

Chapter 1

The Journey Anew

In a plain brown box tucked away in a musty old attic in a warm cozy house in a quite town in cold and windy Alaska lived two very special toys. Rebecca, a love-worn rag doll who belonged to the cute dark-haired girl Samantha, sat in the bottom corner of the box drawing pictures on a piece of paper with a broken orange crayon.

“How long have we been in here?” she sighed.

From another corner, near the top of the box, came the deep voice of a model horse. “I can’t tell time, my dear,” he said as he scratched behind his ear with the corner of an old comic book. He had had many names, but his favorites were Silver and Sky, so he called himself both. The young boy who used to play with him had not been seen in a sad long time. His name was Timothy and he had red hair.

“Yes, but you can tell night from day, can’t you?” Rebecca quizzed.

From the top of the box came the sound of hoof tapping cardboard. “Lids closed. No sun nor moon nor lamp.” He let out a loud sigh. He missed his Tim and knew Rebecca missed her Sam. She had used all but one of the crayons in the box writing letters and drawing pictures for Samantha.

Silver Sky scrunched himself up into the corner, looking up at the closed top of the box. How long *had* it been since they were shut away in the dark? There had once been a watch nearby that had provided light when he pressed a small button on the side. Though he could not tell time, he could watch the numbers go by. The watch had long ago gone dark.

He could hear Rebecca pushing aside books and old socks as she climbed her way to the top of the box. Her blue eyes looked quietly up at the box top.

“Does it open?” she asked, scolding herself silently for never asking before.

“It’s taped, my dear,” he answered, pointing to an edge where he had peeled away the cardboard with his teeth, revealing a band of sticky tape. “Nearly got myself stuck that time.”

“Humph,” Rebecca grumped, absentmindedly scratching her triangle nose. “I think I saw a pocket knife in here, once. You could cut the tape.”

“I can’t,” Silver Sky said.

Rebecca glared at the plastic horse. He was not being very helpful at all! “Won’t more likely then can’t,” she fumed. She wanted out of this box, and out *now!*

“Can’t it is, dearest,” he replied waving his hooves in her face. He then dug down into the box, past an old Valentine candy box and returned holding the knife in his mouth. He set it down near the grumpy rag doll.

“No thumbs,” he said sadly. “Can’t get the blade out. You’ll have to do it.”

Now, as you might know, fewer things frighten a rag doll more than sharp objects. Rebecca had once had a nasty encounter with Shadow, Timothy’s pet cat. It earned her a new elbow patch and a healthy respect for kittens and their claws. If you were made from cloth and stuffing, you would understand.

Rebecca poked at the knife carefully, as though it might bite her. “It’s sharp, isn’t it?” she asked skeptically.

“Hope so,” Silver Sky said looking at the box top with measured concern.

Holding the pocket knife as far away from herself as possible, Rebecca slowly pulled out the blade. "Ooh, it looks wicked sharp," she said with a frown.

The model horse looked on with interest. His Tim had used this knife to carve pieces of wood and to trim the little extra bits off of model parts. It seemed a useful thing. Silver Sky wondered why it had been put in a box with him and Rebecca.

Rebecca, meanwhile, had pressed up near the top of the box, still holding the knife as far away as possible, and looking with determination to the taped seam. Slowly, and with shaky hands, she pressed the blade into the tape, working her way across the box. It was hard going, the tape felt double thick in the middle, and she had to saw back and forth, all the while looking like the knife might jump up and bite her on the arm. Silver Sky cheered her on and clapped his plastic hooves together as she got farther along. When finally she had finished, she pulled the knife down, slowly closed the blade, and put it as far away in the box as possible. Only then did she look at her handiwork.

"It's open, dear, what next?" Silver Sky asked, suddenly feeling very worried. He didn't know how long they had been in the box, or what to expect outside. He frowned. "What if they put us in a box because they didn't like us anymore? Maybe they found more interesting toys. Something with lights that flashes and makes noises? I'd feel dreadfully dull next to that!"

Rebecca sat down next to Silver Sky. "I don't think that's it. I think it's been so long that we've just forgotten the reason. My Samantha didn't like flashy things. She liked doll houses, bracelets and puppy dogs," she said sternly, remembering all the pets in the house. She liked most of the pets, though she could have done without Shadow.

"One of us should look outside," Silver Sky said, changing the topic. "I wonder where we are and what's out there?" He recalled the funny feeling in his stomach the few times the box had moved.

They both shuffled uneasily among the toys and socks in the box. Now that the time had come to get out they were both very nervous. Being toys they were used to being made to do things, not being the ones doing the making. It is, after all, awfully presumptuous of toys to go leaving their boxes on their own. But these two were on the verge of doing just that!

"You can do it," said the horse.

"No, you," said the rag doll.

"Paper, Rock, Scissors?" Silver Sky asked.

"Can't, silly. You don't have fingers, remember?" Rebecca pointed out to the confused model horse.

"Oh, yes, forgot for a moment." He sat in silence. If he were a brave horse, he wouldn't have hesitated, he thought. Rebecca had cut open the box, even though she was afraid of the knife. Rebecca was brave. Silver Sky looked at her. She wanted to know where her Sam was just as much as he wanted to know where his Tim had gotten off to. If she could be brave, he could too.

Silver Sky clambered to the top of the box, slowly pushing the top up with his nose. The first thing he noticed was light. It made him all squinty as his eyes adjusted to the new found brightness. It was coming in from a small window. The room was filled with lots of other boxes, all very dusty. It made him sneeze.

"What do you see?" he heard Rebecca calling from below him as she tugged on one of his legs.

“A rat.”