

The Impossible Prayer Of A Little Girl

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BUZZ MAGAZINE - My family is a tad more country than most, and quite a bit more city than I care to admit. The redneck that I am, combined with my squishy soul, created a quirky hybrid way of doing things. For example, we keep chickens... but they wait at the back door like dogs, and come inside to watch TV with snacks.

I dote on my country neighbors' pets behind their backs because I simply can't help myself. So, if your cat mysteriously comes home wearing a paisley sweater, or your dog inexplicably gains 4 pounds and shows up smelling like shampoo? You know who the culprit is.

I ordered six baby chicks for my youngest daughter, Bella. Well, I wanted four, so I ordered five...knowing one would die. They sent me six...knowing one would die.

We have six chickens.

They were shipped from the hatchery the minute they emerged from their shells and sent to my local feed store. They were packed for transport in what appeared to be a Kentucky Fried Chicken to-go container. I proceeded to refer to the petite fluff balls as nuggets.

Bella had anticipated this day for weeks and was elated that her “babies” had finally arrived. They thrived in a cozy brooder for two months, plenty of time to disregard every boundary with a farm animal. We had baby chicks everywhere. The pocket of my robe, tucked inside a sock on the couch and my all-time favorite, sitting on dollhouse furniture.

A year passed, and the entire chicken endeavor was declared a success. To watch Bella grow in knowledge and confidence while raising the animals made my heart swell. She knew when someone was sick or injured and assuredly helped care for them.

She dressed the ladies in baby doll clothes and talked to them as friends. Bella proudly walked her babies in a stroller under the country sun with a wide smile, just as any mother hen would do.

Early in the fall on a bright warm day, Bella sat the old tin wash tub on the back porch and filled it with water until bubbles oozed over the brim. She was bathing the chickens before the weather turned too chilly. She still wore her nightgown and her long, straight hair hung on either side of her pretty little face. She had no idea what was perched above, waiting...

I called out to Bella that I would be in my sewing room and headed inside. Moments later through my window, I suddenly heard a scream from my child that I had never heard before. My heart dropped at the peculiar sound of her scream, fearing someone was hurt. I rushed into the hall as I heard the screen door slam while Bella frantically called out for me.

Bella was hysterically crying that her chicken was missing. I was confused at how upset she was. I imagined this to be a case of a chicken simply wandering off, which happened almost daily. She would then explain, what she in fact already knew to be true. Her chicken had just been snatched right in front of her.

Miss Nunkie had just been bathed. She was released to frolic in the sunshine and walk off her grievance over being scrubbed with baby wash. Bella grabbed her next victim and intently went to work washing her. Suddenly, from the corner of her eye she saw a hawk swoop down from above and quickly vanish back into the sky.

She calls her chickens over and again. She counts fluffy butts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Nunkie is gone, the hawk grabbed her chicken! Crying, screaming, pacing and searching, even though she knew there was nothing to be done. Bella walked our property and beyond for over an hour, hoarsely calling her baby until her face was beet red.

Bella and her sister set up a remembrance circle with a stone and flowers as they cried together. As sad as it was, the overwhelming gratefulness at the compassion I witnessed my children show each other is a gift I will never forget.

Her brother set out for the woods at the back of our property, hoping he could possibly find something for her to at least bury. I stood looking through my kitchen window in sadness, as my full grown boy walked toward home at dusk. His head down, sweaty and dirty, with an empty bag clenched in his hand.

My heart was shattered for my Bella. Her genuine grief for her dear friend, taken in such a traumatic way. She laid in my arms and sobbed and hiccuped as I tried to comfort her. I reminded her what a wonderful chicky Momma she had been, and what a blessed life she had given her animal

I helped Bella dress into a fresh nightgown and washed her bright red face with a washcloth. Her precious eyes looking up at me, every swipe quickly replaced by a fresh tear. She laid on her bed curled into a ball, I tucked her quilt around her shoulders. She prayed for Nunkie. She desperately begged and pleaded with God for her chicken. I couldn't help myself. As I knelt beside the bed with my head touching hers, I sobbed right along with her.

At dawn I heard Bella's feet padding down the stairs. She crawled into my bed and abruptly stopped her soft crying long enough to flatly tell me "I want my baby." She kept saying the same phrase over and more emphatically as she went. I finally cut her off and told her to "Go on outside and check on the other girls."

It could not have possibly been even a full minute later, Bella is standing in my doorway rocking from side to side with a chicken's head on her neck. "God answered my prayer, God answered my prayer, I have my baby!!" I would not have even believed it, but sure enough, that was Miss Nunkie's yellow leg band and charm.

The chicken wasn't even missing a feather. Bella reports that she was sitting at the back door waiting. Nunkie kept her tiny head right on Bella's neck as she held onto her, crying tears of thankfulness.

Bella and her chicken spent that morning on the couch sharing a pint of fresh blueberries and cartoons. I have never seen such a contented animal in all my life. Certainly exhausted from her long night of adventures, Miss Nunkie burrowed contentedly into the crook of Bella's arm and drifted off to sleep.

One can only speculate about what happened that day to Miss Nunkie. She is a Bantam, a tiny little thing no problem for a hawk to carry away. I personally think that the hawk accidently dropped her into the cornfield, and it just took her that long to make her way back home.

Yet there is a part of me, that loves a God who is big enough to delight in answering the impossible prayer of a little girl.

A prayer spoken in pure faith and love. Why, yes, in fact, that is what we will always believe to be the truth.

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