

The Best Worth Giving

By Sarah Landry

“Through the fire and flames,” I whispered to myself. The thick fog of smoke wasn’t helping much, burning my eyes, strangling my already dangerously constricted wind pipe. Micalea’s cat oreo, lay limp in my arms as I stumbled out the front door. Cool night grass greeted my face as I fell, retching as if to dispel myself of the smoke. I stared at my friend’s house, the palace in flames. I have to say it was almost like something out of a fairy tale picture book. The glass window pains began to glow with the lemony turrets or fire inside the bedrooms, and already tiny flickers of the hot orange death had begun to consume the rooftop. Some birthday present, huh?

That was the night Micalea had invited me to sleepover for her birthday, just us two on her special day. I remember showing up already in my favorite pig slippers. You wouldn’t have imagined any disaster when you stepped in. In fact, there were no inklings of it until about midnight when we woke up in the giant oven Micalea’s beloved home had become. They lost the entire upstairs, everything including the presents Micalea had gotten for her twelfth birthday. Happy Birthday! Your house is burning down! Happy Birthday! The fire trucks are in town! I couldn’t even imagine, even seeing it then.

Things got fixed up pretty quickly. But come time for Christmas, the family had barely any money to spend on presents for each other. And that’s where I came in. The perfect white envelope gift, and I had it.

When she found it on her front step Christmas morning, this is what she read:

Micaela, I know how much you wanted that new shirt and that new nail polish collection for Christmas, but I think I got you something ten times better.

I know what you and your family have been through. I've been by your side trying to help the whole way. This made me think about all the other families out there in the same situation, but not as lucky with so many friends to help them through the hard times. So I made myself a friend to one of those families. There's a family, the Morgans, who lost their entire home to a fire. They have three children, Mark, Emily, and Michelle. With all the money it's taking to rent an apartment and rebuild their home, there was no money left over this season to buy a little something for the kids. So I was that money. I contacted the family anonymously, asking each child to make a small Christmas wish list. Instead of getting my Christmas presents, I had my parents use the money they reserved for me to buy a few things from each list. I had them wrapped and delivered. I can't tell you how nice it was to hear about how happy the children were. But I didn't do this for me. I did it for you! Here's your little white envelope, the deed you would have done if you could. '

It was the best white envelope gift worth giving. My friend had suffered from the flames and could share the pain of the Morgans. I knew she would have loved to help a family in the same predicament as hers, so I did it for her.