A BRAVE DOLL

Janice Clark

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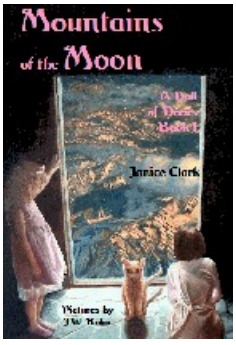
BY JANICE CLARK

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is for Maggie, who wanted to be in a book like her cousins. The knot-tying technique Nancy discovers has been successfully used to teach many children to sew. The stop-and-think method of problem solving is pretty useful, too.



Two of Maggie's cousins posed for the illustrations in *The Mountains of the Moon*.

Thank you to all the people who helped with pictures. Maggie's Mom and Dad took her pictures, and posed as Nancy's parents. Maggie's godmother Jenn and her son Cory provided the photo of Nancy's brother. The part of Sandy was played by Kelsey, a Jack Russell terrier. Richard Lewis took the sewing photos.

No dolls were harmed in the production of this book. Sherri had a pillow stand-in for the surgery pictures.

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Nancy's grandmother made her a cloth doll. Nancy named her doll Sherri.

One day, Nancy took Sherri to the back yard for a picnic.

Nancy put Sherri on a blanket.

Mrs. Castle's dog Sandy was in the yard, too. He was digging in the flower beds.

"Stop that," scolded Nancy. "Bad dog! Go home!"

Sandy stopped digging. He saw Sherri on the blanket. He grabbed Sherri with his teeth and started to shake her.

Nancy screamed. "Let go, Sandy, let go."

Sandy growled and shook harder. Nancy didn't know what to do.

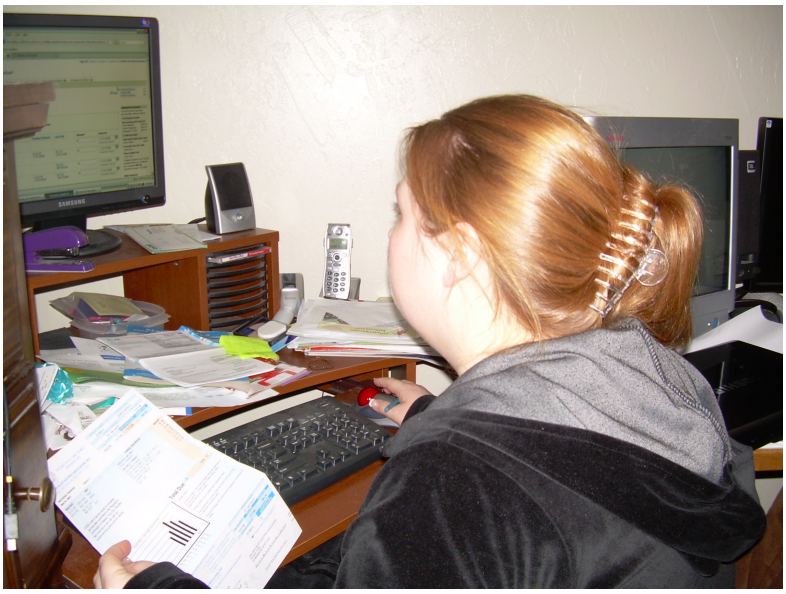
"Sandy," called Mrs. Castle from next door. "Where are you? Time to eat."

Sandy dropped Sherri. He listened for a moment, then hurried home.

Nancy looked at her torn doll. There was stuffing all over the lawn.

Her eyes filled with tears. "I must be brave," she told herself. "Sherri needs my help."

Nancy wrapped Sherri and the stuffing in the blanket. She went to the house to find help.



Nancy's mother was a teacher. She was marking a pile of papers. Nancy thought, "Mama mended my coat when I tore it. She can mend a doll."

"Will you help me?" she asked. "Sandy hurt Sherri. Will you sew her up?" She showed her mother the torn doll.

"I'm sorry, honey," said Nancy's mother, "but I must grade these tests tonight. I will do it later if I have time."

Nancy did not want to wait. Her father came in the door with a bag of groceries. Nancy thought, "Daddy mended the tent last summer. He can mend a doll."

"Will you help me?" she asked. "Sandy hurt Sherri. Will you sew her up?" She showed her father the torn doll.

"I'm sorry," said her father, "but it's my turn to cook dinner. I have to start the spaghetti sauce. Maybe later I can help. Why don't you play with your other dolls?"

Nancy didn't want to play with her other dolls. She told herself, "I must find a way to help Sherri."

Nancy's brother Bob came down the stairs dressed for football. Nancy thought, "Bob sews the badges on his Scout uniform. He can mend a doll."

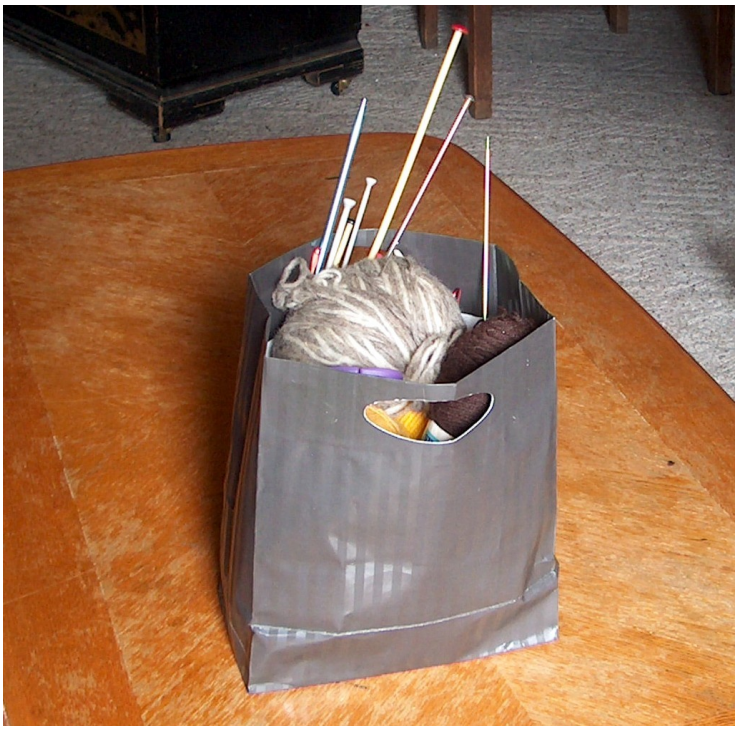
"Will you help me?" she asked. "Sandy hurt Sherri. Will you sew her up?" She showed her brother the torn doll.

"I'm sorry," said Bob, "but I'm late for practice. Maybe later." He went out the door, got on his bike, and rode away.

Nancy hugged Sherri. She put Sherri on the couch and sat down beside her. She thought very hard.

"I made a yarn picture in school," she remembered. "Maybe I can mend a doll."

The pin cushion in the sewing basket was full of needles. "Those are too small and sharp for me," thought Nancy. "I need a big one for yarn like we used in school."



In her mother's knitting bag, she found a big needle with a rounded point.

Nancy unrolled some yarn from a ball and cut it with the scissors. She threaded the yarn into the eye of the needle. It was hard to do. Finally the yarn went in. She carefully pulled it far enough, so it couldn't slip out.

"Hold very still, please," she told Sherri. "This will hurt a little, like when I get my shots."

Nancy pushed the stuffing back into the hole. She poked the needle into the cloth and pulled it through. The yarn followed the needle into the hole. It went all the way through and came out again.

"I need a knot at the end," thought Nancy. She didn't know how to tie a knot.

Nancy sat and thought a while. She remembered when the end of her shoelace got into the loop and made a knot. "I need a loop," she thought.

She poked the needle in again. This time she was careful not to pull the yarn all the way through. She put the needle in again, near the first hole, and pulled the yarn part way through. Now she had a loop.

She pulled gently until the loop was small. Next she put the needle through the loop. Then she pulled the yarn tight. It made a knot, just like the one in her shoelace.

Nancy smiled. She kept pushing the needle in and pulling it through until the hole was closed. Then she made another loop and knot like the first one. She cut off the extra yarn with the scissors.

Nancy was happy. "You are a very brave baby," she said. "I am proud of you."

She wrapped Sherri in her blanket and put her to bed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janice Clark lives with her brother on a mini-farm in western Washington. When she isn't chasing deer out of the garden or playing with grandchildren, she writes a little bit of everything: reviews, poetry, stories, songs, and occasional sermons. She especially enjoys writing stories for children.

Her published works include a children's chapter book series, *The Hall of Doors*. Book one, *The Mountains of the Moon*, is currently available. Book two, *The Door in the Sky*, will be out in 2009. Other books are in progress.

Visit her website at www.janiceclark.net.