

# Rescue From Under the Bus

By Barbara Jean Gradia



**T**hat October in 7th grade, there was a freak ice storm. I ran for the line of buses, but the numbers were above the front windshields, so as I craned my neck while running, the lead bus pulled away. I was hurrying, trying to catch up and was unaware of the slippery ice coating the sidewalk. I fell and found myself flat under a bus. The wind was knocked out of me, my back hurt so much; I wanted to cry out, but couldn't. I saw the bus begin to move. I felt and saw the wheel touch the middle of my body and roll back a few inches in readiness to pull out, engine roaring. All I could imagine was getting crushed in the next few seconds. I couldn't move or communicate my fear to anyone but thought, "Oh God, help me!" Instantly, I was aware of two strong fingers under each armpit, pulling me out and lifting me high in the air. As I was being lifted up, the pain left my back, and coming back down, my breath was restored. As he set me on the sidewalk, I looked up at the nearly nine-foot man standing before me. He was thin but had a strong build. He wore a white buttoned-down shirt open at the neck, a woven brown leather belt and tan pants. His hair was a bright shock of golden-blond and he had a broad smile illuminating his face. I stuttered an amazed "Th-thank you," to which he nodded motioning with his head and replied melodically, "Your bus..." I looked over my shoulder and saw my friend Lorraine Delia standing up at the window of the moving bus yelling to the driver "Stop, stop! Barbara needs to get on." I turned immediately back to my rescuer-angel to thank him with more clarity and meaning, but he walked past me. He disappeared into thin air a few feet away! The bus driver honked the horn and I ran the few yards, much more sure-footed and sat next to Lorraine. I

thanked her for getting the driver to wait. She asked me, “Why were you standing there facing the school? Did you forget something?” I said, “No, didn’t you see me talking to that really handsome man?” “What man? There was nobody with you, Barb. You were standing there alone.” I was so awestruck, I couldn’t formulate the words to tell my dearest friend what had happened. I fell silent for the most of the ride home. When I told my parents over dinner what happened with my near-miss and rescue, Dad’s fork dropped to his plate and Mom just stared at me. She said, “Now wait a minute, there must be some explanation. The man who pulled you out was tall. How about Mr. Gulyas? (my Science teacher) He’s tall – I bet it was him.” “No Mom,” I answered. “Mr. Gulyas has salt-and-pepper hair, this guy was golden-blond, and he disappeared right in front of me, I know what I saw!” She shook her head saying, “No, I’m sure you were just shaken up. Go see Mr. Gulyas first thing tomorrow and tell him your parents said thank you for lifting you out from under the bus and saving your life. Do you understand?” I consented, dinner resumed, and Daddy just looked at me over the top rim of his glasses in that special Daddy-way he had... The next day, I went to school with trepidation, already sensing what the outcome would be, but I did as I was told. I achieved the exact result I knew I would when I told my teacher what Mom told me to say. A strange look came over his face as he declared, “I don’t know what you’re talking about. I certainly did not pull you out from under any bus!” I went away smiling and thanked God for sending me the angel. When Mom asked if I’d spoken to Mr. Gulyas, I said, “Yes.” When I told her what he said, both she and my Dad looked at each other, fell silent, and it was not spoken of again... that is, until now!