

Blessed Margaret of Castello (Holy Innocence Book 6)

Bob Lord



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Patron of the unwanted

A baby is born

There is a hush in the town and on the mountain top, in anticipation of the new little lord, as if time is standing still waiting for the signal to rejoice! Lady Emilia went into labor. The candle bearers were ready to brighten the castle, symbolizing the light that had come into their lives. The serfs stood ready to ring the bells! The baby was born, but no lights, no bells tolled, only deadly silence. A baby girl was born; that was one blow. The infant was rejected immediately by her parents; she was not only a girl, she was deformed! She was not a pretty baby; if her parents were to believed, she was ugly. She would never reach full height, they determined as she already showed signs of being (as her parents later told her) a midget! Her right leg was shorter than the other, and so they knew she would be lame, as well. Believing God had punished them, one week later, they discovered they had not seen the total chastisement; the child was blind! What a disgrace, they thought!

The word went out that the baby was very sick and was not expected to live! As it was impossible to keep them from becoming aware what had transpired, the serfs and soldiers in the fortress were told that this was not something to be broadcast. As Parisio was known for the merciless cruelties inflicted on those who disobeyed him or got in his way, it was fairly fait-accompli[4] that no one would know of the little girl who had come into this cruel world, and cruel it would turn out to be, making this reaction and subsequent action a kind one in comparison.

The local parish priest, Father Cappellano insisted the baby be baptized! And as was the custom of that time was that the baby be baptized in the cathedral, he faced very stubborn opposition; Parisio flatly refused. But when his wife reasoned with him, he reluctantly agreed - on one condition, Lady Emilia's maid would bring the baby girl and have her baptized. The heartless twosome (parents) even refused to name the child; they left it up to the maid, with only one admonition, she was not to bear the name Emilia!

The maid took the baby to the cathedral in Mercatello When the priest asked the name of the infant, the maid cried out, Margaret, meaning pearl. Although her outer visage was not what the world would call beautiful and extraordinary, her soul would prove precious and priceless, truly a pearl. The maid returned. All the serfs hoped the parents' hearts would soften, after all she was their child! But that was not to be the case. Not even when the priest who was teaching the child told them how extraordinarily bright she was, his best student, did that melt their hearts of stone.

She was a friendly, loving child, in spite of her parents' obvious disdain of her, knowing all the citizens of Metola by name, whether child, man or woman; and this considering she was blind was quite a feat! Everyone in Metola began to love her and looked forward to her visiting them, which she did by herself. She knew how to get to everyone's home; there was only one place she was forbidden to visit and that was the rooms of the palace which her parents occupied.



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