SURVIVAL Municale.

Frieda Wishinsky

Illustrated by Don Kilby

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For my friend Rebecca Upjohn, with thanks

CHAPTER ONE

October 16, 1954

Michael climbed onto the rickety chair. As he leaned toward the attic window, the chair snapped. Michael tumbled into a box. His right shoulder smashed into a sharp edge.

The floor creaked and heaved. The rain drummed on the roof. The wind howled around him.

His hands trembled as he pulled over the other wobbly chair. He held on to it with one hand and yanked himself up with the other.

"Michael, where are you? What happened?" His mother's frantic voice rose above the pelting rain.

"Michael! Hurry!" called Paul. "I think the water's rising higher in the house."

Michael's heart was beating so hard he couldn't think. He peered out the window. Paul leaned against the wet shingles and clung to the pipe. His mother crouched on the roof above Paul and held on tightly to the TV antenna. Their faces dripped with the pounding rain. The wind snapped against their clothing.

Someone screamed from below.

"Help me! Please!"

More screams pierced the darkness. Screams echoed over the rain and wind.

"Go, Michael!" called his mother. "Now!"

Michael could barely breathe.

He lowered himself out the window feet first. His rear end dragged along the slippery shingles. As he made his way slowly toward his mother and Paul, Michael's right foot slid on a loose shingle.

He was sliding!

He reached for something — anything — to stop

him from falling off the roof, but there was nothing to hold on to. Nothing.

He fell into the darkness and splashed into the icy water.