with blonde hair, painted blue eyes, wire frame glasses, and a dress made out of the cloth from a dress I’d ripped playing in the summer; it was a doll that looked a lot like me! I hugged my parents tight, so happy to have my doll, unique and inimitable!

I still have that doll, and my daughter always plays with it even though it has a new head, new glasses, and the hair had to be replaced. I’ll always remember that Christmas, so special, so particular because it was so warm.

Christmas doesn’t necessarily have to be better than other days. Christmas doesn’t have to be perfect. Christmas has to be only and simply—Christmas. And let’s be honest: what kid cares how many branches a Christmas tree has?

**We wish you and
your beloved ones
a Merry Christmas
and a very happy
New Year!**

Warmest greetings

Judith & Hannes Rottensteiner

