

STARS FOR SYLVIA

by

Dorothy C. Haskin

Copyright © 1953

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

TOO YOUNG!

LA VON KEPT her word and went forward the next Sunday, and that very day she joined the choir. As she said to Sylvia, "I'm not taking any chances. I'm going to keep busy."

Sylvia thought it was an excellent idea, and knew how much closer she was to the Lord since she had started trying to win her friends.

But then the slump set in! She kept on memorizing her verses. She tried to invite other girls to church. But no one was interested. It seemed as if there was nothing for her to do, and she was discouraged. Then one morning she noticed Claudia come to school with two strange girls.

"Surely," she thought, "if they are strangers, they won't have started to church yet. Even if they are Christians, I can invite them to Sunday school; and if they aren't perhaps I can win them to the Lord."

At lunch period, she cornered Claudia and asked, "Who were the girls you were with this morning?"

"They're Norma and Ellen Bowen. They moved in the flat next door. I was sorry for them, having to change schools in the middle of the term."

"Did you ask them to church?" Sylvia asked excitedly.

"I asked Norma and she refused. She said she had to stay home and help her mother on Sunday because her mother works."

"And the younger one?"

"Ellen? I didn't ask her. She's too young for our class. Why, she's only a freshman."

"Maybe." Sylvia felt disappointed and decided that, at least, she would try to be friends with them. The girls were both pretty. The older, Norma, had dark brown shoulder-length hair, and was quiet. The younger, Ellen, wore her hair in pigtails with bows.

Whenever Sylvia saw one sister, she saw the other. They were polite and they spoke when they were spoken to, but they didn't make friends. Sylvia had Nancy put them on her prayer list, for she said, "It just isn't right for them not to go to the Lord's house."

One day, much to Sylvia's surprise, she saw Ellen at school alone. Curious, she asked, "Where's Norma?"

"Mom's home sick with a bad cold. We're afraid it's flu. Norma had to stay home to take care of her."

"If your mother's sick, maybe I can help," Sylvia offered. "I'll walk home with you after school and see if there's anything I can do."

"Will you?" Ellen beamed.

"Yes." Sylvia smiled at the younger girl, and went on to class.

Later, she found Nancy and told her, "This is the first time any of us has had a chance to be friends, so on your way home will you stop in and tell Mom why I'm late and that if the Bowens need any help, I'm going to stay?"

"Yes," Nancy promised.

After school Sylvia found Ellen and walked home with her. All the way home Ellen chatted about how nice it was of Sylvia to come and how sick she thought her mother was. When she opened the front door, she called out, "Sylvia Ingle's with me."

"Bring her in here," called a voice from the bedroom.

Ellen led Sylvia into the untidy bedroom and introduced her to her mother. Sylvia thought she looked very thin and a little feverish. She was certainly glad she had come. She could see that Norma had been busy all day, waiting on her mother and going to the drug store for medicine and to the grocery store for food.

Sylvia sat in a chair by the bed and talked to Mrs. Bowen for a few minutes and then went into the cluttered kitchen. The sink was full of dishes. She offered, "Better let me wash them." Ellen helped her find the dishpan, and as Sylvia washed, Ellen dried.

Meanwhile Norma was busy making soup. She had a bone simmering on the stove and was peeling and dicing potatoes for it. As soon as Sylvia and Ellen finished the dishes, they started to scrape carrots and shell peas.

"It's kind of you to help," Norma said, as she opened a can of tomatoes and dumped them into the soup. "We don't know much of anyone here. Really, only Claudia, and she has her own work to do."

“I’m glad to help.” If only Norma and Ellen knew how she had prayed for an opportunity to be friends! She suggested, “You’d make friends if you’d come to Sunday school with Claudia and me.”

“Thanks, I’d like to; but we never seem to get caught up with the work. And besides, Dad says that we can worship God in our own way. God is not only in church, but He’s in nature.”

Sylvia nodded while she tried to think of an answer. She never knew what verse she would need next! She thought of several, and then remembered. “Yes, the Bible says, **‘The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead’** (Romans 1:20). God can be seen in the wonders of nature.”

“I am glad that you agree with me. You know, Claudia tried to argue with me.”

“She would,” Sylvia thought; and then, intent upon what she was trying to say, she stopped working, and looked straight at Norma.

“But we can’t find all we want to know about God in nature. We need to know more than that He is. We need—” Sylvia faltered, for as she talked, Norma stared at her with unfriendly eyes.

“Where would you suggest finding God?” Norma asked with a sarcastic curl to her lips.

“**‘No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,’**” Sylvia testified, growing all tense inside.

“Maybe so.” Norma walked over to the sink, and turning on the water so it would make a loud, splashing noise, she started to peel an onion under it, making it impossible for Sylvia to continue. Sylvia felt all let down inside. She knew she had failed. And she had been so anxious! She began cutting the carrots into small pieces, but they were jagged pieces because her hand trembled so.

Norma turned off the water, and sliced the onions into the soup. Sylvia cut the last carrot and remarked, “It’s time I went home.”

“May I walk part way with you?” Ellen whispered.

Sylvia nodded, and Norma smiled. “Thanks for helping.” That made Sylvia feel a little better. She didn’t want to offend Norma and apparently she had appreciated her help enough to overlook their disagreement.

“I’m going to walk part way with Sylvia,” Ellen spoke up.

“Good!” Sylvia put her arm around the younger girl’s shoulder and pulled her close to her. She was pleased that Ellen wanted to walk with her, until, as they were walking down the street, the younger girl, with a defiant look on her face, said, “I don’t believe in God, at all!”

Surprised, Sylvia exclaimed, “You what?”

“I said, I don’t believe there is a God.”

“**“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,”**” Sylvia replied, before she realized how her answer would sound.

“Are you calling me a fool?” Ellen stopped and stared at Sylvia, her face turning red.

“Oh, no, honest, I didn’t. Only that’s what the Bible says about anyone who doesn’t believe there is a God. Look, I’ll show you.”

Afraid she really had offended Ellen, she took her New Testament and Psalms out of her purse, turned hurriedly to the Fourteenth Psalm and shoved it in front of Ellen’s face.

Ellen read it and then said, “As long as you didn’t say it.”

“But honestly, Ellen,” Sylvia argued, now that she felt easier, “isn’t it rather foolish to say there is no God? If there wasn’t, where did the world come from?”

“It evolved. Miss Morrow said so just last week,” Ellen answered as the girls started walking again.

“The Bible says God created it and I believe that. But even if it had evolved, God would still have had to create the first speck of dust, or whatever it was that it all evolved from.”

“But you can’t see God,” Ellen persisted.

“No, but He’s real!” Sylvia’s heart knew! Gently, she reminded, “You can’t see pain, but it’s real.”

“That’s true. But suppose there is a God, why does He allow wars?”

The very thought of war made Sylvia unhappy, but she explained, “God doesn’t have the wars. It is men who start them. God has told men to love one another, but they won’t do it. They try to grab everything, and that starts the wars.”

“But God could stop the wars. Why doesn’t He?” Ellen’s young face was long and sad.

“Because it seems to be the only way to teach men how wrong war is, but even that doesn’t teach them all.”

“Still, I don’t think God cares. I don’t think God cares about—”

Anxious, Sylvia asked, “About what?”

“Me!” Ellen whispered, and leaned against a picket fence.

Sylvia nodded, remembering that Miss Harper had said that when people made general objections about not believing in God, really, they had some personal reason that they didn’t tell. Something was troubling Ellen. Sylvia’s warm heart was sorry for Ellen as she asked, “Why don’t you think God cares for you?”

“Because my mother has to work, and Norma and I are so busy. We don’t have time to have friends or go places like other girls.”

Sylvia put her arm around her shoulders, and said, “Maybe He will fix it so you can; and really, Ellen, there is a God. He made us and He made the world, and—”

“It’s kind of a mixed-up world.”

“It just seems mixed up until you believe in Christ. After that, it’s a nice world. The trouble is, Ellen, you don’t know how grand God is. Why don’t you try to find out about Him?”

“But how?”

Sylvia frowned, as she thought of what to say; then asked, “How did you learn how to do algebra?”

“By going to school.”

“And you’ll learn about God by going to church. Won’t you come this Sunday with Claudia and me?”

“Yes, I will,” she agreed, with a bright smile, “because I really do want to know.”

“Oh, I’m so glad,” Sylvia exclaimed. After she had said good-bye to Ellen and was walking on home by herself, she remembered: “I didn’t pay any attention to Ellen because I thought she was too young, but she was the one who wanted to come. I was trying to reach Norma. And I still hope I do.”

~ end of chapter 14 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
