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Some Other Day

By Mrs. Paul E. King

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Kelly glided swiftly down the river, his tightly-laced skates feeling like they had wings as they skimmed across the ice. He looked back to see Mike, who was not far behind, then darted full-speed ahead again toward the bend, feeling like every part of him was vibrating and pulsating with newness of life.



It was great to be on vacation, he thought, doing a quick turn around and a figure eight before heading on a straight course again and following his brother, who had shot ahead of him while he vented his pleasure and happiness of being on the ice in the kind of skating which got him nowhere mile-wise, but which elicited squeals of delight and fond glances of admiration from the girls, if any were nearby.

"Better practice for speed when you're with me," Mike teased as Kelly skated alongside him.

Kelly laughed. "Maybe so," he rejoined pleasantly, shooting ahead with super speed and agility. "Beat you to the bend, Mike." He threw the challenge across his shoulder; the wind carried it to his brother.

"Fair enough," Mike answered, leaning forward and skimming across the glassy surface with equal agility and speed.

First Kelly was in the lead; then Mike; and when the bend was finally in sight and the two pairs of skates reached the place where spruce boughs touched the water's edge, it was a tie.

Slapping Kelly fondly on his shoulder, Mike exclaimed enthusiastically, "You're great, Kel. Great! You've really improved your speed."

"Thanks, Mike. Coming from you, I'm highly complimented. But you deserve the credit if there's any improvement."

"How's that?" the older brother questioned. "After all, it's you who's doing the skating -- whether fast or slow."

"I know that, Mike, but it's your encouragement and your confidence in my ability to improve that has actually brought this improvement to pass. Not everybody has a brother like you. ' "

Mike reached for his head, feeling around it in mock surprise, "I'm just checking the size," he teased his brother. "Seriously, though, Kelly, you have improved. That proves to me that you can.., and you will.., improve those math grades when school starts again."

Kelly winced inwardly. He had forgotten all about the hated math.., much to his satisfaction and delight. Furthermore, he didn't want to think about it, especially not during winter vacation time. That was one reason he enjoyed skating: it took his mind off his inferior math grades.

"Did you give Jeana Collins that list of names for visitation?" Mike asked, changing the subject abruptly.

"Thursday's just two days away," he added, referring to the night when the young people from the church went calling on new people and paid visits on the sick and the infirm, praying for them and encouraging him.

Color mounted in Kelly's ruddy cheeks. He knew he should have gotten that list to their young people's leader days ago. But he had had so many things he wanted to do.

"I'll take it to her tomorrow, the Lord willing," he said quickly.

Mike's face clouded over. "You mean you didn't give Jeana the list?" he asked, his eyes sad pools of deepest blue.

"Tomorrow's soon enough." Kelly answered. "She'll have plenty of time to get them ready for our calling night."

"Not when she wanted it four days ago," Mike replied, adding on a sad note, "O Kelly, don't you realize what you're doing?"

"What do you mean, don't I realize what I'm doing?" Kelly asked, digging the tip of his skate into the ice.

Mike sighed. "Jeana always goes over the list of names she receives from each of us and prays for each one on the list," he said. "Then she checks the names for those living in the same part of town and groups them together, being careful that none of us gets the same names week after week. This takes time and careful planning, Kelly. It's not fair to Jeana to make her do last minute work. She's methodical and diligent and always has things organized well in advance of the deadline. This is why God is using her so mightily, I believe; He has found her dependable and faithful!"

Again Kelly winced. Methodical! Diligent! Faithful! Dependable! The adjectives describing Jeana all went conversely to his way of doing things. Always, he waited till the very last minute to do whatever needed done -- studying included.

"I wish you'd change, Kelly." Mike's words had a startingly-shaking effect upon his brother.

Kelly swallowed. Mustering his courage, he said, "It's easy for you to say that, Mike, because you're a perfect anti-type of Jeana: methodical, diligent, dependable and faithful.., quoting, of course, your descriptive adjectives. Now me . . . well . . ." Kelly's words trailed meaningfully. Mike shook his head sadly.

"We're not all alike," Kelly added quickly. "Me, I'm just not the 'hurry up' type. There's always another day if God spares one's life. Then, too, what difference does it make so long as one gets the job done?"

"Even if it is at the very last minute!" Mike exclaimed. "I suppose you haven't finished paneling the Smith's garage, have you, Kelly?"

Kelly made a big circle on the ice; then skating backwards to his brother, he said, "Truthfully, no. I forgot all about that."

"You do intend to finish it?"

It was a question -- one that demanded an answer.

"Well... yes, when I get time. Not now though; not when the river's perfect for skating."

"Let's skate over to that fallen tree," Mike proposed, pointing his index finger toward the shore. "I want to have a talk with you."

"Aw, Mike, c'mon! I'm not all that bad. I came out here to skate."

"Right; so did I. But a little rest and a straight-from-the-heart brotherly chat may help you. You're too great a brother to continue going down Careless Avenue and Put-Off-Till-Tomorrow Street."

Kelly gulped. Was he really that bad? he wondered, skating toward the fallen tree.

Mike climbed the bank. Brushing the snow off the dead tree trunk, he sat down. Motioning to a cleaned-off spot beside him, he said, "This is reserved for you, Kelly. Sorry it's so hard and cold, but it's the best I can offer." He smiled broadly as he said it. His sky blue eyes held a hint of laughter in them.

"Thanks, your honor," Kelly teased, dropping down beside his brother. Steeling himself and straightening his shoulders in good-humored mockery, he said, "The defendant awaits the verdict . . . or the sentence."

Mike's lips parted in the semblance of a half-smile; his eyes were liquid pools of sadness. "You're ruining your testimony," he said quickly and without preamble. "Your classmates will never believe what you tell them if your living doesn't back up your words . . . your testimony, Kelly."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Simply that your living counts more than your words. A promise fulfilled speaks eloquently of the depth of one's testimony, Kelly."

"Meaning, of course, that my testimony doesn't ring true?"

Mike sighed. Digging the tip of his skate into the crusted snow, he said with open candor, "Let's put it this way, Kel: Suppose Calvin Bayberry told you he loved the Lord with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and suppose he promised to bring Dad and Mother a quart of milk every other day but never did. What would you think of him? Could you have confidence in him and in his testimony? Could you? Honestly and truly?"

Kelly felt color mount to his cheeks. "I . . . I . . . guess I'm guilty, Mike," he confessed humbly. "But how did you know that I promised a quart of milk to Mrs. Patterson three to four times a week?"

"This is what I'm trying to tell you, Kelly; these things have a way of getting out and they ruin or nullify your testimony. It's the 'diligent' man who shall 'stand before kings,' as Proverbs 22:29 declares. Not the 'some other day' man. Neither the one who never keeps a promise or fulfills his vows. Oh, Kelly, can't you see what you're doing to the cause of Christ by your careless, lackadaisical attitude and the way of living? It's

ruining everything you say. The students at school read you, not what you tell them. You, Kelly! And they have a perfect right to this observation, for our moment by moment living should measure up to our testimony."

Kelly traced patterns in the snow with his skates, his eyes all the while following the motions of his feet but his thoughts on things other than the pattern and designs he was creating.

Save for the muffled "scrape, scrape" of the skates and an occasional gentle sound of ice dropping off the spruce boughs, all else was peaceful and silent. After a long pause, Kelly broke the silence.

"I don't pass the test," he admitted humbly. "I see it clearly, Mike; I've been a phony, and I'm sorry. I've had head religion but not heart salvation. I did like some of my 'in' friends did: accepted Christ. But there's never been any confessing of my sins, neither repenting for them and forsaking them. I'm still the same Kelly that I was before I accepted Christ -- no change whatever in my heart."

"And it hasn't worked," Mike said brokenly. Kelly brushed a gloved hand across his eyes. "No, it hasn't, Mike. But I'm ready to get something that does work!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Right now!"

The tips of two pairs of skates dug into the snow as the two knelt by the tree. The woods, locked in winter's stillness and silence, suddenly echoed and re-echoed with the music of prayer., the cry of the penitent, the intercession of the saint., followed later by shouts of victory and praise.

Kelly, standing to his feet, his face testifying to the change within his heart, said, "Thanks for leveling with me, Mike. This time I know that I'm saved. I'm truly a new creature in Christ. O praise the Lord! But come, let's be going; I want Jeana to get that list. And maybe I can finish that paneling job too . . . after I deliver the promised quart of milk. I may just make it two quarts today; kinda catch up on my delinquent promise."

The skates flashed in the sunlight and skimmed swiftly across the ice as the pair headed homeward.

It was a new beginning for Kelly; no more "some other day" way of doing things and no more unfulfilled promises either. The thought, along with the joy and peace in his heart, gave added momentum to Kelly's skates.

"Make him as swift to hear, as speedy to obey and to do Thy bidding, dear Father. Amen."

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THE END