

“4 Wheels and a Piece of Maple”

A novel excerpt

by

Chase March

© 2007 Chase March. All Rights Reserved.

## Chapter 1

### Moving Day

“You’re not going to need that,” said Maria as she surveyed all of the items laid out on her son’s bed.

“That’s what you think,” said Dylan, “I need all this stuff.”

“Yeah, but we can’t take everything with us. The car is going to be quite loaded up, ya know.”

Dylan was too busy packing his personal things into a duffel bag to listen to her. He was doing what all kids do when they don’t like what they are hearing.

His mom picked up on this. “I know you hear me,” said Maria, “Besides you’ll find out that there is nowhere you can even use it up there.”

Maria went back into her bedroom. There was no point continuing the conversation. He wasn’t listening anymore. He had tuned her out. So she went back to her last minute packing. Charlie was doing the same thing. “Has he got all his stuff together yet?” he asked.

“No, but you and I both knew he’d do it at the last minute,” she answered.

They both worked on packing up the last of their personal items. After a minute of silence, Maria had to say what was on her mind, “He doesn’t know what it’s going to be like there.”

“He’ll find out,” said his dad, “We’ve been

trying to tell him. And he's old enough to figure things out himself now."

"He's only nine," she protested

"Ten in two months," said Charlie, like that would alleviate all her fears. It didn't. She still worried about him.

Moving day is usually at the end of a month. For some reason, that is when everyone moves. So while Dylan was trying to stuff all his important things into one duffel bag, another person was having a similar difficulty.

"Well I think that is everything," said Ken.

"Yeah but what about the weight?" asked Allan, his step dad.

"I think I did it okay. Get the scale and let's check," said David.

"I'll get it," said Heather.

"Thanks, Mom!"

She gets back to the room in a few seconds with the scale. Ken steps onto it to check his weight. 165 pounds. His mom looks at the reading and says, "I hope you eat okay up there. You're so skinny.

"Stop pestering him Heather, he'll be just fine," said Allan

"Moms are allowed to worry. It's our jobs," she said.

She always says that and she probably always will. Ken is twenty-two years old now, and she still says it. She was worried last year when he went away to teacher's college. She called like every week to check up on him.

“Yup, this bag is right on. 70 pounds,” said Ken, “and the other bag is 42 pounds, 2 pounds under. Should be okay.”

“I can’t believe you can only take 44 pounds on the plane. How are you supposed to live for a year up there?”

“Will you stop it Heather?” said Allan, “the little bag goes on the plane with him and the big bag gets there a bit later.”

“Yeah mom, and I already mailed myself a box of things. It should be waiting for me up there.”

She continued her worrying anyway, “Are you sure you have everything you need in the little bag?”

“Yes mom, I got my underwear, socks, extra pants and shirts, my toothbrush and shaving kit and everything I will need for one week,” said Ken.

“Good to go, we should all be hitting the sack soon. I got work in the morning. I’m going to turn in. Good luck Ken,” said Allan and he glanced from Ken to Heather and added, “Goodnight.”

“Good night Allan. Thanks.”

“Are you coming Heather?” Allan asks.

“In a minute” she replies. Allan leaves the room and she turns to her son. “So do you have everything?”

“Yeah mom, thanks.”

“Okay, so we set off first thing in the morning. I’ll wake you,” she leans over for a hug, kisses his cheek and says, “I love you. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight!”

Charlie did a quick survey to make sure they had everything packed. He then got in the car and started it up.

“Well everybody. We ready for the big move?” he said.

“I think I got everything,” said Maria.

“How about you, Dylan?” asked his dad.

“Whatever,” said Dylan as he put on his headphones. He glanced back at the house and the paved driveway. He would miss that.

“Away we go. It’s a good night for a drive” said Charlie.

After they had been driving for a while, Maria looked back at her son. He was leaning back on his seat, his eyes closed. She could hear the faint hum of the bass coming from his headphones.

She turned to Charlie, “I think he’s asleep.”

“That’s good. It’s a long ride. You should try to get some sleep too.”

“I’m a little worried about him. Do you think he will adjust okay?”

“He’s a Douglas, we adapt. Always have.”

“Maybe you’re right,” she said.

“Of course I’m right. We’ve been trying to prepare him for this for a while. And he’s been there before too.”

“Yeah, six years ago. He doesn’t remember.”

“It’ll come back to him,” he said.

“Don’t you ever worry?” she asked.

“No, that’s the mother’s job,” he joked, “right now I am just worried about the road. Let me

do the worrying and you get some sleep. You'll need it. You're driving in the morning."

"Okay, you're right. I'll try," she yawned and then closed her eyes.

"Thanks for driving me to the airport," said Ken as he let out a big yawn. It was too early in the morning to be up and the excitement of the move hadn't let him sleep much last night.

"Wouldn't have it any other way," said Heather.

She walked him right up to the gate. Security only lets passengers past this point so that is where they needed to say their goodbyes.

"Call me as soon as you touch down okay."

"I will Mom."

"Be careful"

"Mom, it's a jumbo jet. Safest form of transport they say."

"I know. Just be careful"

"Okay, talk to you soon. And don't worry. This is going to be great"

The Douglas family was heading down the road as the sun started to rise. They past signs that said they were leaving the city limits. The road became narrower and completely tree-lined on both sides. Maria started to wake up from her night of sleeping in the car.

"Morning" said Charlie.

"Morning" she replied as she looks back and sees Dylan playing his PSP, "Did you sleep okay?"

"Alright," he said.

“Well, you two. We will be stopping in about half an hour for breakfast at the next stop. We are right on schedule,” said Charlie. He then looked over at his wife, “After that, you drive and I get a nap.”

“Sounds good.” she said, “just let me wake up first.

It was Ken’s first time on a jumbo jet, but he wasn’t worried about it at all. He had a brand new skateboard magazine to keep him entertained. He had gum to chew during take-off and landings so that his ears wouldn’t pop. Lots of people told him to do that.

He was fortunate enough to get a window seat, and he watched as the city he lived in for almost his entire life, shrank away below him. It got covered up by clouds and like that was gone. He was on his way.

The flight was uneventful. The gum worked. His ears didn’t pop. He landed and retrieved his bags without any problems at all. And then he made sure to find a pay phone and call his mom.

“I’m on the ground Mom,” he said and with a few pauses in between continued, “Yup, everything is fine. I have a to wait an hour and a half now for the charter flight.”

“That makes me nervous,” she said.

“Yeah, a tiny nine-seater plane. I’ll take a few pictures for you so you can see what it looks like.”

“Why does that have to be the only way to get there?”

“Well, you know, there isn’t much else that far north. The roads don’t even go there. It’s a fly-in-only community.”

“I know. Give me a call as soon as you get to your new place okay.”

“I will Mom, no worries.”

The Douglas family had a quick stop for breakfast and Maria took over the driving. Charlie was napping when she pulled into her cousin’s driveway. She left the car running and got out to get her sister. Dylan stayed in the back playing his video game.

Pretty soon, her sister was squishing in beside him in the back seat.

“Hi Aunt Dora,” said Dylan as he shut off his game, happy for someone to talk to.

“Shh!” said Maria to them both, “We’ve got to let your father get some rest.”

Dylan turned back on his video game. “Do you wanna play?” he asked.

“Sure. Thanks.”

They were at the airport in half an hour and they all got out, except for Charlie. They left him there to sleep while they made sure everything was set for their flight.

Dylan wasn’t too happy about all of this. He started to let off, “I don’t see why we have to leave all this stuff in the car.”

“You know why Dill,” his aunt called him that sometimes. He didn’t like it much, but she was

the only one who did it and so he let her. It actually was their thing. He appreciated it coming from her.

“Yeah,” said his Mom, “and as soon as the winter road is up and running, she will drive up the car and the rest of our stuff for us.”

“Yeah, but what if I need my stuff before then?” he asked.

“I told you to bring only the essentials in that duffel bag. Anything you don’t have will just have to wait,” said his mom.

“Do you have everything?” asked his aunt.

“Yeah, I think so,” said Dylan as he pulled out his duffel bag. Tied to the top of it was a skateboard.

“What’s that for?” asked his aunt.

“You can’t expect me to go there without it,” he said.

Just then Charlie joined them. “I tried to tell him,” he said, “but you know how well he listens.”

“Hey, a good skater can always find a place to skate. I will there too.”

“Okay, good luck,” said Aunt Dora. She rolled her eyes away from him and looked at her sister. “I’ll see you all in three months,” she said.

“Hopefully, if it’s a good season,” interjected Charlie, “otherwise it might be four or five.”

“We will think positive won’t we sis.”

“We sure will Dora, beside I might need my sewing machine before Christmas.”

“I still can’t believe you can drive over ice,” said Dylan.

“Oh yeah, it’s the best thing when you live up there. You can get out to the city every weekend to pick stuff up. It gets pretty isolated otherwise,” said his dad.

“Don’t worry Dill, you will do just fine up there. They’ve got a great school, a hockey rink, a nice dock, and of course the nursing station in case you manage to find someplace to fall off of that thing,” she jokes as she threw her head to the side to indicate the skateboard tied to his bag.

Dylan smirked, “Yeah,” and then added under his breath, “that’s all that’s there.”

“What was that?” said his dad.

He tried to recover. He quickly said, “Nothing,” ran over to his aunt and gave her a hug. And that was exactly what he was thinking. There would be nothing to do in this small-outdated town. Nothing’s there. Nothing to do. Why do we have to move here? But he knew when to keep his mouth shut around his family and so he didn’t say anything else.

Just then their flight was called over the P.A. system, “Flight 473 to Eagle Bay now boarding at Gate 2”

“Well that’s us. Thanks sis. Take care.”

“Yeah, of our stuff,” joked Charlie.

“Don’t listen to him,” Maria continued, “you take care of yourself, and our stuff.”

They all laughed. Everyone except Dylan. He was off in his own world, afraid that he wouldn’t see civilization for quite some time. As he got onto the plane, memories of old town flashed into his mind. He did remember the old town, a

little. But he was too used to the conveniences in the city and was worried how he would get on in the small town of Eagle Bay.

Ken stared in amazement at the Pilatus plane and snapped a picture of it on his camera. He watched as three people ahead of him, walked right past the captain and climbed the small steps into the cabin.

As he walked by, the captain greeted him and he returned the salutation. He climbed the small stairs and had to duck once inside the cabin. He made his way to a seat right beside the wing. He grabbed a stick of gum and popped it in his mouth as the captain explained the emergency procedures. Then shockingly, the captain sat down in his seat, and Ken noticed that he could see all the instruments in the cockpit. In the jumbo jets, you don't get to see any of this. It was exciting.

He watched again, for the second time in one day, a city disappear below him. It didn't feel much different when it was in the air but it sure looked different. The city quickly fell out of sight but the plane didn't go above the clouds. It stayed low. And there was nothing below them except trees. Lots and lots of trees.

Ken watched out his window for a couple of minutes. But everything soon seemed the same to him. He pulled out his magazine to read. Dylan, bored with the scenery out his window, looked around at the passengers and noticed Ken's reading material. For the first time in hours, he smiled. Ken didn't notice. He was too caught up in the

magazine. But Dylan turned around, still smiling. Knowing know that there would be someone there who might understand him.