

A Young Girl's
Journey

Shelter
Me Safe

Sheryle Lehman

© Copyright April 2003 Carlisle Press.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

ISBN 1-890050-65-2



Carlisle Press
WALNUT CREEK

2673 TR 421
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

PREFACE

Follow Ruth Ann through the story as she seeks to know, “What must I do to be saved?” Then discover with her the secret of reflecting Christ in the everyday experiences of life. When her brother dedicates himself to living for Jesus, he is unprepared for the pruning that is to follow.

Most incidents in this book are based on actual happenings. Names and details have been changed intentionally to protect privacy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Saturday Activities	1
A Troubled Conscience	11
A Frightening Experience	19
A Busy Day	28
Going Camping	38
What Is It That Frees Us?	49
What God Requires.	57
Ruth Ann Keeps Seeking	68
Joseph Makes a Decision	79
Casting the Beam Out of Our Own Eye	89
Peace at Last.	99
Joyful in the Lord.	109
Troubling News	118
The Waters Go Over My Head	128
“Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear”	142
A Welcome Break	151
Back on the Job	161
On Her Own—With God’s Help.	169
Home Sweet Home	178
Teaching School	188
Answer to Prayer	195
A Decision to Make.	205
Trusting in the Lord	213
Stuck in the Marsh	226
Fully Surrendered	233
Epilogue	242



SATURDAY ACTIVITIES

BONG! TEN-YEAR-OLD RUTH ANN KAUFFMAN GLANCED at the clock. It showed one o'clock, and both she and nine-year-old Joanna were still sitting at the table, dreading the mountain of dishes before them. Daddy and the boys had left the house five minutes before to put up hay, and Mama was in the bathroom with one-year-old Rosella.

"Girls," called Mama, "did one of you put the Baby Magic away? I can't find it anywhere."

"I remember putting it on the stand just before dinner when I was dusting the living room," answered Ruth Ann.

"That's strange," said Mama. "But it'll show up sooner or later. I'll just have to get the small bottle out of my diaper bag."

Ruth Ann and Joanna turned their attention to the dismal task before them. Then, knowing that no amount of wishing would make the huge pile of Saturday noon dishes go away, Ruth Ann reluctantly got up and started clearing the table.

At least it was Joanna's turn to wash the dishes. She was an energetic worker and could wash dishes as quickly and as well as Ruth Ann.

"Come on, Joanna," urged Ruth Ann, seeing her discouraged look. "Let's get at it and get the job done." But instead of getting at it, Joanna slowly doodled a knife around on the table. Suddenly she sat up with a hopeful look.

"I'll wash the dishes all next week if you'll wash them just this once," she proposed.

Ruth Ann stared incredulously. "But you have only two more meals left of this week, and then your turn will be over for another whole week," she said. Ruth Ann never ceased to be amazed at her younger sister. She had done this before, but how could you want to wash dishes a whole week rather than just one time?

"I know," Joanna replied, already perking up at the possibility of not having to do it this time. "But I usually don't mind washing dishes. It's just that I dread it right now, and I'd rather do it for a whole week than right now."

"Okay, it's a deal." Ruth Ann smiled happily as she carried a stack of plates to the sink. "If you're sure you want to do that, it's fine with me." She took the teakettle off the stove and poured hot water into the sink.

Relieved at not having to do the dishes, Joanna jumped up and tackled the table.

"Ruth Ann, please bring me a piece of paper and a pen," called Mama from the rocker. "The grocery bus will be coming this afternoon, and I need to make a list."

"Oh, yes, I forgot about that. May I go on the bus too?" Ruth Ann asked hopefully.

Mama started jotting down a few things: flour, sugar, crackers, rice . . . “May I, Mama?” Ruth Ann asked again.

“Sh! You’ll wake Rosella. Whose turn is it this time?”

By now Joanna was in the living room too. “It’s my turn,” she asserted.

Mama looked up from her writing. “Can we settle this peacefully?” she asked, her eyes gently pleading with the girls not to be so determined. Ashamed and subdued, Ruth Ann waited. It was Joanna’s turn, but could both girls possibly go this time?

“Maybe if Marie is napping and the dishes and cleaning are done, both of you may go,” Mama decided. “Otherwise, I guess we’ll let Joanna, since it’s her turn.”

Satisfied with that verdict, the girls set about with a renewed will. Pots and pans clattered and cupboard doors banged as they hurried. “Girls!” Mama called softly. “You’ll wake the baby!”

The dishes were soon done, the windows sparkling, and the floor clean. “Now if I can only get Marie to sleep before the bus comes,” thought Ruth Ann. But where was her five-year-old sister? Ruth Ann ran outside, calling, “Marie! Marie!” No answer. She ran toward the barn and called again, “Marie!” Might she be out in the hay field with the men? Then the chicken house door opened and Marie appeared.

“What do you want?”

“Mama said it’s time for your nap. Come,” Ruth Ann told her.

“Okay,” Marie said obediently, “but wait a minute.” She darted back inside. In a moment she was back with the Baby Magic.

“Baby Magic! So that’s where it was! What were you doing with Baby Magic?” Ruth Ann asked suspiciously.

“I was giving Bitty’s babies a bath. See?” she said with a smile of satisfaction. Marie held up a matted-looking chick and sniffed it. “It smells good, doesn’t it? I wanted them to smell good like Rosella, so I borrowed Mama’s Baby Magic. I didn’t think she would mind as long as I put it back,” Marie explained.

Ruth Ann frowned at the sorry-looking sight, while at the same time a smile wanted to surface. Then she noticed a tub of water in the corner. “And what’s that?” she asked.

“I gave them a bath and tried to get them to swim like Mrs. Quack’s little babies in the storybook, but they just kept sinking. I thought maybe if I put baby oil on them, it might help, but nothing worked,” she said sadly. “Will you help me teach them how to swim?”

Ruth Ann didn’t know whether to laugh or scold, but Marie looked at her so innocently that Ruth Ann couldn’t scold her too much. She couldn’t suppress a chuckle, though. “Marie, Marie! I wonder what Mama will say about this. Chickies can’t swim. They’re made different from duckies, the same as birds can fly but we can’t. God made us all different.”

Ruth Ann glanced at the pitiful-looking chicks. “Come, let’s find Mama. No, wait. Maybe we’d better wipe them off a bit.” Ruth Ann picked up a dry rag from beside the tub and gently wiped the chicks. After several minutes she said, “That’ll have to do. Come. Let’s go to the house.”

Since Mama had just laid baby Rosella down, Ruth Ann led her outside so they wouldn’t need to whisper. “Here’s your Baby Magic,” Ruth Ann said, and she went on to explain what had happened.

Mama listened attentively and then said, "Come here, Marie." She drew the little girl into her lap. "You should have asked Mama before you used the Baby Magic. I know you didn't mean to be naughty, but you should never do something like that again without asking first. Do you understand?" Marie nodded.

"Do you understand that chickens can't swim?" Again she nodded. "Okay, run along, Marie."

Suddenly Ruth Ann remembered. The grocery bus! She had forgotten all about it. And she still needed to get Marie to sleep before it arrived. Finally she had Marie lying down, and Ruth Ann lay beside her. Actually, it felt good to rest. Ruth Ann hadn't known that she was so tired.

But Marie didn't seem sleepy at all. "Go to sleep," Ruth Ann willed. Then she thought of something. Maybe if she stroked Marie's eyelids gently, she would go to sleep sooner. "Here," Ruth Ann said softly, "maybe it will help you sleep if I rub your eyes." To her surprise, Marie let her do it.

Ruth Ann stroked her eyelids for a time, and it did seem that perhaps Marie was getting sleepy. Then Ruth Ann groaned. Was that the grocery bus she heard? She eased herself up gently and peeked out the window. Yes, it was, and Mama and Joanna were already climbing up the steps.

Ruth Ann lay back down beside Marie. Tears of self-pity and disappointment threatened to overflow. She had worked so hard, all for nothing. She could just picture them inside the bus. Joanna was probably looking at the candy and gum in the center left aisle while Mama was getting flour and crackers from the top shelf at the left front. The driver was a friendly, talkative man who enjoyed making his weekly rounds to the country folks. He would probably be close to

the front, chatting with Mama about the hay he saw the men putting up and whatever other news he'd accumulated from his other customers.

Ruth Ann heard Marie give a deep sigh. She was almost asleep, but Ruth Ann was afraid to get up yet, so she held quite still. "It would be so much fun being a grocery bus driver," she thought. Suddenly a bright idea struck her. "Why don't we play grocery bus? We could save all our cracker boxes, butter boxes, sugar bags, and tin cans. We could use the wheelbarrow for our bus, couldn't we? Maybe Steven would help us too."

Strangely enough, Ruth Ann no longer cared that she hadn't been able to go on the bus. Dreamer that she was, she was suddenly imagining all the fun it would be to play grocery bus.

Suddenly Ruth Ann awoke. It was four o'clock and the grocery bus had long been gone. Marie was still sleeping peacefully beside her. She eased off the bed and sheepishly went to the kitchen.

"Here's a lollipop for you," announced Joanna. "I told the driver you wanted to come too but couldn't, so he told me to give this to you."

Ruth Ann smiled. "Thanks. I wasn't going to fall asleep, though."

"You probably needed it." Mama smiled at her oldest daughter. "Why don't you two walk down and get the mail yet before supper? Maybe I can take out a cold drink for the men. I'm sure they're thirsty."

Much refreshed by her nap, Ruth Ann enjoyed the cool walk down the long lane. When the girls reached the narrow gravel road, they walked beneath the canopy of leafy branches