

Sample Chapters from
Adventures of a Kid
on an
Outback Goldmine



Growing up
in the Last Goldrush Town, Tennant Creek NT

Illustrations Peter Turner

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Chapter 2

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Sure, it was dusty; sure the road to the mine was rough and winding. Sure there was not a blade of grass or lawn to be seen anywhere but what does a kid of six care about any of that? I was impressed. I was allowed to drink as much soft drink as I wanted and to stay up late. I had the idea right from the start that I was going to like this place.

After we had eaten, the manager took us down to the “tin house” we were going to call home for the next ten years. We went in through the side door (there were three entrance doors to the house), along the passage and opened the door to the main room. It was big and open and had four walls all painted in different colours. There was a fireplace and a four gallon (twenty litre)

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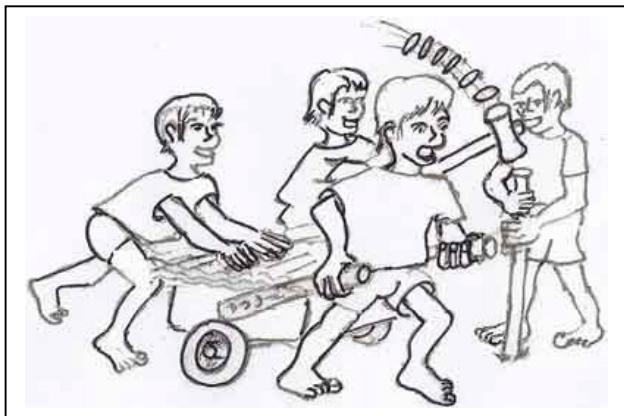
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We had to build our mine on the Rugers' side of the hill. This was because the top of the hill was solid rock, and the other side was too far away from the scrap metal dump where we got our materials.

The problems for George started when he found out that the Rugers were going down and playing on our mine when we were not around. For a while it looked as if the cold war between the Rugers and the Forwards would turn into a full scale battle over territory. After all, the mine was on the Rugers' side of the hill.

George decided he was going to do something about this. First he put a ban on any other kid except Ronnie or me going near the mine. That stopped any of the other kids going near it, except for the Rugers. Peter and Rod Ruger were not afraid of the Forwards, so George decided that he would have to trick them.

We went back to the scrap metal dump and got some more sheets of tin. We also got some lengths of pipe long enough to cover the top of the hold in the ground. We put the lengths of pipe over the hole, then we covered the pipes with sheets of tin. Finally we covered the whole lot with a layer of dirt. It made it look as if we had filled in the mine. Of course we had made a secret trapdoor, so that we could still get down the mine ourselves. It actually made the mine much better than it was before.

George went and called a truce with the Rugers and brought them in to see that we had filled in the mine. The Rugers believed it and that was the end of any dispute over the mine for some time. On the other hand, we now had a new underground secret room which nobody but the Forward Gang knew about.

We could go there any time we liked and hide. We built another smaller underground room off to one side with a tunnel joining the two rooms. We used candles for light. With these new facilities we no longer cared much about the surface buildings because the real mine was now the secret underground section. We kept this secret for quite a long time.

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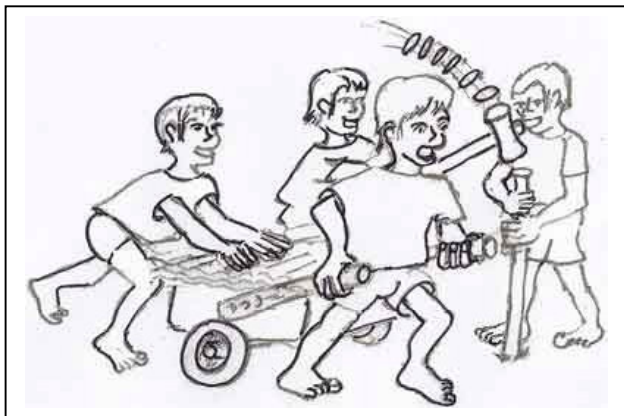
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two boys, Peter and Rod Ruger, were about the same age as George and Ronnie Forward and were the only kids on the mine who could threaten the absolute rule of George Forward. That meant that they were usually the enemy and so it was at the time we were building the mine.

We had to build our mine on the Rugers' side of the hill. This was because the top of the hill was solid rock, and the other side was too far away from the scrap metal dump where we got our materials.

The problems for George started when he found out that the Rugers were going down and playing on our mine when we were not around. For a while it looked as if the cold war between the Rugers and the Forwards would turn into a full scale battle over territory. After all, the mine was on the Rugers' side of the hill.

George decided he was going to do something about this. First he put a ban on any other kid except Ronnie or me going near the mine. That stopped any of the other kids going near it, except for the Rugers. Peter and Rod Ruger were not afraid of the Forwards, so George decided that he would have to trick them.

We went back to the scrap metal dump and got some more sheets of tin. We also got some lengths of pipe long enough to cover the top of the hold in the ground. We put the lengths of pipe over the hole, then we covered the pipes with sheets of tin. Finally we covered the whole lot with a layer of dirt. It made it look as if we had filled in the mine. Of course we had made a secret trapdoor, so that we could still get down the mine ourselves. It actually made the mine much better than it was before.

George went and called a truce with the Rugers and brought them in to see that we had filled in the mine. The Rugers believed it and that was the end of any dispute over the mine for some time. On the other hand, we now had a new underground secret room which nobody but the Forward Gang knew about.

We could go there any time we liked and hide. We built another smaller underground room off to one side with a tunnel joining the two rooms. We used candles for light. With these new facilities we no longer cared much about the surface buildings because the real mine was now the secret underground section. We kept this secret for quite a long time.