

## PART ONE

Bates Island, Lake Opeongo, Algonquin Park,

1991



I can hear the air going in and out of my brother's nose. I am awake. He is two years old and almost three and he bugs me lots of times because I am five years old and soon I will be six but it is warm sleeping next to him. I call him Stick. He always falls asleep before me and I listen to the air of his nose. I can hear my parents' voices. They are further away than I can reach and whispering because they think I can't hear. I let out a squeak to let Mummy know I am awake and she says, 'We're right here' from too far away. I squeak again and the zipper undoes and I can see the sky in the crack. Her cool hand brushes my hair back and her fingers touch my cheek. 'Sssh, Anna,' she says, and the sky zips away again. When I am inside a tent the outside is far away.

The tent is blue and sniffs like dust. My parents have a fire because it is the end of summer and they are cooking something too and not sharing with me. Bacon. I love bacon. My tummy rumbles and I want bacon but it will make Daddy mad. I sniff Gwen teddy bear instead. She is brown and smells like us. I hear the air whistle when it leaves Sticky's nose. I feel nervous and I don't know why. The night will be dark soon. And it might be the meat is making my tummy weird. When we were back at the cottage, Sticky was chewing on bacon and

he shoved another in his mouth and another and another. When Mummy saw she said 'chew your food' but Stick couldn't chew because his mouth was all full. He started to go red and his eyes got watery and I thought he was crying. I said, 'Ha ha, Alex's crying', and Mummy came and thumped him. A ball of bacon came out of his mouth. Mummy got Stick in trouble for not chewing and I looked at the meat. It had spit on it. I felt a barf in my mouth. And I didn't eat that bacon ball but it's making my tummy feel weird.

The air is cold. I roll closer to Stick. His breath goes in my ear and it is warm. A little piece of light from the fire is having a dance on the side of the tent but only a little because it is not dark yet. There is no music except Stick's nose air and still the light flicks and rolls on the side of the tent. I can't sleep. I tuck Gwen under the covers so she isn't cold and I creep over to the door. The zipper has teeth that grab on my skin. I go slow so it doesn't bite and I open it just a little bit so my face can be out. The carpet here is made of pine needles. They smell like the yellow bottle I use to help Mummy clean the bathtub. There are prickly pine trees all around our camp. These are the ones that forgot the needles on the ground. The moon is going to switch with the sun and the moon will have a tail that shows up on the water. The water is not chop, chop, chop any more. It sits quietly in the lake now because it is sleeping. Close to the water, really far away from me, I can see two shadows. I can hear from the whispers that it's Mummy and Daddy and they are laughing. Mummy leans forward and I see a ponytail like a horse's hanging down. Her face is smiling and I can see her teeth in a nice way. The only other thing I can see is Coleman.

Coleman is green like grass and he is so heavy I can't lift him

up. We bring him on canoe trips to carry our food and keep it cold. And we use him so that bears can't rob the food from us. Bears like our food if we let them and we don't want to do that. So Coleman holds everything cool inside his body and has a metal tooth in the front that keeps him shut tight. He is really, really big and a metal box. Stick and I can both fit inside him like when we play hide-and-seek at home. We can stay so quiet and hide in Coleman from Daddy and try to stop laughing with my hand on Stick's mouth. When Coleman sits in the canoe he can't fit across the side and so Daddy needs to put him pointing to the front. Only Daddy can lift him up. When Coleman has to pee he has a little button at the side where I can push and his pee comes out and when I see it sometimes I pee too. Coleman is why we camped on the island because he is so heavy and big. The water was chop, chop, chop because the wind was whistling in my ears and Coleman makes the canoe go tippy. If we went down the path to the next lake where we were supposed to camp then Daddy would have to carry Coleman and the canoe but Mummy wanted to be here at the island to see the tail of the moon. Once I tried to pick Coleman up and I can't.

I whisper hello to Coleman and Daddy's head turns away from the fire. 'Back in the tent, Anna.'

I stay still to make me dream.

'Did you hear me?'

I am *awake*.

'Last time, okay?'

'Yes, Daddy.'

'Sleep tight.'

I poke my head inside and Gwen missed me. She looks lonely and I tell her with my eyes that I am coming. I carefully

take the zipper in my fingers. They feel furry in the tips and too tired to pull. He will bite if I don't watch out. I pull again and the zipper tries to get me between my thumb and pointy finger, the soft part that looks like it could be on a frog. I sit back and pull my hand away. The zipper must be hungry and so I will stay away. I grab Gwen and sniff and tuck her back into the sleeping bag.

I lie on my back and snuggle and the fire is dancing more on the side of the tent because it is a little more blue and grey outside. I watch it and my eyes start to shut but I don't want them to. Maybe if Stick is asleep then Mummy will pluck me out of bed and feed me bacon. I want to ask out loud but my teeth are too fuzzy. My head is heavy like a rock. My eyes shut again and I peel them open. I hear a sniff. It might have been from Sticky's nose but it sounded bigger than that. Stick's nose must be growing and in the middle of the night it will hog all the air. Something moves on the side of the tent. I see some fluff beside the dancing fire and I think the fluff is Stick's hair. He has escaped. It might be his little white head sneaking out for bacon. A few of his fluffy hairs are sticking up as a shadow just outside the tent. His nose whistles beside me so I know it's not, but the hair stands up and I think that it looks thicker. The hair stands there shaking like my fingers when I am hungry. I watch it and it moves forward only a very little as slow as a snail. It would be a hairy snail and much bigger and that means it probably isn't a snail any more. And the bacon smells and my eyes fall down and now I can open them only a crack. I see the hair move and I think as my eye shuts how did Stick stay sleeping and sneak out of the tent for bacon at the same time?

I hear Mummy yelling and I keep my eyes closed. Dreams aren't real. I know that because my Mummy doesn't yell. She has a soft voice that looks like a lily that tastes like sugar cookies at Christmas when you don't put the sprinkles on. We made cookies and I was allowed to use the shiny stamp to make an angel. The wings broke off in the oven and then we tried again and we got perfect angels with wings. Stick wanted to eat his before Mummy put the sprinkles on. He cried because he couldn't wait for sprinkles and thought we were just taking the cookie from him. Mummy gave him the cookie and he ate it and I put icing on mine. Red and green icing and sprinkles, even though they blinked like the sun when I held them up. I got done and wanted to save my cookie to show Daddy and put it on a plate. Stick started to cry. He wanted my cookie. Mummy said no. Stick cried more. Stick loves cookies.

Mummy doesn't yell about cookies and she doesn't yell when I spill my glue on the carpet even though the glue was brand new and it was all gone. She says she will only yell if I am about to get hit by a bus. She says maybe sometimes people yell because things are hard but if you go past the things that are hard you can be very very strong. And now she is yelling. I open my eyes to see if a bus is coming. I will

jump out of the way like a superhero maybe one with a cape but maybe not. All I see is blue and I am lying on my side so it is hard to jump. The whole world looks blue and flappy. I give Gwen a hug and look at the flapping. It's the tent in my face. Flap flap flap it snaps and growls like a dragon. I better close my eyes so it isn't so scary.

I think of my house in Toronto because I wish I am there. I like the woods too. The pine needles taste like spicy gum and I climb on rocks. I can swim like a dog when I kick hard. And I like coming out into the park near our cottage in a canoe with marshmallows and graham crackers and chocolate that we smoosh together and Stick gets it stuck in his hair and hands. He is Stick because he always has sticky hands. He used to have them more, like every time he touched me on the arm his hand would stick on me. And he also plays with sticks all the time. He chops me with them and he pretends that they are cars or trucks or guys. I said one day that he was a sticky stick and Mummy and Daddy really laughed because there is one word and he is both of them. That is how he got the name Stick and Daddy lifts his shoulders and says it just stuck.

Right now I like our house in Toronto more and it is brick and tall and skinny. My friend Jessica says hers is bigger. The kitchen is almost in the back yard where there is a tree that is the same age as me. We are growing thicker every year except it has more leaves and is way taller now. I want to catch up. There is a big long counter that I sit at to make cookies and eat cereal. Also popsicles because there in the back yard is where you go so they won't drip. Sometimes I used to let my tongue melt it a little and let it drip into



my tree. Now I don't do that because the magic drip made the tree grow so fast that it is way bigger than me even though we are the same age. That's why I like my kitchen but my favourite place in my house is my room. It has my puzzles and Lego and a carpet that tickles my feet. I go under the sheets with Gwen. We hide in bed when it is rainy outside the door or when I feel scared. I call and Daddy comes in to snuggle with me. He never talks. He gets into bed with mussy hair and wraps his arms around me. In the morning I wake up and he is gone.

When you have a dream and it feels real it means you might pee the bed. That's what Mummy says. If I am having a bad dream she says I should get up and pee. The bathroom light is always on. But I remember the tent. That is what is blue and very flappy. Flap flap flap. Maybe I am dreaming that too. The most important thing that Mummy says I have to remember is not to dream I am going pee before I get to the toilet. It's not my fault but I have to remember. If I don't remember and I dream that I am peeing then I really pee but not in the toilet. Then I wet the bed and the sheet that makes a crunchy sound like cereal needs to be hung in the back yard on a string so I can hide behind it like the curtain for a play. Go to the toilet. There is no toilet when we are camping. I don't need to pee.

And I don't like the flap, flap, flap. I turn over and hug Gwen and snuggle into Stick and hope the sounds will go away. Mummy screams like a monster is tackling her. That's why I know it's a dream so I should keep my eyes shut tight. It is dark behind my eyes. Mummy never yells. Mostly not ever. Except sometimes.

Even though my eyes are shut so tight I can hear the rip of the zipper. I turn to look and see a crack of sky and it is really dark blue now and Daddy's head is blocking most of it. He looks mad and I am in trouble. He is shouting and all I see is teeth. They are not very white teeth and big. He has pointy fangs and at the back he has even bigger teeth that are wide and look like they could be in a dinosaur's head. Inside the middle of most of them is a piece of gold. That is where he keeps all of our golden treasure so that it will be safe. If it is inside his mouth then no robber can sneak away with it. Or if a robber tries to take it in the night then he will also have to try to take Daddy's teeth. That will wake Daddy up and he will chase the robber away. I duck down. Daddy scoops me up.

Daddy is hugging me but it's not a snuggle. It is hard and squeezey and my breath shoots out of my body. The sky shakes. I see a long arm that is like a claw but big and it is a tree branch with needles. Daddy is running and it is shaking me. The yelling won't stop. I see Gwen's head jumping up and down. I am holding her and she will let go if I don't hang on so I pull her tighter and try to sniff but her head is wiggling too much. Daddy jerks me back and I see things scatter all over the ground and I think that Daddy is making a mess.

Daddy moves away fast and I feel the ground go in my back. It is pointy and makes my breath go away. A pine needle pricks in the crack between my PJ top and bottom. My PJ pants are always falling down. I have to use my hand to pull them up at the back and sometimes when I am running it happens. Once a boy laughed and pointed because he said he saw my bum. He didn't see my bum. Not the round part. Just the tippy top of crack that peeks out from my pants. Mummy says it's my other-end smile. I like pants that stay on.

I want to reach to get my pants up but Daddy grabs my ribs again. He throws me like he does into the water at the lake but there is not water. I hit my head. I scream and it hurts and Daddy is so mad he is yelling. Except he made the mess not me. Or Stick might have sneaked out and made the mess but Daddy is still yelling. He pushes me and I wonder if he is going to throw me into the lake. He does this sometimes but we aren't supposed to play rough in the water. We have to be laughing and everyone needs to be happy if Daddy is going to let me stand on his shoulders and jump or throw me in. When I do jump I am not scared. I plug my nose and go in and the noise stops. It is quiet under the water. There are bubbles that I see and no sharks. They don't live in our lake. Only little fish that nibble at my toes if I stand really still and even that doesn't hurt. When it is quiet and I see the bubbles I know it is time to go up and I let go of my nose. I kick my legs and come back up and find Daddy's arm to hold me up. The noises push back in my ears.

This time Daddy throws me and I don't go in the water. There is something hard in my back and Daddy pushes at my stomach. It is not a game. We aren't supposed to push so I tell him to stop and scream because he is screaming so many

things that I don't think he can hear me. He pushes again even though it is not allowed and it hurts my stomach this time so I curl into a ball around Gwen. He shoves me on the back and I feel the air rush around me. I hear a thump. Click.

I am in the black. And I am mad at Daddy. He is shouting and pushing and both those things are naughty and I wonder if he is getting in trouble from Mummy. When Mummy gets mad she doesn't yell. She looks at me and she lets the sad drip up from her heart down her veins and into her eyes. Her eyes send the sad into my eyes and then it drips back down into my heart and makes it feel like a ball. But not a ball that bounces up high, one that is squishy because it needs Daddy to put in air. I won't ask Daddy to pump my heart because I am so mad. I can't see him any more. It is so so dark. I don't know if my eyes are open or shut. I think they are shut and I put my finger to see. I can feel my eyelid. After I know then I open my eyes and it looks exactly the same. My eye feels sad. Mummy leaves a nightlight when it is too dark. I stick my hand out. All I feel is a smooth wall. I know how it feels and it is Coleman.

The air goes whoosh and the light comes back from the sky. I see Daddy's face. His eyes look like they are in a cartoon when a guy gets hit. Then I see Stick is in the air above me and he is coming down. His legs are curled up and his face looks like when he got stung by the bee in our back yard. He was in his highchair when he was a baby and the bee wanted his food. It ran into his forehead but it took the stinger away. Stick didn't need a needle but his face went all red and it scrunched up into the middle of his face. So now he maybe got stung by a bee and Daddy pushes him in beside me and I say 'hey' because

there is not room and Stick's feet are touching me. I try to push him away and Daddy gets even madder. He has snaky veins on the side of his neck under his skin and he yells so loud I cover my ears and hunch my shoulders up. I am bad. Very bad. Again. I didn't wet the bed and I can't remember what I did to get him so mad but I never really do.

'Stay in there,' he yells and sounds sick. 'Don't get out.'

Maybe Stick was bad.

Daddy squishes us down and it gets dark again. I feel the air whoosh and a thump and a click. Coleman shuts his mouth. The air from Stick's nose goes in and I almost can't breath. And then it opens a crack and I feel the cool air again and take a breath. I see Daddy's fingers and a rock. The fingers put the rock at the side of Coleman's mouth where he has no teeth and it sticks there and Coleman's mouth closes down. There is a click from the metal tooth at the front of Coleman and Daddy is yelling at me not to touch the rock and that it is my problem rock. Coleman can't shut his mouth all the way because the rock is there at the side. Daddy moves away and now he is yelling at Mummy. She won't like it. I stick my ear to the crack of Coleman's mouth and I hear him yelling.

'The paddle . . . oh my God.'

He says God, not Jesus.

We are inside Coleman. Stick's toes stick into my leg and I don't like it. There is not enough room for both of us. When we share a bed, Mummy draws a line down the middle and no one's toes are allowed over the line. I say there is a line and try to draw it with my chopper hand down the middle. I can't draw the line without Stick's bum leaking over. I kick him to get him on his side of the line and he cries and there is yelling and

Mummy is yelling back and Daddy is roaring and sounds like a lion with a big mane that shakes. I don't like this daddy that is shouting so much. I want the other daddy back but he keeps yelling even though Mummy isn't. Mummy doesn't yell so I feel better. I like her quiet because that's what she is.

I push Stick with my feet for more room. It is too squishy in Coleman for us. Now his bum is in my face and I don't want it there. His nose breath is hot on me and I don't want it there either. I put my head up to put my nose by the crack in Coleman's mouth. I can see the rock is stuck between Coleman's mouth like a tooth on the side. I am not allowed to touch the rock. I put my nose up to the air so that Stick doesn't hog all mine. I can hear huffing and it might be the new daddy. There is a huff and a growl and I hear Daddy talking like he is sad. He keeps talking and his voice is quieter so maybe my daddy is coming back and there is a snarl and a growl and I don't know what it is. I try to push my head up but my forehead is tall. It stands up from my eyes until my hair so I can't make my eyes get right in Coleman's mouth to see through his lips. I am glad that Coleman isn't a whale with a big tongue that would suck me back. Whales don't have teeth so we could get sucked in on a waterfall that was really just how the whale eats. The whale doesn't want to eat us but he doesn't know we are there because he has no ears on his head and won't hear even if Stick cries. A whale doesn't eat people he eats trees.

Stick and I have to wait for trees to flow into the whale's mouth. We sit in the middle. If a tree comes in and we catch it and maybe another and then I could use a rope to tie the trees together to make a boat to float on top of. We could float out of the mouth when the whale was sleeping one day

but then we float back in by accident. But I can't do any of my plan because Stick pulls my hair and I punch him back and I see that it is only Coleman's mouth but I still feel shakes. There is no whale. Stick can't swim.

I can hear things outside Coleman. My ear is close to his mouth so I can hear more than the inside sounds of Stick's nose and whining. Outside I hear a growl and a nose breath that isn't Stick's. It's from a longer nose like Snoopy's. He is a dog that lives next door and usually he is behind the fence and he barks at Stick and me when we play with a ball. At first when I met him I got scared because Snoopy is big. His name was wrong because he didn't look like in the TV. He is black and tall and inside his mouth there is black. He stared at me like I would be a good dinner or my arm is a chew toy. My mummy said hello to Snoopy after a while and then we were friends. Now Snoopy gets in our yard and takes my ball but I share. Only with Snoopy not with Stick. Snoopy will run after my ball and bring it back again and again and again. He is the only person who will play ball with me for a long enough time because Mummy only throws twice or one more time and then that's all the times and I'm alone and that isn't so good. And Stick's hands are too fat to catch so Snoopy is the best. I can hear Snoopy outside of Coleman and it's not Toronto but Snoopy came to visit near the cottage and maybe doesn't like it because he growls. Mrs Buchanan must miss Snoopy or maybe she came to see me too. Snoopy's voice is low and he makes a woof, woof, woof. And I hear Daddy talking and I wonder why he has so much to say to Snoopy when usually he does not. Except for if Snoopy makes a poo and leaves it in our yard.

Stick cries so much. I call Daddy and Mummy and my throat feels like the deck at the cottage that gives me splinters in my foot. No one is coming. I don't like splinters and I don't want one in my throat. This is bad. This must be how we do time-out when we are camping. It's not like a normal time-out in Toronto or when I am at the cottage. I don't sit on a step or on the porch. Here I sit inside Coleman? But I haven't talked and I stayed still and I was quiet for as long as the time-out and still Daddy won't let me out. I try to stick my eyes out Coleman's mouth but my forehead is still too tall. I see stars and the wind is not breathing. I call Daddy and Mummy again and no one. I listen and I can hear other breath not wind or Stick's nose. The noises are Snoopy breathing. Mrs Buchanan has given Snoopy a bone. I am not allowed but Mrs Buchanan lets me hold the bone out and Snoopy takes it. He does it gentle with his lips back so that I can see his teeth aren't going to bite me and he keeps them far away from my hand. When he is done with the bone for his dinner he gives me a wet kiss on the cheek and I smile.

Snoopy is eating the bone and I can hear the snap snap snap of his jaws on the bone. His nose is snuffling because he is a pig when he eats and doesn't stop to breathe. I am



supposed to stop to breathe even when I am so so hungry. Snoopy doesn't stop because he is a dog. His teeth go scrape on the bone and I hear it pop. I think Snoopy has broken the bone and he's not supposed to do that. It can get stuck in the roof of his mouth and he has to go to the dog hospital. It happened once but I wasn't there. Mrs Buchanan told me. Snoopy cried at the vet and got a needle to make him sleepy so they could get the bone out. And the sounds outside crack crack snap and I know that Snoopy has broken the bone but Mrs Buchanan is not stopping him. Maybe she is sleeping because it is night-time for her.

'Snoop,' I call out of Coleman's mouth.

He doesn't listen. He keeps eating.

'Hey, Snoop!'

I say it louder. Behind me I feel Stick twisting. He puts a knee in my back but he is quiet and maybe having a snooze. I don't want to wake him up because he stopped whining after so long.

'Snoooooopeeee,' I whisper.

The chewing stops and I hear Snoopy sniffing.

The sniffing gets louder. Snoopy is coming to see me. I stick my fingers out to say hello because I have one hand that isn't holding Gwen. There is a bad smell. I pull my fingers in to plug my nose up because my nostrils don't like the smell. Snoopy needs a bath. It smells like the rotting leaves under the cottage and when there were fish guts in the boat. Yuck. Snoopy comes and I see his big nose sniffing in the crack but his smell is wrong and it gives me the shakes and I don't know why except the smell of fish. I don't like fish to eat. The crack goes dark and there is hair coming in the crack. It is not like

Snoopy's. It is more prickly hair and fills up the crack and turns out the lights and I can't see. And Stick starts to cry because it is dark and we get jerked. Stick pushes into me and I grab Gwen and Coleman shakes and it is still dark and I call Daddy. We shake harder and I hear huff and it stinks. I cover my mouth because I don't want to breathe in the smell and Stick is crying and then I am too and we shake more and we flip. I roll back and my head goes clunk on Coleman. There is growling and a sound like Mummy is making lunch and using the top of Coleman to cut apples with a knife. But it is not Mummy because her hair is yellow too and she always gives me a piece of apple first. It is louder and more like there are ten mummies cutting apples but that is too many and they wouldn't fit. And it is dark flashing on and off and I can see Stick on his side crying and I need Daddy because it isn't Snoopy and I am not supposed to talk to strange dogs because we don't know them. I'm on my back and Stick gets shoved into me but I don't mind and I grab his arm and pull him and Gwen in and we cry and scrape scrape scrape. I see the fur and hear too much breath and squeeze Stick and Gwen and my eyes shut tight and we cry.

My tears are gone when the scraping stops. Coleman stays on his back with the rock in his mouth. The black dog is not scratching Coleman. He goes back to his sniffing and huffing and then he starts cracking his bone. Stick and I are huddled in tight. Stick's head is heavy like a bowling ball and it makes my arm go fuzzed and he snuggles in. It is so dark outside Coleman and no Daddy or Mummy and after a while I watch the lids of my eyes close down like jaws.

I open my eyes and it is light outside Coleman now and I can see Stick's crying face all red and squishy. He cries for Mummy. I tell him to shush. He keeps crying. His belly is squishy too. It looks like a ball and is round like his cheeks. His face is like a bad tomato because he is crying so much. It is wet and he has snots all over his nose. It is very noisy inside Coleman because of Sticky and I'd like to get out.

I call Daddy and Mummy and no one comes. I try to have a peek outside. I can see a line of sky that is blue. The trees reach out and they don't look like claws any more. I put my hands over my ears because it is so loud from Stick crying and I squint my eyes too. It is still loud but I can see darker lines down my eyes. I open them and the lines are gone. I shut and they come back. The lines are attached to my eyes. I touch and they are my eyelashes. I thought they were skinnier but they look furry. In the mirror there are a lot of eyelashes but with my squinty eyes there are gaps in between. I can still see out. The tree branches look furry not like claws too. Like the needles are the eyelashes of a tree. And they are furry in the same way. When I squint. It is too loud and my hands on my ears barely block all the noise.

After a while Stick's crying stops and I take my hands off. Stick is only breathing through his spit. He is curled up on

his side of Coleman and just staring at the blank wall. It is hard to lift my head so I put it back down and listen. I hear nothing except then I do. I hear a sniff.

The sniffing is closer. I think of the black dog I saw through the crack. I don't think Snoopy is here. Snoop would listen and be nice. Mrs Buchanan would call Snoopy because she doesn't like him to be very far away. I hear more sniffs and I don't hear Mrs Buchanan. I think it is the black dog and I feel scared. I was scared of Snoopy too. The black dog might not be bad. I keep my fingers away from the crack because you are not supposed to make your fingers look like carrots.

The sniffing is close and something bumps Coleman. He wiggles and then stops. Sniffing and another bump. The black dog's nose comes to the crack. It is wet so the black dog isn't sick. It is big. It looks shiny like the chair at my grandpa's house. Grandpa loves to sit. He says his 'old bones' need a chair and there is a handle that I pull on the side. I am only allowed to pull the handle when Grandpa is ready for his legs to kick up. My grandpa is very nice when I do things his way and so I do. The chair is black and sometimes the cleaning lady rubs a cloth on it so much that I can nearly see my nose. Not my real nose but like a shadow of my nose. Rose. That is the cleaning lady. She smells like lemons and wears an apron that I think should have lemons too. Instead it is pink flowers that are more floaty. Rose came after my grandma died and my grandpa missed her so much he got Rose to do her jobs. When I pull the handle on the chair a small toadstool appears from the bottom of the chair and picks up Grandpa's feet until he is lying down like a bed. Except it isn't a bed. It's a black chair. Shiny and smooth with dimples. Like this nose.

The nose sniffs and I watch the nostrils go in and out. Stick is quiet and I only hear him make a small squeak but I don't want to lift my head because the nose is looking at me. It keeps breathing in my air like it says hello like Snoop does. Except it's not hello. It's more like, Who are you? I don't want to talk and I keep my head flat and I feel Stick is moving like he is trying to get away. There is nowhere to go inside Coleman. Stick is wiggling and I want him to stop. I push to get him over more on my side again. His head comes up near mine and our feet are curled together. The nose keeps sniffing around the edge of Coleman's mouth and I take my hand and put it over Stick's mouth like when we hide from Daddy. Not enough to make Stick mad or tight so he can't breathe, but I don't want the black dog to know us. Stick's stomach sucks in like he is going to scream and he changes his eyes to look at me. I say sssssh and I can feel his lips flap open to yell at me but his eyes blink once and he is quiet. I put my hand on him and we are quiet and we watch the nose sniff sniff sniff.

The rock is still stuck in the side of Coleman's mouth. The front of Coleman has the metal tooth that Daddy pushed in to make us stay. The nose finds Coleman's metal tooth and pushes on it. The nose lifts up and a big tongue jumps out. I see a black lip and a tooth that is very white and long. The fur is a little bit wet and there is pink juice on it. I once had a juice box with tomato juice at a party that was sneaky. Usually it would be apple or orange or fruit juice and this was tomato and I did not like it at all. I spat it out and Daddy said it was a mess. But he wanted me to put the mess in my stomach and that was gross. So I did spit and I said sorry but I didn't think sorry. The black dog has tomato juice on his jaw and some of it paints onto Coleman's

white lip. The tongue comes out and licks the juice and keeps licking like Coleman has yummy things stuck on his mouth.

The teeth open and I see the sides scrape along the edge of Coleman and I see little bits of Coleman turn into metal splinters. The black dog is making grunts like it is uncomfy or maybe mad. He is chewing on Coleman like a toy and I grab Stick in because I don't like looking at the teeth. There is one that is really long and I start to shake. And the tooth is scraping and ducks under the metal clip and catches there. The tooth is like a hook and Coleman shakes and Stick screams and I think maybe I do too. The fur in the crack snaps back and the tooth isn't a hook even though it tries. It comes right back and the mouth pushes and tries to get hooked. It pushes in and fills us with its smell. Bad bad breath. Like rotting stink. The hamburger that Mummy forgot in the fridge and only found when it was brown with green fur. Like that except with black fur. Stink. The tooth comes in and looks like a sword and tries to hook. And Stick screams and I can't stand the noise and the stink and my foot is there so I kick.

I hit the tooth and my foot is ouch and I put my foot back in a ball. There is a yelp. A low growl. The stink gets less. We hear sniff sniff sniff and less sniffs. I keep listening and the tooth is not in the crack. The nose isn't either. I hear a scrape and a smacking of lips. The dog is chewing on something. Not Coleman but food that is closer to the lake. Like when I chew on chicken, I hear scrape, pop, smack. The black dog is eating breakfast. It looks like Stick is listening too because his head is up nearer the crack and he turns and looks at me and lifts the front of his shirt up to wipe his nose.