



#85 *The First Cover-up*



There once was a village that had no fighting. Long, long ago they had put down their swords in a pile at the edge of town and never returned to use them. To keep from having conflagrations, every person in the village took a solemn oath to resort to a 'cover-up' if there was any chance of having a fight with another villager. What was a cover-up you say? Well, at the first possibility of a disagreement that might lead to a fight, a villager would go home, take a cover off of the bed, and bring the cover to the edge of town and throw it on the pile of swords. This would mean getting busy to hurry home and knit another cover before night fell. In this way, the sun never set on a feud - at least not on any feud that was spoken. This went on for generations and the pile grew and grew. And the people learned to avoid working out difficulties - they just pretended to get along.

Although this village may sound to you like it was the perfect place to be because no villagers ever came to blows, they had several problems to be sure. For one thing, they had thrown so many covers on the pile for so many years, that they forgot that there were swords at the bottom of the pile. Also, they had avoided conflicts for so long that many townsfolk had forgotten how to work out disagreements by being truthful with each other.

So, when marauding swordsmen came to intimidate the village one fine autumn day, you can imagine the threat! Everyone in the town reacted instantly with a unity that was as if they had rehearsed their response - they unanimously avoided the fact that the robbers had come to make trouble. The villagers greeted the thieves and invited them into their homes. This did not end well.

The swordsman demanded that anything of value be stolen. Suddenly the villagers started to wake up to the fact that these men meant trouble. But what could they do? Suddenly, a small boy remembered a story that his great grandmother told him about the swords. He tried to tell others, but no one believed him, so he ran to the edge of town and uncovered the truth all by himself. There at the bottom of the huge pile of covers was the handle of a sword. He pulled it out, then used it to slash away some more covers to find more swords. He grabbed as many as he could carry and ran to the back doors of the village square. Immediately upon seeing the swords, villagers followed him to the pile, uncovered the rest of the swords and returned to fight off the marauders. The village was saved, and from that day forth, every person in the village took a solemn oath to speak their mind - even if it meant an argument or two.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES UNLAYERING TO SEE THE TRUTH