



MARY'S TREASURE BOX

(Based on a storybook by that name, by Carolyn Walz Kramlich)

NARRATOR:

Every mother has a treasure box of bonnets, blankets, trinkets and toys, if not hidden in a closet or an attic, then tucked away in a corner of her heart. Mary's treasure box is like no other. It was filled one special night in a Bethlehem stable. Now, forty years later, she opens her treasure box and shares her most precious memories.

MARY: Well, Sarah, are you ready to hear your bedtime story?

SARAH: Oh, yes, Grandma. I always like spending the night with you because of the stories you tell me. I want to hear the story of your trip to Bethlehem.

MARY: Well, all right then, let's begin. *(Hugs Sarah)* That seems to be your favorite story—all about Jesus' birth. And here's my treasure box to help me tell the story.

SARAH: Oh, yes, Grandma. Please open the treasure box right now!

MARY: *(Rubs her fingers over the fancy box)* How I love this treasure box. Jesus was just about your age when He made it. He and Grandpa Joseph spent many hours in the carpenter shop making such wonderful things.

SARAH: Please, Grandma, may I open the box?

MARY: Of course! You know, some day this box will be yours.

SARAH: *(Carefully opens the lid of the box and peers inside)* Mmm, I love the smell! *(Reaches in the box)* Here's the first bundle in the box. I always like to open it first. *(Unwraps a yellowed cloth bundle tied with string)* Tell me about these things, Grandma.

MARY: Ohhh, it's been over forty years, but it seems just like yesterday. Even though I've opened the treasure box many times, I always learn something new.

SARAH: *(Picks up a small bundle of straw and gives it to Mary)* Look, Grandma, here's some straw. Didn't you say it came from the manger bed? Please, Grandma, tell me what I can learn from this.

MARY: Well, Sarah, every time I see this straw it makes me think of humility. That night when Joseph and I got to Bethlehem, it was so cold, and I was so very tired. It was almost time for Jesus to be born. But there was nowhere in all Bethlehem that we could get a place to stay. We went everywhere! Finally we found a stable. There were all kinds of farm animals in it, cows, chickens, sheep. That night, in a simple stable, Jesus was born. And this straw came from the bed Joseph made for the new baby. He took it from the feed trough that the animals used.

SARAH: Look, Grandma, here's some wool. Tell me about it.

MARY: You remember, the shepherds came to the stable to see our new baby. They brought some wool from their sheep to help keep the baby warm. I always thought that wool was like a gift from the shepherds. They didn't have any fancy or expensive things they could bring—only this wool. And every time I see this wool it reminds me to be kind to others.

SARAH: *(Looking in the box)* And this? What's this, Grandma Mary? *(She pulls out a wooden flute and begins to blow on it.)*

MARY: Oh, that belonged to one of the little shepherd boys. How sweetly he played that flute. It made Baby Jesus smile when He heard the beautiful music. That's why when I see this little flute it teaches me how important it is to be joyful. That night was the most joyful night of my life!

SARAH: And this? *(Picks up a piece of rough cloth and rubs it against her face)* It's a piece of cloth, but it feels so scratchy and rough! What lesson can I learn from this, Grandma?

MARY: Sarah, that's what is known as a swaddling cloth. It may not feel very soft, but it was very warm. I used it to wrap around Baby Jesus so He would feel all cuddly and warm. This cloth makes me think of love, because God loves us and keeps us in His care. It reminds me of the love of a mother for her child, just as I love you, Sarah. And it's like the love a father has for his son. And, of course, it reminds me of the love God has for everyone. *(Mary spreads out the cloth. Sarah places the straw, wool and flute on it. Sarah rolls them up together in the cloth. Then she looks into the treasure box again.)*

SARAH: Look, Grandma! Here are the gifts from the Wisemen. This is my very favorite part of the treasure box!

MARY: Yes, the Wisemen! From the East they came to visit Baby Jesus. My, what fancy clothes they had, the most beautiful I've ever seen! It was many months after Jesus was born that the Wisemen came. They left their faraway homes, followed a star, and looked for the greatest King of all!

SARAH: *(Picks up a small gold bracelet)* I remember this bracelet, Grandma. You told me it was solid gold, fit for a king to wear!

MARY: Yes, Sarah, solid gold. And when I think of gold I think of purity. Jesus was God's only Son, and He was pure in heart. You could see that in Him in everything He did and the way He thought.

SARAH: *(Picks up a small wooden box and lifts it to her nose. She whiffs the contents.)* Mmm, how good this smells! Isn't this stuff called frankincense? Yes, that's what it is, frankincense. But what does frankincense teach us, Grandma?

MARY: As far back as I can remember, frankincense has been a symbol of prayer, worship, devotion. Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus worshiped the Heavenly Father. I learned so much from Jesus about how to worship. I have become a better child of God since Jesus came into my life. Now I am totally devoted to God.

SARAH: Well, the treasure box is almost empty. But I still see one more thing. Myrrh, isn't it?

MARY: Yes, that's right. It was the last of the gifts given to us by the Wisemen.

SARAH: Myrrh. Isn't that what they use to anoint dead people, Grandma? That seems like a very odd thing to give a new baby!

MARY: No, actually it wasn't strange at all! It was a gift for someone who was going to die for His people—Jesus.

SARAH: But Grandma, just look! There's a whole lot of myrrh, but only a little bit of gold and frankincense. How come?

MARY: It's easy to explain that, Sarah, dear. Do you remember I told you that there came a time when Joseph and I had to take our baby, Jesus, and move to Egypt?

SARAH: Yes, I remember now. You said it was because mean old King Herod wanted to kill Jesus!

MARY: That's right. He actually wanted to kill Jesus! Can you imagine? Well, we took the gold the Wisemen gave us and used it to live on when we went to Egypt. And now, the only thing left is this little gold bracelet.

SARAH: What about the frankincense?

MARY: Oh, we used the frankincense to worship on holy days. But the myrrh, I never had a chance to use it.

SARAH: I know what you mean, Grandma. I remember, you told me that the women went to the tomb where Jesus was put and they were going to anoint Him with this myrrh. But were they surprised! When they got there, He was gone! Grandma, what can I learn from myrrh?

MARY: *(Smiles and raises hands to heaven)* Hope! Hope for eternal life! That's what we can all learn.

SARAH: *(Looks into Mary's face)* Grandma, when you look at this treasure box, does it make you miss Jesus?

MARY: Oh, no, Sarah! The treasure box only serves to bring Jesus closer. That's because I know why Jesus came to earth. I know why He had to die, and I know that He lives here forever *(Points to her heart)*. It's time for bed now, Sarah. You've had your bedtime story. Now let's get ready for beddy-bye!

SARAH: Okay, Grandma. But first, would you sing a song to me? I love the song about Bethlehem.

MARY: Very well, Sarah, but then it's off to bed you go! *(Sings softly)*

In Bethlehem, a child was born,
In Bethlehem, one night.
To Earth He came, Rose of Sharon,
King of heaven, Son of Light.

And Mary sang and the angels smiled,
For Jesus was His Name.
Joseph prayed and the shepherds bowed,
For the world was not the same.

In Bethlehem, a child was born.
In Bethlehem, the start.
But Jesus lives, Rose of Sharon,
In the Bethlehem, in the Bethlehem of my heart.

NARRATOR:

And so, in the still darkness of the Nazareth night, Grandma Mary leaned over, kissed Sarah, and covered her with a woolen shawl. Then Mary knelt to fill her treasure box again. As she placed the lid on the box, she smiled, for Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

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