

The Pearl Necklace

Jenny was a cheerful little girl with bouncy golden curls. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, five-year-old Jenny saw them—a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. “Oh, please, Mommy. Can I have them?”

The mother checked the back of the box then looked into the pleading eyes of her daughter. “They’re almost two dollars. If you want them, I’ll think of some chores for you, and in no time you’ll save enough money to buy them for yourself. Your birthday is only a week away and you might get a dollar bill from Grandma.”

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her bank and counted out seventeen pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores. She went to the neighbor and asked if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. On her birthday, Grandma gave her a crisp new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel grown up. She wore them everywhere—Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only place she didn’t wear them was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a loving daddy. Every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and read her a story. One night, when he finished the story, he asked Jenny, “Do you love me?”

“Oh, yes, Daddy. You know I love you!”

“Then give me your pearls.”

“Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. You can have Princess—the white horse from my collection. She’s my favorite...but please, not my pearls.”

“That’s okay, honey. Daddy loves you. Good night.” He brushed her cheeks with kisses.

A week later, after story time, Jenny’s daddy asked again, “Do you love me?”

“Daddy, you know I love you!”

“Will you give me your pearls?”

“Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. You can have my doll—the brand new one I got for my birthday. She’s beautiful, and you can even have her little yellow blanket. Please, Daddy, not my pearls.”

“That’s okay, honey. Sleep well and God bless you. Daddy loves you.” As always, he brushed her cheeks with gentle kisses.

A few nights later, at story time, Jenny sat on her bed. When Daddy came close, he noticed her chin trembled, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

“What’s the matter, Jenny?”

Jenny didn’t say anything but lifted her hand. There rested her little pearl necklace. “Here, Daddy. It’s for you.”

Tears gathered in his eyes as Jenny’s Daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace and with the other hand reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls. He gave the case to Jenny. He had had them all the time. He was simply waiting for her to give up imitation jewelry for genuine treasure.