

# A Little Something

—MinervaDeannaBond

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*In the episode "A Christmas Secret," Jessica gave Seth a toy train for Christmas, but we never got to see her open his gift. What was in that little gold box? This is my take on the gift Seth gave her, inspired by a certain piece of jewelry that Angela Lansbury wears quite frequently. Merry Christmas and God bless!*

Seth Hazlitt was feeling pretty darn good. It was nothing short of a miracle that Wanda Andrews had pulled through after an agonizing time in the ER, but then again, this was the season for miracles. Seth had always wrestled with the idea of miracles happening, but tonight, he had to admit he believed with all of his heart... and most of that change of the aforementioned organ was thanks to the woman standing beside him. He'd arrived at the party that evening much later than specified, but Seth told himself that he was "fashionably late," as the old saying went. He hadn't seen a Christmas shindig this joyous in years. Between Mort and the Caroliers and Charlie McCumber's parents rejoicing over their newfound grandchild, plus the relief of Wanda's survival, happiness filled the atmosphere and glowed like the candles and Christmas lights that brightened the room. No person, however, shone brighter than Jessica Fletcher. No one ever did, come to think of it. He finally spotted her by the table that held the delicious-looking Christmas feast, as though she were standing guard over the turkey.

Seth chuckled to himself at the very thought. The only person she'd have to guard that turkey from was him, but the golden-brown bird on the table wasn't the object of his attention at the moment. No, Jessica had snagged his eye and was holding it captive without even knowing. Lord, she was beautiful. That golden blouse of hers was sheer-sleeved, treating him to a filmy, veiled view of her arms, and the color turned her hair into an even richer blonde. And that smile of hers and those blue eyes... no Christmas lights could shine or sparkle brighter, if you asked him.

When he'd opened his Christmas gift from her and found the train he'd longed for since his boyhood, he was pretty sure his own smile was just as bright. Never did he think he'd ever see that precious toy train, but Jessica, God bless her, had been his Secret Santa, in a manner of speaking. She took his story to heart and given him the one gift he had always wanted... and banished his inner cynic to the shadows, replacing it with the little boy

he'd long kept buried. *Another miracle*, he said to himself as the snow fell and the Caroliers began another tune outside the window. And yet another miracle would occur if Jessica ever got around to opening her present.

"Speakin' of a merry Christmas," Seth said, after they'd both given each other that very wish, "are you gonna open your present before the *next* 25th of December?"

Jessica suddenly became aware of the little gold box she still clutched in her hand. "Oh, I'm sorry, Seth! I almost forgot!"

"Your memory's slipping. Happens to all of us at this particular time of life."

"Oh, hush! There is nothing wrong with my memory, and you know it."

"Ayuh. Obviously." Seth held up his train engine with a grin. "Come on, Jess, open it!"

"All right, Seth! For goodness' sake, I think I've created a monster." She was just about to tear at the gold wrapping paper when Seth stopped her.

"Wait a minute." He pulled the metallic green bow from the package and stuck it among Jessica's blonde curls. "Green and gold. Heckuva combination on you," he said with satisfaction, beaming at his handiwork.

"Well, I am Irish, after all," Jessica laughed, now ripping the wrapping paper off her gift in earnest. A small white box was revealed... a box that was just big enough for a piece of jewelry. Curious blue eyes flickered up to glittering hazel ones and she flashed him a wry smile. "Seth Hazlitt, what is in here?"

Jessica had never seen Seth so eager for anything in her life. He was practically dancing on tiptoes, he was so excited to see her open her gift, and his ruddy face was split in an enormous grin. "*Open it, woman!*" he ordered, almost jumping up and down on that exclamation.

Jessica's eyes, which were narrowed as she opened the box, flew wide again at what was inside. Nestled on a cloud of white gauze was a diamond brooch in the shape of a bird taking wing. "Oh Seth, it's beautiful!" she effused, touching a finger to the sparkling pin.

Seth all but glowed with pleasure at her praise. "I racked my brain for days trying to think what to get you. To quote old Ted Geisel, 'I puzzled and puzzled 'til my puzzler was sore.'"

"And then you thought of something you hadn't before?" Jessica teased, continuing the rhyme of Dr. Seuss's beloved Christmas tale.

"Ayuh. I found this in the jewelry store here in town. It was on display in the front case like it was... I don't know, like it was meant for me to buy it for you. I asked what kind of bird it was supposed to be, but I didn't get a definite answer."

Jessica turned the box in her hand, inspecting the little bird. "Maybe it's a seagull."

Seth shot her a look. "Jess, get serious. Would I really buy you a pin that looked like one of those rats with wings?" He paused to enjoy her answering laughter. "Naw, I kinda like to think it's a dove."

"Why is that? Because of this time of year?"

"Not just that. I know doves mean peace on earth, and somehow, we seem to find it at Christmas. I almost didn't this year, but you gave it back to me. You never lost faith that Wanda would be all right, you helped Charlie's parents welcome their granddaughter... and to top it all off, you gave me the one gift I'd always wanted." Seth smiled rather sheepishly. "Sappy as it sounds... you're my dove, Jess."

Tears glistening in her cobalt eyes, Jessica shook her head in what appeared to be joyous disbelief. "I... Seth, I don't know what to say!"

"Well, there's another miracle." Seth let out a bark of laughter as she landed a playful punch on his shoulder. "If you'll allow me?" He took the brooch from the box and pinned it to the left lapel of her blouse, where it sparkled a dazzling white against burnished gold. "Not bad for a little something."

Jessica touched the pin, the dove winging a message of peace right over her heart. "It's more than just *a little something*. It's a gift of peace." She leaned in and kissed his cheek. "Thank you so much, Seth."

"No, Jess," he said softly, wrapping his arms around her and cuddling her close. "Thank *you* for giving me back my faith." He returned her kiss, this time on top of her head. "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas," Jessica said, finding her own peace in the warmth of his arms and the bond of love between them as the snow fell that Christmas Eve – the night when everyone, with a little miracle from above, could find the peace they were searching for.