

# THE MESSENGER

By Jeri Howe

*I am Terra. I live alone hidden in the mountains. I left the others in search of Truth, and I have not found it yet. I bear the scars of one on a long journey. My clothes are patched and worn, and thin. This is the cold season, and the mountains are the coldest region. I should have left a month ago, but I feel that I am close. I know that I have felt that way before – but this time is different. I can't leave. Something is here. I can sense it in the air... anticipation. Like all of nature is holding its breath.*

Terra put down her pen. She felt it important to journal her thoughts. She knew the dangers of staying out so long into the winter season and wondered if her search was worth risking her life. It brought her some peace to know that if she did lose her life in this pursuit of truth, at least someone might find her words and be able to take up where she had left off.

She put her journal back in the rabbit skin bag she had made for it and tied a piece of leather snugly around it. It was mid-morning. She left the shelter of the shallow cave she had called home for the last two months and went looking for wood, the hush of the lightly falling snow surrounding her in a subtle silence.

“Terra.” The voice broke through the quiet, deep and resonant like a gorgeous thunder. Terra was afraid it would crack the trees in half. She felt terror creep up her spine and was not sure she could force herself to turn around to see who – or what – it was.

“Terra, turn around.”

“I do not dare.” Her breath was coming so fast, there were black spots in her eyes and then she felt the heavy hand upon her shoulder and she was falling.

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Terra awoke and all was still brightness around her. Snow was lightly falling on her face. As her eyes adjusted to the light, she noticed a fire a few feet away.

“Ahhhh, you are awake. Good. We have much to talk about.”

She looked upon the face of the voice. So majestic. “You are Him. You are the Truth I have been seeking!”

“I am,” he said. “I am little one.”

“How did I finally find you?”

“Well, you have been seeking, remember?”

“Yes?”

“And that is how one finds the truth. By seeking. Those who seek me shall find me...”  
He turned and smiled at me, “When they seek me with all their heart.”

Terra was confused and unsettled. She always thought finding the Truth would be marvelous; that it would solve all of her problems... But the truth-- the Truth was a man? A large, intimidating, thunderous man?

“Terra, what is bothering you?”

“I – I’m not sure.”

“You have found me, because it was my will. It is time. There is a journey before us.”

“What? What are you talking about?”

“Well, I want you to carry a message back to your people... a message from me.”

“What? But I have been looking for you for so long... why would I leave?”

“Oh, you won’t be leaving me. We will be traveling together... at least some of the time. The way to get to know the Truth is to travel with Him.”

Terra thought that over. Perhaps that made sense... but she had imagined sitting on the top of the mountain and learning all there was to know. She had thought she would be the most learned of all the people and would come back a hero, a leader, someone... well, special. And now, now the Truth wanted her to go back in her raggedy clothes, knowing nothing at all of the Truth?

“Terra, trust me. It will be wonderful. Come on this journey with me.” There was a twinkle in His eye and all her doubts melted inside her. She wanted what the Truth had. If this was the way to get it... well, she must do what she must.

The Truth helped her to her feet.

“Okay, Truth, so, what is this message?”

He smiled a smile so rich and warm that any bitterness Terra had remaining over their agreed upon arrangement blew away in the face of its power. He slowly reached inside his thick and furry coat. He pulled out a tiny scroll and looked up into her eyes as he handed it to her. “I want you to give your message to the people.”

Terra took it from his hand and began to open it...

“No!” The Truth bellowed.

“What?” Terra almost dropped the scroll she was so startled by his outburst.

“The scroll is only to be opened when you get to the people.”

“How do I even know they will listen to me?”

He looked at her in the eyes. “Do not concern yourself with things that you can not control. You are chosen by me to carry the scroll along our journey, and deliver your message to the people. What they do with the message is not your concern.

Terra sighed. How different today had turned out than she had thought it would. “Well, when do we leave?”

“Now.”

“Now? Shouldn’t we prepare?”

“Our journey begins now. In fact, it has already begun.”

Terra and the Truth began walking down the mountain. The Truth had sat her down and given her a couple of rules to follow.

1. Follow in my footsteps.
2. Trust that I am always with you, even when you can’t see me.

They had been journeying for a day and a half and as it turned out, the Truth liked to sing and Terra was trying to learn the words to his songs. As she sang along, her heart became lighter.

Their progress was slow because the snow was deep and Terra was not as tall or sure-footed as her companion. “I wish I was faster.”

“Why?” The Truth replied, surprising Terra.

“Well, so we could make more progress of course!”

“Why?”

“So we could get there faster.”

“But then... then we might miss some of the journey,” the Truth said smiling. Terra stopped walking as he continued and just watched him. He sure thought differently than she did. As she started walking again, she forgot to follow in his footsteps and wandered off a bit, wanting to see the view from an overlook to the east. Perhaps she could gage their progress. As she walked closer to the edge she could see off into the distance where

the snow line ended. She was trying to see beyond the rise when everything started slipping under her... The earth was giving way! She started moving with her feet, grasping with her hands to find something firm, but she was slipping away. She thought she was yelling, she didn't know what exactly, and she shut her eyes to protect herself from all the debris. She was falling! Suddenly she felt a firm grip on her right arm and then something clasped on her left arm and pulled her up.

"Truth!" She yelled! "Help!"

"I am here." He said as he set her down on a firm rock. A strong bit of ground had never been so welcome under her feet. "I don't know what happened! The whole earth began to give way!"

"You wandered away from my path, and out past the rock line. You were standing on just snow... the cliff did not go that far."

"And you came for me?"

"Yes. I told you I would always be there... even if you could not see me."

She looked at the Truth a moment and then wrapped her arms tightly around him as far as they would go.

"I am sorry I wandered. Thank you so much for lifting me out and putting me back on solid ground."

"You are very welcome," he said, smiling.

She looked out over the horizon. Something felt different. Like the solidness under her feet was something she felt inside of her, like a strength that had been poured into her. She looked at him curiously.

"What is it you want to know?" He said smiling.

"I don't even know." Terra said. She did not realize that she too, was smiling.

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Terra and the Truth walked on through a dense forest. The trees were thick, with their pine needled branches poking Terra. Every poke felt like it pricked on purpose and the sky was growing darker as the snow began falling steadily. Terra was having a hard time keeping her eye on the Truth. She could only catch a glimpse of him every other footstep or so. Then she began to hear these voices. She couldn't tell if they were from the treetops, or from her own mind, or if they were just whistling on the wind...

"What if he just leaves you here?"

"What if he brought you out here only to let you down?"

“What if the Truth does not really exist... you’ve been alone so long you imagined him and now you are wandering off into the snow alone... to die!”

Terra cried out “TRUTH! Truth where are you?!”

But she did not hear him call a reply...

“What if he decided you weren’t really worth it and just left you here...”

“No, no, it can’t be true.” Terra said out loud. She stopped in place. Snow covered her head and clothes. She was turning around now looking, looking for some sign of him.

“Stop Terra. Just stop. What do you know to be the truth? What do you know?” Terra wasn’t sure. She felt like she was going crazy. Then she had a new idea come to mind. It was shiny and warm and full of light.

“What if you can tell the voices to stop? What if instead of being their prisoner, lost here in the woods, you can silence them? What if the Truth gives you that power?”

Terra decided to try. She yelled out to the wind, “You are wrong. You are against the truth. He does exist. He does. And He would never leave me. Not even when I can not see him. You must be silent.” Her voice hurt from trying to yell louder than the wind, but then something happened. It all stopped. Everything was still. The wind stopped... the whining voices that had been confusing her, the doubts, they were all gone. Then she saw him. He was only 30 yards away. She started running. She didn’t even notice she was crying until she was holding on to him.

“There, there Terra, it is alright now. You have done well.”

“I am sorry I lost you, I didn’t mean to.”

“I am not angry, Terra. I am glad that you are safe. And you silenced those whistling winds with the truth! I am so proud of you.”

Terra wiped the tears that stung her face in this cold away with her hand, feeling the tattered glove wipe across her face. She looked up at him. “You *are* the Truth.”

“Yes. And you don’t have to doubt or worry anymore. You are safe.”

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A few days later as Terra and the Truth were still making their way through the thick forest; they suddenly emerged from the trees and before a tall, smooth rock face. Terra pressed her body against it and slid as she walked 10 steps...20 steps...30 steps to the north... but it showed no signs of ending. She quickly made her way back to the Truth and sat down hard. “Now what? We are stuck.”

“Oh? Is that how you see it?”

“Well, yes. Look! It goes straight up, like a wall. It looks like if you could get that high you could just about touch the stars! And we can not see the end in either direction. We are going to have to go back through that horrible forest all over again. All that time and effort wasted.” Terra sighed and put her head in her hands and rested them on her knees.

“It is has been a long day Terra. Let’s rest here.”

“Great idea, since we can’t go anywhere anyway!” Terra grumbled to herself.

The Truth smiled a little and then began to make a fire with the wood he had brought in his pack.

Terra woke up. It was morning. She had fallen asleep exhausted as soon as they had finished dinner. She awoke to find that the Truth was already up, if he had even slept, and he was standing at the rock face.

“Ready now?”

“What? What do you mean?” Terra said, hoping she didn’t know what he was implying.

“It’s time to climb.”

“Climb that? Are you kidding? There is no way I can climb that.”

“Oh, I’m not sure you really know what you can do, Terra.” Terra tilted her head and looked at him then she looked at the wall. Did he have some kind of magic or something?

“Okay. Okay, I’ll try.”

She raised her arms and, to her surprise, found a place for her hands. As she pulled with her hands she felt with her feet to find footholds and again, she was amazed as they were there, right where she needed them. And she continued to climb, sliding her hands up until they found their holds in just the right places. And up she climbed. She had never, ever climbed anything this steep before. She was amazed that on this wall that had seemed so smooth there were so many great places to grab onto and push off from. She decided to look down to see how the Truth was doing. To her amazement he was right underneath her... and his hands were acting as her footholds. *He* was holding her up. Terra nearly lost her hold.

“Don’t worry. I will not let your foot slip.”

Terra felt her heart warm toward the Truth. This must be hard for him; it must cost him to bear her weight on his hands. At the same time she was amazed at his strength and skill. She did not know what else to do, so she just quietly whispered, “Thank you.”

“You are welcome.” He said.

Terra continued to climb. For a long time it seemed like she was not making any progress. She was pulling, pushing, sweating, trying, but she could not see the top. What would they do if they did not make it soon? How much longer could they hold out?

“Do not give up Terra. So often the goal is just a few steps past where our strength will take us.”

“How can we go further than our strength?”

“By faith. Trust in me. Trust me when I tell you the truth – you will make it. You will be on the heights. You will look out upon this whole valley. You will overcome this obstacle.”

Terra felt her own double-mindedness. Part of her wanted to believe him, and the other part was tired of stretching and trying and doing more than she believed possible. Some part of her wanted to go back to what it was like a few days ago before she had met the Truth... when she knew nothing of falling through the snow, or dealing with the whistling wind of doubts, or magically climbing up walls of rock. These thoughts caused her physical pain in her chest, where she was already breathing hard. Her pace had slowed considerably.

“Trust me.” These words seemed to pull Terra out of her spiraling thoughts. “I will trust Him.” She thought to herself. Then, without really thinking about it she shouted, “I will trust you! I will trust Truth!” Then she let go of her hold and reached for the next. Immediately she felt strength return to her. She was pulling and pushing again. When the fear would come, she pushed it away. The fatigue was beginning to grow. She felt her warm muscles begin to ache. She had to slow her pace. Fear threatened again. Then she remembered....”Truth?”

“Yes?”

“You said the goal is often a few steps past where our strength will take us... right?”

“Yes.”

Terra felt it would be disrespectful to probe further, but she really wondered what made up the difference... how would she get to her goal if it was past her own strength? She knew she had to be a couple hundred feet in the air by now. A fall from this height would be... no. He had said he would not let her foot slip. She had to trust him. Terra kept going, even though she felt certain she would not be able to go on one more foot. When she thought she had reached the end of her strength, she stretched her hand up to feel if she was at the top yet. Her fingers stretched and strained, but all they found was smooth flat rock as far as they could reach.

“I can’t go on. I am done. What now?”

“Don’t worry. I am here.”

Terra took a deep breath and reached one more time, and as she did she felt the strength come and she was able to reach the next hand hold and then the next. She could barely believe it was happening and then, all of the sudden she was standing on the peak. She looked around her in wonder. How could they have come so far? She had never dared dream she would scale such a peak, let alone one so very steep.

“I can’t believe it!” She said, still breathing hard.  
The Truth was next to her. “Nevertheless, you are here.”

She looked around her, her eyes feasting on the view. It was amazing. A fear tugged at her, “How are we to get down?” But she pushed it away. For this moment she was here. She was here and she had climbed this... this wall!

“We’ll camp here tonight, Terra. Then we will continue towards your people in the morning.”

Suddenly, Terra felt the fatigue in her muscles. By the time the fire was made she was having trouble keeping her eyes open. Once she had a good warm meal in her stomach, she quickly drifted off to sleep.

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Terra and the Truth spent a few days making their way down the backside of the mountain. Although it was not nearly as steep as the face they had climbed, it was rocky and uneven and Terra found it quite fatiguing. As they walked and climbed they talked. Terra soon felt like she was long-time friends with the Truth, they were becoming so familiar with one another’s ways. She found Him to be kind, considerate, bold and brave. He was so faithful, and yet unpredictable. Once in a while he would travel out of her sight, but He was always there when she needed him.

They came upon a river that was almost frozen. Terra could see through some places of thin ice where the water underneath was beginning to flow. “The spring thaw must have already begun.”

“So it has.” said the Truth, “We will stop here for the night and travel downstream in the morning.”

“I have lost my bearings... how much further is it?”

“Not too far. Once we are down off this mountain, we will travel through the valley and your people are just on the other side.”

“The valley... you don’t mean—“

“Shadow Valley.” He looked calmly into her terrified eyes, “Yes, Terra. We are going through the valley.”

Terra did not dare talk back to the Truth, but he must be insane. No one chose to go through Shadow Valley. It was too difficult, dark and scary. People would travel days out of their way to avoid it and now she was headed straight for it.

She lay down on her blanket and pulled it up around her and turned her back on the Truth. Terra gazed at the moonlight as it reflected off the frozen river. Everything had a light blue cast to it. It was breath-taking. Something in her seemed to be soothed by its beauty. Before she knew it, she was sleeping.

The next morning the sun was bright and warm and Terra felt renewed hope. Perhaps they would not go straight through Shadow Valley... perhaps they could stay at the edge somehow. Her intellect knew this was not a possibility, how does one travel through a valley without going through the valley? But, her heart was willing to be fooled into believing this improbable plan, and so off they went.

They hung near the river’s edge, where the terrain was worn down from the yearly flow of water. They were able to make better time and by the late afternoon, Shadow Valley began to come into view. Terra looked intently, trying to see the dangers, though she could not even discern individual trees in the dark patch far off into the distance.

The Truth interrupted her thoughts, “Let’s look for something to eat while it is still bright out.”

Terra sighed, “Could I sit down and rest here a bit?”

The Truth looked at her. “Yes, yes, that’s fine. You rest.” And he headed off into the woods. Terra turned her attention from him to the valley still far below them. She wondered if there was any way she could change the Truth’s mind... there must be an alternative route. If it had taken this long for them to bring the message, what would a few more days matter?

Terra brought the scroll out of her inside pocket and played with it with her gloved fingers. What might it say? It seemed important... did the people need it right away? Why did the Truth want her to bring the message... why not bring it himself? He was going with her anyway. As Terra slid the scroll back into her pocket and buttoned it closed she heard a loud crack. It sounded as if the top of the mountain was cracking off.

Terra stood up, “Truth? Truth is that you?”

Then she heard more cracks, and more and she turned to look upstream in time to see a great wave of frigid water flowing toward her with gigantic ice chunks rolling like boulders. She turned and tried to run, but before she took more than a few steps she felt her legs get swept from underneath her. She grabbed for a tree nearby and tried to hang on. Her legs were flowing down before her and then she felt a huge blow to her head. She let go of the tree and clasped her hands on the back of her head to protect herself from more injury. She felt certain she was bleeding.

Now that she had let go of the tree she was flowing down the river among all the floating ice. She tried to yell but she had no voice. She had been so cold, but now, now she was feeling okay. She was worried that was a bad sign... shouldn't she feel awfully cold? She had a hard time moving and she realized that the water was overtaking her. Her legs were beginning to sink and she really couldn't do anything about it. In a moment more she felt that her head was beginning to submerge and then she was being ripped from the current. She was not flowing anymore. She was on the ground and her jacket was being taken off. She felt warmth around her.

"You are going to be alright, Terra. I am here."

It was the Truth. He was here. She tried to say something, but her mouth barely moved and no sound came out. "It's alright, Terra. Do not worry about saying anything. I am here, and I have pulled you from the waters. They have not overtaken you. You are safe. I will warm you and take care of you."

Terra felt the warmth returning to her body. She began to shiver and shake. The Truth sat her up and put his warm coat on her. "The shaking might actually be a good sign that you are warming up. Here, can you drink this?"

Terra sat up and drank a warm liquid... it tasted like broth. She thought she could feel the entire path the broth took from her mouth to her stomach. It felt so good, she drank some more.

"Well, then, Terra, I think you are well on the road to recovery!"

Terra tried to smile, but her face was still a bit numb. Then she turned serious and tried to speak, "T-t-t-t-tang..."

The truth smiled and put his hand on hers, "You are welcome, very welcome."

Terra felt tired, but the Truth would not let her sleep. He fed her broth and kept putting warm things on her, and once she could feel her legs and arms he required her to walk around quite a bit, while he held her up with his arm around her back. With the end of the numbness came pain, in her hands and feet and the back of her head, where she had been hurt. Goodness, what a bad day! And she had been worrying about Shadow Valley! At this rate, she'd be lucky to survive to see it!

As the sun set, the Truth put Terra in the shelter he had made, close to the fire. As she felt the warmth radiating on her face she gave in to the exhaustion and fell into a deep sleep.

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It took Terra a few days to recover. During this time she used every argument she could think of to persuade the Truth to avoid the valley and go some other way.

“Surely we have time to go around it... we’ve already taken so much time, what are a few more days?”

“And if we go around it, which mountain would you choose to climb?”

Terra took a deep breath as she looked at the choices. She could not think of what to say.

“Terra, perhaps you should just accept that we are going through Shadow Valley...make your peace with it.” With that he smiled and got up and walked towards the woods. Terra turned and looked down river at the valley.

“I guess I’ll have to face my fears.” She whispered under her breath.

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It took just one more day to make it to the place where the river turned and the tree line broke. There they made camp. They were in the lowlands now and the weather was a bit milder.

Terra ate her breakfast in silence. She felt angry inside.

“Terra, why are you so quiet?”

She just shot him a spiteful look. “I am going with you; do I have to be happy about it too?”

“No, I suppose not... but it wouldn’t hurt.” He smiled.

They broke camp and the Truth began to sing as they walked down into Shadow Valley. The song threatened to improve Terra’s bad mood and she tried to steel herself against its encouragement, but after a while she grew tired of being crabby and gave in and joined him.

After a while they had begun to walk in silence. As she looked around her she could see why it was called Shadow Valley. The trees were dark and bare and their branches were thick. It was hard to see the path, in fact, Terra was not sure they were even really on a path. The way was difficult and tiring. She had fallen more than once already and had a

few scratches and bruises to remember the valley by. The beauty of the mountains seemed far away, unreachable really. She felt lonely and sad.

This place, for some reason reminded her of people she had lost over the years. It felt like death and loss. It was so empty of life. So forlorn. She felt the sadness form like a great ache in her chest.

“We are never going to make it out of here,” she said, breaking the silence.

“What, Terra, why do you say that?”

“Death is here. I can feel it. We are doomed.”

“Terra, do not be afraid of sadness, it is just an emotion. It does not harm you.”

Terra looked at him, tears in her eyes. “But, I can feel my heart breaking... just like—“

“Just like what, Terra?”

Terra turned angry. “Why did you take me here? I never wanted to come here. Why did you make me go through this?” She took her hands and shoved the Truth hard. “It feels... it feels...”

“What Terra?”

“It feels like when my parents died.” With that Terra gave in to the sadness and sat down. “I give up. If this is what you want. If you want... this... I – I give up.” She sat down and she cried.

“Why don’t you want to remember this?”

“The pain is too much.” She looked around at the trees. “It will-- it will destroy me if I feel it.”

“Terra, when did you leave to go look for me?”

Terra shook her head, tears blinding her. She couldn’t think...“I- I don’t know what you mean...”

“You came looking for me when your parents died... you ran away all alone looking for me...”

Terra still couldn’t think. What was he saying?

“You ran away, instead of mourning. Do not worry, you can feel this pain. It will not destroy you. He came and knelt behind her and wrapped his arms around her. He

pressed his face to hers and said. I will be with you. You will be okay. You need to grieve... you need to walk through this valley.”

“But you don’t know... you don’t--” Terra cried out struggling to get out of his grip.

“That you think it is your fault?” He whispered into her ear. Terra stopped short. “It was not your fault; it was an accident, Terra. It is okay. You are forgiven. You are. It is finished.” With his words came a solidness in the deep places of her heart. Although her mind could not grasp all of this, somehow her heart felt peace. “You can forgive yourself now, Terra. You don’t have to punish yourself anymore.”

Then Terra felt it; it was like an avalanche of mourning that flowed through her. She sobbed and sobbed as he held her. She mourned the loss of her parents. She regretted her foolish mistake. She knew she should have been more cautious with the fire... she had not cared for it as they had taught her. She had forgotten--and now her parents were gone. She cried and cried. She had been so lonely all this time as she had looked for the truth. She hurt. As she cried, the peace in her heart grew.

Eventually her tears slowed and she heard the Truth singing softly. It was like a lullaby,

*Peace be still,  
Run no more.  
You are safe,  
Forgiven and loved.*

As Terra opened her sore eyes she saw that it had grown night around them. She was in Shadow Valley. She had faced her fears. She had mourned her losses. She was okay, because the Truth was with her. She was not alone.

They made camp in that awkward little place and in the morning Terra got up and found a large stone a few paces away and put it in the spot they had been. It seemed that was an important place. “I might want to find it back someday.” She said as she caught the Truth’s eye.

“You would come back to Shadow Valley?”

“Perhaps,” she said, “if you came with me.”

Terra walked quietly that day. She could not describe the peace she felt. It was as if something heavy had been lifted from her. As she walked in this valley she could see the beautiful sky. Even here, she could have hope, because the Truth was with her. He had not left her here to suffer and wander alone.

As they got to the edge of Shadow Valley, Terra was able to reflect on its bitter sweetness. It had been so hard to go through such a sad and frightful place, and yet the Truth had

been so near to her. He had never wandered from her during the whole journey through the valley. It was in this time that his tender love seemed so clear to her, and she had been vulnerable enough to accept it. Although she knew she would not have chosen to go through the valley, she never wanted to give up the peace she now had in her heart because of it.

Terra could see that they were not far from the village. She began to think through the journey they had been on for all these days. All the dangers they had faced to get this far, and the mistakes she had made that cost them more time.

Terra looked up at the Truth with tears in her eyes, “I wish I had not wandered so much and been so much trouble.”

“But my Terra, that is what journeys are all about. What would you have learned if you had not made your mistakes? What would you know about me if you had not needed my help? Your journey has not been full of failures; it has been full of revelations about yourself and the Truth. That is not a failure, but a success.” With that he smiled, and Terra couldn’t help but smile back. She felt the warmth of his love penetrate to the deep places of her heart.

“Thank you for coming for me, up in the mountains. For finding me, so I could find you.”

“My pleasure,” he said. “Terra now is the time for you to bring your message to your people.” He motioned to the village just a mile down the path.

“But I don’t want our journey to end... I don’t want you to go!”

“I will not leave you. We will see each other soon, but now you must go and share your message.”

Terra felt a pang deep in her heart. She did not want to leave the Truth’s company. But, this was the plan from the beginning of the journey, so she turned and walked toward town. It seemed like it had been a lifetime since she had left. So much had happened, she felt like a new person.

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As she walked past the gate she could sense she was being watched by the villagers. She continued to walk to the center of the village. People began to follow her. They seemed curious about her. As she got to the center of the village she turned and nearly knocked over a man in a rather large hat. She recognized it as a sign of the authority the villagers had given him. He was their leader.

“I left in search of truth and now I have a message for our people,” she blurted out, surprised at her own boldness.

The leader looked at her quizzically. He scanned her clothes and suddenly Terra realized she must be quite a sight. Her clothes were thin, worn and full of holes. She bore the scars of her long journey, and yet she sensed she glowed with the contentment she felt emanating from her heart. She felt herself smiling.

“Very well,” he said, surprising Terra. “Ring the bell!” He shouted and within moments the village bell was tolling. Villagers began streaming out of every corner of the village toward the square in the center.

Terra realized at this moment that she had not thought things through this far. It seemed so improbable that anyone would listen to her that she did not really know what she was going to say. She felt her body grow hot and her tongue began to stick to the top of her mouth. What was she going to do? Then Terra remembered that she had the scroll! She reached inside her coat and unbuttoned the pocket that had held the scroll for the entire journey. It was still safely tucked inside. Her pulse began to slow back to its normal rate. She didn’t have to worry-- The Truth had given her what to say; he had given her the scroll.

The people were all assembled. The Truth was nowhere to be seen. The leader and his companions took Terra to the top of a small stage in the village square. There the leader and the others left her and joined the people gathered around, filling the square and overflowing into the streets. He nodded at Terra and she took a deep breath and opened the scroll. It was empty. Terror flowed through Terra’s body in waves and she felt her knees go weak. Nothing. There was no message. The Truth had betrayed her. Her throat grew warm and tight and her eyes were wide as she looked out at the people assembled before her. What could she say?

The leader looked at her curiously, and he said, “Please tell us, Terra... please tell us about the truth.”

Time seemed to stand still as she looked at all the curious faces before her. Terra was considering whether or not to run away and then it hit her. She knew what to tell them. She knew the message she wanted to share. She would tell them what she knew about the Truth. She knew the Truth personally... her whole body buzzed with energy and she said...

*“I have been on a long journey to bring you my message about the Truth.  
The Truth isn’t just some list of facts, like I thought it’d be.  
The truth isn’t some secret practice or some revelation about our inner selves...  
The Truth is a person and I have met Him.  
He is both powerful and good.  
When I was confused by hurtful thoughts,  
He silenced my doubts, worries and fears with his love and faithfulness.  
When I faced an overwhelming obstacle,  
He did not let my foot slip but enabled me to reach the heights.  
When the flood waters threatened to overtake me...*

*He rescued me and saved my life.  
And, He," Terra felt the tears come to her eyes...  
"And He walked with me through Shadow Valley...  
I did not have to fear, because he was with me, he was my companion."*

Just then as Terra looked out towards the back of the crowd she saw the Truth standing there looking back at her. She thought he was almost shining. Terra knew deep within her that she had the message... it was in her heart. She had lived her message.

"My name is Terra. I know the Truth and I would love you to know Him too."

*Jesus answered, "I am the way the truth and the life."  
John 15:6*

## **Author's Note:**

I have met the Truth and I know Him.

When everything I thought I knew began to crumble away under my feet, He gave me a firm place to stand in His Word.

He has silenced the lies that tortured me and kept me captive. Lies that used to blow through the winds of my mind. Lies that obscured the truth so I could not see it. Lies that told me I didn't matter. Lies that told me I was unlovable. They no longer hold me prisoner; now these lies are silenced by the Truth.

He has enabled me to do things I thought I could never do. He has made me able to keep going when I have reached the end of my own strength, my own courage, my own ability. He has empowered me to write talks, bible studies and works of fiction and when I hit the "wall"--when I thought, "I can go no further"--I prayed and the next "hand hold" was unveiled.

When the waters of depression and fear have threatened to overtake me He has rescued me and brought me to a spacious place--His faithfulness. I may not know anything else for certain – But I know Him, and I know His love never fails, and nothing can separate me from it.

When I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death,  
when I have lost people due to death or broken relationship,  
when I have cried myself hoarse as I sat alone in my car in an abandoned parking lot,  
when I have had to face the fact that I had hurt and offended those around me and felt completely alone...  
in these places He has been my constant, faithful companion. He has walked with me. He is not repelled by suffering... in fact He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit.

**My name is Jeri. I know the Truth, His name is Jesus, and I would love you to know Him too...**

You can email me at [jeri@jerihowe.com](mailto:jeri@jerihowe.com).

Click here to go to Billy Graham's website to learn more about how to know Jesus:  
<http://www.billygraham.org/specialsections/steps-to-peace/steps-to-peace.asp>

or you can get to know Jesus in the pages of the gospel of John as you open your heart.  
<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1&version=NIV>

**Thanks for reading! To see what I am up to, visit [www.jerihowe.com](http://www.jerihowe.com)**

## Verse references for *The Messenger*:

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### **Earth Giving Way:**

Psalm 46:1-3

- <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

### **Silencing the Lies:**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

### **Climbing the Wall:**

Psalm 18:29, 33

- <sup>29</sup> With your help I can advance against a troop;  
with my God I can scale a wall.
- <sup>33</sup> He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;  
he enables me to stand on the heights.

### **Rescued from Flood Waters:**

Psalm 18:16-19, (also Psalm 69, 124)

- <sup>16</sup> He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
he drew me out of deep waters.
- <sup>17</sup> He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
- <sup>18</sup> They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
but the LORD was my support.
- <sup>19</sup> He brought me out into a spacious place;  
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

### **Companion in the Valley of the Shadow**

Psalm 23:4

- <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.