

I SURVIVED

THE GREAT ALASKA
EARTHQUAKE, 1964



by **Lauren Tarshis**
illustrated by **Scott Dawson**

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ARCTIC OCEAN

RUSSIA

ALASKA

CANADA

VALDEZ

GLENNALLEN

Copper River

ANCHORAGE

JUNEAU

BERING SEA

Prince William Sound

PACIFIC OCEAN



CHAPTER 1



FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 1964

5:36 P.M.

VALDEZ, ALASKA

To eleven-year-old Jackson Barrett, it seemed like the world was ending.

He was caught in the middle of the most powerful earthquake in United States history. Across Alaska, the ground shattered like glass. Buildings fell to pieces. Icy cliffsides crashed into the sea. Giant tsunami waves smashed into towns and villages along the coast.

Just moments before it started, Jackson had been at the waterfront in the small town of Valdez. The docks were crowded with families and happy kids. Suddenly, a strange roar filled the air. Jackson's body shook. But wait . . . it wasn't just his body that was shaking. Everything around him was shaking, too.

And then a woman screamed.

“Earthquake!”

The roaring got louder, hammering Jackson's ears. The ground shook harder, knocking him down to his knees. The freezing water in the harbor seemed to boil like an evil witch's brew. On the streets, cars swerved and spun. Trees and telephone poles swayed.

The roaring got louder. The shaking got harder.

Louder. Harder. Louder. Harder.

Jackson tried to stand up, but it was impossible. The ground seemed to have come alive — rising and falling, twisting and rolling. For Jackson, it was like riding on top of a giant squirming snake.

He clawed his way forward on his hands and knees, inching his way across the shaking ground. He had finally made it out to the street when . . .

Crack!

A massive gash opened in the ground right in front of him.

Jackson turned around, but . . .

Crack!

An even bigger gash tore open behind him.

A sickening stench rose from the darkness below. Jackson tried not to think of what could be waiting for him down there.

Boiling lava? Shooting flames? The slobbering mouth of a hungry beast?

The ground under him started to crumble apart.

“Please, please, nooooooooooooooooooooo!” Jackson screamed.

But down he fell, helpless and terrified, into the darkness.