

Read-Along Storybook For Audio

as told in Episodes by Daph & Josh

Rick Nau

Illustrated By Sukwan Myers

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THE RUBY FLOAT

A Tale Of Hope

Read-Along

Storybook For Audio

as told in Episodes by Daph & Josh

by

Rick Nau

Illustrated by Sukwan Myers

Dancing Pen Books

Dedication

For Bettina, The Love Of My Life.

Welcome





Daph: Hello Ladies and Gentlemen. Our names are Daph and Josh. Some of you may already know us from our great grandfather's stories, The Ruby Float and Theodora's Children. If you haven't read them yet, you'll find them at the Dancing Pen Books website.

Josh: Today we're inviting you to hear our live presentation of The Ruby Float. It's split into lots of exciting episodes, so you can tune in whenever you'd like. Just close your eyes and imagine you're sitting with us by the lake under the big willow at Shady Point. Listen to the wind rustling through the leaves and to the short poem that introduces our story.

Daph: A boy and girl went to the sea—

Josh: In deep and dark despair—

Daph: When something dancing on the waves—

Josh: Sent sparkles through the air.

Daph: They plucked it from the water's edge—

Josh: A sphere of deepest red—

Daph: And found within amazing words—

Josh: That chased away their dread.

Daph: So come with them as they do raft—

Josh: Across the bounding main—

Daph: In search of One who promises—

Josh: To heal them of their pain.

Daph: Now, on with the show!

Josh: Your friends —

Daph: Daph —

Josh: And Josh

Episode One

Dreams Of A Raft



Daph: Hello L & G.

Josh: L & G is short for Ladies and Gentlemen.

Daph: They know that, Josh.

Josh: I don't think they do.

Daph: Jesse told us that if we want to tell the story we can't argue.

Josh: I'm not arguing.

Daph: You are too.

Josh: No, I'm not.

Daph: What are you doing, then?

Josh: I'm responding to you.

Daph: What about the people who are listening?

Josh: Oh, I forgot.

Daph: So let's start. The story we are telling is called *The Tale Of The Ruby Float*.

Josh: Daph and I will tell it together.

Daph: Yes, we have Jesse's permission. He's the one who first told us the story. He's our great grandfather.

Josh: Though it doesn't begin with Once Upon A Time, we will begin it that way.

Daph: Once Upon A Time, in a land far across the sea, there lived a boy and a girl.

Josh: The boy's name was Nathaniel, though he liked to be called Nate.

Daph: The girl's name was Samantha, but she always went by Sam.

Josh: The time was long ago, before cars and electric lights and cappuccino drinks.

Daph: It was not super long ago, however, for there were sailing ships and flashlights and bicycles.

Josh: Yes, Sam and Nate both had bicycles, as did everyone in the town where they lived.

Daph: Sam and Nate liked to ride around a lot, especially to the harbor and to the chocolate shop.

Josh: Sam especially liked white chocolate.

Daph: And Nate liked kippers, which are little salty fish that come in cans.

Josh: He didn't get those at the chocolate shop, obviously.

Daph: No, he got them at a little store in the harbor.

Josh: Some days they'd ride all over the town.

Daph: Everywhere they looked there was a house or a building that their grandpa had built.

Josh: His name is Hank, which is short for Henry.

Daph: Like our great grandpa, that's Jesse, he loved his grandkids very much and told them lots of stories.

Josh: Every Sunday he'd take them to the beach and tell them a story.

Daph: Yes, they had a special place on the beach and a special umbrella and a special blanket.

Josh: "Tell us about the raft," they would ask every time.

Daph: "Oh, yes, the raft," he would answer.

Josh: "And when we're going to build it."

Daph: It was a terrific raft.

Josh: One that could sail across the entire ocean.

Daph: They were going to take lots of great food along.

Josh: Like chocolate and kippers and smelly cheeses.

Daph: Sam was going to bring her stuffed monkey.

Josh: And when they were out on the open sea, they'd catch lots of fish.

Daph: Then they'd cook them on a charcoal grill and drink hot chocolate.

Josh: Then they'd sail into all the ports of the world and learn new customs.

Daph: And taste all kinds of new foods.

Josh: And learn different languages.

Daph: It was very exciting, so exciting that I'd like to go along myself.

Josh: Me, too.

Daph: And while Hank was telling the story, they'd have a gigantic picnic.

Josh: With fried chicken and lemonade and pink potato salad.

Daph: Then they'd go beachcombing and find wonderful things.

Josh: Like the jawbone of a whale.

Daph: Or beautiful seashells. Sam loved them and had a most beautiful collection.

Josh: Nate was always on the lookout for fishermen's floats, the glass balls that hold up the fishing nets.

Daph: Yes, they keep the fishing nets floating in the water. They are usually green or purple.

Josh: So if they're a different color, it's very unusual.

Daph: Hey, don't give the story away!

Josh: But it's called The Ruby Float!

Daph: Josh!

Josh: Okay. Let's talk about the logs then.

Daph: Thank you. To build a raft you need logs.

Josh: And not any old logs, but special logs that don't get waterlogged.

Daph: Because if they do, you'll sink, right in the middle of the ocean.

Josh: That would be bad.

Daph: Very bad.

Josh: Their grandpa told them about the trees he would use to make the logs.

Daph: They grew somewhere in the forest, high in the hills above the beach—

Josh: And in other hard-to-find places.

Daph: One day he'd show them the trees, but not until they were

ready to begin construction.

Josh: They'd start by lashing all of the logs together with heavy ropes.

Daph: Then they'd put everything on top of them.

Josh: Like the cabin and the sail and the safety railing.

Daph: And the rudder, too, so that they can steer it.

Josh: It had to be extremely well built.

Daph: Very extremely.

Josh: Fortunately, their grandpa was an excellent builder.

Daph: He built the town library and the school and even Nate and Sam's home.

Josh: It was a most beautiful home, a wonderful home near the seashore.

Daph: I would very much like to see their home, if only I could.

Josh: It was built of beautiful finished pine—

Daph: With polished wooden floors and glorious windows and skylights that looked like the ones in boats.

Josh: I don't remember that part.

Daph: I'm elaborating. That means I'm filling in some of the missing details.

Josh: Is that okay with Jesse?

Daph: Of course it is. You can elaborate too, if you'd like.

Josh: Then I am now going to elaborate us to the breakfast table of Nate and Sam's home.

Daph: Great! That's where our story really begins.

Josh: The day is Sunday, the day their grandpa will have breakfast with them and take them to the beach.

Daph: It is a most beautiful day, one of the most beautiful of the year.

Josh: Eggs are frying and bacon is popping in the frying pan and orange juice is gurgling into bright, shiny glasses.

Daph: Nate and Sam pull on their sleepy clothes, comb their hair, brush their teeth—

Josh: And scramble into the kitchen faster than scrambled eggs.

Daph: Which are the fastest eggs of all.

Josh: But when they sit down at the table they know immediately that something is wrong.

Daph: Something is very wrong, which has nothing to do with the bacon and the eggs and the orange juice and the toast.

Josh: But it does have everything to do with the table being set for four.

Daph: Because on Sundays it is always set for five, number five being their grandpa.

Josh: Did we say that his name was Hank?

Daph: Yes, we did. To continue, Nate and Sam's parents were acting very strange that morning.

Josh: Yes, they were wearing inscrutable expressions on their faces.

Daph: What's inscrutable?

Josh: Inscrutable? It means they couldn't figure out what their parents were thinking.

Daph: Whatever the word, it had to be bad, because Hank had never missed a Sunday with his grandchildren.

Josh: It's funny that no words were spoken.

Daph: That's right. Not a single, solitary word.

Josh: There was only silence.

Daph: Yes, dead silence.

Josh: And then the screen door slammed shut.

Daph: Meaning that Nate and Sam flew through it so fast that it didn't have time to close twice.

Josh: That's very fast.

Daph: Really fast. And they stayed going fast all the way to their grandparents' house.

Josh: They made it in record time.

Daph: Yes, even someone on a pogo stick couldn't have beaten them.

Josh: And when they got there-

Daph: What did they find?

Josh: We'll find out next time in-

Daph: Why Hank Didn't Come To Breakfast-

Josh: The next exciting episode of *The Tale Of The Ruby Float*.

Daph: Episode?

Josh: Yes, I think we should tell our story in episodes.

Daph: Grandpa didn't do that.

Josh: Yes, but the book company did. That's the way books work.

Daph: But this isn't a book.

Josh: I still think we should have episodes. Then we can take breaks in-between.

Daph: To do what?

Josh: Practice for the next episode.

Daph: What should we call this one?

Josh: Dreams Of A Raft.

Daph: But we never introduced it.

Josh: Go ahead. Do the introduction.

Daph: Really?

Josh: Really.

Daph: Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes Dreams Of A Raft, the

first exciting episode of The Tale Of The Ruby Float.

Josh: That was great!

Daph: Thank you. I think I like episodes.

Josh: Well, that's it for now, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Daph: See you next time.

Episode Two

Why Hank Didn't Come To Breakfast



Daph: Hello Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the second exciting episode of *The Tale Of The Ruby Float*.

Josh: It's called Why Hank Didn't Come To Breakfast.

Daph: Jesse started that part of the story by saying "something didn't happen."

Josh: Our story is a little different, however.

Daph: Yes, we put some of the breakfast material into the first episode-

Nate: Which we called Dreams Of A Raft.

Daph: We also took something out.

Josh: It was the part about something that was missing from the town.

Daph: It was something very important, something that a town can't survive without—

Josh: Something that hung over it like a dark cloud.

Daph: We'd tell you what it is, but Jesse told us that we've got to keep you in suspense.

Josh: In the meantime, let's find out the answer to Nate and Sam's question-

Daph: Why didn't their grandpa come to breakfast?

Josh: As we rejoin them, they've just finished running all the way to his house.

Daph: And there he is, sitting in his favorite swinging chair on the front porch.

Josh: They sit down next to him, but he hardly notices. It's like they're invisible.

Daph: "Grandpa?" asks Sam. "Are you all right?"

Josh: "It's us, Nate and Sam," says Nate.

Daph: But their grandfather doesn't say a word.

Josh: He just sits there, like a statue.

Daph: "Today's our day to go to the beach," says Sam. "Have you forgotten?"

Josh: "We waited for you, but you didn't come."

Daph: Sam tugs on her grandpa's arm, but he doesn't respond. Why in the world is he ignoring them?

Josh: "Let's go," says Nate, getting up out of the swing. "He's getting tired of us, that's all."

Daph: "That's not true," says Sam. "Something's wrong."

Nate: "Well, if something is, he's sure not telling us."

Daph: Yes, something was wrong.

Josh: Seriously wrong.

Daph: And it had to do with their grandmother.

Josh: Her name is Harriet, which is a name nobody has today.

Daph: I think it's a lovely name.

Josh: Though it's kind of old-fashioned.

Daph: Even so, Hank thought it was the most lovely name in the world-

Josh: And that Harriet was the most beautiful women in the world.

Daph: She was extremely beautiful.

Josh: And Hank loved her like no one has ever loved a woman before.

Daph: When he saw her the very first time, she was wearing a long, flowing white dress, not blue jeans or pajamas.

Josh: No one could keep him from instantly falling in love with her, not even the fire chief or the police chief or the mayor or anyone else.

Daph: And no one could keep her from falling in love with him.

Josh: Because for both of them, it was-

Daph: Love at first sight.

Josh: It was very mushy.

Daph: But very true.

Josh: Hank could scarcely believe what had happened.

Daph: How could someone so beautiful be in love with him?

Josh: What's more, how could anyone at all be in love with him?

Daph: When he was growing up, no one seemed to love him.

Josh: Not his brothers or his sisters-

Daph: Nor his schoolmates or his neighbors-

Josh: Not even his parents.

Daph: Instead of getting love, he got work.

Josh: Whenever he wasn't going to school, he was working.

Daph: He sold newspapers and made wires and pulled weeds out of big fields.

Josh: He fixed boats and painted fences and planted trees.

Daph: He washed dishes and mopped floors and made soup.

Josh: He was hoping that if he worked very hard, his mom and dad would love him.

Daph: But whatever he did, it didn't seem to make any difference.

Josh: Even so, Hank never gave up.

Daph: He hoped and hoped and hoped that someone he loved would love him back.

Josh: And when that suddenly happened, he became the happiest person on earth.

Daph: It didn't take him long to ask Harriet the big question.

Josh: Two weeks.

Daph: Yes, only two weeks.

Josh: Everyone told him he should wait.

Daph: But Hank wasn't about to. He knew true love when he saw it.

Josh: "Will you marry me?" he asked the girl of his dreams.

Daph: "Yes," answered Harriet.

Josh: That was fifty-two years ago.

Daph: But today-

Josh: Something's happened.

Daph: Something so bad that Hank can't talk about it.

Josh: Especially not to his grandchildren.

Daph: What is it? Have they had a fight?

Josh: Has Harriet left him?

Daph: Has she found someone else?

Josh: We'll find out next time in the next exciting episode of-

Daph: What do you mean? This is the episode where we find out.

Josh: We don't have to find out exactly. In the interest of suspense, I say we wait.

Daph: I guess we could-in the interest of suspense.

Josh: Then let's keep going.

Daph: That's it for now, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Josh: Be sure to join us again next time for-

Daph: A Time Of Sadness-

Josh: The next exciting episode in-

Daph: The Tale Of The Ruby Float!

Josh: See you then.

Episode Three

A Time Of Sadness



Josh: Hello everyone. Sorry about the little disagreement between Daph and me.

Daph: We've made up.

Josh: Yes, we have.

Daph: And we're ready to begin the next episode.

Josh: The title is—

Daph: A Time Of Sadness.

Josh: In the last exciting episode of *The Tale Of The Ruby Float* we discovered that Harriet was very, very sick.

Daph: It was her heart.

Josh: It was slowly giving out. The doctor told Hank that it was only a matter of time, though how much time he wasn't sure.

Daph: Hank took it worse than Harriet.

Josh: Jesse said that Hank was devastated.

Daph: It's like you are hit by a tornado and everything is suddenly gone.

Josh: Of course, Harriet wasn't gone yet. It was just the idea that she would soon be gone.

Daph: Hank couldn't get it out of his head. He'd always imagined he'd be with Harriet forever.

Josh: It was impossible for him to imagine anything else.

Daph: Yes, if you took Harriet out of his life, nothing would be left.

Josh: Only Hank didn't say any of this.

Daph: You could only tell from his demeanor.

Josh: Demeanor?

Daph: He looked very sad. Even when he smiled he was sad.

Josh: This also made Nate and Sam very sad.

Daph: Yes, it turned their whole world upside down.

Josh: It was Nate who first thought about doing something.

Daph: His idea was to hope his grandmother into getting better.

Josh: He thought that if he could get everyone to hope for the best, the best would happen.

Daph: For a while it seemed to work. Hank got happier and so did Harriet.

Josh: But this was only an illusion.

Daph: It was like a mirage. It looks like something good, but it really isn't.

Josh: Then Sam told Nate that the happier Hank seemed to be, the sadder he was.

Daph: She thought that the worst thing Nate could do was to give

Hank and Harriet false hope.

Josh: Usually such criticism made Nate very mad.

Daph: This time it didn't. He just listened.

Josh: What Sam was saying wasn't that there was no hope—

Daph: Only that it was wrong to think that hope in hope would do any good.

Josh: The thought of this made Nate very depressed.

Daph: He couldn't sleep a wink. All night long he would lie in bed, wide awake.

Josh: Sometimes he would slip out of the house at night and go to the beach and sit alone on the sand.

Daph: As the waves crashed on the shore he would think about all that was happening.

Josh: It made him feel very alone.

Daph: That's right. That was just the way his grandfather felt as a boy.

Josh: That was before he met Harriet, before he had anyone who loved him.

Daph: Though he didn't know it, he was longing for the same thing as Hank.

Josh: Actually, he was longing for something much more than the same thing.

Daph: He was?

Josh: Remember? It was for a love so great that it would bring joy and happiness to everyone, no matter what.

Daph: That's right. No matter what.

Josh: One that could overcome even sickness and death.

Daph: I don't remember that.

Josh: I'm elaborating. You said that was okay. Anyway, you remember what Jesse said.

Daph: Yes, I do. He said that because Nate was just a young boy, he wasn't able to find the same words that we can.

Josh: That's right. It was like another language which he didn't learn till he got older.

Daph: I want to learn another language when I get older.

Josh: Let's stick to the subject.

Daph: It is the subject. I don't know another language, so I'm like Nate.

Josh: Then I am, too.

Daph: That's right. And so are lots of people who are listening to us.

Josh: I guess so.

Daph: And so was Sam, though she didn't know it yet. Not until—

Josh: Not until she saw Nate slipping out the window one night.

Daph: The first thing she thought was, "I'm going to tell Mom and Dad."

Josh: She went straight to their bedroom and put her hand on the doorknob.

Daph: Then she stopped. She was curious—like a cat.

Josh: So she slipped out the window herself and followed Nate.

Daph: It was pitch black outside.

Josh: Not a soul was to be seen, not even a cat.

Daph: Then Nate entered the woods.

Josh: Sam followed after him.

Daph: Now it was beyond pitch black.

Josh: She didn't have her shoes on and stubbed her big toe.

Daph: She had to keep from shouting, otherwise Nate would hear.

Josh: Her mind suddenly filled with visions of hideous monsters.

Daph: They were going to leap out at her and eat her up.

Josh: Now you're the one elaborating.

Daph: I know. It's fun to elaborate.

Josh: Nevertheless, she kept on going forward.

Daph: She had lots of courage, a lot bigger than being afraid or curious.

Josh: It was very big. If it hadn't been, this whole story might not have happened.

Daph: Which were Jesse's exact words.

Josh: No, they weren't. He said the story would have turned out differently.

Daph: That's right. And that would be a different story, which wouldn't be this story.

Josh: Okay, I give up.

Daph: Which is just what Sam didn't do. She kept on going until she saw Nate sitting on the beach.

Josh: He was staring off toward the sea like he was in another world.

Daph: "Nathaniel!" Sam hollered. "Whatever are you doing here?"

Josh: Nate jumped a foot off the sand, straight into the air.

Daph: Yes, he was very scared.

Josh: "What are you doing following me?" he asked.

Daph: "To find out where you are going. Why else would I follow you?"

Josh: "Well, go home," he said. "I want to be alone."

Daph: Samantha would do no such thing, not after what she'd been through.

Josh: So she sat down on the sand beside Nate.

Daph: "I'm not going anywhere until you tell."

Josh: "I told you. I want to be alone."

Daph: Nate stood up, walked twelve steps to the right, and sat back down.

Josh: Then Sam did the same thing.

Daph: So Nate stood up again and went another twelve steps.

Josh: Then Sam did the same thing again.

Daph: They did this over and over again, until Nate finally gave up.

Josh: "Don't make me crazy," he said.

Daph: Sam was so happy to have won that she kept her mouth shut.

Josh: As she looked around she noticed how beautiful everything appeared.

Daph: The sea and the little grains of sand were sparkling in the moonlight.

Josh: Way above the stars were twinkling in the heavens.

Daph: "It's so glorious," she said.

Josh: She didn't notice that Nate's cheeks were also glistening, something which cheeks don't do unless they're wet.

Daph: Instead, she saw something small and round dancing on the

waves.

Josh: Now and then it reflected a flash of moonlight to her eyes.

Daph: "Look there," she said. "In the water."

Josh: Nate saw it, too, a small, sparkling object floating not far from shore.

Daph: Sam ran to the edge of the water and waited.

Josh: When a small wave carried it forward, she snatched it up with her hand.

Daph: "It's a fisherman's float!" she hollered.

Josh: Nate didn't answer. He was so down and out that he'd lost interest in everything, even his favorite things.

Daph: He used to like school, which I think is unusual.

Josh: You're elaborating again.

Daph: No, I'm not. I'm making a comment.

Josh: Well, keep it to yourself. We're not telling our own story.

Daph: If you listen to a story, you're part of it. If someone says they like potatoes and you don't, it's okay to say so.

Josh: Nate liked mashed potatoes.

Daph: So do I. But he doesn't like them anymore, now that he's so sad.

Josh: What about the gravy?

Daph: He really liked gravy. But not anymore.

Josh: He also liked swimming in the sea and diving down to see what was under the rocks.

Daph: Only he didn't care about any of these things anymore.

Josh: Not even adventure stories, which he liked very, very much.

Daph: Yes, he liked them very much. But now all of his dreams were gone.

Josh: He could only think of now, and now was very bad.

Daph: Meanwhile, while we were telling you about Nate being sad, Sam came back with the float.

Josh: This time she saw that his eyes were sparkling in the moonlight, just like the water.

Daph: Yes, because there was also water in his eyes.

Josh: Meaning that he was crying.

Daph: Sam had never seen her brother crying like this before.

Josh: She had seen him cry when their parents punished him, but this was different.

Daph: It was so different that it made Sam's heart melt inside.

Josh: Suddenly, she was also very sad.

Daph: She rushed to Nate and hugged him as hard as she could.

Josh: Then she also started to cry.

Daph: So there they were, crying like mad on the beach in the middle of the night.

Josh: And all because they loved their grandfather and grandmother with all their heart and soul—

Daph: And could do nothing to help them out of their hopeless predicament.

Josh: And that's the end of this episode.

Daph: We hope you can come back for the next one, which is called—

Josh: The Silhouette.

Daph: That's it for now.

Josh: Almost. One question. How did you know the word "predicament?"

Daph: Because everyone in our story is in one, that's why.

Josh: But how did you know what it means?

Daph: Do you know what it means?

Josh: It means a bad situation.

Daph: That's why I said it. They're in a bad situation, which is a predicament. Otherwise, it wouldn't be.

Josh: Then you're not going to tell me?

Daph: Tell you what?

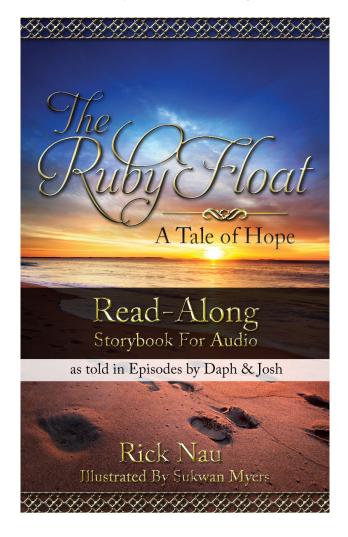
Josh: How you know the word?

Daph: I'd tell you, but then I'd be breaking the storyteller's rule.

Josh: What rule is that?

Daph: Have you already forgotten? You've got to leave your listeners in suspense.

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Thank You

Thank you for listening to the The Ruby Float as told by Daph and Josh. If you enjoyed it, please consider leaving a review on the site where you purchased the read-along book. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

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About The Author



Rick lives in Southern California with his wonderful wife, Bettina. He enjoys helping her tend the hummingbird garden and defending her from the exotic creatures that lurk in the shade of the honey-suckle bushes. When he's not out and about in wilds of the backyard, you're likely to find him reading and writing, especially in winter, when the fire's blazing in the hearth and the rain's coming down in sheets outside the window.

His first publication, *Daph*, a story set during the polio epidemics of the 1950s, was awarded Best Short Story Of The Year by *Writer's Digest*. He has written two novels–*The Ruby Float* and *Theodora's Children*–part of a series called *Tales Of Hope*. The third in the series, *Desert Gold*, is now in work.

You can connect with Rick at Dancing Pen Books, Twitter, Facebook, and Google+.

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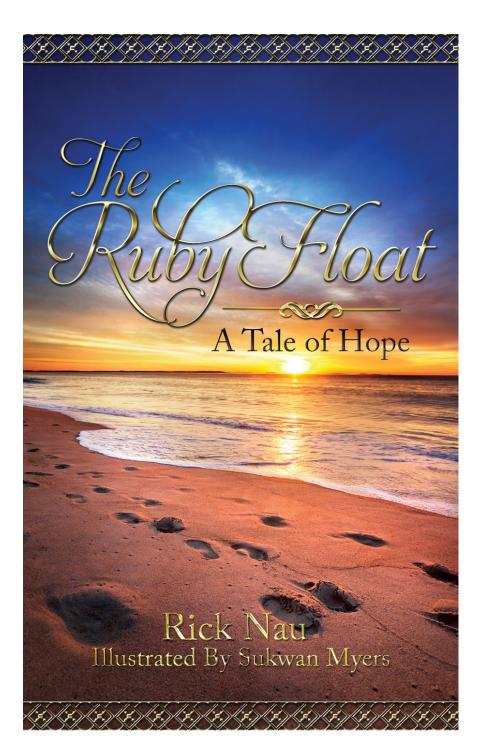
The Ruby Float

We've all been there—our hearts broken, our lives shattered, our hopes and dreams dashed. Many things can do it—a serious illness, the death of a loved one, a disappointment in life, a divorce, the loss of a job, a rejection. When we're young the loss is amplified. In a small world everything looks bigger, more immediate, more frightening.

In The Ruby Float two children are heartbroken when they discover their grandmother is dying. Desperately wanting to help, they search for a mysterious person who they believe can save her. With only a few clues to guide them, they embark on a perilous journey, sailing a small, homebuilt raft across a broad expanse of ocean. What they discover changes not only their hearts, but the heart of an entire nation.

If you're eight or eighty, you'll thoroughly enjoy The Ruby Float. Parents will take special delight in reading it aloud to their children, who'll love the many beautiful illustrations by artist Sukwan Myers.

More About The Ruby Float



The Next Tale Of Hope

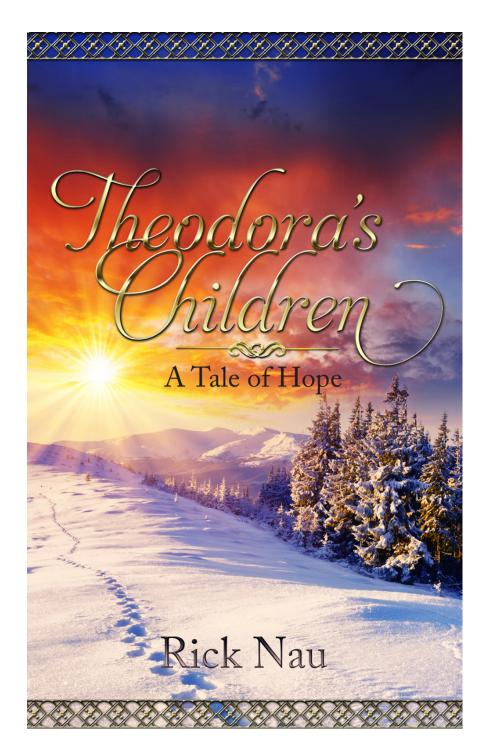
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Theodora's Children

Gretchen is a young girl who suffers from a dreadful loneliness. Though she is extremely rich, having virtually everything under the sun that any boy or girl could ever want, she has no friends—not one, not a single one.

Then, one day, during a terrible disaster, someone mysterious enters her life, someone who will cause it to change forever.

More About Theodora's Children



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