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For Mel

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Introduction

Me, Mel and Padre David, the priest who Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) hosted us in Pamparomas, Peru. Mel and I were about to begin a hike up the mountains to visit the lake that provides the town with its water. MELANIE FRICOT

Have you ever been to a place where it's dangerous to rinse your toothbrush under the tap?

When I was twenty-three, I visited my friend Mel, who had volunteered to lead development groups in Peru. For two months I hiked with her to tiny settlements in the mountains, worked on my Spanish, and even tried making bread in an adobe oven.

Then, suddenly, I got very sick. For days I spent almost all my time in the bathroom. Mel borrowed a truck to drive me three hours to the nearest hospital, and medical tests showed that bacteria (germs) from our water had multiplied in my digestive system. Antibiotics—and an intravenous drip that rehydrated my body—saved my life.

Not everyone Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) is so lucky. Every day thousands of people—most of them children—die because they've drunk dirty water (or they don't have clean water to wash with) and they can't get to a doctor. The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. Around the world, people are finding creative ways to collect and clean all the water they need. Did you know that some families in Botswana use solar power to turn salt water into fresh water? Or that some folks in Chile use huge nets to catch fog that becomes clean drinking water? And at schools in several places, kids collect clean water by playing on playground-powered water pumps!

Everyone on the planet has a right to clean water, and people are Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) working hard Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) to make this a reality. Want to find out more? Grab a water bottle, and come with me!

These lakes, high in the mountains above Pamparomas, are the local drinking water source. The lakes were first built hundreds of years ago, then fell into disrepair and were recently reconstructed. MICHELLE MULDER

Go with the Flow

In this tiny settlement in rural Peru, people get their drinking water from a stream that runs between the houses. You can see it here at the bottom of the photo. MICHELLE

MULDER

When I got sick in Peru, the news spread through the town quickly, and soon people appeared at our door with traditional remedies. Meanwhile, Mel whipped up more salty banana milkshakes than I'd ever imagined. (Yes, they Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) were just as disgusting as they sound, but we knew that I needed to drink sugar, salt and fluids to get better.) In the end, it was Mel's access to a truck and hospital that saved my life. Happily, I've never had to drink a salty milkshake since.

Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints)

CHAPTER ONE

A Drop to Drink

SLURP IT UP, BUTTERCUP

When you don't have a water tap nearby, rivers and lakes are crucial. These families in Morocco wash clothes in their local river. HENRY MULDER

If your family decided to move, what would you look for in a new place? A big living room? A school, playground, library or shops nearby? Thousands of years ago—and even today, in many places—the first thing you'd look for was the nearest lake or river.

Every living thing Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) needs water to survive. (And if you've ever swallowed salt water when swimming in the ocean, you know that not just any water will do. We need fresh, clean water.) Early humans slurped from rivers and lakes, using their hands as cups. These days, many people can drink a glass of water right in their own homes, simply by turning on a tap. How did we get here from there? The story

begins about 12,000 years ago, with the planting Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) of a seed.

HEY, WATER! COME THIS WAY!

Imagine waking up to the birds twittering and your stomach rumbling. You crawl out of bed to look for something to eat—not in the fridge, but in the bush outside your tent. A little while later, you're chewing on a chunk of meat and tossing back a few berries.

*This underground cistern in Istanbul, Turkey, was built 1,400 years ago by over 7,000 slaves.
GIOVANNI DE CARO/DREAMSTIME.COM*

WATER FACT: *A person can live for weeks without food, but only a few days without water. The human brain is 75 percent water. Blood has Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) even more water in it, and even our bones are 20 Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) percent water. No wonder we need to drink so often!*

For hundreds of thousands of years, people followed their food everywhere. If those antelopes (that your mom turned into amazing steaks) ran across the grassy plains in summertime, your family was there to meet (and eat) them. If those delicious purple berries grew in the river valley every September, you got there in time to Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) pick as many as you could.

Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints)

About 12,000 years ago, people in the Near East (western Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home (Orca Footprints) Asia) began to help nature along a bit. When they found a plant they liked, they cleared space to let it grow and brought the plant more water from the nearest lake or river. The plants grew bigger and yielded more food.

Every Last Drop Bringing Clean Water Home Orca Footprints

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