

Spider's Gift

A Christmas Story

Written by
Geraldine Ann Marshall

Illustrated by
Rebecca Sorge



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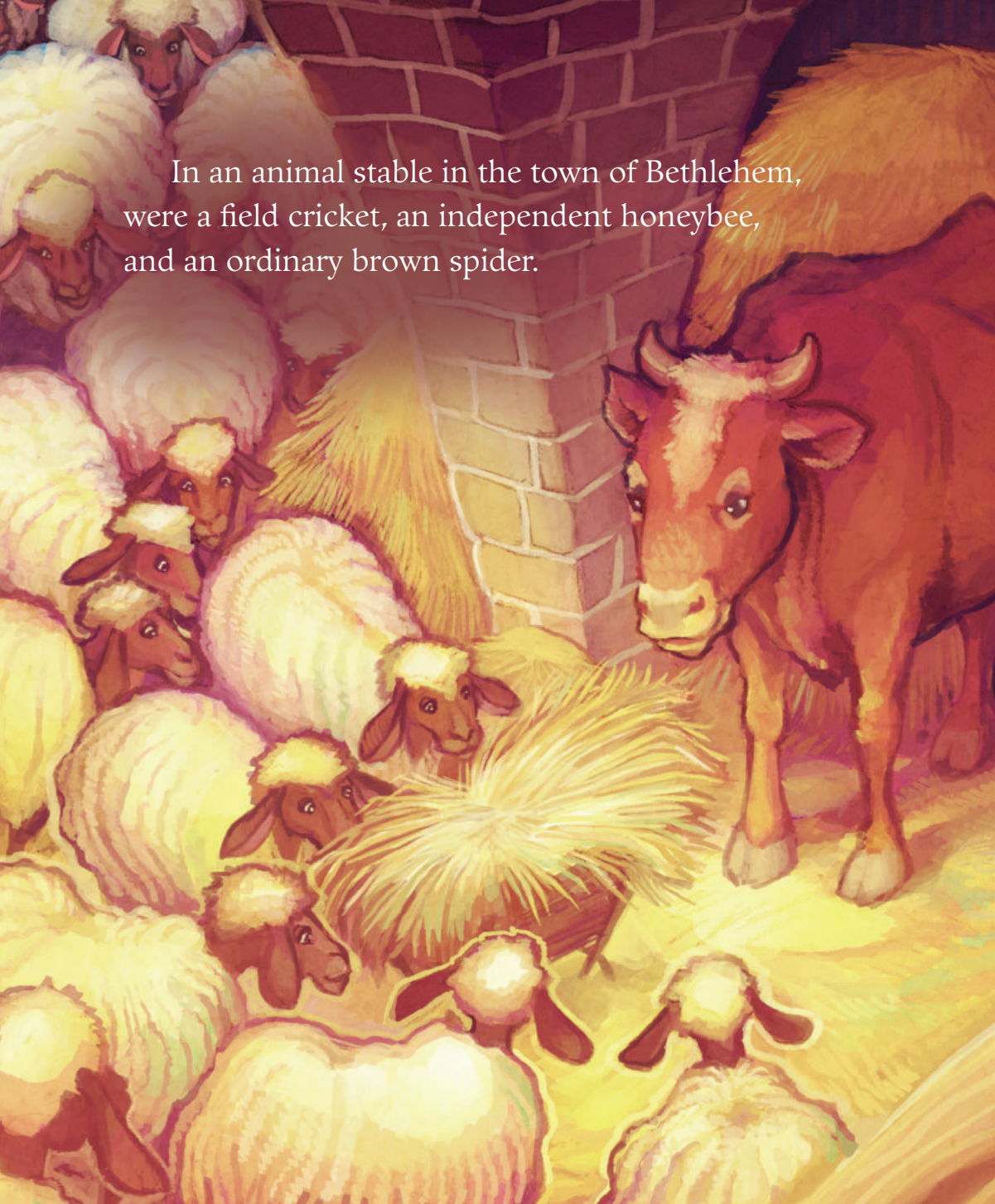
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*For my daughters,
Audrey and Rachel,
for whom I wrote the Christmas stories.*

*For our family dogs
who've all given us their gifts of love:
Scamper, Frank Lloyd, Newton,
Wilbur, Stuart Little, Emmett;
and two cats,
Charlotte and Sac a dos.*



In an animal stable in the town of Bethlehem,
were a field cricket, an independent honeybee,
and an ordinary brown spider.





“Today, I want
to make music,”
Cricket said.

“I want to dance,” Honeybee said.

“Each one of my eight legs is twitching with
joy,” Spider said.

“Something special is going to happen!” the
three friends shouted.

That night a gentle man helped a young woman with soft, dark hair into the stable. The man put clean hay in a corner for the tired woman. The woman's stomach was large and round.

"She's going to have a baby," Cricket whispered.

"Oh, Joseph," the woman said, "is this where we'll be staying?"

"All the inns are full. There is nowhere else we can go, Mary," said Joseph. He helped Mary sit on the summer-smelling hay.

"This is such a rough place to bring a baby into the world," Mary said. "But I know God will keep us safe."





Later that night, the animals awoke when a baby began to cry. Then they heard heavenly singing, and the stable shone with bright starlight.



Soon shepherds and their sheep entered the stable. “We came to see if what the angel said was true,” the eldest shepherd told Mary and Joseph. “The angel said the Savior was born tonight.”