



2003

Simeon's Gift

Sandra L. Tidwell

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Tidwell, Sandra L. (2003) "Simeon's Gift," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 5 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss5/15>

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Edwards, Julie Andrews and Emma Walton Hamilton. *Simeon's Gift*. Illustrated by Gennady Spirin. Harper Collins Publishers, 2003. ISBN 0060089148. \$17.89. 34 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fairy Tales;

Subject: Musicians--Juvenile fiction; Self-Realization--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Simeon, who has a deeply ingrained love of music, is in love with the beautiful Sorrel. Feeling that he doesn't have the rich possessions which would keep Sorrel's love for him vibrant, he decides to travel the world, with his lute as his only companion. He hopes to better himself, find riches, and discover new songs to add to his repertoire. In the course of his journeys, he meets soldiers, monks, and city folk before he despairs of ever finding the riches he needs to please Sorrel. Although he hears lots of melodies and sounds, new songs also elude him. Simeon sells his lute for a canoe, fruits and vegetables, and a little grain and heads homeward. On the way home, his selfless acts attract a beautiful bird, a pink-and-golden fish, and a beautiful fawn that follow him home and are declared "wonderful gifts" by his beloved Sorrel. "In his joy, Simeon suddenly heard the entire song in his head and in his heart. He picked up his flute, and all the music that had been building within him for so long poured forth in one complete and perfect melody."

This beautiful fairy tale has an uplifting message of courage and sacrifice. Spirin's delicately detailed watercolor illustrations depict the magical time of castles, knights, and minstrels. The story begins with a beautifully decorated letter A, in keeping with the medieval time setting. A CD is also included with the book with the reading by Julie Andrews Edwards. Her beautiful English accent and the musical backgrounds would make this an extra special reading experience for upper elementary school-age readers.