

Alaskan Adventure

“Another forest is being cut down due to the need for more wood...” says a T.V. news caster as the channel is changed.

“Our skylines are being blocked by these wind turbines. We don’t wan...” says a man being interviewed on Good Morning America. The channel is changed again.

“Jeeze! What is with all of these news stations?” Says the girl sitting on the couch, she is the one changing the channels. She has shoulder length brown hair and a Boston Red Sox t-shirt on, it barely fits her. She is taking up the entire couch by lying down and her younger brother is about to bite her leg off if she doesn’t move. He is standing in front of the T.V. and is whining at her to move.

“If you keep whining Jack I’m never going to move.” She said, trying to see around him.

“Please move Claudia.” He said in as much of a not whinny voice as he could make.

“Fine.” She moved her legs and sat cross legged. She changed the channel to MTV. A girl started talking about how her parents didn’t like her boyfriend and how they set her up on two blind dates and she has to choose between her boyfriend and these two other guys. Parental Control. Claudia’s favorite show.

“Oh come on!” Jack said “This is the stupidest show ever invented.”

“Well what would you want to watch?”

“Ummmmm...”

“Oh, I know what you want to watch...Barney!”

“I’m ten. I don’t watch that show anymore!”

“Yeah sure.” They continued to fight as their mom walks into the room.

“Guys.” She said quietly. They don’t hear her. “Guys!” she yells it a little louder but the still don’t hear her. “GUYS!!!!!!!!!!” They heard her this time and stopped. “Guess what?”

“What.” Jack said

“I give.” Added Claudia

“We are going on vacation!” Her blue eyes lit up with excitement. The kids looked at each other completely surprised, but they don’t seem excited at all.

“Ummmmm...yay?”

“Woop-de-doo.” Claudia continued to watch T.V. and Jack went to head up to his room.

“Wait!” their mom said “Don’t you want to know where we are going?”

“Ummm... not really.” They both said.

“Well,” she said ignoring them “we are going to Alaska.”

“Great.” Jack said unenthusiastically.

But Claudia was staring at her mom, her blue eyes open wide and her jaw almost on the floor. “Oh my god!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Alaska!!!!!!!!!! Do you think we will see Orcas and otters and...and...and...what ever else they have in Alaska?”

“I hope so honey.”

“You are such a loser Claudia.” Jack said.

“At least I have an interest in something other than video games.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah!” this continued back and forth as their mother left the room. They fought back and fourth until they got a phone call.

“Hello?” Claudia said as she picked up the phone “Hi dad!” at that Jack stood up and ran over to the phone. He attempted to take the phone from Claudia, but she is much stronger then him and she pushes him away. Over the phone their father yells,

“You will get your turn Jacky.”

“So dad,” Claudia said “How is your trip going?”

“It’s going very well. So did your mom tell you about the trip?”

”Yeah! I’m so excited! I hope we get to see some orcas...or even one!”

“Well I’m glad you’re excited.”

“I’m glad you called. Here talk to Jack. Love you dad.”

“Bye honey.”

“Hi dad.” Jack said.

“Hi Jacky. How’s it going?”

“Good.”

“Are you excited about the trip?”

“I guess so...”

“You will be excited once you get there.”

“Okay.”

“Well, let me talk to your mother.”

“Okay. Love you. Bye.”

“Bye Jacky.” Jack handed the phone to his mother

“Hi Olivia.” He said. She walked into the kitchen. Jack went back to his video games and Claudia was watching the end of Parental Control. The girl had chosen her mothers pick and sent her boyfriend home.

“Good for you.” Claudia said to the T.V. “He was a scumbag anyway.”

Their mother came back into the room. She hung up the phone and sat down next to Claudia. “What are we watching?” Her mom said.

“Ummm... well this show is over and I think My Super Sweet Sixteen is on next.”

“Oh... Well you are going to turn sixteen this year. Have you thought about what you want to do for your party?”

“I don’t know. Something bigger then my usual birthday party, but smaller then these parties.”

“Well I’m glad you don’t think you are getting one of these parties, because we don’t have near enough money for these.” Claudia and her mom both laughed.

“So,” Claudia said “when are we going to Alaska?”

“Next week for April vacation.”

“NEXT WEEK!!!!!!”

“Yeah. Why what’s wrong with next week?”

“Nothing, it’s just really soon.”

“I should start packing.”

“Let’s watch this show and then have dinner first.”

“Okay.” So they watched an episode of My Supper Sweet Sixteen. On this episode a boy had his party in a mall. For dinner that night they had spaghetti and meat balls.

“I wish dad was here.”

“Me too Jacky.” His mom said as they finished dinner. After they finished Claudia went up to her room to start packing and Jack went to his room to play video games. Olivia stayed downstairs and watched Desperate Housewives. Claudia came back down for Grays Anatomy.

Two weeks later they were at the airport. They boarded a small...very small plane. They were meeting their father in Alaska.

“So where are we headed, exactly.” Jack asked.

“To Glacier Bay.” Claudia said. She then attempted to sleep they had a long flight ahead of them. Claudia and Olivia fell asleep and Jack played his game boy.

They landed at Glacier Bay hours later. Their father, Joe, was there to meet them. They all exchanged hugs. They went inside to their room and unpacked. They caught each other up on what had been going on since they last spoke to each other. Jack had beaten his new video game. Olivia had learned how to cook her mothers secret cookies, the kids say they are very good. Claudia had made high honors and got asked to the next big dance. Joe had accomplished, he said, absolutely nothing on his business trip. They continued to talk until they heard people yelling outside by the water. They all rushed out there and found themselves in a mob of people headed down to the water.

They all stood aghast as a giant ship was sinking. Joe ran up to a man that the rest of the family had never met before.

“What’s going on Mark?” Joe asked concerned.

“Well, as you can see that giant ship is sinking and no one knows why.” answered Mark. “Everyone on board seems to have been able to escape in time.”

“Well that’s good.” Claudia chimed in.

“Well, good for the people not for the...” Mark said as he turned around to face who he was speaking to. “Hello.” He said. He looked at the rest of the family. He then glared at Joe. “Joe hasn’t introduced us yet. I’m Mark and I’ll be your guide on your vacation.”

“His father works with me.” Joe continued to go on about Mark’s father, but Claudia paid no attention to him. She was looking at Mark. He stood about 5 foot 2 and he had shaggy brown hair. Mark noticed she was looking at him and he grabbed her hand and brought her closer to the water.

“Hi, I’m Claudia. So you said that it was good for the people that they escaped but not for the... and then you stopped what where you going to say?”

“Well it’s good that the people got away, naturally, but it is bad for the animals that the ship is sinking.”

“Why?”

“Because that is an oil ship. It is carrying oil over to Canada. The oil can and will fatally injure the animals.”

“Well what are we going to do?”

“At the moment *we* can do nothing. Our team is setting up booms that will collect oil off the top of the water and in about an hour we will have these boats that suck up the oil. You can come with me once we have them.”

“Yeah.”

“What do they use that oil for anyway?”

“Well that particular oil ship was carrying diesel fuel, the fuel would be used as an energy source to run trains, cars, electric power generation, military transportation stuff like that.” She continued to ask questions about everything from the oil spill to the types of animals that live in the park. She found that he, like she, was obsessed with

Orcas. They talked of them for two hours until the boats arrived. They boarded.

As they got closer to the oil it started to smell. The oil was very thick, but very slowly it was being sucked up. As they were moving along she saw something poke its head up out of

the water. She pointed it out to Mark. He gasped. It was an Orca. More and more started to appear. For some reason they were coming closer to shore. Then they turned back. Claudia looked back and gasped in horror and started crying. More and more animals had started to beach and now among them was a small calf Orca.

“This can’t be happening.” Claudia said as tears were streaming down her face. Mark turned the boat around and headed back to shore. He had Joe take captain of the boat and he and Claudia ran to the whale.

“He is still breathing.” Mark said. A brief smile came to Claudia’s face. “It’s a good thing it is a baby, he is still big but if we recruit a few more people we might be able to get him back in the water.”

“Okay, what do we do first?”

“Well first let’s get some water on him and clean the oil out of his blowhole.”

“Okay.” Jack came running over and Claudia sent him to recruit more people. Claudia kept stroking the whale to keep him calm. He was just out of the water not very far so it should be easy to get him back in. Jack brought back about 10 more people.

After the blowhole was clean they all stood around and pushed the whale back into the water. He stayed in shallow water for a little while then the orcas that were there before came back and he followed them off. He was one of the lucky ones. About 20 different animals from otters to birds were now laying on the beach helpless and dying and by the end numerous animals died and they only saved 8.

The family helped with the oil spill clean up for the whole week they were there. They had never had a better vacation. Even though the reason that they were cleaning the whole time was bad, they learned so much and gained so many friends and Claudia gained a very special friend. On the day they were leaving they all exchanged hugs.

“Promise you will call me everyday to tell me how things are going.” Claudia told Mark.

“Promise.” They hugged each other and Claudia boarded the plane.

Their home life seemed very boring compared to what they had encountered in the last week. Jack beat another one of his video games, Olivia learned a new cooking skill from her mom, Joe did absolutely nothing on his next business trip and, Claudia and Mark painted her room as if she was underwater with the Orcas.

Afterward

The starting point of my story is Alaska. I thought it would be cool to have a story about an oil spill in Alaska. I am fascinated with orcas, just like the girl in the story. So I really started the story knowing how it would end and working backwards. In my research I learned



a lot about how hard it is to clean up after and oil spill. I also learned how some oil is thicker than another, like diesel fuel. I learned how diesel fuel is used and how many things it is used for. I learned that the wind mill things used to create energy are actually called wind turbines. I learned about all of the different types of animals that are in danger of being killed by oil spills like otters, orcas, and even the small organisms that don't even get counted when people talk about the animals killed by oil spills. I never even thought about how many of very small animals are killed in oil spills, and also how that if some of the small animals become extinct that the fish won't be able to eat them and may die because of it.

“Questions About Diesel.” 2004. 10 April. 2006. <http://www.chevron.ca/FAQs/FAQsDiesel.htm#Top>

“Oil Spills.” 2002. Novi Meadows Elementary. 10 April. 2006 <http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0215471/oil_spills.htm>