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### **Dream Your Dreams...and Knit them into the Wool**

The magic of Christmas is inside the pages of a new picture book, *The First Christmas Stocking* by Elizabeth Winthrop, illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline (Delacorte Press, ISBN 0385328044, \$15.95)

If you're knitting a stocking for a special child, this wonderfully illustrated story tells of the magic and hopes that fill the hearts of children who hang a Christmas stocking on the mantel or at the end of their bed.

The tale is of a little girl whose dying mother teaches her to "dream your dreams and knit them into the wool." So when she is ordered to make six stockings for the rich lady at the top of the hill whose children know nothing of cold and damp, hunger and loneliness, little Claire fulfills the near impossible task, even knitting in her sleep. She knits into the stockings pictures of warm fires flickering, children dancing, bells of Christmas ringing. But on her way to deliver the order, she comes upon a small boy, freezing in the snow, and she puts her precious knitted stockings upon his hands, his feet, and one on his head.

When she returns home from the top of the hill, she hangs her one remaining stocking over the fire. And in the morning, all the pictures and dreams she has knitted, all the hope that has gone from her heart into the wool, have come true. The room is warm, food is abundant, love reigns, The magic of Christmas is in the stocking, the hopes that fill it each year.

A delightful new book that will surely become a Christmas classic, like *The Polar Express* or *Santa's Favorite Story*, and inspire you to pour your dreams into the wool while you knit, too.

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Gwynne Spencer is hopelessly in love with children's books, and is hoping to learn to knit one of these days. She can be contacted at [gwynnespencer@aol.com](mailto:gwynnespencer@aol.com).

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