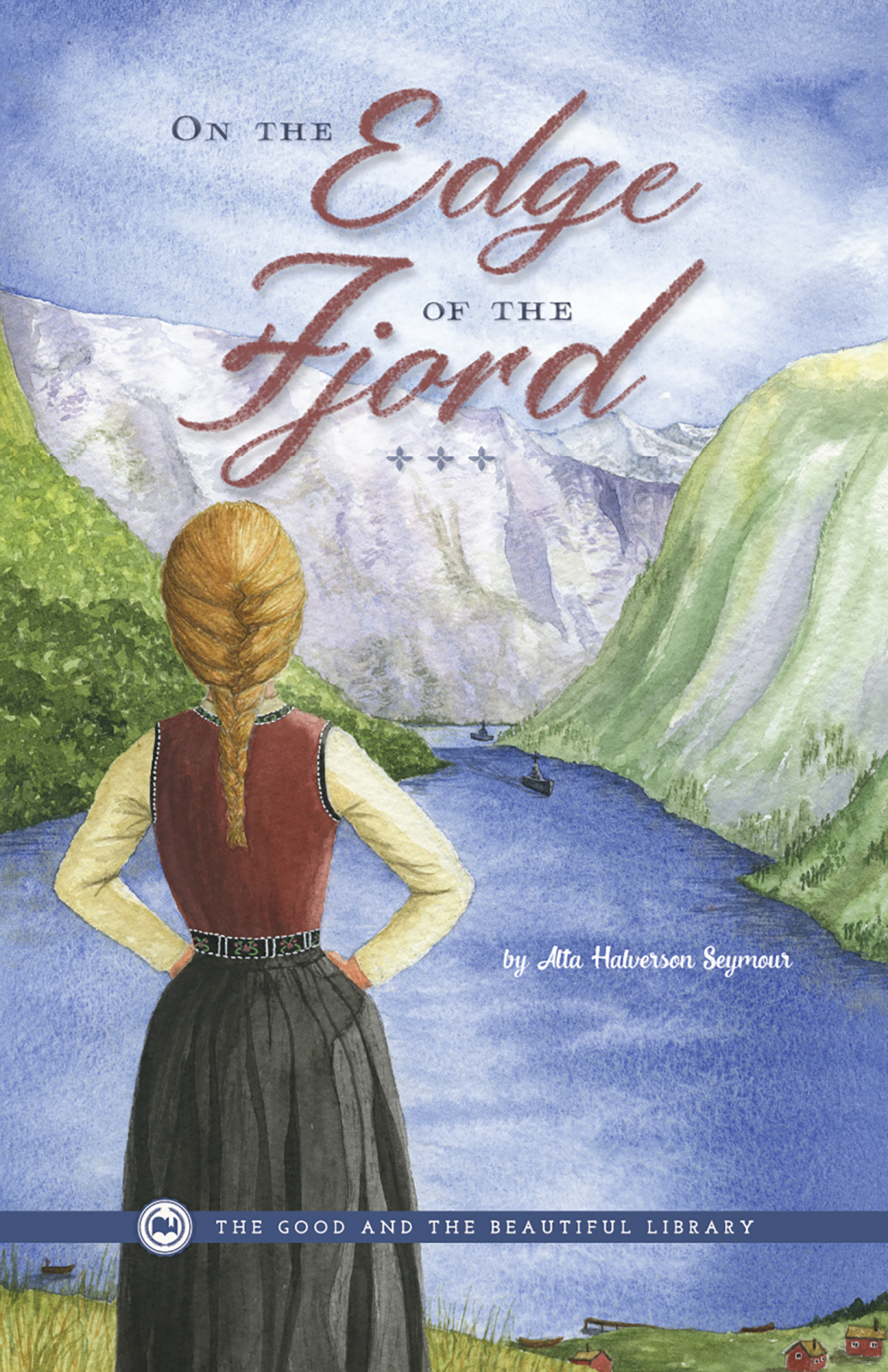

On the Edge of the Fjord
by Alta Halverson Seymour
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

Table of Contents

1. The Nazis Come to Valcos 1

2. Martin and Petra Go Fishing 17

3. The Boats Sail Out 27

4. Petra Goes up the Mountian 36

5. The Plane Comes Over 47

6. An Uninvited Guest at the Saeter 57

7. The Cave on the Lost Trail 66

8. Petra Goes Fishing Again 77

9. A Dangerous Errand 90

10. Martin Goes Investigating 100

11. A Meeting on the Mountaintop 114

12. A Night on the Mountain 125

13. Three Boys Go to Halven 136

14. Captain Ebert Investigates 144

15. Martin Turns Messenger 157

16. The Cave at Lillegaard 168

17. Fugitives on the Mountain 179

18. The Viking Sets Sail 187

1

The Nazis Come to Valcos

"Goodbye, Martin! Goodbye, my little Petra!" said Captain Engeland, and, for a moment, his eyes were troubled. He gave his son's hand a quick, firm shake. Then he gently rumpled his daughter's light curls and smiled down at her. "Petra was a silly name to give a dainty little thing like you," he chuckled. "It means rock, and somehow it doesn't quite fit you. But your mother wanted you named for your grandfather Peter. And you know what a terror your mother is—she just will have her own way."

He winked at Petra, and she winked back, for they knew that in all of Norway, it would be hard to find a gentler, sweeter-natured woman than Fru Engeland. Petra understood very well that her father was joking to keep his spirits up, and theirs, too. She knew that he was reluctant to leave them for this trip up the coast to the fishing islands, for Martin was away at school all week, and she and her mother were alone with the two old servants in the big house on the edge of the fjord. She also knew that, as part owner and manager of the big fishing cooperative, he was obliged to go. He had had to take these trips before, of course, but of late, to Petra's delight, he had managed to conduct as much of his business as possible from his study at home or from his office in the big warehouse down at the foot of the fjord.

Fru Engeland, as well as Petra, knew all these things, and she knew something her fourteen-year-old daughter did not quite comprehend—the growing tension in the country, the

uneasiness that no one liked to put into words. But she said gaily, as she patted her husband's cheek affectionately when he came to give her a goodbye kiss, "Bring me a whale this time, Johann. You know you've always promised me one, but I haven't seen it yet."

"Take care of them, Martin," said the captain. "They're quite a pair. They may need watching."

"I'll do my best, sir," replied Martin, "but that's a big order." And all of them were smiling and waving as the boat moved down the fjord.

But as Fru Engeland and Petra sat talking with Martin on his weekend visit home a few weeks later, they were not smiling. Strange and terrifying news had come, news of Nazi troops in Oslo, in Bergen.

"And even here, in our little village, they will come," said Martin. "Even now, in our school, the Nazis are trying to change our history courses, telling our teachers what they shall teach us."

"And your teachers, are they obeying what the Nazis tell them?" asked Petra.

"What do you think?" returned Martin, rising and moving restlessly about the room. "Of course they are not. They are teaching Norwegian history as it really is—and you know it is a stirring history. Norsemen have always been brave and daring."

Petra nodded, but she had never cared for history as much as her brother did. She was far more interested in the present—in the party to be given at Signe's, for instance, or the hike up the mountain, or the summer festival. But now the present looked more forbidding than the past.

"What are we to do when the troops come?" she asked in a small voice. "They will not hurt us, will they?"

"They will expect us to give them anything they want that we have. Perhaps they will expect us to quarter some officers here—it is a good, comfortable house."

"We cannot refuse that, of course," said Fru Engeland. But her voice was deeply troubled as she asked, "Martin, what of your father? They will know about his big boat and the many smaller fishing vessels he controls. They must know how influential he is with the people." She paused and finished in a half whisper, "They may want to get hold of him and the boats. Have you thought of that?"

"I haven't thought of much else," returned the boy. "I had hoped against hope that he might be here now or that he could get home and away again before they come here."

"Perhaps we could reach him at the islands by telephone," ventured Petra.

"I tried that," admitted Martin, "but he had already left, intending, on his way home, to stop at one or two places where there are no phones."

"He will hear the radio," said Petra hopefully.

"But that is both conflicting and misleading," returned her brother.

"And the enemy wants boats," said their mother, putting into words the fear they all had. "They may want your father to give them special help—they may take him prisoner when he refuses."

"I am sure of one thing—they won't get the boats from him. We need them ourselves to get men to England, where they can be outfitted and trained to fight. Yet, if the Nazis come here to Valcos, their big reason for coming will be to get hold of the boats," said Martin.

Petra looked at her mother's anxious face and said quickly, "But Father is too smart to walk right into a trap."

"Yes, but what if he doesn't know that the Nazis are here? What if he doesn't know the trap is set and waiting for him?" demanded her brother. "We have to look this squarely in the face, Petra. If the troops get here before Father does, we must

find some way of warning him not to come home. You must manage somehow to come as fast as you can to the school and let me know."

"Oh, Martin!" said Petra fervently, as she said goodbye to her brother the next morning. "I hope you will be here when they come."

Her brother replied as earnestly, "And so do I."

Certainly nobody in Valcos had expected the Nazis to arrive so soon. People were going quietly about their affairs that early evening, tending to the milking, the chickens, the fishing nets; the children were playing in the village streets, and the women were preparing the evening meal when someone on the pier cried out, "Here they come!"

Swiftly the news spread, and from houses, barns, and gardens came pale-faced people, watching the ships come nearer and nearer up the fjord. But as the enemy troops began setting foot on the pier, people turned, with stony faces, into their houses and shut the doors. It was as if they could not bear to see the hostile forces in the streets that had been peaceful for centuries, as if they could shut out the intruders by going into their homes and barring the doors.

Petra, crouching in the inglenook, heard marching feet coming up the street, heard orders barked, and knew that men in small detachments were stopping at the houses of the neighbors. She wondered what she would do when that dreadful knock came at their own door, for her mother was down at the other end of the village caring for a sick neighbor. And though old Helga and Anna were at home, they would be too frightened to be of much help. She would have to face the soldiers, answer their questions, and listen to their orders. Oh, if only Martin were here!

They were at the next house. She could see them going up the steps. Now, a sharp order out in front, steps across the

porch, three heavy knocks at the door! Petra put her hands on the chair arms and tried to rise, but she could not force herself into action.

"Open at once, or we'll batter in the door," the harsh order was shouted.

Petra, knowing well that they meant exactly what they said, straightened her shoulders, lifted her chin, and managed to walk to the door, unlock it, and pull it open.

A group of Nazi officers stood there, a stern-faced captain in command. He looked a little surprised when he saw the slender, fair-haired girl, but his eyes grew hard again as he snapped, "Your father, miss. He need not try to hide behind you. You speak German?"

Petra bowed assent, but her eyes were blazing. As if her proud and brave father would try to hide behind anyone! "My father is not at home," she jerked out.

"Your mother, then!" demanded the captain.

"She also is away from home," said Petra, between stiff lips.

"They have not taught you very good manners. Have you not learned to invite guests to enter the house?"

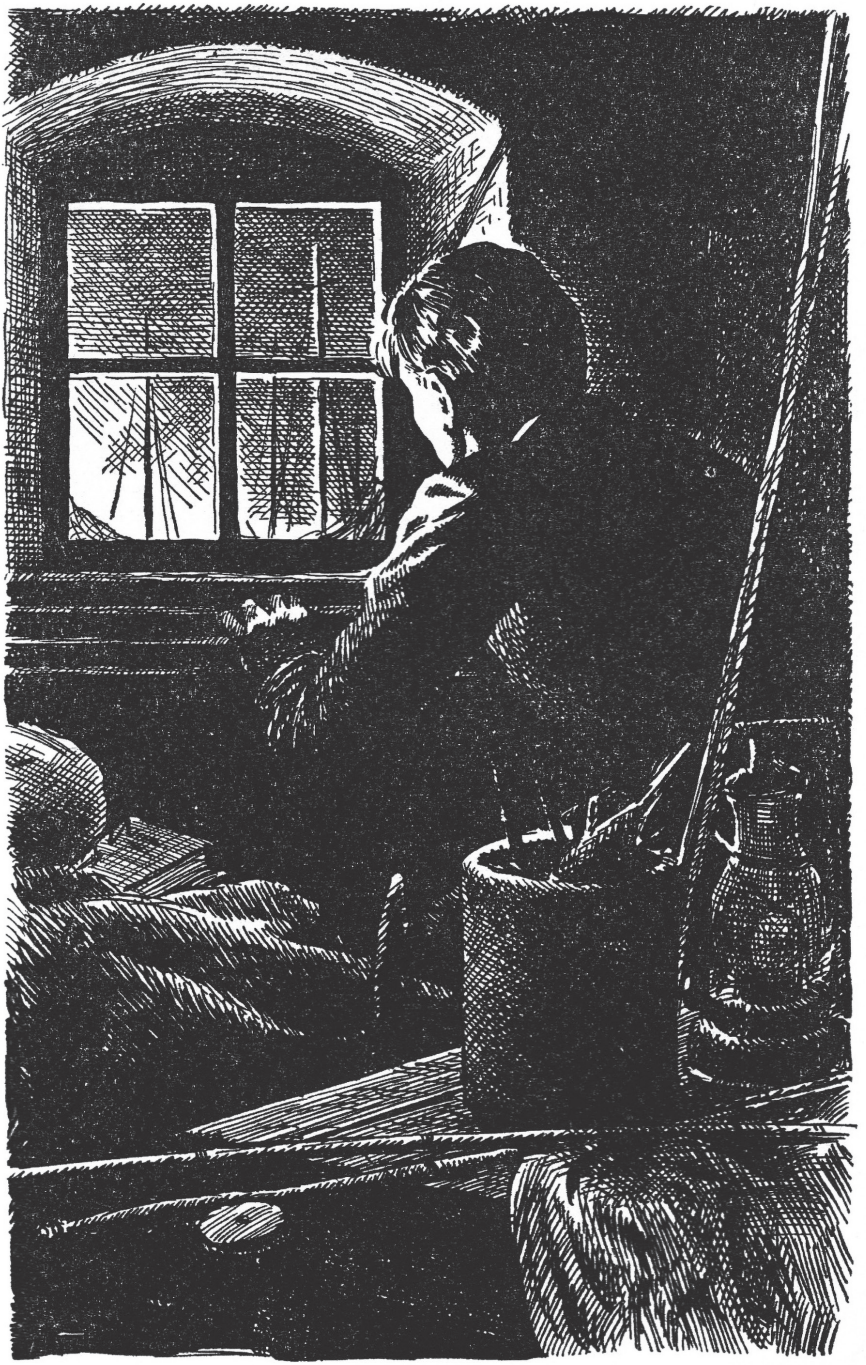
"Guests!" exclaimed Petra, and now her head was high. "I see no guests."

"You'll see plenty of them," sneered the officer, "and the more polite you are, the better it will be for you and your family." He turned to the others. "Come in, gentlemen, we are graciously invited to take supper here. Tell the servants, young lady, that some officers are here for supper, and come back at once to see to the entertainment of your guests."

Petra was only too glad to have an excuse to get away. In the kitchen, she found Anna and Helga terrified. It took a great deal of cajoling to make them stop huddling together in a corner and start supper preparations for the uninvited guests. When Petra left the kitchen, she went into the back kitchen for

"My father is not at home," Petra said.

It was Sigurd, sure enough.



Martin, shivering in the chill damp of the long unused room, knelt there doggedly.

The wind was in their favor, and they made a speedy passage.