

SKY PILOT NEWS

JUNE-JULY, 1957

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RITA, JANET AND THE PET KANGAROO

JOE'S SNAKE BITE: A Story From The Sky Pilot's Log (2CH Broadcast)

My assistant, Joe, was a good fellow in most ways, though a bit of a misfit in the tropics. He and George did not get on too well as a rule, though there was never any real animosity between them. They had one thing in common, however—they both hated snakes.

I had to go away in the aeroplane to attend to an injured stockman and it was unfortunate that it was just the day we had arranged to take the school children for a picnic. George had been asked to accompany us as he was a firm friend and favourite with the children. When I knew that I would be away I had a few words with George. "Look here, George," I said, "I have to go away for a few hours and that means that you and Joe will be alone with the kiddies. I know that Joe can be very trying at times, but you will try to make allowances for him, won't you?"

"I will that, Smithy," he replied. "As a matter of fact I have a lot of admiration for Joe. He can't help bein' what he is; I guess he must of been born that way. Anyhow you can count on me. If I can prevent it we won't lock horns while you're away—that's a promise."

George kept his promise and behaved himself very well. He only made one slip, and that was while Joe was saying grace before dinner. Joe believed in a long grace. True to his promise George sat down and kept his eyes so tightly shut that he didn't see the bull-ants' nest behind him. What he said when the bull-ants started on him rather upset the grace; but under the circumstances he was forgiven.

After dinner the children played in the bush. George and Joe sat down on an old log and yarned while they kept their eyes on some of the toddlers who couldn't join in with the other games. One little girl amused herself by poking a stick into the hollow of the log the men were sitting on. It wasn't till she screamed that they realised anything was wrong and they looked up in time to see an ugly snake with its head drawn back ready to strike the toddler. Joe was the nearest. With no thought for himself he jumped forward and grasped the snake with his bare hands. As the snake's fangs sank into Joe's arm George shuddered. "Joe," he whispered, "Joe, old man, you've been bit!"

Joe went very white. He wrapped a handkerchief round his arm while George killed the snake. Between them they tightened the liga-

ture and George hurried Joe back to the mission. Somehow George found the permanganate of potash and rubbed the crystals into the bite after he had sucked out the venom. He was as gentle as a nurse.

"How's that, old man?" he asked finally. "For heaven's sake try to buck up. Smithy will be back any minute and he'll fix you up proper. Wish I knew more about snake bite. How do you feel now?"

Joe's answer came in a voice that quivered. "I've gone a bit numb, George. It was a big snake and unless Smithy comes soon it looks like the end. I can feel the poison workin'."

"Don't talk like that, Joe," said George with forced cheerfulness. "You'll be all right. Smithy's always gettin' bit and it don't seem to hurt him much."

"He's been bit that often he must be immune by now. Anyhow he knows how to treat snake bite—he's used to it. I wish he'd come quick."

"So do I. Look here, Joe . . . what I mean ter say is . . . oh, hang it all, it was a darned brave thing you done, Joe. I take off me hat to you. Tell you the truth I didn't think you had it in you. It was the gamest thing ever I seen."

"Thanks, George. I—I'm glad I done it. I was always scared that when the time came I might—well—fall down on the job. I was dead scared, George, an' I am still. I *hate* snakes an' it's a rotten way to die."

"Don't talk about dyin' Joe. You'll be all right, I know you will. I'm not much good at prayin' but if I thought it would do any good I'd go down on my knees right now. I wish Smithy would come."

"George, you've been very decent to-day. I know you don't like me much an' maybe it's my own fault, but—well, we seem to look at things so different. If—if only you would become a Christian I wouldn't mind dyin' so much."

"Oh, you ain't goin' to die, Joe; God couldn't let that happen. An' maybe I'm nearer to bein' a Christian than you think. Of course I like to argue, and I put on a bit of an act sometimes; but all the same I take a lot of notice of you fellows. It ain't so much what you say . . . I know you are genuine and you try to live out what you preach. I guess God understands bush-

men like me. I'll never be no 'oly saint, but maybe I'm closer to God than you think. Anyways I always try to do the right thing."

"But," Joe insisted, "why don't you admit your need of a Saviour and confess your sins to God? I know He'll forgive you."

"I ain't much good at confessin'. I'd have to go back a long way; unless I tell the worst an' lump the rest I can't waste that much of God's time. Maybe God understands. . . . Anyway you ain't agoin' to die. If only . . . say, listen! I can hear the aeroplane! You'll be all right now, Joe, here's Smithy comin'."

A few minutes later I was in the room. After a brief examination of the punctures in Joe's arm I gave him a sleeping draught.

"Drink this up," I said. "That's the way. You're out of danger now so you can have a good sleep and in the morning you won't know that you were bitten by a snake. Come on, George, we'll go over to the office and let Joe have a good sleep."

When seated in the office George told me the whole story. I asked him what precautions he had taken and he mentioned casually that he had tried to suck out the venom.

"That was a risky thing to do," I told him. "Of course it's quite safe if you have no broken skin in your mouth, but there is always some danger. You could drink the venom and it wouldn't hurt you, but even a tiny scratch in your mouth would be fatal if the venom got into it."

"Hang it all, Smithy," said George. "It was the least I could do. Joe risked his life for that kiddy. Anyone would do what I done."

"Well I'm proud of you both, George. You are both very gallant gentlemen. By the way, what did you do with the snake?"

"It's here, Smithy, in this sugar bag. I thought it might do for your collection though it's a bit knocked about. I hit it pretty hard and often. I *hate* snakes!"

* * *

Poor old George! That was many years ago, but I never forgot the incident. Sometimes we Christians worry too much in our attempts to get loved ones to sign a decision card, or to conform to our own particular method of expressing our faith in Christ. It states clearly in the Bible that there is no other way that we

can be saved but through faith in Christ, but God is not less righteous than we. He can look into the hearts of men and I'm sure that many a man we worry about is already at peace with God through Christ—even if they do not parade the fact. Open confession will probably come later, but it is better to come naturally than be forced by our over-eagerness.

Whenever I think of the incident I feel proud of my two friends who were terrified of snakes and yet acted bravely. I did not keep the snake. It was badly damaged, and in any case was not a valuable specimen being merely a young python. It was quite harmless and its bite would not have hurt a child—but I never let George or Joe know that. And the final entry is taken from the 19th chapter of the first book of Kings. Elijah said: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the Children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left. . . ." And the Lord said: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal."

SKY PILOT NEWS. Some of our readers who have picked up this little paper for the first time may wonder why it is dated some time back. Due to the serious illness of the Director and other members of the staff it was found to be impossible to care for our large family of dark children and keep up with all the other work. However, now that the worst of this emergency period is over (we trust!) it is intended resuming the publication of the "News." In order to try to bring the news up to date only brief reference will be made to events that are already past history. For several issues the "News" will be dated to cover two-monthly periods but as soon as it is thus brought up to the current month each issue will cover a period of one month only, as before. There is one matter, however, which we do want to stress: **ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS WILL BE EXTENDED TO COVER THIS PERIOD.** That means, of course, that you will receive 12 separate issues of the "News" for the 2/6 already paid. We do value your interest and support and we feel sure that you will realise that this is the only way in which we can carry on and yet keep faith with our subscribers.

JANET, RITA AND THE KANGAROO. Our cover photo, showing three real Australians, will be of interest even though it was taken some months ago. Janet and her little

sister, Rita, were very sad this day for they were dressed ready to leave the Mission Farm to return to their parents in "the bush"—as Bre-warrina appears to many city people. There were tears when they left; tears that were not only in the eyes of these little ones whom we had learned to love. And Janet kept throwing her arms around Mrs. Langford-Smith as she said: "I'm coming back again, Mummy, aren't I? Tell me I'm coming back." It was difficult to reply. As far as we knew they would not be returning to us. And we believed that this was for the ultimate good of the children themselves. If their parents were able to care for them properly and give them the love that is the right of all children it would be wrong to keep them here. But things did not work out as was expected. The parents did not act up to their responsibilities. It was not long before little Rita was once more in hospital through neglect or worse. A few weeks later both children were sent back to our care and they have settled down very happily.

THE DARK CHILDREN: During June and July six more children came to the Mission Farm: Judy (aged 11), Carol (9) and Jan (3) were the girls; and David (7), Mark (5) and Geoffrey (4) the boys. They settled in very quickly and seemed to enjoy the country after city life.

Some of the women from the Church of England, Kurrajong, came to the Farm one day and provided a wonderful party for the dark children.

One Sunday all the children attended a special service at the Holroyd Methodist Church. If some of the younger ones showed signs of sleepiness during the service, maybe it was due to over enthusiasm during tea.

Isabelle enjoyed a week as a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Clissold, Rydalmere, and another week at Coo-i-noo Home, Enfield. She has worked hard and the holiday was well earned.

SKY PILOT FELLOWSHIP

Marella Mission Farm

RALLY and SALE of WORK

to be held (D.V.) in the

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

(Lower Hall).

SATURDAY, 10th MAY, 1958

DOORS OPEN 10.30 a.m.

PUBLIC MEETING, 2 p.m.

Our responsibilities include: Christian Radio Broadcasts, Mission Farm and Home for Neglected Aboriginal Children, etc.

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE ALL DAY ● COME, BRING A FRIEND, AND SUPPORT
THIS WORK FOR THE DARK CHILDREN.

Gifts for stalls should be mailed to the "Sky Pilot", Parramatta Railway Station, or brought to the Town Hall on the day of the Rally. For further particulars, please phone Marella Mission Farm, YA2427.