



4-8 July, 1999 XVI Soroptimist International Convention,  
Helsinki, Finland

**Three Wishes**  
by *Catriona Fallow*

“Good Morning!

I hope you weren't expecting me to have a funny accent like my Mom's - I've lived most of my life in the States so I don't have a Scottish accent. I do say “tom-ah-to”, not “to-may-to”, but otherwise I speak American quite well.

My Mom is learning too - I've noticed her say sidewalk and elevator several times recently!

My name is Catriona Fallow and I live with my Mom and Dad in Des Moines, Iowa now - we moved there in January from Oregon. I don't have any brothers or sisters, but I do have a pet - he's a black Chinese Pug and his name is Nero.

I'm a fifth grader at St. Augustin School, which isn't far from my home, and I'm hoping Mom will let me ride my bike there next year. Some of my friends live quite close, but a lot live on the other side of the city. Des Moines is a fairly small city, compared to Portland though, so nowhere is very far away.

At school I like art and history as well as reading and writing. I'm not bad at math, but I hate spelling tests.

Outside school, I like to play soccer. I used to play for a classic team when I lived in Portland. It was a new team and none of us had played together before so we lost most of our first few games. But we got better as we practiced and we won the last few. I'm hoping to find a new team next season in Des Moines. I also like playing the violin. I've been playing for three years now and I'm getting better at it. At least the dog doesn't run away any more!

Since both my Mom and Dad come from Scotland, I get to go there most summers to visit my Grandmas and my uncles and cousins. I've been really lucky because I've had a chance to travel a lot - I was born in Japan and then we moved to Hong Kong before we came to live in America.

If I had three wishes to be granted for the next millennium, I think first I'd wish that people would be more tolerant of each other. There are lots of different kinds of people in the world, and nobody is better than anybody else just because of who they are or how much money they have.

It's hard to explain my second wish so let me give an example. You've got a homework assignment due on Friday and you know you should get started on Monday. By Tuesday you know you should have at least some of it done but it's still not started. By Wednesday you're starting to freak out and on Thursday you have to work for hours to do it all.

4-8 July, 1999 XVI Soroptimist International Convention, Helsinki, Finland

My last wish is that all countries, people and races could be treated equally. If people felt they were equal, they wouldn't need to go to war or fight about land or different religions or things.

I know that Aladdin and all the fairy tale people only get three wishes, but I want to ask for a fourth one today. This is a wish for Monday morning though - not for 2000. I wish it was safe for kids to go to school. I wish all we had to worry about is whether our homework assignments are late, or what's on the menu in the cafeteria, not whether the kid in the locker next to you has a gun in there. I wish it was safe again.

Before I finish I want to say "thank you" to Mrs. Kirkby and Mrs. Falkenstein for inviting me here to talk to you. I need to say thank you to my Mom too for letting me miss school to come and also to my friend Molly and her Mom for bringing me down here from Portland.

Mom says this sounds like an Oscar speech, but I want to thank all of you too. Some of my friends and me worked with the Soroptimists in Portland on their service projects and I know you do a lot for people who aren't as lucky as me.

Thank you."