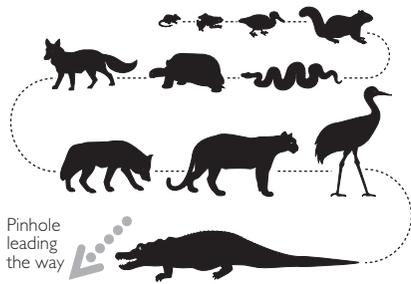




Pinhole was so small that almost anything was an adventure for him. One day, while he was at the zoo, he got into the locks on the cages, opened the doors, and led the animals away. It was reported all over the place.



### ANIMALS GO FREE!!\*

was the headline that caught the attention of Norbert Forris and three friends, who were having a ham sandwich and discussing an adventure of their own. "Hmmm," thought Norbert out loud, "Jean, give this Pinhole guy a call, would you, please?"

\*Actually, Norbert Forris misunderstood the headline, and was annoyed by the implications. He imagined crocodiles, panthers and snakes sitting next to him at the movies. *And they had got in without paying!* "When will humans go free?" he thought to himself, "and will it be properly advertised so I don't miss out?"



Pinhole's phone rang. It was Norbert's friend Jean Milton on the line. "A group of us here are having a ham sandwich and we wondered if you'd be interested in going to India with us?"

"It's too hot there," said Pinhole, "and I'm in no mood to think about hot places, today of all days."

He was just about to get back into the coolth of the sink when the phone rang a second time.

"I'm too hot to go there..." Pinhole started to say again. But then he heard a word that made him listen to what was being said. "OK, I'll be right there," he said suddenly.

At the other end of the line Jean Milton had said *adventure*. And if you ever want to get Pinhole's attention, just mention adventure.

Pinhole packed a very small bag and went to see what this adventure was all about.



Pinhole's telephone looked old fashioned on the outside, but he had fiddled about with the inside of it so that he didn't have to lift the receiver when it rang. (Or when he wanted to make a call.)

It was a really smart phone.

# Chapter 2

## Meeting the explorers



On the train, Pinhole thought about the expedition. *India*. Yes. He knew the elephants there had smaller ears than the ones in Africa. But apart from that he knew diddley squat about the place.



The four explorers were staying at Norbert's house in Lima, Montana, a town named after a bean. Jean was setting up a group photograph on the porch. Norbert was in the kitchen checking through old cookbooks for jungle recipes. (There weren't many.)



When Pinhole arrived, the explorers didn't quite know where to look to see him, so they did air handshakes with him in what they hoped was the right direction. They were amazed at how very small he was. (Norbert wouldn't admit this, but he never, ever really could make out exactly where Pinhole was.)

\*On the journey, Pinhole walked back to a different car, because people were talking loudly on their cellphones, and he couldn't think straight.

"Hey, can we take the group photo, before it gets dark?" said Jean. She had set up the camera to take the picture automatically, so that everyone could be in it. "See if you can get it in focus, Jean-o," sneered Ken. "Watch it, brother. My name's not Jean-o. It's Jean." "Hi, Jean," said Ken.

It always annoyed Jean when Ken said Hi, Jean. It sounded like "hygiene" to her. Actually she was sensitive about hygiene. She insisted on taking two pairs of white sheets with her on the adventure, and the others thought that was excessively fussy for an exploring expedition.

After the picture, everyone said a proper hello to Pinhole. "Hello, I'm Norbert Forris. I'm the leader." (The others grumbled at Norbert calling himself the leader, but they knew he was really.) "I do the cooking, look after the medical supplies and tell stories to keep us amused at night." "Hi" said Pinhole, "I don't eat much, but I love stories!"

**EXPEDITION PROFILE**  
 Name: **Jean Milton**  
 Main jobs: **Geologist, and occasional photographer**  
 Good/Bad points: **Perfectionist, quibbles with Ken a bit**

**EXPEDITION PROFILE**  
 Name: **Otto Arns**  
 Main jobs: **Artist, draws maps and diagrams**  
 Good/Bad points: **Shy**

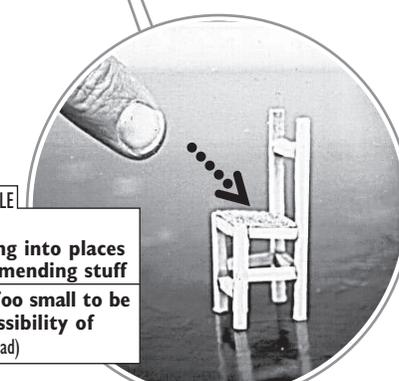
**EXPEDITION PROFILE**  
 Name: **Norbert Forris**  
 Main jobs: **Leader, cook, storyteller, carries the medical supplies**  
 Good/Bad points: **No nonsense, slightly irritable**



JEAN'S PICTURE: THE FOUR EXPLORERS & PINHOLE OUTSIDE NORBERT'S HOUSE IN LIMA, MONTANA

**EXPEDITION PROFILE**  
 Name: **Kenya (Ken) Kalu**  
 Main jobs: **Engineer, builder**  
 Good/Bad points: **Dreamer, lots of muscle, quarrelsome**

**EXPEDITION PROFILE**  
 Name: **Pinhole**  
 Main jobs: **Getting into places others can't, mending stuff**  
 Good/Bad points: **Too small to be seen (good), possibility of getting lost (bad)**



They made a chair out of matches for Pinhole (but it was still far too big).

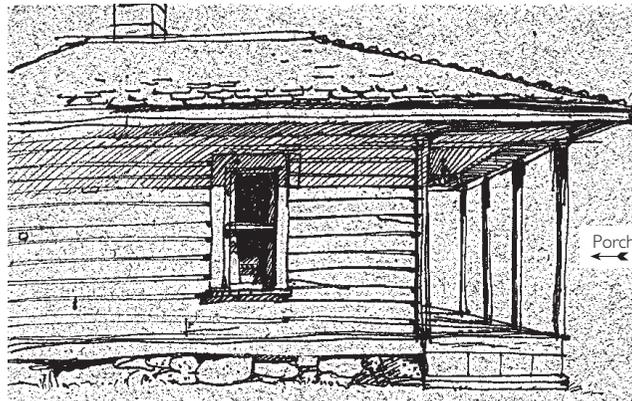
Next was Jean.

“Hi, I’m Jean Milton. That was me calling you on the phone. And as you might have guessed, I’ll be taking photographs of our adventure.”

“Hello, Jean,” said Pinhole carefully.

Otto stepped forward, politely. “Pleased to meet you, Pinhole.

I’m Otto Arns. I do drawings—here’s one I’ve done of this house. I’ll be making maps to help us find our way, and doing diagrams of how things work and stuff like that.”



Otto’s sketch of Norbert’s house, showing the porch at the front where the group photo was taken

“Hello,” said Pinhole. He sensed that Otto was a little shy.\*

The last member of the team was Kenya (Ken) Kalu. He certainly wasn’t shy. “Well hello there,” he said, confidently.

Pinhole thought Ken seemed dangerous in some way, but he had a nice smile.



After the introductions, Pinhole asked the group why they had invited him to join them. “Simple,” they all seemed to say as one. “We loved that story we



\*Maybe a little dumb, too. When Otto saw a road sign that said DRAWBRIDGE, he would get out his sketchbook and draw the bridge.

If there is room later in the book, I’ll put some of the bridge drawings in.  
—The Author.

(Footnote-footnote)

saw in the newspaper about the locks at the zoo, and letting the animals out. We need a miniature handyman on this trip.” They didn’t explain why, but Pinhole was pleased to be asked, anyway.

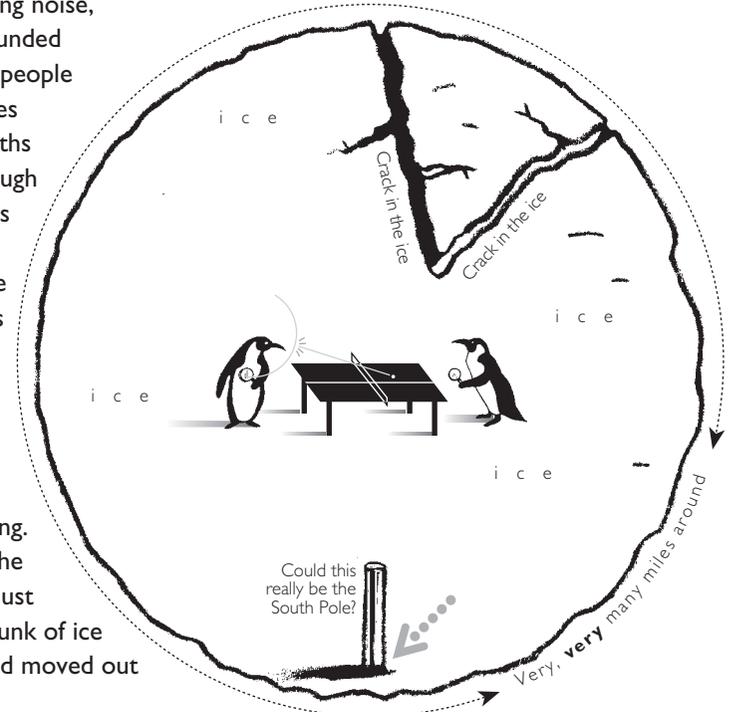
Norbert had made fried chicken for them all, and it was delicious. After that it was time for bed. Pinhole, especially, was tired after his train ride.



He had a strange dream...

In his dream, it was millions of years ago. He was somewhere very cold, on a round field of white ice. Was that the South Pole he could see? He heard a distant cracking noise,

a noise that sounded like millions of people eating cornflakes with their mouths open. Even though the ice field was 10,000 miles around, Pinhole could fly across it in a second towards the noise. On the way he saw two penguins playing ping-pong. He arrived at the cracking place just as a gigantic chunk of ice broke away, and moved out into the sea...



...but it was only a dream. And he soon forgot it. Besides, by now it was morning, and he had a big question to ask the team. “Exactly why are we going to India?”

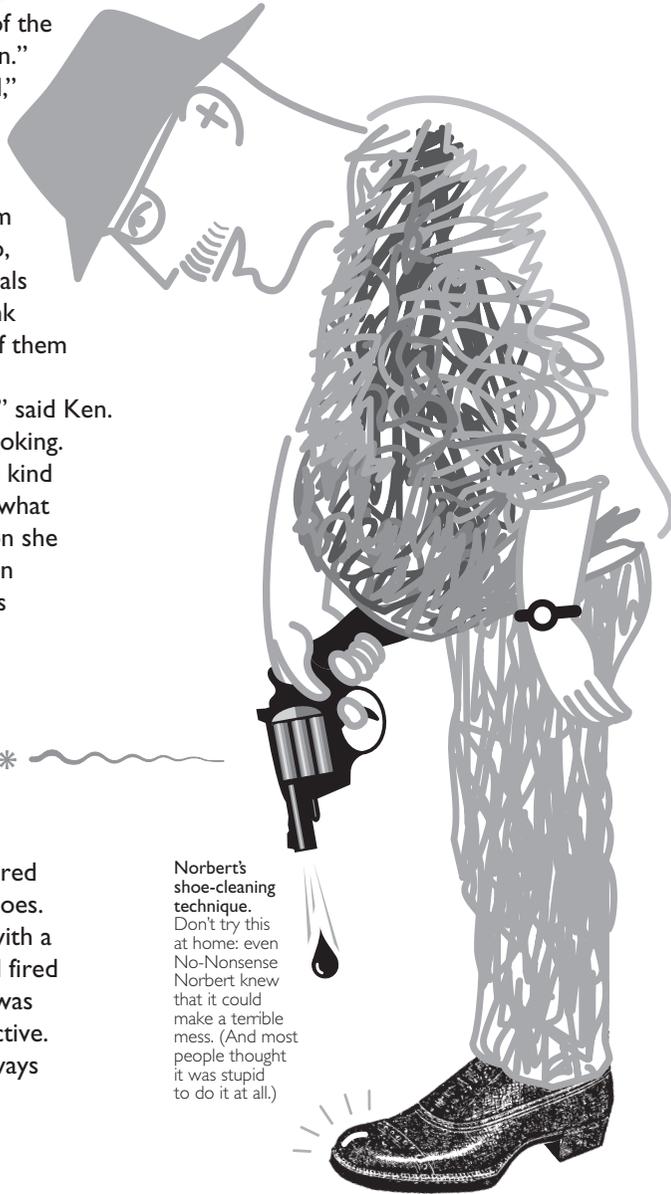
Good question. They all turned to Jean. "I thought I'd tell you about it when we get there," she said, thinking that if she told them everything now they may not want to go. "What do you think, Leader Norbert," asked Ken, "shouldn't she tell us now, so we know what to expect?"

Norbert, along with Jean, *did* know what the point of the adventure was. He said: "Once we get to India there'll be plenty of time for a detailed briefing, but why not give the others a brief idea of the expedition now, Jean."

"It's complicated," Jean started, "but in a nutshell, we are going to try to find what's left over from millions of years ago, when different animals lived on earth. I think I know why some of them might still be alive!"

"You are joking," said Ken.

But Jean wasn't joking. She had studied this kind of thing. She meant what she said. And later on she would explain it all in greater detail, just as Norbert had said.



Norbert had wandered away to clean his shoes. He filled his pistol with a nugget of polish and fired it straight down. It was noisy but most effective. Norbert's shoes always sparkled.

Norbert's shoe-cleaning technique. Don't try this at home: even No-Nonsense Norbert knew that it could make a terrible mess. (And most people thought it was stupid to do it at all.)

Pinhole wasn't sure about this adventure. But Norbert had already got the money.... and bought the tickets....



This is 30 Indian rupees. It wouldn't go far in America. (1 US \$ = about 45 rupees\*) But in India, where many people only earn a few rupees a week, 30 rupees is worth having.

\*The rate changes, so if you go, check first.



...so they were on their way.....

