Charlie and Chloe's Family Holiday

Charlie and Chloe were seven year old twins. Charlie was a boy and Chloe was a girl so they didn't look exactly the same, but you knew they were related!

It was getting close to the school holidays. Usually the twins couldn't go away in the holidays because either their Mum had to work or their Dad had to work. But the twins still had a great time. They went to the museum with their Grandma, and sometimes Dad took them to Clip and Climb. They got to hang out with their friends. Usually they went to a movie, and as a special treat they would have McDonalds afterwards**.** They could watch TV, ride on their bikes, jump on the trampoline, and play games on their Chromebook. It was really fun.

But this holiday was different, because at the last minute both Mum and Dad found they could have holidays. Neither of them needed to work. "We should go away somewhere", said Mum. So she got onto her phone and looked in BookaBach to see if there was somewhere they could go for a holiday where they could take Mintie, their dog too. Mintie was a white Scottie dog. Nearly all of the places were booked up and for a while they thought they might have to stay home, but finally Mum found a little house at a place called Surat Bay. Not even Dad had heard of this place, but Mum said it sounded ok and it didn't cost a lot, so as soon as the holidays started, they packed up the car and off they went**.(9)**

The journey from Christchurch to Surat Bay took almost 7 hours! Round about Rakaia the children started to ask, "Are we there yet?" It seemed to take forever! It was dark when they got to a town called Owaka and Dad called in at a house to pick up the key. Then they drove to the smallest place the twins has ever visited, Surat Bay**.** It had just one street and probably thirty houses, maybe less. They couldn't see the outside of their house but the inside was weird. The floors were a bit wobbly. It had the oldest stove and fridge the twins had ever seen. There were just two bedrooms and one was a bunkroom with six bunks so Charlie and Chloe could each have a top bunk**.** There was a very nice kennel at the back door for Mintie. But it was what the house didn't have that was a problem**. (15)** It didn't have a heat pump, only a fire. It didn't have a TV. It didn't have wifi. The toilet was out the back door. And in Surat Bay there were no shops at all**.** "How can we live here for one week?" asked Charlie. "It's awful". "What are we going to do all the time?" asked Chloe. Even Mum looked a bit shocked, but Dad just lit the fire and they all went to bed. When the twins were in bed, Charlie said to Chloe, "I think this is going to be our worst holiday ever".

In the morning the children got up early and went and woke up their parents. "What can we do?" they asked. So Dad took them for a walk. Just down the road from their house was a river mouth that flowed out to the sea. They went across a rickety bridge and onto the sand. Mintie loved the beach but suddenly his hair stood up on end. "What's that?" asked Charlie and Chloe at the same time pointing at a big grey lump. Suddenly the lump twitched and the children could see that it was a big sea lion. Then they looked again and there were four sea lions on the beach. They watched as one of the sea lions stretched itself and then slid down to the river**.** It was enormous but when it got into the water it seemed graceful.

They walked a bit further being careful not to get between the sea lions and the water and they saw dolphins playing in the waves. Dad showed them a place where they could see penguin footprints coming up to the sandhills behind the beach. They drew on the sand and chased Mintie into the sea.

Charlie found a really old frying pan at the back of their house that was very black on the bottom so Dad said maybe they could have a sausage sizzle. The next day the family went to Owaka where they bought some sausages and a loaf of bread, and they took their frying pan to a place that had a picnic area and a beautiful waterfall. They could climb quite close to the waterfall so they got sprayed by the water, and some keas came to try to steal their sausages!

Because they didn't have any TV, Mum thought it would be a good idea if they all read a story after dinner at night. They all snuggled up in front of the fire and read The 130 Storey Tree House which was really fun. Dad laughed so much he almost cried.

Then when they were walking down the beach, Dad taught them some really awful Dad songs, and Charlie and Chloe sang them all the time to make Mum mad. It was fun!

So was it the worst holiday ever? Well, no it wasn't. It was really different from home, and some things they didn't like (like the toilet!), but other parts were amazing.

When the children said their prayers before they went to sleep at night, they always tried to say thank you to God for something special that had happened in the day.

The first night they had nothing to say. Surat Bay was horrible!

The second night they could say thank you to God for sea lions and dolphins.

By the last night, the children really didn't want to go home. "Thank you, God, for our amazing holiday", they said. "We thought we would miss takeaways and TV and our devices – and we did, but actually God, we had a great time. Thank you for looking after us in ways we don't expect. Please surprise us again".