

the
Shoe Box

{ A Christmas Story }

FRANCINE
RIVERS



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The Shoe Box

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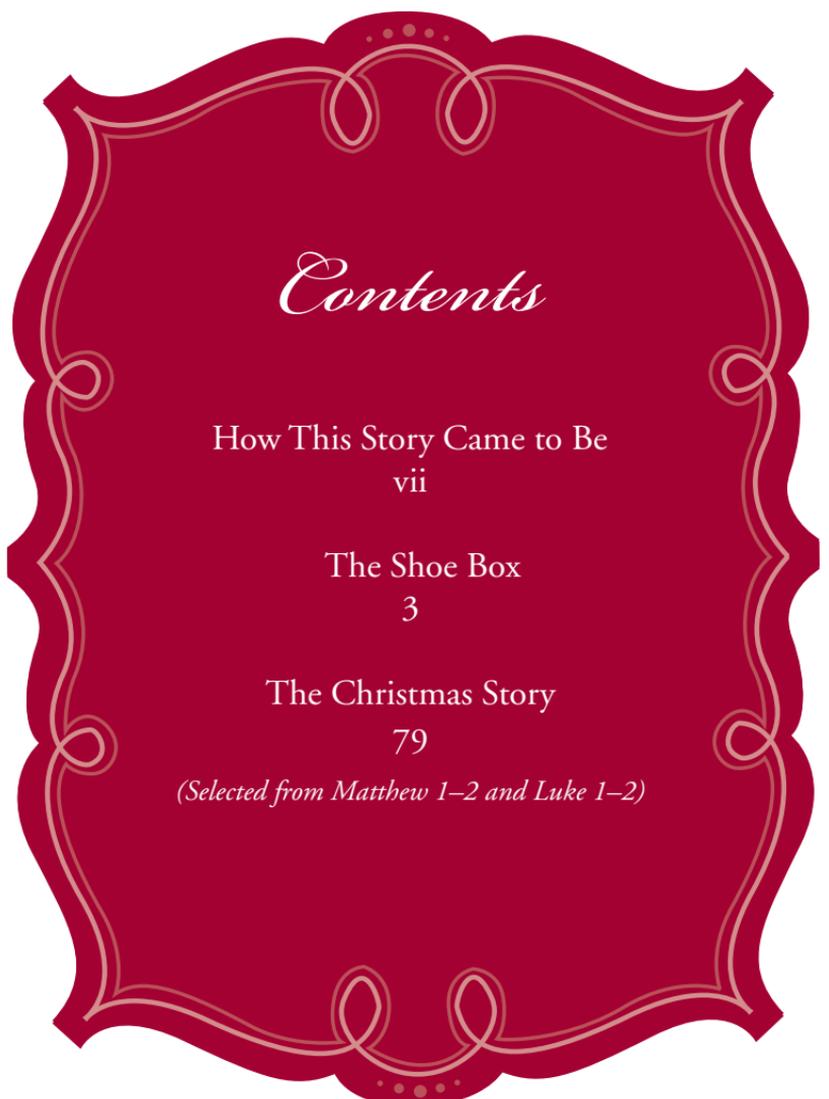
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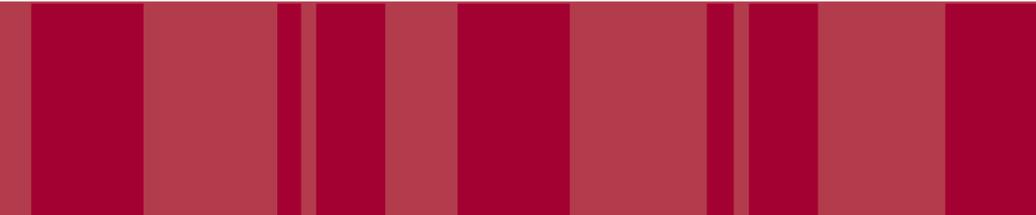
How This Story Came to Be

When I first became a Christian, one of the hardest things for me to do was give my burdens to the Lord. I would worry over all kinds of things. I remember a friend talking about putting prayers in a lunch bag, and that got me thinking. One of the many jobs I had held was that of a secretary, and I remembered the in- and out-boxes. From that memory came the idea of a “God box.” I took an ordinary cardboard container with a lid and covered it with



beautiful wrapping paper. Then I cut a slot in the top. Whenever something was bothering me greatly and I couldn't let it go, I would write out a prayer about it. Then I would tuck the written prayer into the God box. Sometimes my husband and my children would write prayers and tuck them into the box as well. It was amazing to me how this physical exercise helped me give up worries and burdens to the Lord. Every few months I would open the box and read the prayers. What I found was a source of great joy and comfort, for

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many of the prayers were answered,
often in completely unexpected ways.

My God box gave me the idea for
“The Shoe Box.” While I put worries
and burdens in my box, I wanted
Timmy to put blessings and praises in
his box as well. It reminded me that
there are all kinds of prayers—worship
and praise as well as cries for help.

Scripture says the prayers of believers
are the sweet scent of incense to
the Lord.





*T*immy O'Neil came to live with Mary and David Holmes on a cloudy day in the middle of September, two weeks after school started. He was a quiet little six-year-old boy with sorrowful eyes. Not very long afterward, they wondered about the box he carried with him all the time. It was an ordinary shoe box with a red lid and the words *Running Shoes* printed on one side.

Timmy carried it everywhere he

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went. When he put it down, it was always where he could see it.

“Should we ask him about it?” Mary said to her husband.

“No. He’ll talk to us about it when he’s ready,” David said, but he was as curious as she was.

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Even Mrs. Iverson, the social worker, was curious about the shoe box. She told Mary and David that Timmy had the box when the policeman brought him to the Youth Authority offices. Timmy’s

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dad was put in prison. His mom had a job, but she didn't make enough to take proper care of Timmy. A lady in the apartment house where he lived found out he was by himself all day and reported it to the police.

“They brought him to me with one small suitcase of clothes and that shoe box,” Mrs. Iverson said. “I asked him what was inside it, and he said, ‘Things.’ But what things he wouldn't tell me.”

Even the children at Timmy's new

school were curious about the box. He didn't put it in his cubbyhole like things the other children brought. He would put it on top of his desk while he did his work.

His first-grade teacher, Mrs. King, was curious, too. "What do you have there, Timmy?"

"My box," he said.

"What's in your box?"

"Things," he said and went on with his arithmetic.

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Mrs. King didn't ask him about the box again. She liked Timmy, and she didn't want to pry. She told Mary and David that Timmy was a good student. He wasn't the brightest by far, but he always did his best work. Mrs. King admired that about Timmy. She wrote a note to him about it on one of his math papers. *Other students will learn by your example*, the note said, and she drew a big smiling face on his paper and gave him a pretty, sparkly star sticker.



About the Author

New York Times best-selling author Francine Rivers began her literary career at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English and journalism. From 1976 to 1985, she had a successful writing career in the general market, and her books were highly acclaimed by readers and reviewers. Although raised in a religious home, Francine did not truly encounter Christ until later in life, when she was already a wife, a mother of three, and an established romance novelist.

Shortly after becoming a born-again

Christian in 1986, Francine wrote *Redeeming Love* as her statement of faith. First published by Bantam Books, and then rereleased by Multnomah Publishers in the mid-1990s, this retelling of the biblical story of Gomer and Hosea, set during the time of the California Gold Rush, is now considered by many to be a classic work of Christian fiction. *Redeeming Love* continues to be one of CBA's top-selling titles, and it has held a spot on the Christian best-seller list for nearly a decade.

Since *Redeeming Love*, Francine has published numerous novels with



Christian themes—all best sellers—and she has continued to win both industry acclaim and reader loyalty around the globe. Her Christian novels have been awarded or nominated for numerous honors, including the RITA Award, the Christy Award, the ECPA Gold Medallion, and the Holt Medallion in Honor of Outstanding Literary Talent. In 1997, after winning her third RITA Award for inspirational fiction, Francine was inducted into the Romance Writers of America Hall of Fame. Francine’s novels have been translated into more than twenty different languages, and she

enjoys best-seller status in many foreign countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

Francine and her husband, Rick, live in northern California and enjoy time spent with their three grown children and taking every opportunity to spoil their grandchildren. Francine uses her writing to draw closer to the Lord, and she desires that through her work she might worship and praise Jesus for all He has done and is doing in her life.

Visit her Web site at
www.francinerivers.com.