

## Chapter 20

### May 3, 1964, Russian Orthodox *Pascha*

The following morning, the breakfast crowd was nearly silent, in spite of the usual festive atmosphere of the day some called "Russian Easter," for they were devouring the *kulich* with eager intensity. Nobody minded that there was no margarine or butter on the island at that moment. When Jakob Pedersen noticed that the supply of *kulich* had been nearly exhausted and that the noise level was starting to rise, he glanced at Anya and Anicia, who nodded and smiled. He stood up and said in a strong voice, "*Khristos voskrese!*" The two women responded, together, "*Voistinu voskrese!*" Laura Rezoff, sitting across from Judson and Jeffrey, leaned toward them and translated, "Christ is risen!" Betty, at the next table, responded, "In truth, He is risen!" The Hansens nodded, appreciatively, recognizing in the ancient words their own familiar Easter greeting.

Marla, however, looked straight at Jakob Pedersen, her eyes revealing that she had never heard this before. "Mr. Pedersen, could we all say that? I'd like to learn it." Billy Jr. nodded, and Alice briefly put her head on her husband's shoulder. So they *had* been serious about learning the "Church things," thought Judson. Jakob Pedersen smiled and complied, and they all said it three or four times. Judson realized again, what a great Blessed Reader the elder Pedersen would make. For the next two or three days, the Selivanoff twins frequently repeated the greeting to each other with great gusto, although it came out sounding like, "Cwistaws Bo's Cweazy!" But the Church's Gospel had begun to penetrate deeply into the soul of the Selivanoff household, and Judson couldn't help but feel relief and gratitude.

Before they left the table that morning, Jakob had another thing to tell his neighbors. "Tomorrow, Brother Toma, the Priest, and singers from Kodiak, folks from Ouzinkie, and Father Gerasim of Monk's Lagoon will all be joining us to hold a ceremony to bury our Monk, Father Zachar. Because of *Pascha*, it is as close to the day of the Monk's disappearance as we could make it. I understand they'll be bringing a repast in honor of Father Zachar for us to share afterwards. We wouldn't have been able to have a feast afterward during Lent! So we're going to be very busy tomorrow. There will be no construction work done tomorrow..." here he looked at Jeffrey Hansen, "...and there will also be no school until Tuesday. So all you rascals who forgot to do your homework have been showered with mercy! We'll start helping the guests unload things and set up the ceremony right after breakfast, so we'll need all the drivers and all the trucks except Owen's make-out machine for the morning. It's looking like rain, so dress accordingly." There was a ripple of excitement, and a few chuckles, too. Jakob Pedersen was learning just how to handle a crowd, and had managed to make complicated things seem understandable and important at the same time. Judson was again impressed with the man.

## **Monday, May 4, 1964. East Beach, Sokroshera Island**

As expected, Monday dawned with light rain, that famous Kodiak mist that didn't manage to drip much, but still soaked everything in sight. Breakfast was moved into the fort's old mess hall, where the roof was at least temporarily watertight. Betty decided on trying the C-rations again, and this time she'd previewed it. She was sure that this variety would go down much easier than "Lima Beans with Ham and Applesauce." This time the emergency rations were called "Egg with Potato and Shredded Roast Beef." This military concoction was not nearly as green as the infamous previous menu item that had resembled all sorts of unmentionable substances. With a little pepper, it went down pretty well. In honor of their heartfelt complaints the last time the "C-rations" had appeared, not a soul complained this time, and almost everyone was audibly grateful to Betty "for all you do," etc. That at least was the unvarnished truth!

By the time the breakfast dishes were cleared away, involving a quick dash through the liquid air to the field kitchen and its sinks, the first guests for the ceremony had begun to arrive. They chose to anchor out in the little bay above the Monk's sunken vessel rather than going all the way to the Cove. A large crabber called the *Malina Belle*, bigger than the *Sally G.* or the *Marla S.*, anchored off east beach. The guests stood on the decks and gazed at the beach and the water of the bay, where so much history had taken place, and where the divers had recovered the remains of the Monk they came to honor today. Unfortunately, the tidal wave erosion had rendered the east beach bluff impassible, and that beach was the least hospitable on the island in any case. Therefore, the crabber soon loaded up several skiff-loads of passengers, and at least a dozen large boxes of freight, some labeled "funeral lunch," and sent them around the point to Stepan's Beach to unload. The *Malina Belle* remained at anchor off east beach in symbolic tribute. The visitors, most of whom were lifelong residents of the Alaska coastline, didn't think twice about jumping in a skiff for a brisk ride into the Cove; east beach was the proper place to anchor for this solemn occasion.

All the town's vehicles, except the fire truck, which was the most impractical for the purpose in any case, were pressed into service ferrying supplies up to the field kitchen and old mess hall, or bringing people from Stepan's Beach to the site of the ceremonies. One of the first people off the boat was Brother Toma, who joined the rest in helping to unload freight and get passengers situated. Soon, some of the passengers from the *Malina Belle* were preparing the east beach bluff for the interment ceremony.

Up the hill at the campsite, the kids helped stash the freight from Kodiak in the old mess hall, wood stove aglow, and the field kitchen tent. When they finished, they walked down the hill to east beach to observe the ceremony. When they got to the bluff, they found that Mr. Lindseth and Windy Bazaroff had already dug a fine hole for the casket using a small skip loader. The Monk would be buried on the same ridge where Judson, his dad, and Marla had waited for a wave to recede before roaring up the hill on the night of the tidal waves. Judson noticed that the burial

site was also across the road from where Pariscovia Rezoff used to hide in the alders awaiting the fire truck, all those years before.

Most of the dirt the men had removed from the grave went into the dump truck. Gail drove it away from the dig site and parked it a short distance away in case more soil was needed. Danny was nowhere to be seen, and neither was his truck. Ward, Marla, Rinny, and Jakob were busy spreading canvas tarps over the ground around the hole; after the rain, the ground was a muddy mess. Jakob's yellow boom truck was parked next to the dump truck.

The *Malina Belle* was soon joined at anchor by another large crabber. It had just arrived from Ouzinkie with many passengers arriving for the ceremony. Judson recognized it as the *Sally G.*, the same boat that had helped to retrieve the Monk's remains. That seemed very appropriate to him, somehow. It was towing several skiffs to facilitate faster unloading. Judson recognized Sam Gelsen running the outboard in one of them. A group of about eight or ten people from Ouzinkie was aboard the tender, and soon had been ferried to shore. Sam Gelsen returned to his boat, and was standing on the deck with someone who looked like a Priest. As soon as Jakob noticed that Sam was back on his boat, he got in his boom truck and headed toward Stepan's Beach.

In typically unpredictable fashion (you'd have to be a Kodiak area resident to know what that means), the sun peeked out from behind the thinning clouds, and a light breeze from the northwest, sheltered almost perfectly by the hills of Fort Sheplen, made the site of the burial ceremony much more pleasant. There were plenty of clouds, and the sky to the north remained stubbornly gray. Some clouds were low enough to obscure the top of Mount Sokroshera, but it looked like soon it would be in the clear as well. Off past Teplov point, Judson caught the faintest hint of a rainbow in the receding clouds.

Judson looked back at the bay. Someone was taking a skiff back out to the larger of the two crabbers, and taking Brother Toma with them. Judson wondered aloud where the casket was, but only so that Herman and Sandy Ann could hear. Herman replied, "Watch. I think they're bringing the Monk now." Sam Gelsen and the man in the black robe got in his skiff. A skiff from the larger boat, with several people in it, including Brother Toma, headed down toward the cove entrance, followed by Sam Gelsen and the Priest in his skiff.

Within a few minutes, Danny's truck arrived, the men, including Brother Toma, carefully bracing the simple, handmade wooden casket so it wouldn't bounce. Judson had never seen anyone drive so carefully, at least not in Sokroshera Cove! Behind them came Jakob in his boom truck, with the Priest in the front seat. Sam Gelsen and more people than he ever thought would fit were holding on in the truck bed. The jeep followed closely behind, driven by Marty. It too was loaded down with as many people as he'd ever seen it carry. Marty and Danny must have been waiting at the beach. The trucks parked, and a group of men, including a few who had just arrived on shore, prepared to carry the casket.

The mysterious Priest got out of Jakob's truck, with his assistance. He had a large silver cross around his neck. His silver hair shone from under his Priestly headgear. Brother Toma came over to the kids for a few moments, apologizing that he'd be too busy to talk soon. "I thought I should tell you who the person was in Jakob's truck. He is Father Gerasim, an Archimandrite Monk-Priest. That's one of the highest honors afforded to a Monk in the Russian Orthodox Church." Brother Toma went on to explain that Father Gerasim had come from Russia in the early years of the century, and had spent the past decades tending and restoring the hermitage of Father Herman at Monk's Lagoon on Spruce Island. Father Gerasim would be conducting most of the ceremony today; he, like Father Zachar, was following in *Apa Herman's* footsteps.

As the kids listened, Brother Toma explained briefly that he had consulted with Father Gerasim before he even set foot on Sokroshera Island, and was eager to show the elderly, honored Archimandrite all the things that the martyred Monk had brought from Russia. "His entire house at Monk's Lagoon is smaller than the kellydoor on your old house," said Herman to Sandy Ann. "We visited him a couple of summers ago when my great grandma Anicia was still able to travel by boat." Brother Toma nodded; he'd recently been there, too. Brother Toma continued to explain that the collapsed cave and subsequent robbery attempt had thwarted his efforts to show the Archimandrite the long-lost treasures. And now they were hidden safely in the ladder room, beneath the summit of Mount Sokroshera. "But I was able to bring back the two Ikons that our robbers signed for, and I will make sure they are visible in the old Army mess hall before all these good folks leave." Brother Toma excused himself and joined the dignitaries from Kodiak in greeting Father Gerasim, and accompanied him up to the crest of the bluff, where the guests would soon hold the ceremony.

After a few minutes, the service began; Judson was surprised to see Ikons and lampadas and a censer, and a dark wooden cross on a pole, all suddenly move into their proper positions around the hole with the help of the men and women who held them. There was quite a crowd on the bluff, and no one stood beyond the cross. Judson and his friends were relegated to standing in the old roadbed, below the adults on the bluff, and out of view of most of the ceremony. However, they certainly heard it. Father Gerasim's voice could be faintly heard, clearly enough that Judson could tell that the liturgy was in Russian. Judson thought he heard the Russian phrase he'd already heard, the *Gospodi pomilui*, repeated several times. Every so often, an impromptu choir made up of parishioners from Kodiak, Ouzinkie, and Sokroshera Cove, all broke into song, and chanted what Herman explained were Scriptures that were part of the liturgy. Larry Ellanak, the Blessed Reader from Ouzinkie, had brought his three daughters and their spouses, and his lovely wife Katie, and they made quite a choir all by themselves. Another gray-haired couple stood near them, joining in. There were also at least another half-dozen singers from the church in Kodiak. And Anicia, standing and holding onto Anya's arm, and all the neighbors that had sung so sweetly at the starring last Christmas, were joining in. There was Betty, and nearby was Alice, who stood arm in arm with her husband Billy Jr. He was listening with complete attention.

A similar situation was taking place to their right, where Gail was singing, aided rather clumsily by Danny, while her brother Marty had a look of rapt attention that rivaled Billy Jr. Then Judson noticed Mr. Faltrip, Laura, and his father standing along the edge of the crowd. Judson went to stand with them, Herman close behind, while Sandy Ann went to stand by her mom. Owen looked at the small cluster around him and said, "Welcome to Protestant Alley!" Laura held up her hand. "Shush, Owen! Not today at least," said Laura, but she cracked a smile nonetheless.

When the ceremony ended and the casket had been lowered into the ground, Judson watched as a tall white Orthodox cross was planted firmly in the bluff overlooking east beach. It would be visible from the beach, from parts of the village, and from miles out at sea. It must have been brought ashore while they were unloading the boxes up the hill. Judson was a little disappointed that he did not have a clear view of the ceremony, and could only hear snatches of the liturgy. Suddenly, from somewhere, the sweet and haunting strains of "Memory Eternal" wafted across the bluff, the beach, and Marmot Bay beyond. Judson could feel his eyes beginning to tear up, thinking of Will Rezoff's service. I hope Mother Mary, Jesus, and all the rest are letting you see this, thought Judson about Father Zakhar the legendary Monk. He was sure that Sandy Ann and Herman would agree, but he didn't quite feel like telling anyone.

The crowd would have milled around for a longer time, but true to its unpredictable nature, the weather changed again. The bone-soaking mist returned, a little lighter this time, even as the horizon still showed signs of clearing. But even island residents don't stand in the rain if they don't have to, so soon the whole company was winding its way up toward the campsite, food, and warmth. The boom truck, jeep, and Ford pickup were all pressed into service ferrying folks up the hill. Judson noticed Marty again driving the jeep; where was Howie Lindseth? Being able-bodied and out-done by seniority in any case, all the young people hiked up the hill.

They passed Brother Toma as he reluctantly accepted a ride in the back of the boom truck. "Time to go and unveil the Ikons," he said, and they waved goodbye. When they got to the fire pit, they found it roaring with a sizeable bonfire. Their old fire pit at the entrance of the double bunker up the hill also sported a fine campfire. They could see smoke coming from the stovepipe in the old mess hall, and smoke from the stack on the field kitchen tent. Judson noticed a great deal of coming and going between the field kitchen and an awning that had been built over the picnic tables. He also noticed aromas he hadn't smelled in a long while: the unmistakable odors of real food, prepared well. Even the occasionally self-conscious Betty wouldn't disagree with that; after all, who could do *anything* with "Lima Beans and Ham with Applesauce?"

Howie and Windy were just putting the finishing touches on the tarp, pounding a peg as far as they could into the gravel bed of the old side road where they'd set up camp. Marla and Ward emerged from the far side of the old mess hall with armloads of wood, and headed off toward the fire in the entrance to the sleep bunker. Carla Bazaroff, morning sickness or no, had been slaving away in the field

kitchen, heating up a dazzling array of dishes that the folks from Kodiak and Ouzinkie had brought. So that's where they'd been, thought Judson.

Carla appeared in the doorway with a large tray of something, looking just a bit haggard, and not her usual cheery self. Judson dived for the tray, relieved her of it, and made her sit down. "Just tell us what to do, and you and Sandy Ann can watch us do it," said Judson, and smiled at her. Sandy Ann snorted but didn't reply; she sat down beside Carla who patted her on the knee and said, "Don't worry, girl. You'll be good company!" Judson placed his tray on the table and then chanced to glance at it. Various kinds of rolls and bread slices, and even raisin bread, with a couple of large chunks of butter and some knives. Bread *and* butter! Really? Yay.

Herman brought out a tray of cold cut meats, still better than what Billy Jr. called their "winter beef." Judson carried a big mixing bowl full of fruit salad—mostly canned, but pure heaven after that sorry waste of applesauce in the lima beans that had been their last taste of fruit. Then they carried out not one, not two, but three *peroks*. Certain that Gail's reputation was in no danger, Judson still found his mouth watering at the local delicacy. "Two more boxes in here," Herman called, and Judson ducked into the field kitchen to help out. This time the boxes revealed pies, cakes, and tins of cookies, placed carefully in the box to enable double stacking, and stuffed with towels to prevent damage. By the time they'd finished loading down every available space on the two picnic tables, both boys secretly thought they were the ones who'd died and gone to heaven.

Carla, sitting beside the loaded-down tables, suddenly stood up. "Oh, my goodness! We might have starved!" She returned shortly with two old shopping bags filled with paper plates, cups, napkins, spoons, and such. The boys found the only place to put the paper goods was on the very ends of each of the benches. Carla pronounced that satisfactory. The rain had let up one more time, with stronger sunlight than before, the road and the trees seeming to steam with the sudden intensity of the rays. The Priest from Kodiak came out of the old mess hall, checked with Howie and Carla, and asked if there was a signal for dinner. "We have a school bell," said Howie. "Judson, go get it in the kitchen, and ring it!" The piercing din brought everyone from the sleep bunkers down to the fire pit, and everyone from inside the old mess hall who was comfortably mobile came outside as well, many of them 'designated platers' for the ones still inside. The Kodiak Priest stepped forward and said, "I would like our brother Toma who helped to discover the body of the missing Monk, to introduce the folks from Sokroshera Cove. Then I'll introduce all the visitors, and will ask the blessing. I will also say the prayer at the end, so don't all you Lutherans and Baptists run off!" There was polite laughter at this.

Brother Toma introduced everyone, spending just a millisecond too long introducing the "Sokroshera Cove Discovery Team," and barely stifled a proud smile as the visitors suddenly applauded. Judson realized with a bit of a shock that this was probably not going to be the last time the three of them were to be the focus of special attention. Then the Priest introduced the visitors, the names flying by too fast for Judson to remember very well, singled out Brother Toma and his role in finding the Monk and his treasure, and then all were silent as the prayer of blessing

went up. Afterward, Judson caught Brother Toma's eye, and nodded and smiled. Brother Toma nodded back, a bit shyly. He did not enjoy being singled out for the finding of the martyred Monk, but was happy to serve. He will make an excellent Priest someday, thought Judson.

Everyone had a splendid meal, even those like Judson, his friends, and the younger ones who had to scrunch up in the hallway of the sleep bunker to eat. This food tasted completely wonderful after the questionable and meager rations they'd lately been forced into here on the hill. Betty looked over the now nearly empty tables and solicited help from the willing to eat more of those things that would not keep a day or so without refrigeration. Judson and Herman managed another helping of someone's *perok*, but Sandy Ann just sat propped up against the bunker's hallway wall, groaning with too much of a good thing.

After the ancient prayer that ended the meal, Judson walked through the old mess hall meeting some of the guests. He noticed his father doing the same. He ran into Sam Gelsen, who pounded him on the back and began one of those awful 'this is the guy who...' stories. Noticing that his story was making Judson uncomfortable, he changed tack and began a story about the Tidal Wave. "Did you know that Father Gerasim over there almost didn't make it? He was sitting at tea with Ada in her house right below the church hill. After the quake, nobody looked outside, and some people didn't have their radios on. No roads over there, so nobody was honking horns either. Well before they knew it, the water was up around their ankles, then their knees. When it got up close to their waists, Ada and Father Gerasim both climbed up on the kitchen table. They were pretty well running out of space when the first wave finally started to go down. Soon as they could, they climbed up the hill past the Ellanaks' place in a hurry!"

Judson recognized that first wave as the one he'd experienced. "Marla, Herman, my Dad and me, we were stuck in the fire truck right where the Monk is buried. We saw that wave, too. The low spot by east beach was full of water, and the wave came *right* up to the *tires* before it went down. All the other vehicles were already up the hill on the other side and safe. We all thought we'd *had* it. As it was, we had to heave a few logs out of the way before we could drive up that road!" There were nods of approval, and a couple of low whistles at his close call; Judson was getting better at the art of village narrative style, realizing after he spoke that he'd automatically pluralized the one log they'd moved. Never *lie*. Just keep it interesting! He excused himself politely at the next lull and moved down the room.

Next, Judson was invited to sit down with some of the Ouzinkie people, which turned out to be most of the Ellanak group, and the other elderly couple he had no name for yet. She introduced herself as Fedocia Gelsen, Sam's mom. "And this is Sam Senior." As he offered his hand, she took it into both of hers, and looked earnestly into his face as she spoke. He couldn't help thinking that she could be Anicia's twin sister, in manner if not appearance. "You are the teacher's boy, right? I hear you know our Norman Smith," said Fedocia. Judson nodded. "He told us about you, how you seem to figure things out nobody has even said yet." In spite of trying to think of how much she sounded like Anicia, Judson could feel his own

induced sunburn coming on, and only nodded, a little. He was relieved that Sandy Ann had taken a seat nearby, as though she could protect him.

Judson decided to try to change the subject. "I haven't heard much about what happened anywhere else but here. What happened in Ouzinkie?" One of the Ellanaks' lovely daughters—Judson never figured out which was which—told him how the cannery was collapsed now, some of the boats were damaged, and how one man from their village had died when his boat was caught at the wrong moment, when a wave crested in the shallows off Spruce Cape. Judson shuddered. He'd been listening in on some of that with his portable radio. Judson continued his questioning, "What happened to the *Evangel* in the Tidal Wave? I was happy to see that the *Sally G.* made it, that's the boat we were on when the Monk was found."

Sam Gelsen, who'd heard Judson mentioning his boat, came and stood by the table. "I notice you've met my parents – my, my, how young Jay-Jay gets around!" The last phrase struck Sam as somehow amusing. When he'd settled back from his infectious burst of laughter, he told Judson about the *Evangel's* adventure in the Tidal Wave. "The *Evangel* was tied up at the dock on the outside of Mr. Torsen's boat the *Maureen Greer* when the waves started to come in. Mr. Torsen took the *Evangel* out to its mooring and then escaped to deep water in his boat, like we did on the *Sally G.* The skiff was tied up at the *Evangel's* stern, so everybody all thought Norman was aboard. Every time a piece of the dock, or a building, was headed toward the *Evangel*, it just got out of the way. Same when the bay went dry three or four times. Every time, it managed to float itself without getting swamped. Like I said, everybody all thought sure Norm was on board. And in the morning, when I brought my boat back in, there was the *Evangel*, at anchor like nothing had happened. We took it as a good sign." Everyone at the table nodded.

Judson noticed that the two Ikons that Brother Toma had recovered from the legal system in Kodiak were now hanging near two of the windows, but not close to the stove. They were covered with towels. Mr. Faltrip stood up from the table where he'd been chatting and announced, "I've been asked to introduce the two Ikons that the robbers managed to temporarily steal on the day of the big aftershock. I have it on good authority that not only a new chapel will soon be built here, *at last*, but maybe a museum of some kind as well. But heck, I know as much about Ikons as I do about cooking, maybe less. So I will defer to two of the people who uncovered the treasures, Brother Toma McCraith and Mr. Martin Pankoff." With that, he abruptly sat down.

Marty and Brother Toma quietly stepped to the Ikon hanging on the left. They'd done themselves an enormous favor by hanging the Ikons at the ends of two rows of picnic tables, where they had a natural aisle to access them. Brother Toma did an impressive job of pointing out the features of the Transfiguration in the Ikon, and then helped Marty remove the golden *oklad* covering, revealing the slightly discolored and darkened pigment that still glowed with the glory of Christ Transfigured, standing with Moses and Elijah. The longer Judson looked at it, the more impressed he was with the power of the artist to depict such a cosmic event. What looked like gold leaf surrounded the figure of Christ, and the rays of light

emanating from Him were depicted with bold, wide angular shapes and thick, triangular lines with the points radiating away from the center. The thick lines had a dark blue color, as though the Light of Heaven were tearing aside the darkness of the world.

The three witnessing disciples in the Ikon, Peter, James, and John, were in poses that looked positively awestruck, even terrified. One had turned his face away and had his head in his hands. Another had his hand in front of his eyes, much as the common depictions of the Angels hailing the shepherds in the Nativity story. But the third disciple was literally on his back with his feet in the air, as though he had been bowled over by the brightness of Christ. Judson dismissed that comparison as being woefully insufficient, but couldn't come up with a better one. Moses and Elijah had their eyes fixed on Christ, and were rendered in gray shades, which further emphasized the theme of Christ as the Light.

The longer anyone looked at the Ikon, the more likely he or she was to identify with the overwhelmed disciples. The people around the tables gazed at the Ikon for some moments, some speaking softly to each other, and others in reverent silence. "Wóspodee, that Ikon is... *compelling!*" said Sandy Ann, vocabulary hunting again, but so softly that only a few people heard her. She had raised her hand to her face the way she often did when shocked. Judson smiled and nodded; *compelling* would be an appropriate word for it. Then the men carefully replaced the gold *risa*, the *oklad* covering, and walked around the picnic tables to the aisle on the far side of the stove, to unveil the second Ikon.

When Brother Toma removed the towel from this Ikon, there was a collective gasp. This crowd had grown up gazing at Ikons, and they knew what they were looking at, even from across the room. This Ikon elicited a different kind of awe. The glowing love and tenderness of the Child to his Mother, so evident in the *Panagia Eleousa*, was part of the reaction. But Judson, and many of the others in the room, focused on the supreme tenderness in the eyes of the Holy Mother as she gazed out at everyone.

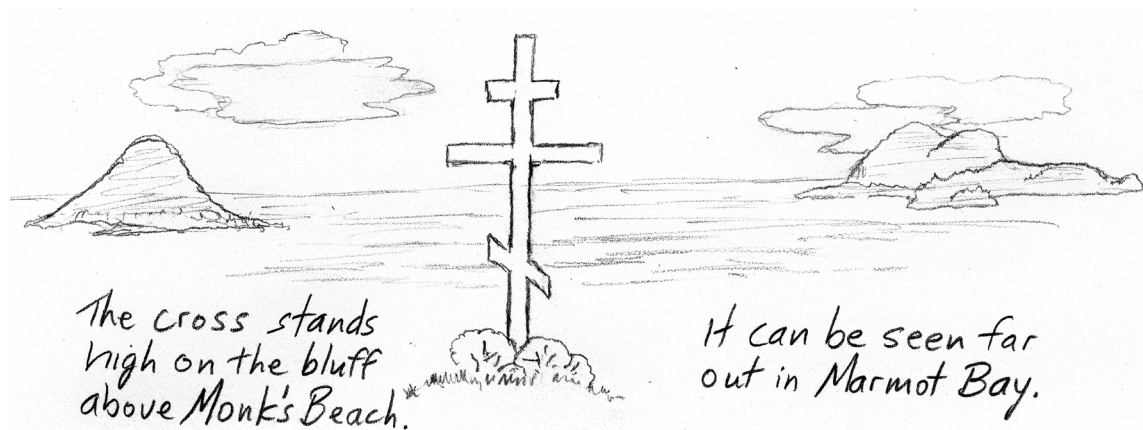
Judson took a quick look around, noticing that the serene, solemn, yet tender faces in the Ikon had riveted everyone. For several seconds there was not a sound in the room. Then slowly, people began to respond. "It's like she's trying to *reassure* us that everything will be alright, *haw?*" said Sandy Ann, still retrieving vocabulary, but at a tenth of her usual volume. Judson nodded vigorously. It was worth every penny from that scoundrel 'The Falcon' to be able to keep that Ikon here on this island where it belonged. Judson silently thought about the faithful believers in Russia so long ago and thanked them for their generosity.

Long after everyone had left, long after the room had been cleaned and set out as a classroom, and the lights had been shut down, Judson and Herman sat and talked. Their conversation soon veered toward their unique family situation. They realized that they were already like brothers, no matter what their parents said or did, and traced the beginnings to the day Judson and Herman worked together to clean up

the Rezoff's yard. "I can remember... uh... and talk about that day now, because that's not how Dad ended up," said Herman, quietly.

The two young men began talking about the day Judson's dad had proposed to Herman's mom, the day they'd gone scouting for a safe place for the Monk's treasure. Something deeply profound and good had happened to Herman in the few minutes that he hung precariously on that ladder in the dark; Judson compared it to the day he and his dad had hugged and cried, the day they decided to come to Sokroshera Island after one of Mr. Hansen's drunken rages. Even though Herman had heard the account once before, on the day they cleaned up his yard, he could hardly believe Judson's story. In fact, Judson had a hard time believing it himself, because they both knew a different Jeffrey Hansen now. Herman quietly observed, "I do believe people can change. I believe that now. I've *seen* it!" He lapsed into silence, and Judson nodded. There were too many examples spinning in both of their heads to bother to talk. After awhile they crawled off to their drafty, echoing fortress of a sleep room in the double bunker. Both had a bit of trouble falling asleep; their minds were still mulling over the details and the significance of dozens of memorable events. And today had been a spiritual capstone, even more than the finding of the treasure.

In the morning light, the brilliant white cross on the cliff above east beach would be visible for miles out to sea, and for years to come.



### **May in Sokroshera Cove: The Turning of Pages**

The Sokroshera Cove Grade School moved back into the cannery's restored mess hall by Friday of the first week of May, literally the day after the paint dried. After class the first day back in the cannery mess hall, Mr. Hansen stood outside the classroom with Mr. Faltrip. "It sure is a good thing, Owen, that you had that landing barge of what Howie calls his 'big toys' on order *before* the Tidal Wave." Owen looked around at the restored building and the future projects and said, "Oh, I'm an *expert* at spending all my money!" At this, Jeffrey confided in him about the letter he'd received from his mother in Minnesota. Mr. Faltrip gave a little half-snort of a

laugh, "And we got our claws into you here, don't we? Well, there's not much to buy in our little store just yet, so I wouldn't try spending any of it here!"

Jeffrey didn't laugh, but continued, his eyes scanning the now nearly barren shoreline of Stepan's Beach, pausing a moment to look at the landfill being built out into the bay ready to receive their floating cannery. He seemed to be changing the subject at first. "Did you know that ours was one of the worst-hit villages and yet we didn't lose a soul? Petey Kurtashkin and Jakob Pedersen swear it was as though Father Herman was telling them to head for the mountain, and up we all went. The angels seem to have been protecting Windy and Carla, too. And I know that some places are having a lot more trouble rebuilding than we are. Laura tells me the government told one village that they wouldn't get any assistance unless they moved to a new location. Yet here we are, already rebuilding before we see any government help other than those tents, cots, and wretched C-ration cans! So as regards whatever money I may have, well, Owen, I feel invested so... *deeply* in this place now. In a way that I never could have imagined back in August. So if you need anything that I can help with, let me know. I don't have your kind of money, but I've got some. I've never met a more generous man than you, Owen, that's a fact. So if you need help making this work... uh, this is as good a project, as good a place, as... as I could possibly think of to get involved in. And I know Judson feels the same way."

Owen looked away, misty-eyed, and said, "A good project? Amen to that! Oh, and by the way, what you've done for the Rezoff kids and Laura, and what you and Judson have done for all of us, that's worth more than I can even begin to say. I'm the guy who writes all the letters, so I know some things. Imagine if no teacher had arrived back in August." Owen paused for a moment, scratching his chin. "You know my opinion of you, Jeffrey, so I feel free to share this with you. Do you really think there were dozens of applicants for this position? I think last year's teacher, Mrs. Marrone, poisoned the well, after the run-ins she had with kids and parents here. 'Course you and I know she'd brought it on herself, but no matter. When she left, she told a lot of people what a lousy assignment this was. And Jeffrey, you were the *only* applicant! I get the impression that they were passing it your way just to get you out of their hair, too. I know their reputation for using village schools, especially this one recently, as a dumping ground for all the problem employees."

Mr. Hansen nodded and groaned, realizing that back at the school in Arizona where he'd first heard about the position, he'd likely have been let go before the next term started. He had left his old position with a reputation for being washed-up, discredited, and unreliable. He couldn't argue with their appraisal of him at the time. Mr. Faltrip could read between the lines, and was somewhat familiar with Mr. Hansen's state of affairs when he accepted the job. Owen saw the pain in Jeffrey's face, and began to apologize. But Mr. Hansen shook his head, and cut in, "Owen, you are right about all of that. But I feel like I don't even know that guy from back in August. I almost feel now like I was *told* to come here! I know that doesn't make any sense, but..." The unfinished thought hung in the air.

Mr. Faltrip continued without directly answering him. "For whatever reason you thought at the time, thank God you took the job—not to mention the spectacular job you've done since you got here. Because Jeffrey, if you hadn't arrived, heck, there would have been no school. I'm sure of it. At least two families would have moved away right then. That means for all intents and purposes, there'd be no village now either. I might not have bothered bringing the crab operation here—in fact, I would have thought seriously of just throwing up my hands and leaving. And after the tidal wave, well, none of 'em would have batted an eyelash—they'd all be gone to some other village or to Kodiak as fast as they could. And that's *if* you managed to escape the waves. Did you *notice* that when you and everybody were up shivering in that wreck of a fort afterward, not one of those families considered leaving for one second? And think of this: if anything had been even a little bit different, then it's very likely that the Monk would still be out at the bottom of the bay, and his treasure would have been lost forever when the cave collapsed in that aftershock. It's pretty much a sure bet, Jeffrey—that's how it would have gone down if you hadn't showed up, you and that *strange* son of yours! Oh, and you wouldn't have found that gem of an employee of mine to fall for, either." Mr. Faltrip laughed, and then turned to face Jeffrey Hansen. "So think about that before you worry about whether you can *help* us around here."

Jeffrey Hansen laid his hand on the man's arm, the conversation suddenly intense. "And if *you* hadn't made sure the Rezoffs stayed in the village back when the cannery shut down, there would have been no schoolteacher job to apply for. I would very likely be just another angry, grieving, unemployed drunk back in Arizona. And my Judson, well, he wouldn't have had a chance to become the amazing Jay-Jay, founding member of the 'Sokroshera Cove Discovery Team' and the kid who managed to somehow have his hand in everything important that's happened this year." Jeffrey Hansen's voice softened, "And, I wouldn't have discovered that I could love again." Both men lapsed into silence, unable to wrap their brains around all the life-changing events of the past few months. Finally, Mr. Hansen mused, "Now, I *wonder* what Norm Smith or Brother Toma would have told us if they'd heard this conversation?" Neither man spoke; both already knew the answer. Finally, Owen smiled, looking off into the distance, and said, "It all reminds me of a conversation I had with Norm Smith, in a bar, many years ago. My life was completely different after I made one tiny little promise. I'll tell you about that sometime." The silence was final this time; both men left with their hearts full.

### **The Restored Mess Hall: The First Meeting in the New Village**

That evening, the village held its first town meeting in the restored mess hall. There was a brief discussion of what would be built next, the status of the new school construction project, and the projected arrival date of the new floating processor. Then someone suggested getting some new place names for the town, since everything else would be new. Anicia remembered the ancient Native and Russian names for various beaches and the upper lake, but none of the rest of them could, and therefore the names had not "stuck." Mr. Faltrip really didn't like the recent fact that the lovely Lake Stephanie was now a brackish lagoon filled with debris. "How about calling it 'Windy Lagoon' after the man who tied his boat to a tree and

rode out the tidal waves?" suggested Herman. "After all, 'Windy Lagoon' sounds sort of poetic, but we would all know what it *really* means!" Once Windy and Carla were done giggling about that, the adults thought Herman's idea was brilliant, and Judson wasn't the only one who pounded Herman on the back for it.

Billy Jr. spoke up. "If everyone wants, we could rename Selivanoff Point and Stepan's Beach..." However, he was met with instant, widespread protest, no one being in the mood to be vindictive. "We're used to those names. We like those names," Barbara said, the twins nodded, and Laura just gave her daughter a sideways hug. After Billy Jr.'s sincere but slightly embarrassing suggestion, Mr. Faltrip dryly suggested they let the young people name the rest of the places. He noted, "Kaguyak village and Shearwater cannery no longer exist, the Afognak village is moving to a new location, and there are a lot of other new changes coming, so let's just tell the map makers what we want everything to be called. May as well change names as well as everything else we have to change!"

"I want 'skip rock beach' to be called 'Robber's Beach' now," said little Jake, who'd come to the meeting for the cookies but was suddenly interested. "Can we keep calling the big bunker the 'jailhouse bunker' because of the robbers?" asked Eagle. "I call it cold and clammy, and I'm done with spending any time in those places," said the elder Jake, a bit grumpily. The conversation veered back to serious. Judson thought for a minute. "We've renamed the big lake, but Stephanie Ardet was very special to the man who built up Pacific Endeavor Seafoods," Judson observed, "She's still alive, right?" and Owen nodded. "How about we make 'Lake Stephanie' the name of the water supply lake?" This was also agreeable to everyone. "I'll write her and tell her about it," said Owen. "She'll get a kick out of it."

"I got two suggestions," said Sandy Ann. "I think east beach needs a name, and calling it Monk's Beach would be a nice way to remember all... uh, all of that story, especially with the cross and grave over there now and everything." Everyone was nodding. "And remember how Petey or Anicia read that one letter giving land to the church? It was the Novikoff family's letter. We should name the beach off Sentry Point, the one you guys are using to build our roads—we should name it Novikoff Beach. And when *are* we gonna build a church?" These were good suggestions, and a good question, the ideas flowing out like a geyser, Sandy Ann-style. Judson smiled to himself at this, but saw the adults nodding at this reminder to build a church. As soon as they got roofs over their own heads, they would start working on it. "I know a place we should start calling 'Make-Out Ridge,' right, Laura?" asked Marla quietly, and got a blush and a punch in the ribs for it. The meeting broke up, the usual people sat around the bench seats of the picnic tables and talked, and Mr. Faltrip took his list of new names over to his home office. He hammered out a request to the Bureau of Land Management to rename the places on the maps before retiring for the night.

## **May: Tasks Unfinished and Tasks Completed**

In spite of the villagers' optimism at all the progress in rebuilding, early May found the village with many unfinished and desperately needed projects. Most of the

families with children still lived up in the fort, there being no other usable housing available. But the people of Sokroshera Cove were now primed for optimism, and having lived through much hardship, could endure it for a bit longer. By the second week of May, the generator Owen had brought to help him construct the site for his big barge was providing "city power." It was now hooked into an abbreviated network that went across the creek to the cannery site, mess hall and superintendent's house, down to the log houses that were being rebuilt, over to Petey and Dottie's, and then snaked its way up to the pumps at the upper lake. That part was mostly via the old wartime poles and wires. Working around occasional fuel supply difficulties and a shortage of plastic pipefittings that stopped the project just south of the stand of spruce trees for about a week, the water crew brought running water to the village by the first week in May. At first, this involved a bare valve stubbed off near the "new" store, and Howie's water hauling operation had a much shorter route.

When the first bucket was filled by the 'skid shack' store, Owen called everyone down to witness it. He produced a couple of cases of beer, to loud cheers (for the new water system, of course!) and the kids were delighted that he also opened two different cases of Shasta soda. Interesting that he'd bought a case of orange and a case of cream soda, which just happened to be Judson and Sandy Ann's two favorite flavors. Within days of that bucket-filling party, the water main was safely buried in the new gravel-and-culvert bridge across the creek. The cannery side of the village had water again, and the superintendent's house was suddenly back to normal, all systems working.

There are so many details to cover when a town has to rebuild, and Owen Faltrip seemed to be on top of all of them. A cannery down the island suddenly went into shutdown status, but not before three "doublewide" prefab plywood duplexes, set up as bunkhouses, had been delivered in Kodiak. They were slated to go to that now-shuttered cannery, but sat in limbo as people argued about who was supposed to have cancelled the order. Through his network of contacts, Owen "pounced on them like an eagle on a dead salmon," in his words, and put them on the landward side of the road that went past the empty pilings of the old bunkhouse. He got some of the work crew to run water, sewer, and power to them. Then he got them painted with the familiar dark cannery red with white trim instead of the dismal gray they'd come in. "These are bunkhouses for my cannery crew," he said sternly, and then promptly installed the Pankoffs, the Selivanoffs, the Rezoffs, the Lindseths and Anya Bazaroff and brood in the new, Spartan but furnished, and much more *private* quarters. Nobody knew anymore what to do with flush toilets, hot baths, and their own kitchens; it may as well have been the Hilton.

Anicia stayed awhile with her brother Petey and her sister-in-law Dottie in their newly transplanted house, so they all got to speak a lot of Russian and *Sugpiak*. Alas, the Pedersen brothers were stuck together one more time in the last unit of the new bunkhouse duplexes. Owen kept being Owen. "These things are ugly," he told his guests when someone asked him about rent. "Hurry up and build your *own* damn house." Judson, overhearing that conversation, laughed out loud. Mr. Faltrip was able to be generous, humorous, and grouchy in one breath. Jakob and Danny

agreed about building their own places. "You're not the one I want sleeping in *my* house!" Danny said to Jakob, as the two couples walked along the beach one evening. Anya had busted up laughing, and Gail had developed a sudden blush, quite uncharacteristic of most dump truck operators.

On the Friday of the third week of May, two weeks after the term would normally have concluded, Mr. Hansen pulled the plug on their school year. After calling to town in mid-April and getting no meaningful response, he took a quick skiff ride to Ouzinkie and consulted with their schoolteachers, who mapped out a 'quick and dirty' way to get the students through what was expected. "Every now and then, I notice I've never been in charge of a whole school before. Throw an earthquake and tidal wave or two my way, and all of a sudden I have trouble planning lessons," he laughed, and Laura assured him he was doing a splendid job.

He certainly was doing a great job, except with Ward. The dreaded box from the University of Nebraska Extension Division had arrived in late April, but young Ward wasn't very good at getting back into the student mode. Truth be told, it wasn't Marla's fault, as one could have guessed back in the fall. No, Ward was busy helping on the work crews, and Mr. Hansen had to politely ask the (other) men in his work detail to give the lad a study break and he'd be back on the chain gang soon enough. It would take another two weeks of intensive study before Ward would be done with his coursework and available for work detail. But as a positive incentive for Ward, Mr. Hansen put him in the graduation program for the otherwise only student to graduate, Miss Marla Selivanoff. They did make a cute couple as they marched down the aisle between the picnic tables in the newly refurbished cannery mess hall, the lovely circle window behind them looking like some sort of wedding chapel.

For the occasion, Marla, borrowing from nearly every purse on the island, did herself up almost like she'd looked when Judson first met her. They would have asked Brother Toma to speak, but a few days after the burial of Father Zachar, he had returned to San Francisco, to report to his Bishop and prepare to continue his studies to become a Priest. The absence of Brother Toma was an acute disappointment, but the villagers made the most of the evening. Mr. Hansen spoke for a few minutes, mostly about Ward, his struggles at the beginning of the school year, and his successes, both academically and personally. He added that like the old schoolhouse that had been swept away, it's possible to sweep away an old life, too. Ward nodded frequently through this, and his eyes grew misty. Marla put her head on his shoulder and patted his arm. Then, after some formal, warm, but mostly unmemorable words from Mr. Faltrip and Mr. Lindseth, both of whom volunteered to help round out the program—everyone felt the absence of Brother Toma—Marla got up to speak. Judson borrowed her handwritten notes to make his own copy, and tried to remember the parts she changed when she delivered it. This is the speech he heard that night:

Good Evening, I am Marla Selivanoff, and I am Sokroshera Cove's own biggest Beatles fan, as you all know full well. You called on me, so I'm sending this along 'With Love From Me To You.' These

are serious times, but I can't bring myself to get all somber, so please forgive me if this is not as... *formal* as you would expect from a distinguished graduate like myself.

I am happy to say that I graduated at the top of my class, and the bottom of my class, and the middle of my class, too. But just finishing is a real miracle for me. After planning on killing Mr. Hansen in his sleep before I even met him, I have changed into someone who not only loves learning, but someone who feels like she could take on any challenge. And I will try to explain why this is.

After watching Mr. Hansen as he built a school out of an old mess hall—make that *two* old mess halls, treated a kid who tried to burn down the school just like any other student, jumped between our fights, patiently taught all the kids that the other teachers regularly ignored, and... calmly waited for a tidal wave to go down so he could drive through the dip in that old cow pie-colored fire truck, I realized life really is what you're willing to make it.

Of course, some of us started off making one thing, and ended up making another. One young man that I happen to love started out as basically a criminal—sorry Baby, but true—and ended up being a hero, saving a couple of boats by himself, and stepping on some toes to do it. And the man who named his big boat after me started out as a cheat, a drunk, and a liar, and actually shot at us once—sorry Daddy, but true. But then, he helped to protect the treasure his great granddaddy stole. Then he helped keep it from getting stolen again, and in the process, he helped to capture what they say is one of the world's most notorious art thieves. And he wants to take church classes along with me. You heard it here, and it's true. Hold 'im to it, everybody!

And along the way I've learned to endure Jay-Jay's horrible cowboy imitations, Betty's splendid "Lima Beans with Ham and Applesauce," and seeing every *single* person in this room except Marty and Mr. Faltrip, including some of my classmates, fluttering around like Bambi and Feline in the springtime. *Whooftie!* What a place! By the way, Mr. Faltrip, Marty Pankoff, shall we send away for some mail-order brides, or shall we just tell Jay-Jay, Sandy Ann, and Herman to get on the case? Hey, I got it—you men might have to fight this out, and of course Rinny and I could show you how to do the fighting—here's my suggestion: maybe "Quirky" Thorsen has a sister! Who knows, she might be *cute!* Just don't lend her your boat, haw?

Truthfully, my family and friends: after all the things we've been through, I *do* feel I could endure anything. Anything at all. Anything except maybe this:

(Here Marla broke into song in a dead-on imitation of the girls from the talent show)

"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."

Hey, I've endured fires, earthquakes, tidal waves, those nosy sixth and seventh graders, and even robbers from Spain. But when I'm trying to go to sleep at night, and I want to hear "All My Loving" in my head as I doze off, and *instead* all I can hear in my mind is those girls singing about that damn whale—well, there's only so much a girl can stand!

And now: I must share some words about my classmates. Thank you, Jay-Jay, for saving my Ward's life, for helping my Dad to save my family's reputation, for making Barbara's lessons easier, for making Serafina almost as happy as I am, and for letting Rinny find Herman. I suppose Sandy Ann should thank you for that, too, haw? Of course, we probably wouldn't be here listening to me talk on and on if you hadn't been so awfully nosy and uncovered so many secrets. I ain't tellin' you nothin' about nothin'—*ever*, but you'll find out anyway, whatever it is. In the words of my Daddy, "Mr. Hansen, where the *hell* did you get this kid?"

Now that I've picked on almost everybody, I want to pick on Sokroshera Cove. Every day here is like a day and a half. First, it's horrible, then it's wonderful. First, it's boring, and then it's terrifying. First, it's cantankerous, and then it's harmonious. First, it's devilish, and then it's spiritual. It all makes my head spin. By the way, Professor Hansen, you're supposed to be gratified that your recalcitrant pupil was able to incorporate so many significant vocabulary words into her public discourse. 'Teacher you taught me lotta stuff, no jokes!'

What does it all mean to a girl who's becoming a woman, a village kid who's going to have to live in town come fall? It means that when I leave here, I will be leaving a place that has become very precious to me in this past school year. It's not the buildings; Lord knows our old house took a bulldozer and a dozen twelve-by-twelves just to get it to stand up, and I'm never gonna stay there again, so it can't be that. No, it's the people, who suddenly have become the most precious *family* a kid like me could ever have.

Mr. Hansen, I remember the first thing I said when I met you. I remember because I had practiced it in my head for days. I was hoping to scare you away. I said, "I'm Marla and I hate it here. I hate school, too. I'll be your whole eighth-grade class." And by the way, Mr. Hansen, it was Max Factor I was wearing that day, thanks for asking. I have no idea what this stuff on my face tonight is; I got it from (I think) six different purses. And *that's* what I'm talking about. Look at what a family we've become!

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for being people a kid can be truly proud of. And especially Dad, who taught me that *anyone* can change. Thank you, old "Fat Lip" Faltrip, for keeping this place going for no apparent reason. Now I finally know what you saw in us. Thank you, Mom, and Laura, and Betty, and Gail, and Carla, for showing me what it means to be a lady. Thank you, Anicia, and Dottie, and Petey, for believing that every mystery has a revelation if you wait long enough, that every evil can be conquered by faith, and for showing us that the past is important after all.

Thank you now to all you hard-working men, and to Gail, the world's most gorgeous truck driver. Thanks for helping to build everything, and for bringing our village back. Thank you, Brother Toma wherever you are, for answering my questions, and helping me want to see Godly things, the way you do. I'm praying, really, that you someday get to return and stay in our village. I can't imagine a better Priest for our future church. Thank you, Mr. Hansen, who helped me, by example as much as anything else, to become the kind of person who could dare to make a speech tonight.

Look around, everybody. These are the best folks you've ever met, and I will be proud to represent you and beautiful Sokroshera Cove as best I can for the rest of my life. Thank you!

There was general mayhem in the mess hall for a few moments as the villagers reacted to this speech. It took awhile for the villagers to get their collective breath back. But nobody who was there is likely to forget the farewell speech of Marla Selivanoff, the eighth-grade graduating class of the Sokroshera Cove Grade School in the spring of 1964.

### **May and June 1964: The New Arrives; The Old Survives**

Three days after the end of the term, the new cannery arrived on an enormous barge. Within hours, the workers slid it up onto the waiting landfill at high tide by using every available tractor and what seemed like miles of cables. Within a couple of days, the barge was painted royal blue, and the superstructure was soon a nice golden yellow. Pacific Endeavor Seafoods was alive and well in Sokroshera Cove

once again. Marty, whose *mukoola* and fillet knife talents were already in evidence, was also one of the best sign painters in the Cove. He taught Rinny how to paint the letters almost as well as he could. Soon "Pacific Endeavor Seafoods, Sokroshera Cove" shone forth in nice, tall black letters on the bright yellow shoreline side of the cannery, and in even bigger letters on the side facing the Cove.

The two sleek metal shrimp boats that came north with the barge would both need some refitting as crabbers. They had boring Louisiana Gulf Coast names: the *Alvenia Crittenden* and the *Marval Rae Johnston*. Mr. Faltrip held a contest among all interested parties to rename the boats, with himself, Mr. Hansen, and Mr. Selivanoff to serve as judges, reasoning that they were the three least likely to come up with a clever name in the whole Cove (although Jeffrey *had* once nicknamed "Quirky" Thorsen). And the winning names were: the *Dayle Ketchemall* and the *Filinda Potts*. You'd have to be a fisherman (and especially a crabber) to fully appreciate those names. Everyone approved. Rumor had it that the Truck Brothers, Marty, and several cans of beer were involved. It would be a running joke for years that visitors to the Cove, attempting to make conversation, would turn politely toward some local resident and ask, "So who are those boats named for?" allowing local imaginations and storytelling skills to run amuck.

The workers hooked the new processor barge promptly into the water system, and had the processor almost operational a day or two later. They would still need a real water tank system to help regulate supply and pressure, and a proper loading dock. The villagers took tours of the tri-deck structure, usually led proudly by Mr. Faltrip himself, and marveled at its compact and up to date equipment. Many villages had homes again, but would struggle for years to get a commitment from a cannery. Those places did not have an Owen Faltrip. The village of Sokroshera Cove had a sparkling new cannery, and hadn't even decided where to rebuild their homes yet. The village's fortunes had exactly reversed since last fall when the Hansens arrived to hold together the school in a depressed community with many vacant homes and a mothballed cannery. However, a new dock would have to wait; the village was still standing in line for pilings and a pile driver as villages across the gulf struggled to rebuild.

Two weeks after the barge came to rest on its pad, the new school arrived. It showed up on a landing barge in the form of stacks of lumber and a collection of tractors, cranes, scaffolds, ladders, and power tools. Naturally, the workers showed up too, and just as naturally, the Seattle contractor folks who sent them had not made any advance preparation for their sleep arrangements. They somehow assumed there'd be a Holiday Inn with a coffee shop within an offramp or two of the build site, and this from a village that had just lost all but a handful of buildings in a major disaster. So Mr. Faltrip arranged for the workers to use the big tents the villagers had recently vacated. He pitched them near the rebuilt mess hall, almost exactly where the kids' makeshift gravel playing field had been. After telling the construction foreman what the village had just been through, Faltrip remarked, "You may as well learn to live like a local while you're here." A bit later, after observing the workers' shock at their accommodations, Herman called Mr. Faltrip aside to tell him in his slowest, old-man Alaskan accent, "Shoulda puttum up there

on the hill in the *bunker*, like we did those *Spain* guys. Then they'd like the tents, *haw?*" Owen laughed and nodded; people like these didn't really belong in a village like Sokroshera Cove. Every moment they were here, they put it down for not being someplace else!

However, Owen did put Betty to work, assisted by Laura, Alice, and Gail when they could, cooking three squares a day for the workers in the lovely refurbished mess hall. If they had sense, they'd know they were being fed like kings. Herman, apparently determined to practice his newly revealed pointed sense of humor, asked Betty in his best old man voice, "So why don't you give them those *nice* cans of Lima Beans and Ham with Applesauce for breakfast like you gave *us*?" She punched him in the ribs and laughed. "I'll never live that down, and it wasn't *even* my fault!" Mr. Faltrip had the tents put up alongside the new mess hall, and left the door unlocked so they could use the 'john' inside when they needed to. And no, none of the kids snuck in and locked the outside door, but boy did they think about it!

For the workers' convenience, the new cannery had several shower rooms and laundry rooms, being entirely self-contained. But the living quarters squeezed into the corners of the big barge were already filled with the work crew that flew in from Louisiana to help set up the cold storage operation, so the school workers were stuck in tents. After a week of intense living (it didn't help that it rained, too), the construction foreman got the Kodiak Island Borough School District to spring for several temporary trailers, and it all worked out. Mr. Faltrip just looked amused at their struggles in the frightful Alaskan wilderness.

The first of June was payday for Sokroshera Cove. An official-looking letter arrived with strange stamps on it and a return address that said something about Geneva, Switzerland in what was probably four or five languages. It had a handwritten notation below the return address: "The Talon Group." Laura let Judson look at it as they hand-delivered it to Mr. Hansen and got someone to call Billy Jr. up off his boat. It was addressed to both "Mr. Owen Faltrip and Mr. William Selivanoff, Jr.," wording that matched the legal agreement imposed by the judge.

Soon both men, joined by Laura and Jeffrey, with the 'everywhere and into everything' Judson, were standing in the now warm and nicely lit temporary store. Billy Jr. did the honors and opened the letter. Within the folds of the paper was a colorful, embossed check, each number pressed into the paper, with multiple signatures below the amount. The check was made out to the same two names as the address, as the judge had specified. Billy Jr.'s hands shook a little as he showed Jeffrey and Owen the check. Five times the combined value of the two Ikons they actually stole: One Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand Dollars U.S.D. The two Ikons had indeed been as valuable as they had thought. Judson laughed when Billy Jr. said, "This is the part where I hit you all over the head with a bottle and head for Solly's Bar!" Luckily, everyone else was laughing as well.

Judson picked up the rest of the envelope, and unfolded a plain piece of typing paper that had been placed around the check. In simple pencil outline, someone

had drawn a face that Judson recognized as a simplified version of Rublev's "Christ the Redeemer" Ikon like the one they'd found. But instead of the usual pose, Christ had a large bird resting on his outstretched forearm. A *falcon*. Judson coughed, showed it to Laura, and started to cry, a reaction that greatly surprised him. Laura gave him a strong hug. The whole group was speechless at what "The Falcon" was apparently trying to tell them.

When Judson had collected his thoughts, he turned toward his dad and then toward the others and asked, "Since the divers found the ship and the bones... I mean, the remains... of Father Zachar, I keep wondering why the rebels went to all that trouble to hide the Ikons. Didn't that seem a bit much? Why not just destroy them? And why did they need to attack the Monk at all? It just doesn't make any sense to me." Mr. Hansen scratched his head for a moment, and the others thought about it, too. He answered Judson's last question. "I think they saw the Monk, and the Church he represented, as a threat to their enterprise. The Church was always being accused of supporting the Czar, but it wasn't just that. Perhaps they knew deep down what they were doing was wrong, and the Monk was a reminder of all of that."

Mr. Faltrip added, "From what we know of Teplov, his rebels, and all those Russian colonists, they were building their little kingdom on the backs of the Natives. Say what you will about the Church, but this Monk came here to help train Native Priests and what have you... The Church was at least *trying* to treat them as valuable people, if not as equals. Part of what impressed people in Russia about Father Herman was how he helped the Native orphans and things like that. And our Father Zachar was trying to continue and expand that work with the Natives, according to Brother Toma's research. Brother Toma believes that Father Zachar may have been one of the orphans rescued by Father Herman. Oh, and he also told me that Father Veniaminov—I think his name was—of Unalaska, for example, translated portions of the Bible into Native languages. So the tide was beginning to turn against the typical Russian way, which was to treat Natives as little more than slaves. When the rebels saw that Father Zachar was not one of the churchmen who would just fall in line, I think they would have seen all that as a threat. I get the impression that Teplov and Selivanov and the rest were trying to erase the Church's influence... to keep it out of their territory."

Judson nodded, but was not completely satisfied that he'd gotten his questions answered. Laura looked at him for a moment and said, "Judson wonders about why they didn't just destroy the Ikons like they destroyed the ship. I know I do, too. I mean, the way you guys described the cave, Stepan Selivanov went to an awful lot of trouble to hide the Ikons, and he supposedly didn't even think they were worth anything." This time, Billy Selivanoff, Jr. raised his hand, almost as if he were in class. "I think I know. I think... they were all greedy people. Mebbe they thought they c'd sell the Ikons to the ships that bought the furs. Or hold them for... ransom or something. But, I know... looking back at how my dad and grandfather was, well, they hated God and everything about the Church, but they were all still pretty damn superstitious, too. Bet they thought burning the Ikons or lettin' 'em sink with the boat was bad luck or something. The way Jakob and Danny said that cave was

set up, they just threw the packages in the back, still wrapped like they were right off the boat. And with how much furs there was in there, they still prob'ley thought the furs and hides and stuff was the real treasure." He sighed, and shook his head. He got a determined look on his face, "They sure didn't want any of that Church stuff to ever get used in a *church*, that's for damn sure. We'll show them, *haw?*" He didn't laugh; he just pointed in the direction of the check, which Mr. Faltrip now held. Judson finally spoke when no one else did. "So now we get a chance to... uh, *undo* some really stupid stuff, don't we?" The group nodded, and his dad gave Judson a sideways hug.

Later that week, on June 3, about mid-morning, Laura sorted the mail. A letter had arrived addressed simply "To the Three Discoverers," care of the Postmaster, Sokroshera Cove, Alaska 99646. It was from *Look Magazine*, and they weren't soliciting subscriptions. This time it was Sandy Ann, Herman, and Judson who gathered in the temporary store in front of Laura's makeshift counter. Mr. Faltrip and Mr. Hansen hovered around like nervous flies, overcome with curiosity.

At the kids' insistence, "I don't want to rip anything," all three had mumbled in one form or another, and Judson's hands were actually shaking a little, Laura was pressed into opening the letter and reading it to them. She scanned it first, and then remarked, "So *this* is what Sam Gelsen was talking about! Says here that the diver, Arnie Wilkins, the man you met the day they found the Monk's remains—he was so impressed with you three and all the stories he'd heard from Mr. Faltrip and Brother Toma that he got in touch with some of his magazine contacts. He'd been in a few magazine spreads after finding some famous shipwrecks, you know. Well... *Look Magazine* wants to interview you three. Sounds like they *don't* know about the cave, or the treasure, or the robbery, but are concentrating on the murder you solved. Won't they have a story when they hear all the rest of your adventures?" Sandy Ann, out of her cast, was able to clap once more, which she promptly did. Judson let out a low whistle, and Herman pounded him on the back.

The kids had Laura read the letter aloud twice. Meanwhile, their elation slowly turned to nervousness, and then to something approaching abject terror at the prospect. Finally, Sandy Ann wailed, "Now what are we gonna do?" Herman said, "I dunno. It makes me really nervous. The Monk story is so big now— I almost think they won't believe us. And it'll be hard to know even where to start." Judson cut in, "That's why they should interview us, but they should talk to almost everybody *e/se*, too. I can't think of anybody except maybe Windy and Carla's kids who don't know something interesting about the story!" Judson was insistent. Herman just gave Judson a pat on the back and said, "Oh, Jay-Jay... that's just like you, wanting to make sure you're not in the spotlight. And that's good, too, because which of our stories doesn't involve you right in the middle of it?" Judson turned slowly and dramatically in Herman's direction, and let it fly, his one, and only possible retort. "Smoochin' in the treasure truck sure didn't involve me," said Judson, slyly. Herman snorted and punched Judson in the ribs. Laura looked at her son and said, "What's this, Herm?" and Herman, avoiding eye contact with his mom, just said, "See, Mr. Hansen, I told you we needed to talk. Now, back to that interview... Mom, when are they coming?"

Judson smiled at Herman's deft changing of topics, even as Herman shot him a withering glance. Laura did not pursue her line of questioning, and went back to the paper in her hand. "Oh, this letter nearly arrived *after* they got here—the mail's been so screwed up since the Tidal Wave. I talked to Harvey Flying Service this morning, and the writer and the photographer will be arriving in the village on the Widgeon, tomorrow after lunch, and stay at least a night. Betty 'n I are trying to figure out where they'll stay. I think there might be room somewhere in the barge, or maybe in Mr. Hansen's office, or someplace."

By mid-afternoon, every soul in the Cove old enough to understand it knew that the "Sokroshera Cove Discovery Team" threesome were about to become famous, and so was their little island. You see, Betty told Howie, and of course, Sandy Ann's proud father had told everyone else, sometimes twice. As the three of them were walking toward the new processor to watch the activity, Billy Jr. walked by. "You know you'd better sound convincing, kids. I doubt if those magazine folks will *even* believe you if you just tell the *real* story!" He'd laughed heartily, and then sincerely wished them good luck. Sandy Ann flatly told him they'd make sure he got interviewed, too, and he stopped laughing and actually looked nervous. The three kids promised each other to get a good night's sleep, but all of them knew they probably wouldn't.

## **Morning Mountain**

The next morning, well before breakfast, Judson stepped down the hill from the old superintendent's house and decided to walk down toward the stand of spruce trees so he could think. To his left, a few hundred feet away from the superintendent's house driveway, the new school was already framed in. The crew had not yet arrived to ruin the morning stillness with their incessant din, and all was quiet and peaceful. He crossed the new, wide bridge that spanned the creek. A light mist rose from the lagoon and extended across most of the meadow. He was considering going all the way to the gravesite on the bluff above east beach. As he passed the Kurtashkin home, lights were already on.

Anicia Novikoff, who was staying with her brother while the Pedersens were rebuilding her home, was standing on the new front porch. It was large, sturdy, and actually more of a small deck; it faced west and had an impressive view of the lagoon, the village, and the top of Mount Sokroshera. Judson saw why Petey and Dottie were so eager to leave their house right where the tidal waves had left it. Anicia was leaning against the new, sturdy railing, gazing off into the distance, and seemingly lost in thought. As always, the trademark faded pink scarf adorned her head. Judson thought for a moment that she might not have seen him.

"Jay-Jay, come up. Come to visit." He climbed the stairs and stood beside her. "You're worried about the magazine people, yeah." He said nothing, but merely nodded. "My Jay-Jay, he's just gonna tell the truth, yeah. Like Father Toma, like my boy Norman. You just look in the eyes and tell your story. Easy." She paused for a moment, nodded to herself, and did one of her little inhaled laughs. Her inhaled

"yeah" sounds were also pure Anicia. "Maybe you tell something to make my Serafina get red. Then they're gonna like her as much as you do, yeah. Pretty easy to like my Serafina." "Yes it is," Judson said, deciding to jump in at this point. He certainly had no intention of embarrassing Sandy Ann, and Anicia knew it full well.

"You like your new brother Herman, yeah." It wasn't a question. Judson was about to argue the semantics of the situation; after all, Anicia had once again promoted Brother Toma to full Priesthood in her mind, and had now made Herman his brother already. She seemed to change the subject, anticipating what Judson was about to ask her. "My Laura, she's the best thing in my Will's whole life, yeah. Now she's gonna be the same for your dad. He's *my* Jeffrey now, yeah." Well, that was easy, thought Judson. He took a deep breath, a bit overwhelmed by the sudden complete acceptance and approval in Anicia's words. He blinked away tears. Anicia continued softly, "My Herman, he will grow up happier than my Will did now, because of my Hansen boys, yeah. You gave him the best year ever, yeah." She paused for a long minute, and said in perfect diction and almost without accent, "I'm not trying to tease you now, Judson. I know my reputation. You are fun to talk to." Once again, she seemed to have hit several topics at once, something he'd heard Sandy Ann do as well. "You can tell our story." It was an ironclad vote of confidence.

Anicia suddenly pointed to the rounded top of Mount Sokroshera, the top third clearly visible above the trees. Judson did look, but not before his eyes paused on the kind, playful eyes and deep wrinkles of this woman who was herself a treasure. "Look at *Unuaq Ingriq*, my 'Morning Mountain' and the sunshine today. You kids found the *peeshéra potyéryanni* – the lost cave. That's where 'Pasheeranny' came from, you know, yeah. And it was a *sokróvisheh peeshéra* too, a treasure cave after all, yeah. That's where Sokroshera came from too, you know, yeah. You make all our names come true, all our legends come true, you and Herman and Serafina, my good hunters, yeah. The treasure of the Monk, the one you found, it is all safe up on that mountain again until we build our church, yeah."

She wanted Judson to remember *this* history, *these* names, *his* place in it. And now she seemed to be searching for words, unusual for the incisive Anicia. After a long moment, she turned and placed her wrinkled, soft hand on his chest over his heart. "Tell about our Father Zakhar Monk, yeah. Tell them about our treasure. And now our treasure is in here, the treasure of *Unuaq Ingriq*." She patted his chest. Her hand was warm. Judson nodded, gave her a hug, and just said, "Thank you." He stepped off the porch and strode back across the meadow to meet the new day.

## Epilogue

The writer and the photographer from *Look* magazine stayed for a couple of days, and interviewed almost everybody. They had a hard time believing the story of the treasure and the cave and the robbers when they heard it from the kids. But after hearing all of that and more from the adults, they were convinced. Nobody thought the magazine folks would do the story justice. They did pretty well overall, but made some parts seem bigger than they were while ignoring most of the important stuff. "It's like they had no idea what it all *meant*," said Sandy Ann bluntly. And of course, they couldn't tell the whole story, which is why Jud Hansen contacted me. He and the others wanted someone to get the real story down on paper before all the old-timers were gone.

The young kids that had this fantastic adventure are all in their late sixties now, and their parents' generation is dwindling every year. Even after all these years, the folks involved feel that a lot of it is Judson's story, that he was somehow the fault of it all. He did seem to be a catalyst for a lot of the adventures the village had back then. And everyone who was there seems very grateful for the way the Hansens got absorbed into village life that winter. But be that as it may, the school year of 1963-64 became an adventure that none of them could forget. And the elements of their adventure affected other events for years to come.

For example, the magazine article caused quite a stir, and resulted in almost every kid from Sokroshera Cove going on a road trip down Stateside. They ended up having a surprise adventure in Arizona that followed them back to Kodiak, a turn of events that would have made one of Zane Grey's characters proud. When they returned to the island, well, Sokroshera Cove didn't return to its status as a quiet, sleepy town. At least not for a long time. The Monk's treasure had its own adventure, one that once again stretched across the miles and across centuries. The events prompted Billy Jr. to mutter, "There sure are a lot of ways to try to steal things!" All of that might end up being the subject of another book someday.

I had to get into almost everybody's head—especially Judson's—to tell their story, expanding the bare facts and sparse details of his notebooks, poring over his letters to his grandma, and emailing as many original participants as I could reach, in order to re-create what was truly one extraordinary school year! When I finally had the finished copy in hand (the book you are now reading), I sent the last draft to Judson and the others. A few weeks later, the Hansens, Rezoffs, Debbie and I gathered at Grandma Hansen's house in Sedona, Arizona, where this whole project was born. Judson just said, "Aw, heck, I don't think it was quite that *clear* what we were all thinking at the time, but it'll do. I had forgotten how... *rough* it was living up on the hill after the waves — and I'm glad you included a lot of the funny things that happened, too. You wrote what happened, so I should say thanks." He shook my hand.

Sera (short for Serafina, the one all the old-time villagers still call Sandy Ann) put her hand on my arm and said, "Each of us would have written *something* differently. But you at least caught the essence, the *significance*, of all that happened. The rest of it, well, it's like looking at old yearbooks or even baby pictures... I want to shudder sometimes. But it's good as is." Herman nodded. He paused for a moment and added, "The part where I froze on the ladder... I almost couldn't stand to read it. But you understood, just from what we told you, what was happening to the adults..." he turned and looked at Judson for a moment, "...to Owen and to our parents, a lot more than we did at the time. I think you nailed it." I thanked them all; I hope they're right.

I'm sure you wonder what happened to those friendships and budding relationships, and if I can persuade them all to let me tell those stories, I certainly will. However, I *have* been asked to include one tiny detail from their original adventure. On the morning after the magazine people flew out of the bay—and it was morning so that the sun wouldn't be in their eyes—little Jake and Jay-Jay, along with almost everybody else, made their way to "skip rock beach." There, they talked a lot about the day they stopped the robbers at that very beach. They had a fine weenie roast using the same fire circle that had warmed them during their skating party in what already seemed to them to be the olden times, before the tidal waves, before the discovery of the hidden cave and all the rest. And there, they finally held the long-promised contest of skipping rocks. So, in order to skip a rock, you have to...

***Timmy Smith***  
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