***Treasures of the Snow* by Patricia St. John**

**Age Range: Middle grade**

**Back cover copy:**

“A beautifully written and engaging story that captures the innocence of childhood, and the joys found in the little things. Learn as well what the healing power of repentance and forgiveness can bring as we heed our Savior’s voice in our lives.”

**The Good:** *Treasures of the Snow* is a true Christian fiction classic for middle schoolers. The book is brimming with spiritual and moral truths while still holding the attention of the reader regardless of age. I found myself captivated by the simple story and have read it many times to own children. It’s also an exceptional aid in history or geography studies. Written about a Swiss family in the early 1900s, it was set in the same little village where Ms. St. John lived as a child. Her scenic descriptions leave the impression that you’ve once visited the village. Emotionally, the book is wonderful. Good wins on every front: leaving a satisfied, all-is-right-in-the-world feeling.

**The Not-So-Good:** The book has a few antiquated words that you may need to explain. This opens a positive opportunity if you’re using this as a family read aloud, which I recommend doing. But if that is not possible and your child is reading this on their own, please scan the chapter ahead of time and make sure they understand the new vocabulary. Another potential negative is that while the book keeps interest, it does slow down a few chapters near the end. I think Ms. St. John could have wrapped up the story with a bit more conciseness.

**Books in the series:**

*Treasures of the Snow* is a stand-alone, however, Patricia St. John wrote several other books that you may consider purchasing as well. Here are her most famous. Of these listed below, *Star of Light* is my favorite.

* *Star of Light*
* *The Secret at Pheasant’s Cottage*
* *The Tanglewoods’ Secret*
* *Rainbow Garden*

**Where to get it:**

Free online at googlebooks. However, the formatting is not great, and I typically watch the time my kids spend in front of the screen, even if it is while reading a great book.

My Recommended Option: You can purchase it used on Amazon for around $5, including shipping. It’s a solid addition to any family library and you might find yourselves reading it multiple times or loaning it out to friends.

You can also buy it at Walmart but it’s more expensive because it would be new and require shipping costs.

If money is an issue, then before purchasing, check your local public library or church library where you have a solid chance of finding it on the shelves.

**Discussion Questions:**

***Treasures of the Snow***

**Chapter 1:**

1. What was the best Christmas present you ever received? What made it special?

**Chapter 2:**

1. Annette was willing to sacrifice to serve her family. Grandmother moved her home and came to her son’s aide. What sacrifices do you make, or can make, for your loved ones?

**Chapter 3:**

1. Dani’s Papa gave thanks to God for the kitten. Is it right to thank God for such small things? Why or why not? Can you think of a Bible verse to back up your answer?

**Chapter 4:**

1. It’s easy to recognize Lucian as being unkind, but what about Annette? Is how she responded to Lucian how God teaches us to treat others?

2. Do you find yourself being more of a Lucian or an Annette; an easy-to-spot sinner or one who’s greater faults lay underneath the surface?

**Chapter 5:**

1**.** Have you ever done something wrong and been tempted to hide like Lucien or conceal the sin? Why is this a bad idea?

**Chapter 6:**

1. In the midst of a crisis, what did Grandmother do?

**Chapter 7:**

1. What was Grandmother trying to get Annette to understand when she asked her, “Have you ever thought; Annette, that when we do wrong it often brings its own punishment without anyone else interfering?”

**Chapter 8:**

1. If you were Lucien’s mother, how would you respond and why? How does God our Father respond when we fail?

**Chapter 9:**

1. The little family left the hospital without hearing the doctor’s advice. Can you imagine a situation in which you would be tempted to hurry things along for your own temporary comfort? How can you have greater patience during uncomfortable situations?

**Chapter 10:**

1. Were the townspeople right in how they “disciplined” Lucien? Do you think Jesus would have agreed with this or acted differently?
2. The old man advised Lucien, “…if you keep on trying you will find your happiness in loving, whether you are loved back or not.” Is this true? Why or why not?

**Chapter 11:**

1**.** Dani made demands of his family and was allowed many privileges because he had no mother and was crippled. How could this behavior become more crippling than the injured leg?

**Chapter 12:**

1. Monsieur Burnier did right by not seeking revenge and continuing to mow Lucien’s fields. However, he stopped short of forgiveness for he wouldn’t talk to the boy. Have you ever felt justified in half-forgiveness?
2. Annette not only refused to forgive Lucien, but she also acted as his judge. She said, “Why should he be happy? He deserved never to be happy again. He would not be happy if she could help it.” Which Bible verses warn against this attitude?

**Chapter 13:**

1. How did the old man learn about God’s forgiveness, grace, and love?

**Chapter 14:**

1. Annette’s character is changing. She’s cross with Dani, lying, and unhappy inside. Why?

**Chapter 15:**

1. Annette “realized that she couldn’t ask Jesus to come into her heart because her heart was full of hatred for Lucien. Jesus would not want to come into an angry, unforgiving heart. Either she would have to forgive and be kind, or else the Lord Jesus would have to stay outside.” Is this Biblically true? Why or why not? Can you think of some related Bible verses?

**Chapter16:**

1. Does what Grandmother tell Annette about the Lord Jesus coming in and helping chase away the shadows of hatred change your answer from Chapter 15? Why or why not? What are some Bible verses that show we should not wait to get our act together before we come to Jesus?

**Chapter 17:**

1. Annette’s prayer to ask Jesus to come into her heart speaks to both the questions posed from Chapter 15 and 16. How?

**Chapter 18:**

1. How does it feel to know you are welcomed and accepted into a family or group? How can we make sure others feel that acceptance from us?

**Chapter 19:**

1. Did Annette need to tell others about what she did to Lucien’s horse? Wouldn’t asking his forgiveness be enough? Why or why not?

**Chapter 20:**

1. Lucien noticed a difference in Annette after she asked Jesus into her heart. Was there a change in you when you accepted Christ into your heart?
2. If you haven’t had an opportunity to ask the Lord Jesus into your heart and experience the change He brings, would you like to? If so, below is a simple guide with Bible verses to help.

A. **A**dmit that you have broken God’s laws and you are a sinner. The penalty for sin is death, eternal death in a place called Hell. Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23

B. **B**elieve that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and then rose again to life on the third day to declare that He is who He said He was – Almighty God, faithful Savior, Deliverer from death and the grave. John 6:40

C. **C**onfess your sins to God, asking His forgiveness, and **C**onfess Him as Lord of your life by committing to live your life in obedience to His commandments as given in His Holy Word, the Bible. Romans 10:9

**Chapter 21:**

1. The Bible says, “Perfect love drives out fear.” How can we remember this and not be tempted to fear when situations are scary?

**Chapter 22:**

1. Describe a time when Jesus kept you or a loved one safe?

**Chapter 23:**

1. How do know that Monsieur Givet has forgiven his father?

**Chapter 24:**

1. Grandmother’s final advice to Annette was, “Remember, He (Jesus) is your master, and you are working to please Him.” Does this advice include mundane chores and schoolwork? If we took this advice to heart, how would some of these activities change?

**Chapter 25:**

1. Jesus welcomed children. How does your family or church welcome children in His name? Why is this such an important ministry?

**Chapter 26:**

1. Do you think it was happenstance that Ms. St. John ended the book with the dawning of Spring? Why or why not?