

The background of the entire cover is a painting of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a brown and white striped poncho, standing on the peak of a snow-capped mountain. She is looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and valleys. The sky above is a vibrant sunset with shades of orange, red, and purple. The title 'WILD LIKE THE FOXES' is written in large, white, textured letters across the upper half of the image. The words 'WILD' and 'FOXES' are in a larger, more stylized font, while 'LIKE THE' is in a smaller, simpler font in the middle.

# WILD LIKE THE FOXES

LIKE THE

FOXES

BY ANAUTA



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

## INTRODUCTION

The events in this story I seem to have known always. Bits of it were told to me by my father, Yorgke, when on some stormy winter night I would beg him for a story. Then I would lie in my sleeping bag and ponder long on the things I had heard. They always made a deep impression on my ever imaginative childish mind, as I tried to realize that this had really happened in the life of Alea, the gentle, quiet woman who was my mother. In the book *Land of the Good Shadows*, the adult life of Yorgke and Alea lives on. May the readers learn to love them as friends as I loved them as my parents.

Sincerely,

*Anauta*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ahaila — Yes, certainly; I am in complete agreement

Amagok — gray wolf

Anana — mother

Atata — father

Igloo — house made of snow blocks

Inuit — a race of people who inhabit the far north lands of  
North America

“Mon” — man spelled to show Scottish dialect

Nanook — polar bear

Pepsi — dried fish

Sculpins — a species of fish

Toktu — caribou, deer



## CHAPTER ONE

# An Interrupted Journey

A boat slowly nosed its way through the calm water until it came to rest on the sand of the shore. Ahpea jumped out and helped his wife, Soona, and two children to land. While he pulled the boat higher up on the shore, the others ran on up the hill and were soon out of sight. Then he walked a short distance, seated himself on a flat rock, and proceeded to light his pipe.

“What a wonderful day this is! What a fine trip,” he mused.

The past year had been a good one for the Inuit hunters and trappers of the Labrador. The winter had been, for the most part, cold and clear. Deer and foxes had been plentiful. In the spring the offshore winds had helped the Inuits to secure a good catch of seals and walrus. So Ahpea had been able to purchase this fine boat and the supplies for next winter that it contained. The skins and furs had been sufficient to pay for all. He felt happy and carefree as he sat there puffing on his pipe.

He smiled as he thought of Koopah. How surprised the boy had been when he handed him the new rifle at the store yesterday, saying, “There’s your new gun, Son. Put it in the boat before you forget it.”

The boy had looked at it unbelievably. At last he asked slowly, “Mine? This is mine?”

On being convinced that it really was his own, Koopah had held it tightly in his hand and, with a quivering face, had looked

up at Ahpea and said, "Wait 'til that seal pokes his old head up next time."

Koopah was not Ahpea's own son, but Ahpea loved him as much as if he were. What a weak little fellow he used to be. That was because he was so nearly gone when Ahpea brought him home—a little, undernourished boy, just able to walk.

How well Ahpea remembered the time he had been hunting along the rugged coast late in the fall, believing himself many miles from everyone. He had been startled when he heard a child's faint cry. Following the sound, he had walked around a point of land and found a tent. He never forgot the sight that faced him when he opened the flap and peered inside. Even before he entered, he knew the parents were dead. Starvation—that was plain. But the little boy had strangely survived.

Ahpea had wrapped his coat around the little boy and carried him home. Soonah had nursed him and learned to love him as her own. They learned from his lisping words that his name was Koopah. He was fourteen now, a sturdy lad and a good hunter. For some time he had needed a new rifle, and Ahpea felt glad that at last he was able to give him one. The boy would do well with it next winter.

Ahpea heard Soonah and the children laughing. Evidently they were after partridges. "They must be throwing stones at them, for the guns are in the boat," he thought.

When it came to fun, Soonah was as full of it as any child. She had laughing eyes, dark and shining. Her face was animated and full of expression. She was an ideal companion for Ahpea, who was, himself, a quiet man. He had always found her resourceful at times when resourcefulness was needed. Yes, he was a happy man with his wife, Soonah, his daughter, Alea, and Koopah. If only next year would be as good, he was thinking, when Soonah's shout far up the hill made him glance toward the shore.

"The boat! The boat!"

He jumped up and ran for the water. The boat was drifting away. A light wind had sprung up, and the rising tide had floated it off. Ahpea waded out up to his waist, but being unable to swim, he feared to lunge forward. He tried several times, but the boat was beyond his reach. Slowly he walked back to the shore.

Soona, Alea, and Koopah stared at the boat going farther and farther away. No one spoke. The water from Ahpea's clothes made puddles in the sand about his feet. Silently the family watched their boat, their clothes and supplies, their guns and ammunition, everything, drifting out to sea.

A sudden movement from Soona broke the tension. She would get the boat! Quickly she ran to a fallen tree that was washing up and down in the waves on the beach. This she pushed out into deeper water. It was so sodden from having been in the sea a long time that only half of it floated above the surface. Her face was bright with love for her family and her determination to help them. No situation had ever been too difficult for her. She was used to acting quickly, so now she turned to them with her usual happy smile and said, "Soona will get the boat. Wait here until I return. I won't be gone long. Wait."

Ahpea saw what she intended to do. She would float out on that log already deep in the water and try to reach the boat.

"No, no, Soona. You must not go on that. It will not hold you. You will not be able to guide it," he said earnestly.

But she answered, "The wind will blow me to the boat. You stay here with Koopah and Alea. I will hurry."

She turned to the little girl and boy who were watching their mother working with the log and said, "Be a good girl, Alea. Anana, your mother, will get the boat. Koopah, take care of Alea until I get back."

Ahpea caught hold of the end of the log as Soona seated herself upon it. "Soona, you must not go out. It will not do. The

log will not hold you. Never mind the boat now. We have always found a way. You must not go," he pleaded.

But Soona only smiled at him over her shoulder and answered, "I will be all right. I must get the boat. The tide and the wind will drive me to it."

It was madness. Ahpea felt sick. Soona could not possibly hold on with her legs dangling in the water. She would be chilled after a while. He watched her start to drift away, paddling with a short stick. He could not let her go alone. If he could not stop her from going, then he must go too. Picking up a long stick, he ran out, caught up with her, and sat on the log behind her. His weight made the log sink deeply in the water.

"You must not come, Ahpea," Soona said earnestly. "No need for both of us to go."

"I can't let you go alone. Let us go back," Ahpea pleaded. "We must not leave Alea and Koopah alone."

"No, Ahpea, we must get the boat," replied Soona. "Our guns, our clothes for next winter, everything we have is in it. Alea and Koopah will be safe."

She was leaning forward with her hands on the log in front of her. "See, we are drifting in the same direction as the boat. We will get it all right."

He felt it was a hopeless thing they were doing, but he could not stop Soona. He hoped the water would not get too rough. Even now the log was rolling uncomfortably. He looked for the boat and saw it far out, drifting ever farther away.

There was a branch between them, and Ahpea was able to hold onto this for support. "Can you lean against the branch, Soona?" he asked.

Soona did not answer but leaned back until she could touch it. She soon tired of the upright position, however, and leaned forward again.

*Wild like the Foxes*

“That makes me tired. It’s better this way,” she said.

They were not paddling now—just drifting with the tide. For a long time they were silent. There seemed nothing to say. The only sound was the water lapping against the log. So the hours went by while they drifted slowly far out to sea.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Lonely Hours

Back on the shore, the boy and girl watched their parents floating away on the log. From the ever-widening distance, the man and the woman looked as though they were sitting in the water. Before long, they vanished from sight.

Alea began to cry. She was only ten years old. Koopah did not speak. So much had happened in so short a time that he felt bewildered. And he realized the danger their parents were facing. Suppose they didn't catch up with the boat? How would they get back? Ahpea and Soona couldn't possibly paddle against the wind. And here he was with Alea, alone on this island, with nothing but what they had on.

Koopah seemed older than his fourteen years. He was an Inuit boy who had been taught to act quickly. He had often faced difficult situations and learned to do what seemed to be best under the circumstances. So with a long last look, he turned to his sobbing sister.

Quietly looking down at her, he said teasingly, "Alea looks nice, all but her face. That has water that runs from two holes that look like the setting sun. I do not care for it so. If the waters streaming from those two holes would cease flowing, we could go and see if we could find more birds."

His sister wiped her eyes on her sleeve and answered with a sob, "But when will they come back?"

He planted his legs far apart and looked solemnly at his sad companion. "My sister asks me a silly question. When will they come back? I don't answer because I know they'll come back as soon as they can. Now, little Alea, no more water!"

This made Alea smile. Koopah knew how to cheer her. They were pals. He himself had never been able to remember his parents who had died. Ahpea and Soona were his parents, and this was his sister. He loved her dearly. Although they both knew Koopah's story, it made no difference to them. Koopah was Alea's idol, and his teasing was typical of his fun-loving nature. At times he would torment her into a temper, and the more angry she became, the more fun he had. But they understood each other, and he would protect her with his life if necessary.

They spent the afternoon walking around the small, rocky island. Late in the evening they climbed to the highest point and gazed far out to sea. There was no sign of the boat, nor of the two on the log. As the night shadows closed in, Koopah and Alea sat quietly near the shore. Except for the noise of the wind, which was quite strong now, and the waves that washed up and down against the rocks, there was no sound.

The air was getting sharper. Alea shivered. "I'm cold," she declared.

Koopah jumped up. "Come on, let us get dry sticks and make a fire."

There were no trees on the island, but plenty of driftwood had washed onto the shore. Soon they had gathered a large pile of wood. Then they rolled away the larger rocks and cleared a fireplace. Koopah took a piece of flint and part of a file from his pocket. He struck the flint against the steel and made the sparks fly. As the sparks dropped on the dry moss, it began to smoke. Koopah puffed and blew until a bright blaze sprang up. Adding small, dry twigs, he soon had a good fire started, and Alea put