THE STORY OF

Corrie ten Boom

– The Watchmaker Who Forgave Her Enemies –

Written by

JENNIFER T. KELLEY

"This age-appropriate biography of Corrie ten Boom is both compelling and well-written for tweens, teens, and adults alike. Corrie's testimony of courage, sacrifice, and hope will spur kids on to see the life-changing power of living radically for Jesus in even the darkest moments of life."

Sarah Walton, author, *The Long Road Home*; coauthor, *Hope When It Hurts*

"Corrie ten Boom's remarkable story of faith, perseverance, and forgiveness has encouraged generations. Now Jennifer Kelley brings the riches of this story to young readers in a heartfelt and poignant biography. Kelley sensitively handles the tragedies in Corrie's life as she highlights God's provision and mercy in the darkest of moments. Children who dive into these pages will find an accessible, engaging, and moving account that will inspire their minds and shape their hearts for years to come."

Kathryn Butler, author, The Dream Keeper Saga and *The Storyteller's Bible*

"Every child should read the compelling story of Corrie ten Boom. A true hero of the faith, she survived the Nazi death camps to tell the story of Christ's triumph over the worst evil. This beautifully illustrated, creatively told biography will inspire similar courage in this generation. Make sure this book is in your home."

Daniel Darling, Director, Land Center for Cultural Engagement; author, *The Characters of Christmas*; *Jesus and the Characters of Christmas*; and *The Dignity Revolution*

The Story of Corrie ten Boom

Lives of Faith and Grace

Edited by Champ Thornton

The Story of Katie Luther: The Nun Who Escaped to True Freedom

The Story of Martin Luther: The Monk Who Changed the World

The Story of Corrie ten Boom: The Watchmaker Who Forgave Her Enemies

Lives of Faith and Grace

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The Watchmaker Who Forgave Her Enemies

Jennifer T. Kelley

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For my sisters:

Christina and April.

You lead with beauty and strength,

and like Corrie's sisters,

your lives point people to Jesus.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

CORRIE TEN BOOM

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1

The Face in the Crowd

1947

CORRIE TEN BOOM'S train arrived at the station in Munich. But it was not her first time in Germany. She had been there before.

Just three years earlier, World War II was raging across Europe. At the age of fifty-two, Corrie had been forced to leave her beloved Holland. She and

her sister Betsie were packed into train cars with hundreds of other prisoners. They had all been arrested and sentenced. They were being relocated to a German prison camp, to Ravensbrück.

She and Betsie had heard of this camp and its unnamable fears. The barbed wire fences. The cruel guards with guns. The rows of prisoners who were led away never to return.

But that was then.

Now the war was over; it had been three years. And Corrie was no longer a prisoner. She was returning to the war-torn country of Germany to spread the message of God's love and forgiveness.

Now in Munich, Corrie made her way to a German church. A small crowd gathered in the basement to hear her. Rows of wooden chairs creaked as men and women settled in to listen to her incredible story. She stepped to the front, opened her Bible, breathed deeply, and looked around the room. All across the congregation, she saw tired and desperate people.

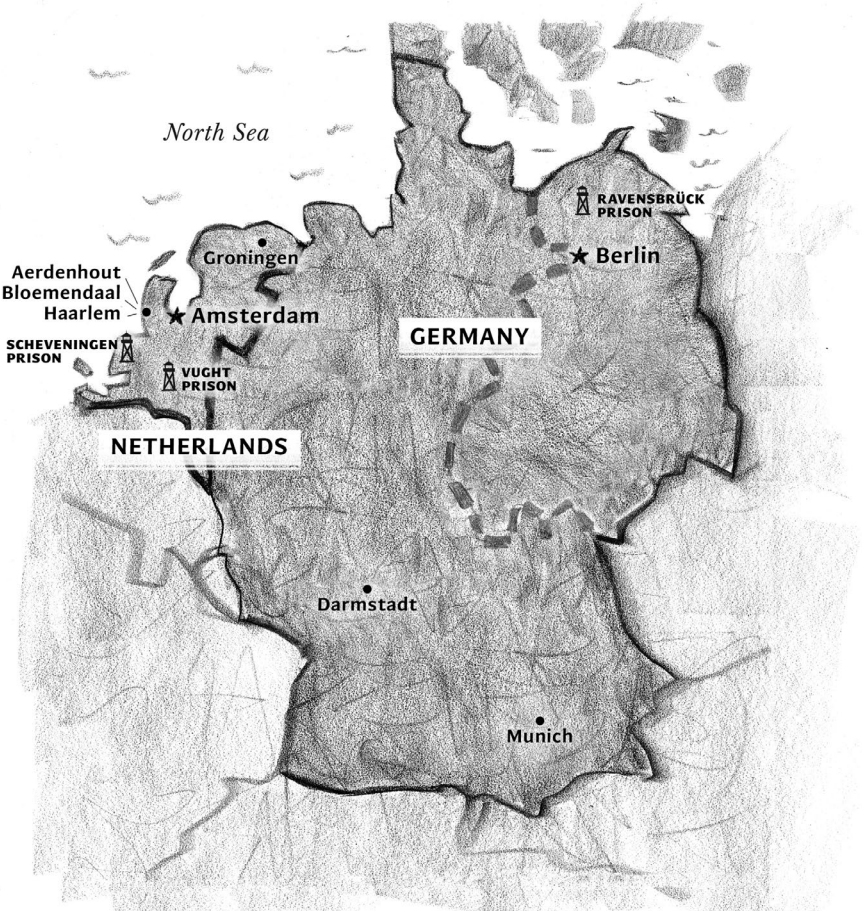
Her message was simple—"Everyone has sinned, but God will forgive those sins. And when God forgives sins, he does not remember them. It is as if he had thrown them into the bottom of the ocean, never to be seen again!"

When she finished her lesson, the meeting was over. People gathered their belongings and moved toward the back door. Everyone moved. Except one man.

She hadn't noticed him before. He wore a gray coat and carried a brown hat. And he began to walk toward the front. Toward her. He was large with thinning hair and unmistakable blue-gray eyes.

It was then that Corrie *really* saw him. And her mind raced to another place and another time, three years before.

Instead of the gray coat and brown hat, she could see his blue military uniform and the skull and crossbones on his hat. She saw his face as she arrived at Ravensbrück prison. She once again felt the chaos and fear of her arrival there. She could smell sickness



— THE NETHERLANDS AND GERMANY DURING CORRIE'S LIFETIME (1892–1983) —

Aerdenhout: OUR-den-howt
Amsterdam: AM-ster-dam
Berlin: Bur-LIN
Bloemendaal: BLOOM-en-doll
Darmstadt: DARM-schaht
Groningen: HROW-ni-gen
Haarlem: HAR-lim
Munich: MEW-nik
Ravensbrück Prison: RAV-ens-brook
Scheveningen Prison: SHAY-vi-ning-en
Vught Prison: vooft

After World War II, Germany was divided into two—West Germany (with a democratic government) and East Germany (with a Communist government). A dotted line shows this border.

and death all around. A guard was yelling. Terrified prisoners huddled in the corner. And he, the cruelest of the guards, stood watch over it all. A look of hatred on his face.

All this she remembered in a moment.

And now in the basement of this small church, the face of that cruelest guard from that horrible concentration camp appeared once more. Why was he here?

As he walked toward her, she couldn't pull away her eyes. That face. But something wasn't right; something was different. He was smiling.

She heard him speak; a voice she knew too well, "A fine message, Fraulein."

What does he want? Corrie wondered.

"How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea! You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk. I was a guard there. But since that time, I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there."

Corrie's pulse raced. And his next words landed like a bomb.

"But I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein, . . . will you forgive me?"

Corrie couldn't look at his face. Hatred for him swelled in her heart.

Hadn't he been the cruelest of the prison guards when she arrived? The worst! She remembered the pain. The prisoners' screams. The guard's laughter.

She kept her eyes down. Her hands fiddled with her purse.

No, she would not forgive him. *Impossible!*

The man in the gray coat extended a large hand toward Corrie. "Will you forgive me?"

He may have stood there with his hand outstretched for only a moment. But time slowed down for Corrie. Yes, she had taught about loving and forgiving others. But could she herself forgive this man? This awful guard who had treated her and others so cruelly?

Her whole life had led to this moment. Her whole life had prepared her for what she should say.

But how could she? How can you forgive the unforgivable?