

She Deserves It!

Once there was a little fair-haired girl who lived with her parents and seven brothers and sisters in a two-bedroom rowhouse in Pittsburgh. It was 1934 and times were hard. The little girl slept in one bed with her mother and two younger sisters, while her brothers slept crosswise, like sardines, in the other bed. Her beloved father worked as a brakeman on the P&LE Railroad from 7 PM to 7 AM, seven days a week, so he slept during the day. Because of his schedule, the little girl's dad would take each of the kids on a special overnight train ride with him. During the special train trip, each kid got to spend the whole night just with dad. When it was the little girl's turn to ride with dad, it was on her birthday, right before Christmas. She was the oldest girl, and the apple of her father's eye. She knew that her dad would do anything for her, even if her mom disagreed.

After a wonderful night of singing and laughing and dancing on her father's toes in the caboose, they went downtown together to get the little girl a new coat for her birthday. Mom said to spend no more than five dollars on the coat because that's all they could afford. After only a few minutes in the department store, the little girl spotted the most beautiful coat she had ever seen in her 10 years of life. It was a deep red velvet coat with a rabbit fur vest and silver buttons. When her dad looked at the price his jaw dropped. It cost \$25... a week's pay! Then he looked down at her big crystal blue eyes and said... "It's yours... but don't tell your mother how much it cost." When she walked into the house beaming with her beautiful new velvet coat her mother shouted, "That coat did not cost five dollars!" Her dad slowly smiled and looked over at his beautiful little daughter and said, "She's a good little girl... and she deserves it."

That was over 80 years ago, and Rose still remembers and relives it like it was yesterday. It is a precious memory that makes her feel like she is home again.