ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

JUVENILE FICTION

The Archangel's Gift
Dick Morgan
AuthorHouse
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Five Stars (out of Five)

For those who don't mind a bit of irreverence in their Christmas stories, Dick Morgan's *The Archangel's Gift* offers one of the most endearing holiday tales to come along in quite a while. Morgan's story is not just for kids. Adults and families who enjoy revisiting their holiday book collections every December are going to add this one to their must-read lists for years to come.

Featuring a modern-day, realistically self-centered, nearly nine-year-old girl named Jamie, and more than a bit of magic, *The Archangel's Gift* offers a most unusual but positively delightful peek into the events of the very first Christmas night in Bethlehem. Precociously teetering between "I believe in Santa" and "I know it all," Jamie is a charmer. Despite her fledgling sense of entitlement and her "need" for a new laptop from Santa, she is still young and innocent enough to be open to the true wonders of Christmas.

On Christmas Eve, Jamie's dad, a man who truly loves the holiday and everything associated with it, gives her a small wooden angel statue, "old and pot-bellied, bald and wrinkled." The angel, who "need(s) a shave," has a halo that has "slipped down over one ear" and a "battered trumpet tied to a sash around his waist." Jamie is neither amused nor grateful. As far as she is concerned, her father's present suggests that this is "going to be a socks and underwear kind of Christmas." Enter the holiday magic.

As Jamie fights sleep, trying to listen for Santa, the angel statue comes to life and introduces himself as Gabe, short for Gabriel. "You're *the* Gabriel, as in, the Archangel Gabriel blew his horn, and the heavens opened up?" asks Jamie. "Retired," he tells her. "Michael's got the job now." Gabe has come to teach Jamie a very important life lesson. He asks, "What if socks and underwear were what you needed most in the whole universe? What if you were so cold and hungry you'd be thankful for a few rags and bread crumbs?" It's something she cannot imagine. "I'm here to give you what you most need," he tells her. "Perspective."

Morgan's Gabe is the cheekiest of angels. Funny, flawed, and good-hearted, he takes

Jamie on a trip through time to witness the wonders of “that first Christmas night in Bethlehem.” Along the way, they encounter angels of all sorts. Cigar-smoking, feather-molting Gabe is a reliably entertaining character as he pushes his way through the multitude of angels, spouting statements like, “God will meet you halfway down *any* path as long as you seek him,” and “God’s will isn’t something you can put on like a shirt.”

From start to finish, *The Archangel’s Gift* is pure delight. Beautifully developed characters, clever tongue-in-cheek humor, a captivating story line, and just enough magic come together in a book that deserves to become a holiday classic.

Cheryl M. Hibbard