

Excerpt from **Ruth's Adventure**
(Pages 208-210)

Ruth was up with her mother very early that same morning.

Claire was in her nightgown and making coffee for herself before she got dressed. Ruth came down in her nightgown and sat down at the table.

When Claire left the stove with her cup of coffee, Ruth was there, looking at her with sleep-filled eyes. Claire sat down at the table across from Ruth.

Claire whispered, "Ruth, what are you doing up so early?"

Ruth answered, "I'm worried. When Chad took us up to the frozen waterfall the other day, we were singing on the way home. He wasn't singing with us. He was frowning and thinking. Then he made up his mind about something and he sang with us the rest of the way home. It worried me."

Claire set her cup on the table and held out her arms. She said, "Come here."

Ruth got up and walked around the table and into her mother's arms. Claire hugged her and kissed her, then set her on her lap. Ruth snuggled against her mother's breasts and sighed contentedly.

Claire picked up her cup and took a sip of coffee. Then she set the cup down again. Claire whispered, "Now, dear, tell me what is worrying you."

Ruth said, "You gave Chad a check for a lot of money. He isn't rich like we are. Will he take the money and never come back?"

Claire answered, "Chad is a hard working man with a lot of integrity and he told me yesterday that he loves me and he loves you, all of you, each of you. He wants to be my husband and your father. However, there is a problem. When he was getting dressed for dinner the other day, I went in and helped him with his tie, the way I always did for daddy. Chad kissed me. Oh it was a wonderful kiss." Claire sniffed, fighting back some tears. She continued, "I called him 'Roger' after the kiss. I didn't mean to, but it upset him. It upset me."

Ruth asked, "Is that why Chad didn't take a nap with you like daddy did after Thanksgiving dinner last year?"

Claire hugged Ruth and kissed her again. Claire said, "Ruth, you are only eight-years-old. You shouldn't be noticing things like that at your age."

Ruth whispered, "But I do, Mommy."

Claire sighed and picked up her cup of coffee and took another sip. She set the cup down and whispered, "I waited for Chad. I wanted him to take a nap with me so much. But when he didn't come to bed with me, I got dressed in your daddy's clothes again and I went looking for him. He was outside sitting on the stone corral fence smoking his pipe. We had a long talk. I told him how I dream about him and then he turns into your dad. I dream about your dad and he turns into Chad. Chad held me and let me cry. He is such a good man and he loves me. He said he would wait until I was ready to love him and only him. Of course, that isn't possible. I will never forget your father. Every time I look at you, Ruth, I will remember your father."

Ruth said, "But I don't look like him, mom. I look like you."

Claire said, "I didn't mean because you look like him, honey. I meant because we made you. Together, your daddy and I made you and Mark, and Virginia, and Chuck, and Leah. Every time I look at each of you, I remember how wonderful it was to make you."

Claire took another sip of coffee.

Ruth asked, "Can I have some?"

Claire held the cup and Ruth took a sip.

Ruth said, "Ugh, how can you drink that stuff?"

Claire answered, "It takes some getting used to."

Most of the snow melted in the canyon that day. The next day was another warm day. The following day it snowed again, not as much as before, but they could see the wind blowing fiercely above them. Some snow dropped down and covered the trees and grass. This snow did not melt and over time, more snow accumulated on top of it. This went on for three weeks.

In the meantime, Claire and Ruth had many early morning conversations before any of the other children were up. They talked about school and Kevin and Chad and they comforted each other.

They talked about the weather and how winters in the mountains of Colorado would be different from Ohio winters. They had enough food to last until spring, if necessary. Chad would be back when the weather cleared up enough so that he could travel. Then school would start again and Ruth would get to see Kevin once more.