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April Grube
Andrews University

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Lost and Found

BY APRIL GRUBE

It was 12:30 a.m., and I intended to sprawl out on the empty seats beside me and sleep from Los Angeles to D.C. As soon as I saw him fumbling down the aisle, bumping passengers along the way, I knew he was my seatmate. “Name’s Billy ... on my way to a conference.” As he continued to chatter, I wondered if he would ever come up for air. This guy was crazy! And yet, he had a strange joy about him.

“What did you say your name was?”

“April,” I replied. “April Grube.”

“Excuse me,” he stuttered. “I didn’t quite catch that.”

I repeated my name more clearly, emphasizing the “b” in Grube that most mistake for “v.” He looked puzzled, as if I was lying.

“I can’t believe it,” he muttered. “You don’t know me, but I know you. I know how you think and feel. If it weren’t for you, I don’t know what would have become of me. April, it is a pleasure to meet you.”

As I stepped off the plane from Chile to Panama three years earlier, it would be only a short time until I realized my precious book was missing. *Searching for God Knows What* changed my life when I’d been close to giving up on Christianity. I wrote so many notes in that book there weren’t even margins anymore!

Little did I know that at that very moment a man named Billy was taking the seat I so recently vacated. Billy was coming home. A year earlier, he’d had enough of his parents and work. So he took off, heading to Brazil and later, Peru. On his journeys, he realized a similarity everywhere he went: There was always pain, always suffering. Billy had long ago given up on God and His “loving” nature. *No God would allow such pain*, he thought.

When there was nowhere else to go, Billy hiked to the nearest airport in Chile and

bought a ticket back to the States. He’d become an atheist and wanted everyone in America to know it.

As Billy searched for earphones in the pouch in front of him, he discovered instead a book filled with notes and devotions. His first instinct was to laugh at the sincerity of the reader, but was drawn to the written words inside. Billy had never known what he truly wanted. But somehow, he knew he wanted the same things the note writer wanted. He turned to the beginning of the book and began to read.

Billy finished the book early the next morning. As he turned the last page, he saw “April Grube” scrawled in a hurried cursive. Slowly, he closed the book, stared at the worn cover and put it back exactly where he’d found it. He closed his eyes and began to think. Billy had no idea what he was going to do with his life once he stepped off that plane. But he had hope.

I couldn’t help but cry when Billy finally explained how he knew me. I made an impact on a person without even knowing it! Somehow God used a 15-year-old girl, with a little help from her favorite author, to bring Billy back to the God who loves him more than anything. God works in the most outrageous ways.

April Grube lives in Riverside, California. She is a sophomore at Andrews University pursuing a double major in history and political science with an emphasis in secondary education.

