

## Chapter 16

### March 29, 1964: Fort Shepley, Easter Sunday

Judson awoke stiff, shivering, and more than a little grumpy. He wondered, after spending only two nights in the bunker, how long any of them could endure it. Then his nose caught the scent of frying Spam, and he heard someone whistling merrily out by the bonfire. Was that Laura? What was that tune? "Christ the Lord is Risen Today!" It was Easter Sunday, of all things. He was on some other planet compared to all the other Easters when he had heard that tune. Memories of starched collars and Easter egg hunts, of organ music, choirs, and the comforting presence of his mother in the church pew beside him almost brought him to tears. Judson shook his head at the surreal conditions around him. Their accommodations may as well have been a tomb, and they were being held inside by the sleet and wind outside as securely as if a stone were rolled in front of the door. Our resurrection is still to come, if at all, he thought glumly. He stood up and walked stiffly to the outer hallway. He saw his dad enter with a load of firewood. Laura stopped whistling the hymn and turned toward him. "The Lord is risen!" she said to Jeffrey. "The Lord is risen, indeed!" he responded. For a moment, Judson caught a glimpse of a reality beyond the confines of bunker walls and driving sleet. Judson shook his head, perplexed and amused, and still a bit grouchy. He stared at his dad; since when had Lutherans become so cheerful? Somehow, the adults were finding comfort in this day.

He heard a rustling beside him, and turned to greet Sandy Ann. "Today's Easter, I guess. Russian Orthodox Easter is not until May 3 this year," she said. "We call it Pascha (Пасха)." She was silent for only a moment before adding, "But the Lord is risen every day, isn't He?" Judson could not help but chuckle and smile at his friend the theologian. Whatever else they might have to complain about here in the clammy hillside, none of them was alone, and there was amazing comfort in that. They walked to the fire, and Judson thanked Laura for reminding him about the significance of the day.

Laura's early morning labors were displayed on a couple of plates beside the fire. Breakfast was fried Spam on freezer bread with jam if desired. Laura apologized for not being able to cook very well on the little fire in front of them, but Judson told her, "Fried Spam with jam is the best food what am!" Herman, Barbara, and Rinny had joined them by this time. Hunger overtook anyone's desire to argue with Judson's culinary review.

Herman looked out the open door of the bunker and remarked that the wind seemed to have slacked off considerably since last night. But the bone-chilling, soaking sleet had not lessened, so they were still effectively sealed in their tomb. They huddled together, but this time they stayed in the hallway, near the front room, where the adults were staying. So how does a tired collection of young people pass the time on such an occasion? By delving into a tired collection of jokes. Jay-Jay had heard hundreds of "elephant jokes" and "knock-knock jokes" back at his old school in Arizona, but he still managed to hear a few that he'd never

heard before. Sandy Ann waxed philosophical, thanks to an elephant joke that she got from her uncle Jakob: "Why do elephants paint their toenails red? To hide in the strawberry patch." That much Judson had already heard. But she continued, "Have you ever *seen* an elephant in a strawberry patch? See, it *works*, doesn't it!" It could have been their tiredness, but Judson couldn't stop laughing at the absurdity of it all.

One of Judson's knock-knock jokes veered perilously close to the kind that had gotten him in trouble earlier. Herman played the straight man part as Judson said, "Knock-knock!" (Who's there?) "Madame!" (Madame who?) "Madame foot's caught in the door!" Laura, a few feet away and attempting to clean out the frying pan she'd used at breakfast, laughed out loud at that one, and Mr. Hansen chided, "Now don't encourage him, please!" But he didn't sound particularly upset.

A couple of seconds later, another one of those unnerving six-second aftershocks sent everyone into choruses of "*Whooftie!*" A small, calm voice spoke after silence had settled in. "See, Jay-Jay, God didn't want you to tell that joke!" —Barbara, followed by a ripple of laughter. Then another voice, "My heart hurts every time we have one of those big ones." —Sandy Ann, with her hand on her chest. Judson decided to throw out the unspoken rule about not holding hands. He grasped hers, and saw her grateful smile in what passed for light in the dim room.

He looked over his shoulder to find that Herman and Rinny had the same idea. It was a time to need human contact, and to provide it. Nothing about the next indefinite time period would be easy. He heard the voices of the adults around him, and realized they were fighting hard to stay calm also. Who could ever prepare emotionally for such a disaster? What were they going to do next? Was there even anybody out there to help them? "It's good to hold on to someone," said Judson quietly, romantic entanglements the furthest thing from his mind. "Th... thank you, Jay-Jay," Sandy Ann said shakily.

The whole group was quiet for some minutes, likely caught up in some variation of what Judson was thinking. Laura broke the uneasy silence as these thoughts descended on all of them. "I keep thinking about... uh, I remember a song I learned in church down in Oregon. I can only seem to recall the middle verse and the chorus. But here goes. Don't throw any tomatoes!" She cleared her throat, and suddenly the rooms of the bunker filled with the sound of her lovely alto voice.

"My soul has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay.  
Tho' some may dwell where these abound, my prayer, my aim, is higher ground.  
Lord, lift me up and let me stand by faith on heaven's stable land,  
A higher place than I have found, Lord, plant my feet on higher ground!"

The little sobs all around him confirmed what Judson suspected: there wasn't a dry eye in the bunker. "Amen, sister!" called a voice from the doorway beyond the fire. Marty and Billy Jr. had found them. Judson felt robbed of the moment, as though all the warm hope the song had provided had been sucked out of the open door and into the sleet beyond.

## March 29, Fort Sheplen: The Storm Breaks

Gail and Alice emerged out of the dark bunker and greeted the two men, and Judson could hear the men's yellow slickers crinkle with their embraces. Alice, frankly relieved that the father of her children had survived, and deciding to be forgiving, gave her husband Billy Jr. a big hug, then joined Gail in hugging their brother Marty. So far, this is all sweetness and light; wait for these two clowns to find a way to ruin it, thought Judson bitterly. He glanced down at Sandy Ann and saw her clenching her fists and staring sternly at the two men. She was having the same reaction to these two. Marla put it into words, as only she could. She stepped forward and spoke with all the anger and bitterness that many in the group felt. "We are doing our best to get by up here, and there won't be room for even one single asshole. Everybody here wants to punch you out right now, so behave yourselves, or go back to the damn boat." The authoritative woman sheriff of the moment had spoken. Alice broke in with a "Now Marla, that's no way to speak to your fa..." when Billy Jr. interrupted her, raising his hand and stepping forward toward the fire pit. Judson noticed with some satisfaction that he was limping badly and was using a piece of driftwood as a cane. Way to go, Ward!

Billy Jr. slowly looked around with a clear and serious expression that Judson had never seen in him before. When he finally spoke, his voice had none of its usual bluster. "Alice, everybody, I... we need to talk. I'm no good with the words, but I know I've been the town's..." he looked at Marla and nodded, "...king of the assholes for a long time. I'm sure Ward prob'ly told you how it all went, down there in the harbor. Ward, you are one ballsy young man. Nobody messes with me without hurting for it. But after you broke my foot..." Ward and most everyone else gasped at this, "I think you might of anyway—well, after we'd made it out to deep water, Marty finally had enough. He grabbed me by the collar, shoved me back down on the hatch cover and said, 'Why, Billy? Why do we act like we hate those people? Even our own families?'"

Billy Jr. paused and looked at Marty, who nodded grimly. They both had important things to say to their families and neighbors. Marty smiled sheepishly at Gail and Rinny. "Billy here is gonna try to make me into some kind of hero, but I am no such thing. During the earthquake, I was more concerned with losing my mukoola barrel than I was for my own sister and her kid. I mebbe came to my senses out on the boat a *minute* or two sooner than Billy Jr., that's all." Marty lowered his head. "Keep goin' Billy," he said quietly.

Billy Jr. cleared his throat and stood up straighter. "I started to dump on Marty with all the reasons I ever had for being pissed off at the world. He just kept repeating, 'Why, Billy? Why do we act this way?' like some kinda three year old. After each one. Like a broken record. 'Why, Billy? Why do we hate that church guy Toma so much? *Why*, Billy? Why do we hate Faltrip so much that we shoot at our own families tryin' to hit his house?' Stuff like that is all he would say, no matter *what* I said. Well, I tried to stand up 'n take a swing at 'im—I was *sure* seein' red by then—but he shoved me back down. I think he threatened to stand on my foot

himself. I sat back down and shut up awhile, wishing I could find a *gun* even..." Billy Jr. cleared his throat, looked at Anicia and then at Jakob Pedersen, and cleared his throat again. "...and I guess I figured out why." Well I'll be damned, thought Judson. The fat old weasel is actually choking up here.

Finally Billy Jr. was composed enough to continue. "I'll make this short 'n sweet. It's not a... explanation, and sure as hell, it's not a... excuse. It's... a *confession*. I acted this way, an' my father an' his father all the way back... 'cause we was raised to hate all the rules 'cept our own, hate teachers and Priests, hate the Church, 'n even ta hate God." Billy paused again, and when he resumed, his tone was softer and his diction was clearer. "And *this* is how somebody acts when they hate God, simple as that. My family's been like a curse... some kinda storm cloud hangin' over this village for a long time now. And so, I've been the devil's own favorite son for... *all* my life. I see that now. Even though God brought angels my way..." At this he suddenly bowed his head and wept, then hobbled over and hugged Alice.

Mr. Lindseth appeared to be about to say something, but Betty shushed him. There are times when quiet is called for. The whole group was quiet until Billy Jr. composed himself and continued. "The Good Lord was tryin' all this time, tryin' to get my attention. He wanted to hit me with some sense after I tried to cheat old Mr. Faltrip, and so Faltrip clobbered me. He got little Jay-Jay to stand up to me when I called Laura here every name I could think of. The look in that kid's eye, as though every speck of him wanted to tear me apart for that... almost like God was trying to help me find a conscience. I am sorry, Laura, you're a... *good* person, and it takes one to know one, so I didn't see it." He turned toward Laura, who stared back, motionless and misty eyed, listening like the rest of them. She finally smiled and looked down. Billy scratched his chin stubble and continued. "Then young Ward here really 'put his foot down,' to keep me from screwing up some more. Then to top it all, I think God sent me a talking jackass, my brother-in-law Marty. I think I'll hear 'Why, Billy?' in my dreams for all my *life* now." There was a titter of laughter in spite of the seriousness of the moment.

Billy's arm made a swift sideways motion, as though tossing away something disgusting. "Dammit, you are all good people—crazy as a yard fulla crows sometimes, but good people, 'n I've been doin' everything I could think of ta screw you guys over as often as I could for as long as I c'n remember." He paused and took a deep breath here, not nearly as good at marathon sentences as Sandy Ann. He cleared his throat again and continued, "I thought about this, all day yesterday and most 'a the night, 'n that's the best I can do by way of telling it. I am... *sorry*..." He held up his hand at this, as if to keep anyone from interrupting. "...and I know you won't believe me if I don't prove it, so just *watch* me." With this, he pounded his fist into his other hand, to reinforce his words even to himself. "If ever'body wants me to, I'll move Alice and th' kids 'n me somewhere else so you can all get a new start without this Selivanoff *curse* hangin' over your head. An' I mean it." Finally done, Billy Jr. stood stock-still and exhaled loudly, a sound of relief and release. Not your typical revival sermon, but it'll do, thought Judson. Guess I'll have to give up my right to be pissed off at him now, he mused. Suddenly he realized that the same thing had already happened between him and Ward.

Barbara stood up, looked at Mr. Selivanoff, and said, "We need everybody to help now. Please don't go away. Everything is broken and we need everybody to help now." Mr. Lindseth stood by Billy Jr. now, with his arm around the big man. "She's right, Billy — you too, Marty — we need to all pull together. This is no time to bail out on us. Please stay and help!" A strong young female voice cut in. "Daddy, I promise not to talk back anymore. But if you try to move us, I'll nail my foot to whatever floor is left down there..." Marla got the biggest laugh for her inadvertent graveyard humor, "...because we belong *here*, warts and all. This time we Selivanoffs get a chance *not* to be the ones who put a knife into the heart of this village."

Laura was suddenly sobbing now, and so was Sandy Ann. In a few moments, Laura looked up at Mr. Hansen, who was a bit misty-eyed himself, and shook her head in amazement. Sandy Ann looked at Judson and did pretty much the same thing. "Apparently there's more than one way to shake up this village, and you just found it, Mr. Selivanoff," said Judson, and the bunker erupted in a chorus of laughs and sobs. "I'm hungry," interrupted little Jake. "Do you have anything *un-canny* to eat?" More laughter at little Jake's pun was followed by Betty's cheery rejoinder, "Oh, I think we'll do whatever we *can*!" The tension lifted, everyone welcomed Billy Jr. and Marty, and everyone started telling their stories. Howie, Betty, Laura, and several others slipped away to start preparing lunch. Using his diesel and gasoline "joy juice," Howie soon had the fire roaring down by the mess hall, grateful that he and some of the other adults had stashed some dry firewood in the mess hall before the storm. He was also grateful for the use of Marty's yellow slicker.

In spite of everyone having to huddle in the entrance hallway of the bunker to escape the rain, and the fact that the cooks had a harder time staying dry than cooking, by the time it was completed, lunch was a wonderful feast. Judson would probably have thought so before the quake. Betty gave a lot of the credit to the Hansens for having flour, cooking oil, cereal, powdered milk, and all the stuff no one else could find out on the field. The last of the thawed halibut had stayed cool in its Blazo box in the back of the bunker. The ladies had taken the halibut, which had amounted to about four or five pounds, and sliced it into two-inch pieces. Then they dipped them in milk made from the powder and lake water, then rolled the moistened pieces in a mixture of smashed corn flakes and flour. Then Howie Lindseth, merging his grilling skills from the skating party and frying skills from the *alodakee* feast, had soon laid out a huge pile of golden, crispy fried halibut.

Their feast would have cost a pretty penny in any restaurant in the country. Little Jake's protests notwithstanding, several cans of green beans made the meal somewhat balanced. But the tension had been broken, the wandering bad boys had returned, and somehow the cloud over the village was slowly passing away. Up in a cold concrete bunker, with no homes and no possessions except what they'd brought with them, it seemed that the villagers felt richer now than back in the glory days of salmon. Without yet saying so, every last one of them was now united in their determination to bring their town back.

Full, reasonably warm, and mostly dry, Judson reflected on all of this with a strange satisfaction. Conditions were horrible, but it was more pleasant to be in the village than it had ever been, and not just for Judson, but for everyone. Another of those six-second aftershocks abruptly interrupted Judson's little reverie, but that in turn was interrupted by Ward's surprisingly good imitation of a certain Liverpool singer, "Well shake it up baby, now, twist and shout...!" It took Marla a good half hour to stop giggling, and Sandy Ann and Rinny almost as long.

Mr. Lindseth chose that moment to interrupt them. "Well, if I could interrupt for a moment, could you all come with me? We got a lot of 'dishes' to do!" The volunteers held their questions and followed him. The mid-afternoon weather had cleared considerably, although it was still damp and cold. Mr. Lindseth had a roaring fire going down at the mess hall level, and Judson noted large new gaps in the walls of the collapsed end of the old building, the likely source of the wood for the blaze. On Howie's metal rack sat two oval tubs about half full of water. He stuck his finger in one, and pulled it out. "Ok, good enough. Herman, help me carry this to the picnic table, and let's try not to spill it." Judson helped him with the second one.

Then Mr. Lindseth dipped about half of the water out of each one and into a third tub. He squirted some dish soap into the first tub, and about a half cup of liquid bleach into the middle one, and left the final tub as plain warm rinse water. "Wash, bleach, rinse, dry." Mr. Lindseth pointed to each tub in turn and then to a stack of dishtowels that Judson recognized as coming from their stash in the superintendent's house. When had they gone back down to get those? "We will start with the 'know nothing' cans. Barbara, can you help us sort these by numbers? We'll label them once we know what's what." He showed Barbara the numbers stamped on several cans, and she nodded. Easy task for ol' single-focus Barbara.

The conscripts took to their new task willingly. It was good to be doing something useful, like they'd done the day before when they had helped to collect these cans. Betty had found some rubber gloves in her camping box, and they set to work. Judson washed, Herman dipped the cans in the bleach solution, and Sandy Ann did the rinsing. Rinny and the "Holy Terrors" did the drying, and the boys managed to complain about it so much that Herman and Judson offered to trade jobs with them. The complaining stopped instantly. The drying crew took the dried cans to Barbara, who placed each one in a pile of like-numbered ones on a large sheet of plywood lying on the ground. Every now and then Barbara ran into a can that didn't match anything. The mystery cans she put in a pail that they started calling "The Experiment Bucket." These cans could be tomato paste or dog food or Norwegian sardines in mustard sauce—although each of those cans usually had its own distinctive size and shape. It was easy to tell which cans contained soup, but not all varieties blend well, so that was still a mystery.

Finally, by late afternoon, they were finished with all the cans they'd collected. The kids delicately washed the ones with labels still attached (dunked them in a more accurate description) and dried them carefully, so as not to lose the labels. Those

were stashed on the pantry shelves in the old abandoned mess hall, since the kitchen end was still intact. Judson took an armful over to the pantry. Besides Spam and Dinty Moore beef stew on the old shelves, he noticed more of those bright yellow and red cans of Tunies hot dogs. These he had met the first day he visited the store, and had made himself a solemn vow in their presence never to eat them. Once, even in the remoteness of this Alaskan village, he had brought with him an assumption of an endless and dependable supply of food, and never had the slightest thought of going hungry. Now, as the "Tunies" reminded him, all of that was a distant memory in the face of the disaster they had experienced. Last night, those Tunies and jam on freezer bread had tasted fantastic. He returned to the fire feeling a bit chastened, and thought of how wonderful their Thanksgiving feast in the cannery mess hall had been, back in the 'olden times.' Chastened, he vowed to appreciate more and complain less.

Betty Lindseth came to inspect their work and announced, "Even after such a good lunch, we're still gonna need a supper. So tonight is 'le cuisine du surprise cans' – grab one each of those 'know nothing' cans and let's see what we got!" Sandy Ann and Rinny grabbed several cans each, followed by the other volunteers. "How about we open these cans from the end that *doesn't* have the numbers, so we won't be confused as to what's what?" said Rinny. She was turning out to be a very practical-minded gal when she chose to be. Herman noticed, and called her "Our chief can detective." Rinny didn't quite look in Herman's direction, but she retrieved her signature sultry voice, saying, I *can* detect handsome *guys*, too!" Judson noticed Herman's discomfort and nonchalantly added, "Let's keep a lid on all that stuff for now, ok? So... I guess we add 'can detectives' to our list of talents!" Herman forced a laugh and buried himself in the work. Soon they had most cans labeled and stashed away. But Betty and Laura looked at the meager pile of dwindling cans and shook their heads. These plus whatever else they might find in the ruins below would last for only a few weeks at best. They hoped that somebody would check in on them and help them get some kind of temporary housing, and some supplies. "Even tents up here under the trees wouldn't be so bad for a while," said Betty.

### **March 29: The Village In Exile**

In late afternoon, with the rain still lightly falling, Howard Lindseth announced that since they were all staying in the twin bunkers one more night, they would have a "Talent night to pass the time." Then he, Billy Jr. and Marla took off down the hill in his jeep and trailer on some errand after an animated conversation with Mr. Hansen that was far enough away that Judson could not overhear. The three returned just before the food was ready, and parked the jeep on the uphill side of the bunker. The trailer was covered with a tarp.

They all had a serviceable dinner made more palatable by lots of good conversation. There was plenty of discussion about the talent show. It would be a 'partial memory night,' too, thought Judson, realizing no one had access to any books or materials of any kind. He once might have thought that a disaster like this would wipe these people out, but for now, they were able to ignore the things they

lost, holding onto each other instead. What entertainment could they possibly come up with in a situation like this?

Judson needn't have worried. A few minutes later, he heard Truck Driver Jake tuning his Gibson Hummingbird. Well at least *something* would be good tonight! The twins and April and Barbara were off by themselves. Suddenly the twins were jumping up and down and squealing. "Our song, our song, our song!" The girls looked around suspiciously, and Barbara said, "We need to practice, but not here. Come with me." She took April by the hand, followed closely by Sonya and Paris, and they walked down the hill to a Quonset hut on the far side of the old mess hall. April soon emerged, ran up to Jakob Pedersen, and returned with him and his guitar to the Quonset. They all reappeared a half-hour later, barely able to contain their excitement at what they'd chosen to do.

Judson and Herman, helping with the dishes, decided that they would give a little demonstration of their self-defense moves, and decided to make it a case of the bumbling bully, with as much humor injected into it as they could think of. They talked out a series of 'you do this, then I'll do that,' moves, including a couple of variations on what Judson called a 'rush and roll,' then defending against a kick from behind, and various spectacular-looking ways of tripping each other that might be entertaining to the audience, but would likely not work with an angry and unpredictable opponent. They were almost as excited as the little girls had been.

About half an hour after sunset, when the adults were satisfied that the cleanup from dinner was finished, Mr. Lindseth honked the squeaky little horn on the jeep. Everyone collected (mostly moving from the room closest to the fire to the room closest to the passageway door they'd managed to shut). Mr. Lindseth and Billy Selivanoff squeezed through the big doorway and suddenly the purr of a small engine could be heard outside. When they returned, Billy Jr. warned everybody not to look, and plugged in two stands of lights, which he'd rigged up using floodlights from his boat. The gray concrete room was flooded with electric light for the first time since the fort had been evacuated so many years before. The blankets were all folded into little cushions for everyone to use, but it would still be uncomfortable squatting on the floor. Nobody cared. "Thanks to Billy Selivanoff, for letting us borrow his light plant from the boat," said Howie Lindseth. Judson noticed that there was still a little pile of something covered with the tarp they'd used earlier, and that Marla was carefully guarding it. He shrugged; must be something to do with tonight's entertainment.

Laura served as the announcer for the talent show, and said that there would be a concert by Sokroshera Cove's own "Johnny Small Change" Jake Pedersen—since Mr. Cash couldn't make it—after whoever else was prepared to share. Marla walked up to her and whispered something in her ear. Laura laughed, and pounded Marla on the back. "You're a brat, Marla, you know that? But ok, I guess. Let's see how it works out." Only the girls, Herman and Judson, Jake Pedersen, and Marla's surprise contribution were slated for the festivities, but that was four more things than most nights before the quake and tidal wave. Whatever it was, it would do. It might even be fun. Judson plopped down on a blanket for the first act.



The four girls, the twins Sonya and Paris Selivanoff, April Bazaroff, and Barbara Rezoﬀ, held hands and stood facing the lights. Judson was surprised when April, normally the quietest, announced, "We're going to sing the twins' favorite song, called 'The Whale.'" she paused for a moment, and Marla took that opportunity to say, "Oh, *hell* no!" just a bit too loudly. Apparently, Beatles records were not the only things that had been played to death on the Selivanoff's record player. April ignored the comment and continued, "Mr. Pedersen will help us with his guitar." April suddenly went off-script. "He's gonna be my daddy!" All four girls clapped enthusiastically at that.

Jakob Pedersen stepped out of the shadows, his Gibson Hummingbird guitar casting strange reflections around the room. He strummed a chord and narrated: "This is a song about a whale with a most unusual appetite! It's from Burl Ives, and from a record that the twins have *apparently* listened to a few times." Marla groaned, "A few times? I seriously think I'm gonna be *sick*." "Oh, stop. It'll be cute!" Billy Jr. cut in, playfully, not crossly. He actually wanted to hear his daughters sing. Marla subdued herself. As Judson could have predicted, the four girls were in pretty much four different keys, but they soon hovered closer to the notes as Jake played a little louder.

"In San Francisco town there lived a whale,  
She ate pork chops by the pail,  
By the pillbox, by the suitcase,  
By the bathtub, by the schooner!"

Judson noted with interest that Barbara was the one stepping out and helping them with the lyrics when they looked like they were about to forget them. Barbara has a near-photographic memory for things like this, apparently, thought Judson. The girls had all rubbed their tummies at the word "schooner," showing off their homemade choreography, at least partially understanding the meaning, too.

"Her name is Sara and she's a peach,  
But you can't leave food within her reach,  
Nor nurse-maids, nor Airedales,  
Nor chocolate ice cream sodas."

The twins pronounced the last line as "ice cweem sothaz." It just added to the growing mayhem in the room. The girls were turning out to be natural entertainers.

"She eats a lot but when she smiles,  
You can see her teeth for miles and miles,  
And her adenoids, and her spare ribs,  
And things too fierce to mention."

When the girls said *adenoids*, they pinched their noses, making them sound like they all had colds. The adults could barely subdue themselves to hear the last

verse. Jake Pedersen strummed a few chords and then stepped over to the girls and back to the shadows, and the room recovered.

"So... what can you do in a case like that?  
What can you do but sit on your hat,  
Or your toothbrush, or your grandmother,  
Or anything else that's helpless."

The room erupted in loud approval as the girls finished the song and, holding hands, bowed deeply. Then they spontaneously gave themselves a group hug. It took awhile for the spontaneous chorus of "Awww!" to settle down. Judson wondered just how many times those girls had listened to that song to learn it that well. More examples of kids without television, it seemed to him. Live, on some TV show, their song would have been a moment for the ages. The girls separated to three highly appreciative mothers, who gave them more hugs. Laura brought Barbara out with her, partly because she wouldn't let go of her mom's hand, to announce the next part of the program. "That will be a hard act to follow. But we now have my Herman and Jeffrey's Jay-Jay to demonstrate the case of the clumsy assailant, the bumbling bully, or something like that."

Judson and Herman sprang into action, taking their two blankets and borrowing several more until there was a pad of sorts on the concrete floor. Judson mentioned to Herman that the loose blankets would make any moves, good or bad, difficult. The first two moves went well. Herman lunged at Judson, who rolled him over his back and laid him down on the blankets, but stopped Herman's fall by not letting go. Then the move was repeated with Judson taking the fall. There were appreciative claps all around, and little Jake groused, "Hey, I wanted to learn how to do that!" Ward was smiling and nodding; Judson made sure he'd forewarned him of the nature of their demonstration. To Ward it was now water under the bridge, or in their case, old school in the lake; that issue was over and gone. The next move was for Herman to try to kick Judson from behind. Judson grabbed his foot, pushed and twisted, and Herman lost his balance, spilling onto the blankets. But knowing what was coming, Herman had just rolled and stood back up. There was more applause at that one.

Then Herman came and stood beside Judson, looking serious. "What's wrong with Sandy Ann?" said Herman, a bit too loudly. Herman executed a perfect tripping maneuver at the exact instant that Judson was scanning the crowd for Sandy Ann. The next second, Judson was flat on the blankets, and the crowd roared with laughter. This time Sandy Ann seemed reasonably composed, clapping with the rest of them. Herman had warned her about the stunt; neither of them knew how it would turn out. Judson, quick to recover, stood up just as Herman took a bow. He decided to bow also, to make it appear that it was all part of the show. Herman leaned over and said quietly, "See, I *told* you I could beat you if I just distracted you first!" Then he took another bow; so did Judson. Thankfully, the glare of the floodlights didn't show blushes very well.

Jake Pedersen came up with his guitar, and sang some songs, including a few from recent radio: Bobby Bare's "Detroit City," Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," The Brothers Four's "Roving Gambler," and many more, only occasionally fumbling for a lyric, which was usually supplied by one of the appreciative listeners. Finally, he indicated he had one more song to sing. He announced, "We started tonight's performance with a song from Burl Ives. I'm gonna close with one, also. However, this is not a kid's song. In fact, Anicia told me this was the last record that her husband bought her, for Christmas 1955, right before he passed away. She said she'd try to help me sing it tonight." Jake turned toward Anicia and smiled. She nodded to him, and then said, "Well, I got nothing better to do since somebody forgot to tie up my house down there! I think I need a new deck hand." Mrs. Novikoff proved to be as good at graveyard humor as anyone else was up there on the hill, it turned out. Judson wasn't surprised. The old lady was just plain *sharp*.

The elder Jake cleared his throat and fiddled with the tuning of his guitar; Judson had seen this before. Jakob had a whole bucketful of delaying tactics, and Judson thought it was sweet. The song must be meaningful to *him*, too. Jakob finally began. It was a lovely little waltz tune, and the lyrics were as romantic as one might expect in a gift from a husband to a wife of many years. Anicia's voice was surprisingly strong, and her voice was deeper than Jake's, the combination oddly melodious. As the song progressed, some of the words stuck in Judson's memory:

The mightiest mountain may tumble down,  
The world may even stop spinning round,  
A star may fall to the deep blue sea,  
But nothing will change you and me!  
For true love goes on and on,  
Our love will be ever new,  
True love goes on and on,  
My darling I'll always love you!

As the last verse began, some in the room began to applaud. Judson turned his eyes from Jake Pedersen and looked around. Petey and Dottie Kurtashkin were dancing! Seeing this, Jake and Anicia sang the first verse again, and nobody noticed. Everyone was watching little Dottie, who was looking up into the eyes of her not much taller husband, modeling the sentiment of the song for all to see.

Then the program was over. But Marla went to the tarp, removed it, and revealed Judson's Voice of Music stereo. "Hope you don't mind, Jay-Jay." He didn't. With Marla acting as disc jockey, the kids had a good chance to hear their collection of Beatles tunes. Marla was very thankful that the records weren't scattered across the meadow and the cove, like so many of their things were. The only one she'd lost was "She Loves You," which she'd left on the turntable at home by accident on the day of the party. Not that she cared; that particular song was always going to be associated now with the great earthquake that had started while she played it, and with the twins' confused cries of "Why, Marla?"

The little Voice of Music stereo sounded amazing in the bunker, like being at a junior high school dance in a gym with a big PA system. She went over to Jeffrey and Laura and asked if they would dance, and Judson heard them politely refuse. "Nobody can top Petey and Dottie tonight!" said Laura, a little catch in her voice, and Jeffrey had briefly squeezed Laura's hand and nodded. Marla found the stereo remake of "Let's Dance" and played it anyway, and the older folks nodded and smiled, but nobody got up to dance except Eagle, little Jake, and April, reprising their disjointed dance routines from Judson's party. The music sounded fantastic in the concrete room, but sometimes the pace of things is set by something you never expected. No one else felt like dancing, although they did clap enthusiastically for the gyrating kids. After a few lively tunes, Marla finally gave up, and shut off and folded up the record player. Soon after that, Billy Jr. cut the power, and everyone thanked him and went to bed. Marla didn't look too disappointed at failing to repeat the success of Judson's birthday dance party. She, along with everyone else, was going to remember the scene of Petey and Dottie dancing for a very long time. And no one was likely to forget the three girls and their charming whale song, either.

### **Monday, March 30, 1964: The Hill and the Bay**

"Anybody know what this is?" Judson stated, holding up a tall can. Rinny, who usually knew, just shrugged. Judson declared, "I think it's the Boston brown bread... you know, that stuff with the raisins." They opened it and it wasn't. Pork and beans. "Could 'a shook it," said Herman, showing off an audible slosh with a matching can. "I'll bet this is what you're after." Herman held up a similarly tall can but with many little ridges instead of two or three big ones. "Remember, they gotta get the stuff to slide out!" Sure enough, that one made no sound when he shook it. Betty Lindseth took the unopened mystery can from Herman. "Well, let's have a look then," she said. "Bingo! It's that canned brown bread alright!" Mrs. Lindseth picked up another can, shook it, nodded, and opened it, discovering cherry pie filling. "Ok, we have dessert," she stated. "A slice of the canned bread and a scoop of the cherries ought 'a be pretty good! Now what to add to that can of baked beans?" Someone found Spam from the 'labeled' stash, the kind with bits of cheese in it. Perfect. Rinny went to the shelves in the fort's old mess hall to find cans with matching numbers so there'd be enough to feed everyone.

Under Betty's leadership the kids (Herman and Rinny turned out to be best at this) devised menu items, duplicated them in large enough batches, and served them at meals. Judson and little Jake were best in what could politely be called the semi-edible division, a.k.a. the 'most likely to make someone sick' category. For example, they once cooked a 'manly meatloaf' made out of Friskies canned dog food (horsemeat, most likely) the chopped-up heels of various loaves of bread, a little can of pizza sauce, and lots of pepper. All the other 'manly men' from Eagle to Herman to Ward had to try it, and then danced around the campfire hooting and grunting like Neanderthals. But they never made that splendid dish again. For after a couple of bites, and a few longing looks from the village dogs, Jay-Jay and little Jake realized their recipe's true calling. They put down their plates of 'manly meatloaf' without fanfare, and let the dogs finish it off.

The *pagooks* from the hill had found all the freezers from all the houses on the meadow by now. The ones that were open and filled with salt water from the waves were therefore full of useless garbage instead of usable food. All the rest had by now been emptied of all edible contents. But just in time, Mr. Hansen and Laura remembered that both he and Mr. Faltrip had freezers, so far untouched. Jeffrey borrowed the jeep and Laura and they headed down the hill to check it out. They brought back several roasts (of local beef, of course), more loaves of bread, more formerly frozen salmonberries, and several cans of ham. These said, "Keep refrigerated," but being men, Jeffrey and Mr. Faltrip had both thought they took up less room in the freezer.

The formerly frozen food might last another day and then need to be tossed, so Betty, Laura, Alice and Gail did some menu planning. They prepared the food most likely to spoil first, cooked the roasts, and "refrigerated" most of it in the back of the bunker. Thus, they extended their last stash of "un-canny" food for a couple more days. Both Howie and Betty excelled in creative recombining of the limited ingredients at their disposal. The fantastic meals of freezer findings served around the campfires were soon the stuff of legend. In those moments, what they were experiencing hardly seemed like survival. Then, when they had to eat canned food again, everyone remembered that's exactly what it was. Survival. In that spirit and in good faith that the two lost sheep had truly rejoined the flock, Jeffrey Hansen had insisted on bringing Billy Jr. and Marty their rifles, which he and Laura found propped in a closet in Mr. Faltrip's apartment. They also noticed his secondary marine band radio, now promoted to 'only radio' on shore with the destruction of the store and office, and decided to ask if Jake Pedersen could think of a way of getting power back for the superintendent's house.

Right after lunch on Monday, the adults had a city council meeting of sorts up at the picnic table. The weather was mostly sunny after that awful weekend storm. Ward and Windy reported that they had gone hiking as far as the beach off Unuak Channel, and discovered that Lake Stephanie was now a lagoon. An earthen dam, built to raise the water level for cannery operations back in the herring days, had almost completely collapsed, leaving a steep channel of steadily eroding earth and gravel. If that dam had not collapsed, the water that the creek couldn't handle would possibly have tried to escape through the swampy area near east beach, and that would have completely eroded the road up into the fort by now. It was sad to think that the lovely lake behind the village would now be a brackish lagoon, surrounded by marsh and dead trees. Lake Stephanie, as a salt-water lagoon full of debris, would never be usable as a water supply. But more serious, should rebuilding begin in earnest, was the new difficulty of bringing water from the upper lake. The town would need to look for a way to replace the old war-era water mains, which had shattered in at least three places that they knew about.

At the meeting, the adults decided that Danny and the *Salmonchanted Eve* would go to Kodiak and see if they could get some tents, portable generators, lights, food supplies, and whatever else would help them survive here. Laura gave him the account number at the National Bank of Alaska that he could use to purchase items. "Even if the bank got flooded out, somebody by now has set up a temporary one,"

Laura guessed. "Almost everybody in town has an account there!" Mr. Faltrip had told her to use whatever she needed in the event of an emergency, and she guessed that this qualified!

Gail quickly volunteered to go along with Danny on the trip to Kodiak. "A real hardship assignment for you isn't it?" said Jakob Pedersen, giving his brother a punch in the arm. Billy Jr. had lucked out; although he would limp for a few days, he had not had his foot broken by young Ward. However, they both decided to work with someone else for a while. The *Marla S.* with Billy Jr. at the helm and Windy Bazaroff as his deck hand, and the *Kashka Cyerry* with Marty Pankoff and Ward Bazaroff, went off to scour the beaches and the waterways around the island for anything they could possibly use, and to do a quick survey of the area. After the informal council meeting, Jakob Pedersen and Petey Kurtashkin went out and looked over the *Kolodka II's* engine to see what had gone wrong for Ward during the evacuation. It was at times like this that everyone missed Will Rezoff's skills, but no one put it to words.

Just doing something, *anything*, was encouraging to the entire population. The ladies and the older kids, with the younger ones carefully kept out of harm's way, went down to the meadow to see what else could be salvaged from the houses. Judson stood with them near the Rezoff property and couldn't help but weep with them as they saw their village for the first time. "Jeffrey let me cry on his shoulder this morning when he brought me by here," said Laura. She held her head up. "All I can say is, I wonder what we'll be able to make of this place once we start over?" Betty sighed and said nothing. When the ladies walked up to the old Lindseth home, lying mostly on its side with one wall caved in, and the kellydoor in pieces over near the stand of spruce trees, Betty refused to go inside. But she did let little Jake go in.

"Should Jake be..." Judson started to say. Sandy Ann looked at Judson and interrupted, "Don't be surprised, Jay-Jay. He's been able to get under the building and into the side closets of the attic so many times! She'd have a fit when he'd get into those tiny spaces before, but she needs him now," explained Sandy Ann, and followed Jake inside. Betty didn't object. Soon her kids handed her a Blazo box with a few things in it. The box was probably the same one that had formerly been a side table for their reading lamp beside the couch, once covered with an embroidered cloth to disguise its identity. Now it was even more useful by returning to its original role as a sturdy wooden box. The kids had already gone back for more when Betty abruptly sat down and began to cry. There, wrapped carefully in a damp towel, was almost all of Betty's tea set, given to her on their wedding day by Anicia and her late husband. The delicate china had rolled around in a cupboard, but surprisingly, more than half of the pieces had survived. Such small tangible reminders of their previous lives would be all they would have now. Laura put her arm around Betty.

They heard a little squeal from someone somewhere inside the house, and moments later Jake emerged, carrying a sturdy wooden model of a Grumman Goose, painted in Kodiak Airways red on white, that his uncle Jake had made for

him last Christmas. He waved it in the air in triumph. Now he had his memory piece; what had Sandy Ann found? No one heard anything for a long minute, and Betty stuck her head in through a broken window and called, "Serafina? Are you ok?" Looking inside was a mistake, for Betty backed away, and collapsed in sobs again.

Within moments, Sandy Ann emerged, stepping carefully over the broken window glass. She had a misshapen blob and a piece of paper, and her eyes were shining. "Jay-Jay, look!" He came over. She held up her old Raggedy Ann doll, a bit more stained than before. "It was caught on a nail in what used to be the ceiling. But look at this! I found it on top of the mattress. It floated around in there on the mattress and it's dry. I remember that some stuff fell on the bed when my bookshelf tipped over. And it's dry now. Look at this!" Sandy Ann could be forgiven for repeating herself. There in her other hand was Judson's birthday card to her. She opened it to show his drawing of the Thought Spot past the oil shed. The adults read the cover caption and looked at the drawing again. "Better keep that," said Alice, putting her arm around her. "Oh, I plan to!" Sandy Ann's eyes shone, and she flashed a smile at Judson, who felt some tears forming and turned away.

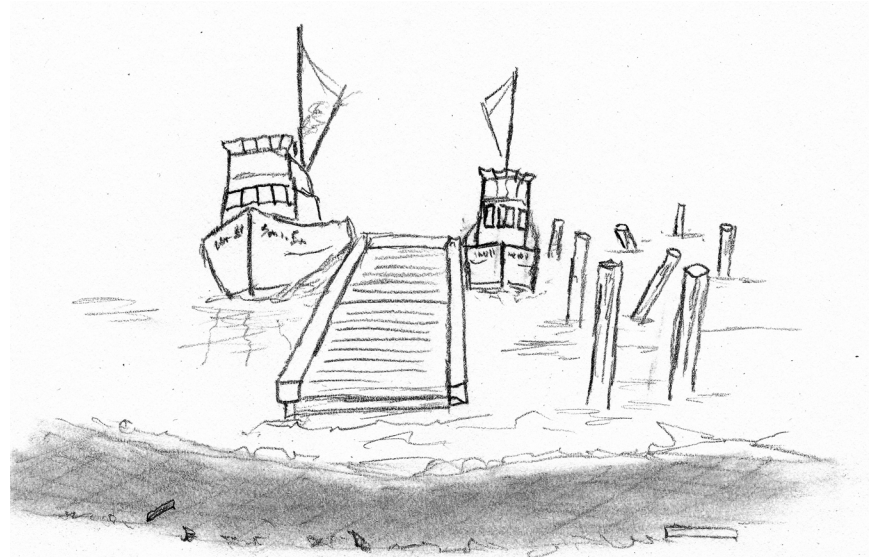
The Selivanoff home was easier to get into, like a sedan after an accident, when you find that the back doors still open. Alice marched in bravely and searched around. It was almost as though, having gotten a "new" husband, she didn't mind that her house was lost. Alice donated some plates and silverware to their camp up on the hill, plus whatever cans she could reach. But she began to cry when she found a throw pillow embroidered by one of her grandmothers years before she and William had gotten married. "I can't believe it! I haven't been able to find this for years. It must have been stuffed behind something. It'll be just fine after I dry it out good."

Thus, nearly every lady had something to remind them of their old life. Alice and Betty turned to Laura. "Oh, I'm so sorry there's nothing to find from your place!" "Well, don't be! Remember, part of my house fell down during the quake, and we snuck in right after, before we got the word to evacuate. Herman and I got Mr. Lindseth to take a couple of boxes up to the superintendent's house, and we saved Will's records and Victrola, too. We probably saved more than anyone else did, because we lost our house while we were still nearby to get stuff out of it. We just automatically wanted to move our best stuff to somewhere safe. I think it comes from being married to a wonderful *pagook* for all those years." Misty eyed, Laura laughed, and gave the women a big hug. "Still, I'm going to miss that saggy old house!"

Just then, Petey and the elder Jake emerged through the beach grass, all smiles. The *Kolodka II*'s old gasoline engine's breakdown had been minor, some gunk in the fuel line, that had nothing at all to do with what Ward had been asking of it. In spite of the damage to his home, Petey smiled with contentment. He was more attached to his old boat than to his home, and quite happy that the *Kolodka II* would live to sail another day.

Laura was still thinking of what she and Jeffrey had found in Owen's apartment. "Do you think we could get a generator from somewhere up to the superintendent's house? Then we could have regular radio schedules and start to make contact with the outside world. I'll bet Owen's frantic about us!" Petey cut in with, "I don't think a boat generator like Billy's would handle the load, not if you wanna run the freezers too." Jakob nodded, and then seemed to remember something. "Well, I actually do know where I can find a generator," said Jakob with a smile, "But I'd be shot dead if I didn't finish my job first." He didn't explain, and didn't look around either. Judson saw Jakob talking with his father later that evening

At that moment, they heard a boat horn, followed by another. They all walked out toward Stepan's Beach. Into the bay came both the *Kashka Cyerry* and the *Marla S.*, on either side of something long and low to the water. It seemed to be resistant to their efforts to move it, and was kicking up a big wake in its bow. So it was something made to float, but not to move, thought Judson. The boats took it carefully past where the pilings of the old dock stood lonesome in the water, and brought it close to where the bunkhouse had once stood. They aimed to get near to those pilings, and then push the thing into the beach there between the wrecked net building and the bunkhouse pilings. Suddenly Judson recognized it as a marina-style float such as the Standard Oil dock or the small boat harbor in Kodiak used to have. The float could have come from nearby, possibly Westerbrook's cannery, but due to the still unpredictable tides, it could easily be from much farther away.



The Salmonchanted Eve and Kolodka II  
bring in part of a boat harbor float  
to tie to the remaining bunkhouse pilings

Jakob Pedersen guessed at their plan and ran down to the beach near their target. Windy Bazaroff jumped off the boat and ran down the captured float toward Jakob. He had a coil of polypropylene rope in his hand. "Here, tie this to the toughest looking piling from the old bunkhouse," he hollered, and threw enough of the line to



Jakob for him to catch. There was a cleat still attached to part of the float, and Windy used it to pull the float in toward shore. The men had used some brains; the far end of the float still had its big square wooden bumper, and the near end didn't—easier to load and unload at the shore end that way. It hit bottom six feet from the shore. "We'll have to pull it up farther whenever we hit the highest tide. Then the far end will still be deep enough for maybe one boat at a time to tie up and unload. This is gonna help us a lot!" Jakob declared. Then Judson noticed Billy Jr. and Marty talking to each other. Moments later, Ward jumped off his seiner with a coil of rope and a small anchor. Even I know what they're doing, thought Judson.

Marty jumped down, adjusted the rope to the right length, and threw the anchor off the side closest to his boat. He then jumped aboard the *Marla S.* and soon emerged with another coil attached to another anchor. He did the same for the side closest to that boat. "Not going anywhere now," he shouted to the folks on the beach, and Judson clapped, joined by the rest of the onlookers. Judson looked up the bank. There was Howie Lindseth, just arriving in his jeep. Jakob Pedersen greeted him. "Do you think we could find some planks to use as a ramp for our new boat dock?" "Ah *-hookh!*" said Mr. Lindseth. Sandy Ann and little Jake joined them.

Off they went in the direction of the meadow to *pagook* some good lumber. In the jeep, Judson asked Mr. Lindseth why they had put the float on the far side of the creek, when most of the village was on the other side. "There are almost no pilings left from where the old dock used to be, and some of them are broken off under the water. This was the only place where we knew for sure that the water underneath was clear of obstructions and where we also had good pilings to secure it to." Judson had not seen Mr. Lindseth talk to anyone from the boats, but they all seemed to have organically figured out the best course of action. Judson guessed that creating a new bridge across the creek would be easier than trying to secure that float on the far side of the creek. Besides, the only usable building, the superintendent's duplex, was on that side of the creek. It made sense to start with what was still usable. There was a normal level of competence, which everyone possessed just from living in a remote and difficult environment. But now it seemed it had been kicked into high gear by the disaster.

They made their way carefully across the old section of the long dock that now served as a bridge. Eagle, who was a bit out of breath, met them. "I think I found a couple of oil barrels floating in the lake, down at that end," he panted, pointing toward east beach. "Don't think they'll go anywhere until we're done here," said Mr. Lindseth, and explained their errand. "Oh, I saw maybe ten or more planks like that between here and the tree swings," said Eagle (everyone understood he meant the stand of spruce trees). He hopped in the back of the trailer and off they went. Within a few moments they had found a couple of good planks, but the kids had to be careful, because the edges were sometimes pretty beat up, and all of them seemed to have spikes sticking out of them at odd angles. The sound of these planks getting ripped from their places in docks and under buildings must have been earsplitting, thought Judson, and shuddered, finally grateful for his gray blanket on the hill.

Following Eagle's lead as he jumped out and zigzagged through the debris so the jeep could follow, pointing out the planks as he went, they soon had more than enough to build a suitable ramp on the beach. "We have a problem, kids," said Mr. Lindseth. "I won't be able to get these across that creek. We'll have to walk them across and then reload." The kids didn't mind; in the backs of their brains, they all realized that this was literally the time of their lives. They would be telling their great grandchildren about how they survived, and they all wanted to be living *here* when that time came. Mr. Lindseth sensed their enthusiasm and marveled that in just a few short months they'd gone from the threat of a ghost town of empty buildings to a bustling, busy village of enthusiastic residents, but with almost nothing but wreckage for housing.

Once the helpers had piled the lumber back on the trailer, then unloaded it again at the edge of the beach near the new float, the group rode wearily back up to camp. The ladies had hiked up earlier, and had a fine meal of leftover roast beef chunks, canned peas and carrots, and sliced Boston brown bread, with canned blueberry pie filling this time. Around the fire, Billy Jr. told them, "Danny radioed us from Kodiak. The town's a horrible mess, and the channel and harbor are actually dangerous from all the boats that went down. They're just starting to mark the wrecks they can't move. Says he'll have more luck trying to round up supplies in the morning, so they're staying the night." Little Jake immediately went into "Ummmm!" mode, but Billy added, "He wanted you all to know that he found Gail a place to stay out at the Mission for the night. Sorry, little Jake, but no big story... *yet*." Billy Jr. actually had a real, genuine, fatherly twinkle in his eye, thought Judson. I'll bet it did those men good to find that boat harbor float and do something helpful for their village.

Billy Jr. also told them some more details of how they found the float that now served as their emergency dock. "We were up by Kolodka Point when we saw the float in the kelp beds. We were able to use the skiffs to break it loose. But we saw where the *PES-4* went. It's swamped and smashed up under the cliff there at Kolodka Point. It's gone." Judson realized that Petey Kurtashkin would be saddened by this; his son had run the *PES-4* when the cannery had been processing salmon. Everyone was quiet for a few moments, as though paying their respects to the passing of a family member. "Shame," somebody said quietly.

But Mr. Lindseth, who now more than ever was a natural cheerleader for the recovery, spoke up. "Yeah, but the *PES-7* can be fixed up and dragged back to the water with only a little bit of work! All we need is a tractor of some kind after we get the hole patched." If we had some ham, we could have ham and eggs, if we had some eggs, thought Judson to himself, repeating another of his grandma's sayings. This village needs a lot of almost everything right now. Everything except spirit, he reminded himself. That, they have in abundance.

When the kids had hiked up the old road to their cold, uncomfortable, and completely un-private sleeping quarters, they were surprised that there were several lines strung between the trees near the lower Quonset huts. On each line was clothing of every size and shape in a haphazard, random mess, but the lines

represented a pressing need: a change of clothes! When he went to his own sleeping spot, he found a stack of neatly folded clothes and underwear, removed no doubt from his still-dry chest of drawers in the superintendent's house. A little note in Laura's handwriting (she must have scrounged around in Faltrip's home office for paper and pen) said, "Here's some clean clothes. Could you see if Ward and Herman can fit any of them? We're thinking of actually burning what you boys have on now!" It was signed by Laura, but with a little smiley face. He and the other young men decided to change for dinner. He understood; he'd been getting crusty.

That night, Judson could not find his dad or Truck Brother Jake, and he saw the jeep's trailer parked outside, but not the jeep. He heard the jeep go by, down toward the lower Quonsets, but didn't see either man until morning. He thought his dad smelled strangely of diesel fumes when he saw him at breakfast, and he had a little smile on his face (and managed to change the subject) when Judson asked him where he'd been.

### **Tuesday, March 31, 1964: Sokroshera Island**

Early on Tuesday morning, Mr. Lindseth, Jakob Pedersen, and Windy Bazaroff took the jeep and brought the cannery generator down to the meadow. It had been left up at the cliffside fort when the first cistern door was opened, and now it was desperately needed. Jeffrey Hansen and Laura Rezoff followed in Danny's truck, but not before attracting Judson, Sandy Ann, and Herman, who piled into the pickup bed. Jeffrey leaned over and whispered something into Laura's ear, and she nodded and looked back at them; Judson couldn't figure out her expression. At the bottom of the hill, after carefully negotiating the muddy mess that the bottom of the dip was becoming, they turned right, past the same alder brush patch where Pariscovia used to wait for Owen so many years before, and onto the meadow near the far eastern end of the lake. Windy's little skiff was pulled up there, and inside were a pair of hip boots and a coil of rope with a four-foot wide loop with a slip knot tied in it so that it could easily be adjusted. Howie, Jakob, and Windy joined them after leaving the generator at the superintendent's house.

Judson, standing on the shoreline, suddenly saw the objects of their affection. There, floating in the lake, no more than an inch or so above the water, were three oil barrels. One floated higher, about three inches above the water. Herman pointed at that and said, "Gasoline, or else not full. We hope it's gas." The other two must be diesel oil, then, thought Judson. Herman continued. "Ladies and gentlemen, meet part of the Truck Brothers' fuel supply, most likely." Windy added, "And now *our* fuel supply, with their compliments." Then he hopped into the skiff and rowed over toward the first one. He tested the depth with his oar, slipped on his hip boots, and stepped into the water, holding the loop of the rope in one hand. He carefully slid the rope over the barrel, and then walked the other end of the rope up to Howie, Jeffrey and the rest of them. With Windy guiding and pushing, and everyone else pulling on the rope, they got the barrel up on the shoreline grass. Mr. Lindseth then rolled it up to a level spot and tipped it up, bung side up of course. Nobody would be stupid enough to—Judson realized that just a few months ago, *he* would have been stupid enough to tip it up bung side down.

The group soon had all three barrels standing within easy distance of the road. "If we decide to, we c'n just leave 'em here. But we gotta find somebody's oil pump—you know, long straight piece of pipe with a crank or a handle in the middle and a hose coming out of the top. We gotta have that if we want to get the fuel out of here and into there." Mr. Lindseth had explained what an oil pump was for Judson's benefit. Now Howie pointed from the barrels to his jeep. "Well, gotta go see what it'll take to get Laura back on the air." Right! Judson remembered that Laura had been the voice of the cannery and Sokroshera Cove for years. Wonder if old Mr. Faltrip's radio even works? But that was a silly question, Judson realized, knowing Mr. Faltrip.

They bounced across the meadow, following the now well-marked detours around parts of buildings and large logs that littered the brown grass. The jeep, but not the Ford, could navigate the temporary bridge over the creek, so they parked on the far side and walked across. Finally, they reached the driveway to the superintendent's house, and found that somebody had managed to push the jitney that had landed there off to the side. "Nice decoration, huh," said Mr. Hansen with a laugh. Such 'decorations' littered the whole meadow. They all trudged up the steps, and followed Laura into Mr. Faltrip's home office.

Truck Brother Jake made a quick jog around the building and indicated the backside near the Hansen's kellydoor. "Over here," he called to Mr. Hansen. "Junction box's over here—we can splice in." Mr. Lindseth had backed the generator trailer past the big cottonwoods, and around to the back, upsetting some long-unused flowerbeds in the process. He'd parked the generator so that it backed up almost to the rear steps. The junction box was on the outside wall of the Hansen's kellydoor, to the left of the steps as you come in, so the jumper line would have only a short distance. In a few moments, the generator and the box were connected. Jake went ahead and disconnected the cannery power; who knew how long it would be, if ever, before those old lines would be 'live' again. But he carefully tied them off and insulated the leads with electrical tape, just in case, and then hooked them well out of reach on the side of the building. This is one man who would never make another electrical mistake, not after the tragic accident that killed Will Rezoff. "Awright, fire her up!"

Mr. Lindseth bent over the little Onan generator and hit the glow plug on its diesel engine, then the starter. The engine roared to life, in a puff of black smoke with all the familiar bus fumes. When Jakob threw the switch, the engine went down a note in pitch, but stayed steady. It was nothing more than the duplex's two freezers and two refrigerators remembering their jobs. They checked the fuel supply. "Got 'bout a quarter tank," said Howie. "Gotta find somebody's oil pump," he repeated. They both walked around the building to the entrance to Mr. Faltrip's apartment. Judson followed them in.

Laura was fiddling with the radio. She heard voices from the tinny speaker, and nodded with satisfaction. "I think it's gonna work. Here, it's on 2512 now." She depressed the button on the handheld microphone and spoke, with practiced ease.

"*Salmonchanted Eve, Salmonchanted Eve*, this is Sokroshera Cove calling. Radio check from Owen's office." "Roger, Laura, read you nice and clear, not quite as strong as the old signal. ETA about three this afternoon. Just loading the last of the supplies, over." "Roger, Danny, thank you. Good that this thing can reach Kodiak. Any news on Owen?" "Roger, Laura. He left a telegram with the bank in case somebody showed up there. Pretty smart guy. He'll have a lot more to say when I bring the telegram, over." "Roger, Danny. Did ya find anything that might help us?" "Roger, and registered the village for emergency aid with the Government folks, gave 'em a head count and such. Big stuff coming I hope, but gonna take awhile. Everybody seems to need everything." "Roger, Danny. Thanks for whatever anyone can send, over." "Ah, Roger, Laura. See you at three, *Salmonchanted Eve* out." Laura signed off with two clicks.

Laura turned toward the listeners crowded into Mr. Faltrip's private office, and said, "Well boys, I guess we know it works!" She would have said more, but she was busy for the next fifteen minutes fielding greetings and best wishes from Port Bailey, San Juan cannery in Uganik Bay, Peggy Dyson the Marine Operator in Kodiak, and the *Sally G.* in the bay in Ouzinkie. Sam Gelsen asked if the magazine people had showed up yet, and Laura laughed it off. He signed off with, "Ok, then, Laura. Guess we'll hear a lot more about you guys later on." She turned back to the group in the office and said, "What's he talking about?" Nobody knew. Laura then gave an announcement in the blind that the radio would only be operating from ten to noon every day due to fuel concerns, and would anyone hearing a call for them outside those hours please pass on the message. Several series of double clicks in response told her that they would. Howie went to shut off the generator.

They all crossed the creek, piled into the two vehicles, and headed back up the hill. After a lunch of the very last of their freezer treasures, the whole hill rested until about two thirty. Then Howie, Jeffrey, Laura, and Windy took the jeep and reattached trailer down the hill, and every other interested soul scampered down the hill after them. Most of the population was soon waiting by their new float for the arrival of Danny's boat. About a quarter after three, the *Salmonchanted Eve* purred into sight, and seeing the float, made a beeline toward it. Danny tied up across the end of the float and summoned helpers to unload cargo. Danny handed an envelope to Laura: Faltrip's telegram. She stuck it in her pocket to read later. Everyone began to sort the supplies and start putting them to use.