

# *FANTA'S CHRISTMAS GIFT*

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Not so long ago, there was a young girl who learned an important lesson about family and how much they meant to her.

Her name was Fanta. Her family was very poor. They didn't have much money to spend on things they did not need. Every day her father went to the center of the city to ask for work. He had gotten sick and was not able to do the work he used to do. Her mother sewed and washed clothing all day long. Her younger siblings helped as best they could since they were not in school yet, but usually they just played and ran around the house.

She had many friends in her school, but they did not know how poor she was because her mother always made sure her clothes were clean and neat.

Every day she would talk with her friends at lunch. They would share their food with her and laugh at her jokes. It was the best time of the day for her.

When she got home from school, she had many things to do to help her mother, as well as her homework.

Christmas was coming and her friends told her about the gifts they hoped Santa Claus would bring them. She didn't say anything. She had never gotten a gift at Christmas.

She decided to write a letter to Santa Claus and ask him why she was not on his list. She wanted paints, she wanted paper, she wanted clothes, she wanted a new pencil case; she had many things on her list. She put the letter in a sock she hung over the stove in their kitchen. Her friends told her that this was the tradition in her city to let Santa know what a child wanted.

She was excited because she was sure that Santa Claus would bring her exactly what she wanted.

Christmas day came. She looked everywhere, but she could not find a single gift. She sat down and cried.

“Why didn’t Santa Claus bring me a gift?” she sobbed. “All my friends are getting gifts, why not me?”

After the winter break, she returned to school. Her friends were all talking about the gifts they got on Christmas. She just kept quiet.

“Hey, what did you get?” one of the girls asked her.

She had to think very quickly and replied, “I got a Barbie doll. It is the prettiest one you will ever see.”

“When can we see it? Can you bring it to school tomorrow?” another girl asked.

Thinking quickly again, she replied, “My parents said it has to stay in my room. I can’t bring it to show you.”

“Can we come to your house?” a girl asked. “We would love to see your Barbie doll. I have never seen one.”

She panicked. What was she supposed to tell them? She did not want them to know how poor she really was.

“I have a lot of chores to do at home after school, so I can’t have friends over,” she answered. “My mom makes me work very hard. Maybe next year I can show it to you.”

She went home and sat on her mat on the floor doing her homework when she had a thought, “Maybe I asked for too many things. Next year I will only ask for the Barbie doll. I’m sure if it is only one gift, Santa Claus will be able to bring that to me.”

The next year she did exactly what she had thought about. She wrote another letter to Santa Claus and only asked for the Barbie doll. She was sure that Santa could do that and then she could show it to her friends. She put it into the sock over the stove, and she was sure she would find it that year.

Christmas came and to her surprise, once again there was no gift for her. She cried

and cried.

Her mom saw her crying and asked what was wrong.

“Santa didn’t bring me a gift. I was sure he was going to give me something this year,” she told her mom.

“Sometimes he is a little busy to remember all the children. Maybe next year he can bring you a gift,” her mother answered while giving her a hug.

When she returned to school, once again her friends were showing their gifts, but she didn’t have one.

“Santa is stupid!” she yelled out. “He forgot me this year. I’m so angry!”

“What do you mean? How can Santa be mean? Don’t you know that Santa is really your parents?” one of the girls asked.

“My parents?” she questioned.

“You don’t know?” she was asked.

“Ah..., ah..., yeah I knew that. I was just kidding,” she replied trying not to seem to be foolish.

She was quiet during the rest of the lunch period. All she could think about was that if her parents really loved her, they would give her a gift, and they hadn’t.

She went home and her attitude changed. She did not want to help her mother, she stayed on her mat most of the time. She did not play with her brothers and sisters. She changed a lot. Her parents thought it was just that she was getting older.

The next Christmas she decided to try one more time. If she did not receive a gift she would run away. She wrote a letter to Santa. Even though she knew it was her parents, she asked for a Barbie doll one more time.

She put the letter into the same sock she had put the other letters into before. She hung the sock over the stove in the kitchen.

The day before Christmas she packed everything she thought she would need on her trip. If she did not get a gift, she would be ready to leave.

She did not know where she would go, just that if she didn’t get a gift, she would

know she was not loved by her family, and she would need to go someplace else.

On Christmas morning, she looked everywhere, but no gift. The Barbie doll was not to be found. She cried and went to her room and sat down.

“Now I know my family does not love me. I don’t need to be here anymore,” she said as she picked up her bag to walk out of the house.

Her mother saw her and asked, “Where are you going?”

She replied, “I’m leaving. I know I’m not wanted here.”

“What makes you say that?” her mother questioned, with a look of concern on her face.

“For three years I have asked for a Christmas gift and I never got one. That means no one loves me. I need to find a place where people will love me,” she responded.

Just then her father came out of the kitchen. He had been cleaning the room preparing for the Christmas dinner and found an old sock hanging above the stove.

“What is this?” he asked his wife.

“I don’t know. I’ve never seen it before,” she answered.

Fanta was surprised that her father had just now found the sock.

He opened the sock and three papers fell out. He read them and then looked up at his daughter.

“Did you write these?” he asked with a surprised look on his face.

“Yes, and I never got anything!” she replied.

“We never saw these,” her mother stated. “Is this why you have changed so much?” she asked.

“Yes, and because I never got a gift, I know you don’t love me. My friends tell me about the gifts they get every year from their parents,” she told them. “Don’t you know that when there is a sock over the stove, that there are letters for Santa in it? Everyone knows that.”

“We’re so sorry! We had no idea. Where did you hear that story?” her mother asked.

“Everyone at school told me. I thought you knew that as well,” she answered.

“We’ve never heard that. You know we don’t have a lot of money since your father got sick, but we will try to get you something. We love you so much. We are so sorry. We didn’t know this was so important to you,” her dad said as he hugged her and cried on her shoulder. “Tomorrow we’ll go to the store and get you a gift. I promise.”

Her parents took her to the store, and they bought her a Barbie doll. It wasn’t the biggest, but it was hers. When school started after the break, she took her Barbie doll to school and showed it to everyone. She told them how much her parents loved her.

**The End**