

Contents

	<i>Foreword</i>	<i>ix</i>
	<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xiii</i>
	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
1	<i>A Kiss on the Hillside</i>	<i>7</i>
2	<i>The Will of the Conference</i>	<i>17</i>
3	<i>The Most Isolated Post</i>	<i>31</i>
4	<i>Little Did They Know</i>	<i>43</i>
	5 <i>Entering Jesus</i>	<i>56</i>
6	<i>A Tale of Two Men</i>	<i>69</i>
	7 <i>Fear Not!</i>	<i>81</i>
	8 <i>Bring the Bacon</i>	<i>94</i>
9	<i>The Safest Place in the World</i>	<i>110</i>
	10 <i>They That Were Scattered</i>	<i>123</i>
	11 <i>And the Lord Takes Away</i>	<i>134</i>
12	<i>The Mammoth and the Minute</i>	<i>145</i>
13	<i>From the City to the Camps</i>	<i>155</i>
	14 <i>Taking a Risk</i>	<i>169</i>
15	<i>Can You Come Back?</i>	<i>184</i>
	<i>Epilogue</i>	<i>195</i>
	<i>Afterword</i>	<i>199</i>

A Kiss on the Hillside

Five-year-old Ruthie's dark blond hair, bobbed to just below her ears, bounced in time to the tune she was softly humming. All morning she had played her favorite song, "Lazy Mary, Will You Get Up?" on the record player she had been given last Christmas. But this particular afternoon, Mum had forbidden her to play the song anymore and had sent her outside to find something to do in the warm spring sunshine. But even as Ruthie tried to turn her attention to other things, the melody played over and over in her head and spilled out into a happy hum.

Ted, her eight-year-old brother, was racing his bicycle up and down the street, followed by a trail of admiring neighborhood children. Sometimes he gave Ruthie rides on the handlebars, but today was not one of those days.

Crayons in hand, Ruthie decided to decorate the slate stepping stones that led to the two-story frame house on Cleveland's Sciota Street. How she enjoyed

streaking those bright colors across the stones! Even though her favorite color, red, was almost used up, she decided to use the tiny stump to complete the last stone.

Suddenly, a shadow fell across her busy hand. Mother was standing over her. Ruthie knew her look meant trouble.

"Wait until your dad sees this!" The words pulsed in her ears as she collected the crayons and marched back into the house.

Since Mum was usually the one who handed out punishment, Ruthie concluded that coloring the stepping stones must be very serious if it had to wait for Dad to get home from work. Dad punished only rarely, but when he did it was for something very serious. She had learned that the hard way the previous year.

On that day, she had overheard a back-fence conversation between her mother and the next-door neighbor. The neighbor had the habit of using the Lord's name in every sentence or two. Although that was not what Ruthie was accustomed to hearing, one day she decided to impress her father with her new vocabulary. She hadn't spoken more than two sentences when she received a strong slap on the face. Dad explained that God's name was holy and should be used carefully and with reverence. That was the first—and last—time that David Engstrom would slap his daughter.

Now, however, as she gathered up her crayons and walked slowly back into the house, she wondered what Dad would say about her sidewalk art.

Was this one of those things that would mean a long lecture, maybe even followed by a spanking . . . ?

It seemed like hours until Mum called the family to supper. Ruthie bowed her head slightly as she took her place at the table beside Ted. Dad prayed, and the family began to eat. Ruthie's heart beat wildly as she waited for someone to say something about the coloring, but Mum was busy feeding baby Glen, and Dad seemed preoccupied with his upcoming Sunday sermon. Though not a professional pastor, David Engstrom was a popular lay preacher who was often asked to minister in various Cleveland churches.

When the meal was over, Ruthie went back to her room. All evening she waited, but Dad said nothing. After Mum tucked her into bed, she lay awake for a long time listening to the murmur of her parents' voices as they sat at the breakfast nook drinking their evening coffee and discussing the events of the day. Finally, she drifted off to sleep.

The next afternoon, Dad came home from work carrying a small package. He sat down on the porch steps and called Ruthie to come sit beside him. Pulling a box of beautiful new crayons from the bag, he said, "Rufus, these are yours if you will promise to use them only on paper." Ruthie nodded solemnly. The promise was never broken.

During those years, the United States entered the era known as the Great Depression. Factories and businesses by the hundreds closed down, and many men lost their jobs because of the financial hard times. Sometimes this was hardest on those who had once been wealthy. Many committed suicide be-

cause they could not stand the thought of being unable to provide for their families.

Ruth's dad was without work for two years. During that time, her mother supported the family by working as a masseuse at The May Company, one of Cleveland's best department stores. The Engstroms felt, as did many families, that having to accept welfare from the government would be a great disgrace. Instead, they economized wherever possible, often eating meals of corn bread or cornmeal mush and beans, and salvaging hand-me-downs to create coats and jackets for Ruth and her three brothers.

A steady stream of tramps also visited the Engstrom home, and though money for food was scarce, those men never left without a meal and an extra sandwich in their pocket for the next one.

Occasionally the Engstroms escaped the summer heat of the city by spending a week or two at Beulah Beach Bible Camp on Lake Erie where they owned a small cottage. Days were filled with swimming, building sand castles and attending meetings in the big tabernacle, creating memories that Ruth cherished for years to come.

One particular day, Ruth and her brother Glen argued incessantly. Finally, Mum had had enough. She sat the antagonists down on the cottage steps and told them they must sit with their arms around each other for thirty minutes. Those thirty minutes seemed like an eternity. Even though they grew to enjoy one another in later years, Ruth and Glen never forgot the agony of that awful half hour—the longest thirty minutes of their lives.

Back in Cleveland, the family returned to the weekly routine of Wednesday evening prayer meetings, Sunday school, youth meetings and Sunday morning and evening worship services at The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church on East 120th Street. They all looked forward to the church's annual missionary conventions. Visiting missionaries often stayed in the Engstrom home, fascinating the children with stories of distant lands.

Thus, it was no great surprise to anyone when Ruth went forward to dedicate her life to that purpose when she was twelve years old. Though she was the only one who actually ended up living overseas, big brother Ted ultimately had a significant impact on God's work around the world through his leadership at World Vision International.

As a teenager, Ruth felt no reluctance about expressing her feelings and opinions in the warm safety of home, yet she felt painfully shy and insecure away from that environment. It didn't help that as a ninth grader she was the shortest person in the whole junior high! Talkative and animated at home, she became withdrawn at school and desperately concentrated on not doing anything that would call attention to herself.

After high school graduation, Ruth began to work as a nurse's aide at Rainbow Children's Hospital in Euclid, Ohio. Before long, she had been chosen over all the other aides for the coveted job of assistant to the physical therapist. Then she was offered the opportunity to study to become a licensed practical nurse. But she had not forgotten God's call to serve Him overseas. In order to prepare to do that, she turned down

the offer, and in January of 1939 enrolled in the Missionary Training Institute (MTI) in Nyack, New York.

On a bright September day in 1941, Ruth breathed in the crisp fall air as she left the dorm and walked briskly up the hill to the North Side Dining Room. A few gold and crimson leaves peeked through the masses of green, hinting at the brilliance of color that would soon paint the hillside far above the Hudson River. A trace of sadness passed like a shadow over her heart. This would be her last fall at MTI. She had learned so much and enjoyed so many happy times with friends.

There had even been a few romantic interludes here and there, but tonight was the first meal of her senior year. Ruth was determined not to become romantically involved with anyone, but to pour her heart, mind and soul into her preparation for missionary service.

As she entered the dining hall and found her place, Ruth discovered that she knew only one person at her assigned table, Miss Stanhope, the dean of women. However, after the meal had started, a tall blue-eyed blond freshman slipped as inconspicuously as possible into the vacant seat across the table. With the prompting of Miss Stanhope, he introduced himself as Ted Andrianoff from Pine Hill, New Jersey.

Despite Ruth's desperate efforts to remind herself of her resolve not to allow her heart to become romantically entangled, during the meal she found herself increasingly intrigued by the man across the table. While he appeared somewhat shy, Ted was friendly and contributed interesting and friendly comments to the din-

ner conversation. Ruth found herself attracted to this stranger and quietly questioned what good resolutions were if she could be so easily tempted to break them.

Although she did not know it then, the feelings were mutual. Unknown to Ruth, Ted went to his dorm after dinner and told his roommate, "I believe I have met the girl I'm going to marry someday."

As the autumn leaves transformed the hillside into a blaze of color, then began to fade and fall, Ruth kept her resolution to apply herself only to her studies. Since the first shift in dining hall seating had now separated them, the temptations were few. Sometimes she passed the handsome blond on his way to classes and exchanged a casual hello—but nothing more. The next opportunity to really talk to him came when Ruth was assigned as hostess at the table where Ted sat. The two weeks of sitting side by side at each meal gave them plenty of opportunity to become acquainted.

During those conversations, Ruth learned that Ted's family had emigrated from Russia a few years before his birth. His father John, an employee of the Russian government under the last czar, had been on a government assignment inspecting arsenals in the United States when the Russian Revolution broke out. A year later, his wife Marie, Marie's mother, little George and baby Valentine joined him. Marie's mother did not like America and returned to Russia after just two weeks. John and Marie, however, stayed and made a home for themselves in America.

Though they knew no English when they arrived, they set their minds to learning the language and culture of their adopted country. In the process, Marie

asked a neighbor how she could raise her children to become good American citizens. The neighbor recommended sending the children to the nearest Sunday school. Thereafter the children faithfully attended the Pine Hill, New Jersey Christian and Missionary Alliance Sunday school classes each week. It was through the teaching of that church that Ted met the Lord when he was a high school senior.

At the end of Ruth and Ted's last meal together, in the midst of the shuffle of putting chairs away, Ted asked Ruth if she would go with him to a class picnic.

"I'd love to go," she heard herself responding.

The group rode a ferry to Tarrytown, legendary home of Ichabod Crane and Rip Van Winkle. As they hiked through the picturesque Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Ted took Ruth's hand and listened attentively as she told him of her plans to serve God as a missionary to Africa after graduation. His response was thoughtful and gentle.

"Ruth, you remember that I told you I became a Christian when I was a senior in high school?" he asked. "I knew even then that God was calling me into full-time Christian work, but I believed that I couldn't possibly do that. I said, 'Lord, not me. I'm too slow of speech. I feel even worse than Moses. I'm sure I can't do it.'"

Ted paused briefly, then continued.

"You know how hard it is for me to talk to people, especially in front of a group. I can talk to you, but usually I get tongue-tied and start to stammer when I'm with someone I don't know well. However, God wouldn't give me any peace until I finally surren-

dered to Him once and for all. That was during a campus weekend four years ago. I decided then that I would prepare for the ministry.”

Ted looked down shyly.

“Pop was really upset about my decision. He only goes to church on Christmas and Easter, but he’s still a strong Russian Orthodox. He said that I was a fanatic about my religion. He told me that if I decided to be a minister, he wouldn’t give me any financial help with my studies. He stopped talking to me. If he wanted to say something to me, he would ask Mom to pass on the message. That was really hard on her, but she understood that I had to obey God.”

Ted paused as he gave an extra kick to the dry leaves covering the path.

“Since I didn’t have any money for college, I started to work as a stock boy in Wanamakers Department Store in Philadelphia. One day, I was carrying a load of boxes and trying to hold the elevator door open so I could get on. The elevator started to move and caught my foot. I had to go to the hospital for a couple weeks. While I was there, Pop came to see me. From then on, we’ve been talking again. He even decided that he didn’t mind if I wanted to go to Bible college. I’m not sure exactly what God has in mind for me, but I think He wants me overseas, probably in Africa.”

Ruth and Ted stopped to gaze at the expansive brown river below them.

“Hey, you two,” someone hollered up the slope. “Don’t you know that the ferry leaves in ten minutes?” Racing back to the dock, they were among the last to get on board.

The following week Ted again asked Ruth to be his guest at a party thrown by his dorm buddies. As they walked back to Ruth's dorm later, Ted took her in his arms and kissed her. That first kiss was followed by more. Before long, the two were hopelessly in love. They sincerely believed that God had brought them together to share in the ministry He had for their lives.

At the end of the following summer, Ted asked Ruth's dad for permission to marry his daughter. Permission was granted on the condition that Ted felt he could continue school and support a wife. He promised that he could. On August 27, 1943, after a year's engagement, Ted and Ruth were married at the Swedish Covenant Church in Cleveland.

During their first year, Ted and Ruth lived in Nyack, where Ted worked in a box factory while finishing his last year of college. Ruth worked at the college switchboard. Then Ted accepted the challenge of overseeing a new church that the district wanted to begin in Newark, Ohio. As they would later discover, it would be good training for what lay ahead—not in the jungles of Africa, but in the hills of Laos.