
"This story will leave you with the uplifting message of hope and forgiveness. Thanks, Ruth, for your brave characters who face hard circumstances—full of faith and filled with God's grace. I love that this book nails both modern parenting and also God's eternal love. Read it!"

Christina Hergenrader,
author of *Last Summer at Eden*

Ruth has done it again! Faith Alone is the compelling sequel to Grace Alone. It is rare to find a book that combines a beautiful story with faith so clearly. The book is filled with so many conversations that could take place at your dining room table or mine. Faith Alone is a story you won't want to put down, filled with twists and turns - just like our own lives. Through it all, faith and grace are woven in clearly and gently, even in the most difficult moments. I truly appreciate how Ruth tackles some difficult issues for families and the church as a whole without preaching. Faith Alone will draw you in from the first page, and yet, you won't want to see it end. This is a thought-provoking, must-read book for Christians of all ages.

Kristen Whirrett,
Lutheran Blogger at Joyfully Thriving

“This is a sweet Christian novel, full of realistic family drama. The Neunabers are relatable and likeable. Faith Alone deals with controversial topics, but Meyer handles them well, and in a very Christian, faith-based manner. Meyer is a good writer and her characters are believable. The Neunabers could be almost any family these days. If you’re looking for a Christian book with good morals, especially if you’re a Lutheran, this may be just what you need.”

Reader’s Favorite

I was eagerly anticipating the sequel to Grace Alone after becoming so invested in the characters in the debut novel. Faith Alone did not disappoint. The story picked up right where it left off and I was quickly drawn into the next chapter of the characters' lives. Ruth Meyer did a wonderful job of not only detailing their family's changing dynamics but also their spiritual growth as well, highlighting the ever-present dynamic of saint/sinner. Readers of all ages will be able to relate to both Grace's and Faith's joys and struggles. I cringed for them at times and cheered for them at others. The storyline is extremely well-told and above all, the message of forgiveness and life in Jesus alone is clear. I am already looking forward to the next book!

Kaethe Ward

**Enrollment Development Coordinator
at Elm Grove Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

To the dear saints of FAITH Lutheran Church in Bridgeport,
Michigan, whom I will always consider my family.

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FAITH FALLS ALONE

A NOVEL BY RUTH E. MEYER

THE SOLA SERIES



TruthNotes Press

To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at His throne,
Saved by His grace through faith alone.

—Matthias Loy, 1828-1915

CHAPTER

1

“Kids! We’re home!”

Faith’s eyes widened at the sound of her mother’s voice. What were they doing here already? They weren’t due back for another two hours! Already she could hear her younger sister, Katie, squealing and running to greet her mother and new stepfather at the front door. That would distract them for a few minutes, but she didn’t have much time.

“Spencer!” she hissed urgently, pushing herself to a sitting position on her bed. “You’ve got to get out of here!”

The blond-haired, blue-eyed young man remained where he was, a muscular arm tucked behind his head. His eyes held an amused look, and he clearly didn’t understand the seriousness of the situation. Her mom would kill her if she found a boy in her room, even if they hadn’t been doing anything but checking social media on their phones. Grace would never believe such an innocent claim.

“I thought you wanted to introduce me to your mom,” he commented. “Let’s go do it now.” His voice seemed to thunder through her room, and her eyes darted nervously to the door. She had the irrational fear that her mother would hear him and come charging in.

“Yeah, right! She’d forbid me from dating until I’m twenty-one if she finds out you’re in here. I mean it! You’ll have to go out the window!” Thankfully, her window faced the back of the house, not visible from the street or driveway. This fact had made it possible for Spencer to sneak in a handful of times already, and she wasn’t about to get caught now.

Faith leaned over him to slide the window open, but he grabbed her around the waist and pulled her down on top of him, giving her a long kiss. Faith felt the familiar rush of adrenaline that accompanied a kiss from Spencer Young, and she wished she had time to enjoy this one, but she was running out of time. Grace and David had advanced into the living room, and Faith could hear excited conversation between her younger siblings and her aunt, who had stayed with them during Grace and David’s honeymoon. Soon they would realize she wasn’t out there, and someone would come to find her.

Impatiently, she pulled away from Spencer. “We don’t have time for this!” she scolded.

“But doesn’t the threat of being caught make it all the more thrilling?” he asked in a low, seductive voice. Normally, that voice would have sent a chill up and down Faith’s spine, but now fear overrode every other emotion.

“You need to leave *now!*” she insisted. Heaving herself into a kneeling position, she resumed her mission to open the window, but she was too late.

“Faith?” It was her mother, knocking on the bedroom door. “Are you in there?”

Her heart nearly stopped. Now what? Her mom had just returned from her honeymoon, a ten-day trip. Faith couldn’t get away with calling her greetings through the door. She knew she had to open it and hug her mom and act excited to hear all about the honeymoon. Desperately, she pointed at the closet

door, and Spencer complied. He slid off the bed and grabbed her around the waist for one last quick kiss before he slipped into the dark closet and hid behind the hanging clothes.

Faith willed her heart to stop pounding as she opened the door. “Mom!” she exclaimed, forcing enthusiasm into her voice as she gave her mother a hug. “I wasn’t expecting you yet! I was taking a nap.”

“Oh, I didn’t mean to interrupt you, hon,” Grace said, taking a quick look at Faith’s bed, which was still rumpled. At least that added credibility to the lie. “We decided not to stop at David’s parents’ on the way home after all. We were too eager to get back here and see you guys! Surprise!”

“It sure is a surprise!” Faith tried to laugh, but wasn’t sure she quite pulled it off. Maybe it was her imagination, but she thought she could hear Spencer breathing in the closet. What if he sneezed or something? A surge of panic coursed through her. She had to get her mother out of there. Impulsively, she gave her mom another quick hug and said, “Oh, it’s so good to see you! I missed you! Let’s go out with the others. I want to hear about the trip!”

Before her mom could say another word, Faith linked arms with her and stepped out into the hallway, pulling the bedroom door shut behind her. She steered Grace toward the living room where the rest of the family was gathered. Her heart thudded so loudly she was sure Grace could hear it.

“Daddy’s home!” Katie chirped happily, bouncing up and down on David’s knee as Faith and Grace entered the living room.

“I see that, Katie,” Faith said. “Welcome back, David.” She forced a smile at him as she sat down cross-legged on the floor. Despite the title, Katie wasn’t David’s biological child. But at the tender age of five, she had never known her birth father,

and willingly accepted David as “Daddy” even before he and Grace had been engaged. Faith, on the other hand, still felt awkward around her new stepfather. She liked him well enough, but it was weird to think he would actually be *living* with them now.

David returned her smile and said, “Thanks, Faith! It’s good to be back.” She noted he hadn’t used the word *home* yet, and realized for the first time that maybe this was strange for him as well.

Olivia, Grace’s older sister, had a gift for making awkwardness disappear. “So, Gracie, Boston?” she prompted. “I want to hear all about it! I’ve never been out east before.”

“It was fascinating!” said Grace, nudging Jackson’s legs aside so she could sit next to him on the couch. “David picked a charming bed and breakfast, and we spent our days sightseeing. Boston is a neat city.”

“But we didn’t *just* see Boston,” David pointed out.

“This is true,” Grace said. Turning to Olivia, she explained, “One of his goals was to expand my travel repertoire for our honeymoon. We drove all over New England for day trips. We went to, what, David, seven new states?”

“Yep. Massachusetts, of course, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and from there we took the train to New York City for a day.”

“Wow! Impressive!” Olivia responded. “And how was the Fourth?”

“Amazing,” sighed Grace. “David arranged for us to watch the Boston Fireworks display on the Charles River. The Boston Pops performed too. Most incredible fireworks display I’ll ever see.”

“David, it appears you did a fine job planning the trip,” Olivia said.

David beamed with pride as Grace smiled at him. “He certainly did,” she seconded. “Best vacation ever.”

Faith had only been half listening to the conversation up to this point, but she fully tuned out now as the adults prattled on. She was on high alert, her senses heightened as she strained to listen for any sounds coming from her room, any telltale thump that would give away Spencer’s presence. Was that just his phone beeping, alerting him to a new text message? Did she hear the window squeak as he opened it, or was she just paranoid? And good grief, did he *have* to use such strong body wash? Some of the scent had rubbed off on her. Didn’t anyone else notice she smelled like a walking Old Spice ad?

“Faith?”

She startled at her mother’s voice, realizing Grace had asked her a question. “What did you say? I’m sorry, Mom.”

Her mom gave her a strange look, but patiently repeated herself. “I thought you’d be at the daycare center right now.”

“Oh, I switched days with Stacey so she can take a weekend trip,” she said. “But tell us more about your honeymoon. Did you get fresh seafood while you were out there?”

“The food was great,” admitted Grace with a groan. “*Too* good, in fact. I gained back everything I lost before the wedding.” She had a stubborn twenty pounds she was always vowing to lose, and she’d managed to lose six pounds in the months preceding her wedding.

“Which just proves you’re exactly the weight you’re supposed to be,” insisted David.

Faith resisted an eye roll. Was this the kind of sappy talk she had to look forward to? Her aunt, on the other hand, took the comment in stride. “Right answer, David!” Olivia laughed. “Andy would be proud.” Her husband, Andy McNeal, often joked that he needed to give David a crash course in

understanding and dealing with women.

“Will you and Andy be staying for dinner tonight?” David asked.

“Oh, no,” dismissed Olivia with a wave of her hand. “We’ve been eating dinner here all week. We’ll let you guys have a nice family dinner without us hovering around.”

“We don’t mind,” insisted Grace. “Besides, I can smell that you’ve already got something cooking. If you went to the trouble to make dinner for us, you might as well stay to enjoy it.”

“Seriously, Gracie, I didn’t go to any trouble at all. I threw a pork roast and a jar of banana peppers into the slow cooker. It took me all of two minutes. It’ll take longer to shred the meat for pulled pork sandwiches, and I’ll let Faith do that.” Olivia winked at her niece. “Besides, Andy said he’d take me out to eat once he’s done with work. I’ve been craving Chinese all week long.”

Faith suspected her aunt and uncle also craved some peace and quiet. Their own three children were all college-aged, and it had been a while since they’d dealt with the chaos and drama of younger children.

“If you change your mind, you’re certainly welcome to stay,” said Grace. “It would be nice to catch up with Andy too.”

“We’ll stop by over the weekend,” Olivia offered. “Deal?”

“Perfect. Now, David, we should get our suitcases out of the car. We got souvenirs for each of you kids. Jackson, come help us, will you?” asked Grace.

Jackson groaned in protest, but Katie jumped up excitedly. “I’ll help too!” She tugged on David’s hand to lead him toward the door. Freddie, likewise, clamored outside.

Faith took the opportunity to slip back to her room while everyone else was distracted. She opened the door and shut it

quietly behind her. “Spencer?” she asked in a stage whisper. “Are you still here?” She opened the closet and swept aside the hanging clothes, finding no one there. Just to be sure, she peeked under both her bed and Katie’s bed. No sign of Spencer. He must have snuck back out the window and shut it behind him. Faith breathed a sigh of relief.

That had been way too close for comfort.