

# **The Church Goer**

**by Keith H Lloyd**

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Ivy enjoyed going to church, it was something of a ritual. Sunday morning she would be up early and tidy her room making sure everything was in its correct place. She would make the beds and help mum clear away the breakfast things before getting ready for church. Ivy liked dressing up in her nice new blouse and skirt, bought specially for her for Christmas. She wore dark stockings and patent leather shoes and with her dark red coat and fur hat to match, she looked very smart—even her mum said so.

Today was a special day. She was taking her young cousin to church for the first time. He was four and a half years old and had never been to church before, something Ivy could not understand. Ivy was nine and had been going to church every Sunday for as long as she could remember, mostly on her own as her mother did not have time. Anyway today was different, she would have her little cousin with her although she would have preferred it had he been a girl.

The boy lived across the street so it was no problem collecting him. But he was a little untidy, she thought. He wore short trousers and a short coat unbuttoned, a pullover that looked a bit tatty, a scarf that had been tied by his mother but was now untied, one sock pulled up and the other down to his ankles and a school-boy hat perched lop sided on his head. But his shoes were highly polished, his dad always did them. Ivy straightened the boy's hat, did up his coat and made him pull up his sock but he would not take her hand.

The Vicar greeted them with a kindly smile and they took their places in the pews.

The boy was quite small and with people in front he found it difficult to see what was happening. Standing on a hassock did not help - it only brought a rebuke from Ivy. It was all right for her she was tall enough to see.

After the Vicar's opening remarks the congregation sang

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hymns but there was something wrong the boy thought—it did not sound right, they were singing the wrong words. They returned home after the service but Ivy was not happy.

"I'm not taking him again" she said to his mother, "He kept on singing 'oh play to me gypsy'. He is "not wanted in the church".

The boy had heard that somewhere before.

I was the boy - Keith Lloyd - and Ivy was my cousin.