

The Santa Chair

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In this story, Christopher D'Agostino learns the difference between the spirit of Christmas and the magic of Christmas and why you receive underwear when you stop believing in Santa Claus.

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Although Christmas is almost five weeks out and Thanksgiving just around the corner, the Christmas season was in full swing in Heidi Falls, Michigan. Since he had nothing to do since most of his friends were out of town visiting relatives for the Thanksgiving holiday, Christopher D'Agostino who was home from college on winter break, decided to head to the Heidi Falls Mall to see if he could find some seasonal work to help earn the money he needed to buy his family Christmas gifts.

Heidi Falls is a small town similar to what you would see in a Hallmark Christmas movie located in northern Michigan near the Canadian border. Christopher has lived in Heidi Falls all of his life and with the exception of going to college at the University of Michigan, he has no plans of ever leaving Heidi Falls.

As Christopher walked the mall searching out potential employers he could inquire with about a job, he noticed in the center court of the mall, Santa's Village, complete with a huge Santa chair that looked more like something a king would sit in rather than a fat jolly old man that gets replaced with underwear once you stop believing in him.

It was a simple chair by design; made of all wood with the exception of the cushions on the seat and back of the chair that were dressed in Christmas colors and the gold piping that ran along the edges of the chair.

"It is too simple by design to be a king's chair and yet, it almost seems out of place compared to the rest of the village," Christopher thought

to himself. He couldn't shake the feeling that there was something special about the chair.

Just then a man exited from behind the red and green curtain located behind the chair. He was dressed as Santa Claus. Christopher could not get over what a spitting image he was to the real Saint Nick, not to mention the Santa suit he was wearing. It looked nothing like the cheap imitation knock-off suits the bell-ringing Salvation Army Santa's wear. **"I bet he didn't have that (suit) made in China,"** Christopher said to himself.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" the jolly old Saint Nick bellowed. **"Nice to see you, Christopher. I see you have been admiring the chair."**

Christopher was blown away at the fact that Santa knew him by name. However, before he could ask, Santa said, **"You're wondering how I know you, right? I know everyone in Heidi Falls."**

Perhaps he was a local who lived in Heidi Falls just like Christopher. Although he thought he knew everyone, (Heidi Falls is that kind of town), Christopher surmised that he had somehow missed this guy, although that would be difficult or Heidi Falls impossible considering the authentic suit and how much he looked like the real Santa Claus.

Then Santa said, **"That is because I am the real deal, my dear boy. Come and sit down. Let's talk about what you really want to know."**

Santa took his place on the chair, while Christopher sat on the smaller chair to Santa's right.

Christopher's head was spinning out of control. **"How can he be the real Santa Claus?"** he thought to himself. **"Santa Claus isn't real!"**

Which caused Santa to say, **"And that my boy is why you get underwear for Christmas, not that underwear is a bad thing -- because you stopped believing."**

Christopher chuckled nervously.

Santa went on to say, **"It is only when we lose our way that we stop seeing what is in front of us."**

"What do you mean?" Christopher asked.

"When we fail to see Christmas for the gift to the world that it really is, we stop believing in the spirit of Christmas and start believing in the magic of Christmas. There is a difference you know," Santa said.

"No, I didn't know," Christopher responded.

"My boy," Santa said. **"Christmas was not born in the belly of a department store. Nor was it conjured up in a spell book from a science fiction movie. Christmas was conceived by a spirit; the Holy Spirit and born in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes. And one day that Christmas babe would grow up to save the world from itself. The spirit of Christmas dear boy is truth; while the magic of Christmas is a spell conjured up by greedy retailers with me as its icon. My jolliness is more a representation of the retailer's greed and wealth rather than goodwill toward men and peace on earth. How can there be peace when there is so much greed, poverty, and sin?"**

"And yet in the midst of all this Christmas magic that blinds so many to the truth about Christmas," Santa said. **"You were able to recognize that the Santa chair is a chair for a king rather than jolly old' Saint Nick. And rightly so. For you see my boy, the wood that makes up this 'simple in design chair' as you described it, yet seems fit for a king, is the same wood that the one true King said to His Father, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do'"**

At that moment Santa disappeared and, in his place, where he had been sitting just a moment before was a crown of thorns that only one King, the King of Kings, has ever worn.