

*Alaskan*  
ADVENTURES



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Published by Redemption Press, PO Box 427, Enumclaw, WA 98022

Toll Free (844) 2REDEEM (273-3336)

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ISBN 13: 978-1-68314-219-5 (Print)

978-1-68314-220-1 (Hardcover)

978-1-68314-221-8 (ePub)

978-1-68314-222-5 (Mobi)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2017935280

**I WAS BORN** and raised in Canada, the eldest of four. After high school, I attended nursing school in Moose Jaw Sask. For many years, I'd dreamed of going to Alaska, and after graduation from nursing school and a year of Bible college, I convinced a friend to accompany me to Juneau. Another friend lived just a few miles out of Juneau in Auke Bay with her husband and two children. They were missionaries in charge of Minfield Children's Home, and that's where I met my husband Ken. He worked as a maintenance man and part time relief supervisor for the kids. We were married in Auke Bay and later returned to his home in Michigan where we continue to live.

The stories stem from incidents we encountered while living at the Children's Home and are based on actual events. Minfield Children's Home was located in Auke Bay for many years but closed some time after we left.



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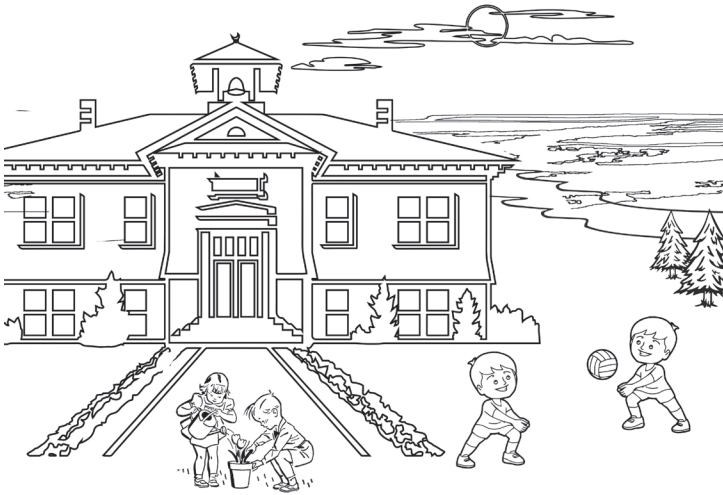


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## CHAPTER 1

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# Roy's New Home



**“HEY, ROY, WAKE** up. It’s breakfast time.”

Roy’s eyes flew open to see an unfamiliar face peering at him. “Where am I?” he wondered.

The voice continued, “Hi, I’m Joey. Welcome to Minfield Children’s Home. Where did you come from?”

Roy sat up abruptly. *Who in the world was Joey, and why was he asking questions?* Then Roy remembered. He had met Joey yesterday when he arrived. Joey was an orphan who had come to the home as a baby.

“Uh, I came from my home on the island of Craig. My dad is a fisherman. I’ll be going home as soon as my dad sells the fish he caught to the canneries.”

Roy swallowed painfully. He was ashamed to tell anyone that his parents used all the money they made on getting drunk. He really wondered if he would ever go back home.

Joey didn’t seem interested in his reasons. He just said, “Come on.”

Quickly, Roy pulled on his clothes, combed his hair, and ran off to the dining hall with his new

friend. He had never seen a kitchen so large. There were long tables set and waiting. The children took their places quickly. When everyone was quiet, Uncle Bob, the superintendent of the home, began to pray. Everyone's eyes were closed but Roy's. He looked around to see who Uncle Bob was talking to. Uncle Bob's eyes were closed, too.

Roy jabbed Joey in the ribs. "Who is he talking to?" he whispered loudly.

"Shh, I'll tell you later," Joey replied. As soon as the amen was said, Joey leaned over to say, "Uncle Bob was thanking God for our food."

"Who?" Roy asked. He'd heard of God before, but why should they be thanking Him? *Maybe He owns the grocery store*, Roy thought.

"By the way," Joey added, "We call all the staff members aunt or uncle instead of Mr., Mrs., or Miss. We're all a big family here."

Just then, Aunt Mary broke in to remind them of their table manners. Aunt Mary was Roy's "dorm

mother” and not related to uncle Bob. “Remember children, we don’t reach across the table; we ask that food be passed. We keep our elbows off the table and eat with our mouths closed. All food taken is to be eaten. We don’t waste anything.”

Roy was speechless. At home he had eaten what he wanted. If he didn’t like it, he threw it away. “They sure have a lot of rules here,” he muttered.

Memories of his island home flooded over him as he remembered the day the welfare people had come. They had said his parents were not caring for the children properly because their clothes were ragged, they had no shoes, and they didn’t go to school. The Welfare Department said the children would have to go to the orphanage. Roy had cried and refused to go, but it had done no good. Here he was with all his earthly belongings and no hope for escape.

As soon as breakfast was over, the children cleared the tables. Aunt Mary approached Roy.

“Roy, since this is your first day with us, you won’t have to help with the cleanup. Come, I’ll show you around and tell you how things work here.”

She took him through the dining hall to the other dorms and the laundry room and introduced him to the boys in his dorm. There were Joey, Fred, Michael, and Stephen. Roy liked Fred right away and felt sure they would be best buddies.

“After the dining room is cleaned and dishes are done, we have morning devotions, but you have a few minutes before we do that,” said Aunt Mary. “If you’d like to walk to the beach or around the buildings, you can. A bell will ring when we are ready. Just come back to our dorm then.”

Roy sighed in relief. A few minutes alone was exactly what he needed. His two sisters, Josephine and Helen, had come to Minfield Children’s Home six months ago and he was anxious to see them. He walked the few feet to the beach and sat on a rock as he gazed across the waters of Auke Bay.

The surrounding mountains comforted him as they reminded him of home.

He missed his family already. True, they didn't have much and often his dad would beat them in a drunken rage, but he loved them just the same. Things were sure different here. The sound of the bell startled him, and he rose to go.

The other boys were seated in a circle on the floor when he arrived. Joey patted a spot beside him. "Hey, Roy" he said, "I saved you a place."

Roy dropped to the rug with a soft, "Thanks."

Aunt Mary came then with a big black book under her arm. She sat down and began to read. Roy squirmed. *Things are really strange here*, he thought.

The reading was about God and His love. Roy had heard about God, at least he had heard his father say that name many times. But he'd never heard that God loved him personally. He listened intently, not daring to believe it. *Can this really be true? God cares about me?*

“Roy,” Aunt Mary said, “since this is Saturday, you will have time to get to know the other children and play games. But before you do that, I’m sure you’d like to unpack and put your clothes away. This is your closet and chest of drawers next to your bunk. You will be responsible to put your clothes away and put soiled ones in the basket for washing.”

Roy began this task eagerly. His very own bed and closet! At home, all of the children shared whatever there was. No one had his or her very own bed or closet.

The afternoon went quickly, and before he knew it, supper was ready and he was hungry as a bear. Once again, Uncle Bob prayed before they ate.

After supper, one of the fellows who worked there began playing some lively music on the piano. Everyone clapped and sang. Roy didn’t know any of the songs but he liked the music and clapped enthusiastically.

When the singing was done, Uncle Bob brought out a big black book like the one Aunt Mary had read from in the morning. *Oh boy*, thought Roy. *This again. Do they do this all the time?* he wondered.

Uncle Bob was a tall, rather heavysset man with very little hair on his head. He wore wire-rimmed glasses and smiled a lot. Now he was reading about God's love and God's plan for each person. Roy sat up then. *A plan? What kind of a plan?* He wondered if it was anything like the welfare plan. Would God take him away from here, too? The part about God loving him made him feel warm inside, and he wanted to know more about that.

Uncle Bob began to pray. "Lord, thank You for each of these children. Be with them and help them to get to know You. Be with their parents, too. Amen."

Roy raced to the refreshment table with the other boys then to get a snack. A few minutes later, they



all trudged off to the dorm to get bathed and ready for Sunday.

Finally, Roy dived into bed and pulled the blankets up under his chin. He had many questions but he was so tired. The minute his head hit the soft new pillow, he was in dreamland.

