

## On a Hot Summer's Day

*By Marilyn Reeves*

Jason and Kelly got out of their car, fastened their fanny packs and their water bottles to their belts and then set out up the trail. The light breeze wafting through the evergreens was so refreshing, they congratulated themselves on escaping the heat back in Denver on this hot July day. Both of them were wearing tank tops and shorts. It had been so warm they hadn't even thought to pack a sweater or a windbreaker.

The trail was a bit rough and rocky, but that was okay. They were both young and athletic and welcomed the challenge of the wilderness. When they saw a muskrat sitting on a big rock up ahead, Kelly asked Jason if he would snap a picture, but he had left his cellphone back at the car. So they continued to move on up the trail until they felt hungry enough to stop for a bite of lunch. They sat on a log at the top of a ridge overlooking a beautiful green meadow, replete with columbine and other wild flowers, as they munched on their granola bars and sipped from their water bottles.

Suddenly the sky darkened and the first few raindrops started to spatter on their heads and bare shoulders. "Oh, oh – it's starting to rain," said Kelly. "Where did that big black cloud come from all the sudden?" said Jason. "I guess we'd better take cover."

They huddled under a big Douglas fir, which helped some, but soon they were shivering and shaking as the rain turned into a drenching downpour. Jagged bolts of bright lightning crazed the gray dome of the sky, and a horrific bang like a shot from a canon wracked the air as the top of a tall tree on the hill across the way exploded in a ball of fire, only to be quickly extinguished by the heavy rain.

"Oh, geez," said Jason, "I think we'd better forget about hiking on up to the lake and get down off this mountain as fast as we can!"

They ran back down the trail, treacherous now with flowing mud and slippery rocks. Then Kelly hit a batch of loose scree and went into an uncontrollable slide. Her feet went out from under her and her right hip took the brunt of it she skidded downhill, trying to break the fall by digging in her heels. Finally she came to a stop, the sharp rocks having left scrapes and cuts all along her legs and a bleeding gash just above her knee.

"Did you bring any bandages?" she cried. "No. I didn't even think about it. Here, let me tie my shirt around your leg like a tourniquet. Maybe that'll help stop the bleeding."

The rain continued to come down hard and heavy as Jason – now shirtless – tried to support Kelly as she limped on down the trail.

Cold, wet, exhausted, and still bleeding, all Kelly could manage to say when they finally reached the welcome shelter of the car was, "Next time, Jason, let's plan ahead!"