

This Month's



FEATURED FICTION

Dollar Store

from Lisa Hecmanczuk

She walks in the dollar store and is accosted by the smell of dust covering mildew present in most shops hawking the \$1 or less items. Her first thought is, should've gone to the discount department store. Oh, but they are so expensive?!? No, she is going to save money. Her list: birthday cards, sanitary pads, bread, and C batteries. Yes, this dollar store actually carries bread. She heads to the cards and immediately thinks "leave now!" as she glances at the out-of-date plastic-sealed greeting cards. They look like they came from a box someone found buried under a defunct Woolworths' store. The box was probably marked "1968-1975 Corny Cards for all Occasions". Each card she picks up is worth than the one before. "You're 10 today and the dinosaur monster is here to wish you a happy birthday." Her ten year old son is into fantasy football, collecting baseball cards, and video games. He would probably think the card was a joke. She rolls her eyes and puts it back. Oh here's one with a cool (really!) zebra on the front. She opens it to find 30-point type declaring: "Here's hoping a very special boy has a very special day in every special way." Forget the 70's, this is straight 80's self-esteem marketing. She decides to try the nephew cards. One has multiple pictures of lighthouses and boats, not what her 25 year old punk nephew would enjoy. Ok, well at least she can get the other items.

She heads to the batteries. At first she doesn't see the C batteries and it's her chance to escape to a normal store! Oh, but alas she waits too long and is accosted by an older gentleman, probably with a mental problem.

"You think those D batteries any good?" he asks.

"I don't know. I usually try to buy alkaline."

"Well for a buck, why not try it?" he says.

Trying to avoid his gaze, she looks at the batteries and spots the C's. Non-alkaline. But still his words are ringing in her ears. "Why not, for a buck." Actually it's not just in her head, he's saying it again. So she smiles (which is really a grimace) and tosses two packs in her cart. She actually tells the man, "Thanks" and glances over to the bread cart. She can see the store is out of bread. She meanders through the extensive food aisle of the shoppe d'une buck, but finds nothing resembling bread mix or bread of any sort.

Then she goes to the feminine hygiene aisle. She questions the smartness of buying pads here, but these are a different brand from the last time she bought cheapo feminine napkins, so she goes for it. She's in deep now. Still she thinks to herself,

"Abandon the cart and run!" But no, dammit she's saving money and time. What better combo than that? She will check if the bakery on the other side of town is open when she does her next errand.

An hour and a half later sitting at home, she remembers the bread. She never did check the bakery. Well she has an old packet of yeast in the cupboard. She could make bread in her bread machine in time for dinner. She doesn't feel like it, but she drags herself up and to the cupboard. The yeast is only two months expired she tells herself. Two hours later she goes to pull the bread out and is surprised that it has more peaks and valleys than the Rocky Mountains. It just kind of dumps out of the pan. It is dense and smells like old socks. She finds it impossible to cut it for toast to go with the scrambled eggs she is making for dinner. She has a brief flash of insight that she could make something else, or—God forbid—pick up carryout. She dismisses those thoughts before they fully reach her conscious mind and presses on.

She scrambles eggs and toasts the few pieces of bread she has left in the other loaf. She puts the "bread" she just made on the table with a knife. She eats one slice of toast and allows the rest for the kids. She isn't satisfied, so tries some of the spongy bread, much to her distaste. Her oldest son, who eats any kind of bread as long as the mold is not visible, doesn't even want any after he tries a nibble. "It tastes sort of weird," he explains.

After having a couple of cookies with her tea to complete her gourmet meal, she thinks back on how much she saved at the dollar store. Let's see, it cost about a dollar and a half for the ingredients that went into the bread, plus the extra money for the other junk she bought. The pads are about as absorbent as a sheet of Kleenex. She will have to buy a box of regular ones. She still has to buy birthday cards. So she's saved no time or money-it wouldn't have cost her anymore at the discount department store. They have 99 cent cards. Plus, she could've bought a loaf of bread. She reflects on this and hopes that she'll remember it next time. On the other hand, going to the local department store would've been too easy and enjoyable and she might have even found something else she liked, and had to write a check. Oh no, not that!



My name is Lisa Hecmanczuk. I am a writer of many diverse pieces that I believe to be of inspirational value to the world today, perhaps especially women. I author short stories in the following categories: Faith, Survival, Romance, Recovery, Family, Humor of Everyday Life, Nostalgia, Nature, Pets, Inner Child, Friendship, and Faith. I also have a collection of poetry and prayers. My works are all meant to provide hope and are written from the heart. My blog is LoveofLifebyLisaHecmanczuk.blogspot.com/.