

Tisha: The Story of a Young Teacher in the Alaska Wilderness Study Guide

Tisha: The Story of a Young Teacher in the Alaska Wilderness by Bobby Specht

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Tisha: The Story of a Young Teacher in the Alaska Wilderness Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-2.....	5
Chapter 3-4.....	6
Chapter 5-6.....	7
Chapter 7-8.....	8
Chapter 9.....	9
Chapter 10.....	10
Chapter 11-12.....	11
Chapter 13-14.....	12
Chapter 15-16.....	13
Chapter 17-18.....	14
Chapter 19-20.....	15
Chapter 21-22.....	16
Chapter 23.....	17
Chapter 24.....	18
Chapter 25.....	19
Characters.....	20
Objects/Places.....	23
Themes.....	25
Style.....	27
Quotes.....	29
Topics for Discussion.....	31



Plot Summary

Tisha, by Robert Specht, is the story of Anne Hobbs, a young school teacher who moves to the Alaskan wilderness. She knows nothing about Alaska or living in the wilds or about the social conditions or customs in Alaska, but she is open to new experiences and certainly finds them in Alaska.

Anne was from Colorado where her father worked as a miner. When he was unemployed, she would be sent to her grandmother's in Missouri. Her grandmother was part Indian so Anne had no prejudice against Indians. It was her grandmother who instilled in her the desire to teach so she could travel anywhere. Anne "inherited" her sense of adventure from her grandmother and signed on to spend a year teaching in Chicken with the possibility of a second year in Eagle.

Anne is a person who respects other people for what they are, which isn't the attitude she finds in Alaska. There is a lot of prejudice against the Indians. The whites feel superior to them, and Anne faces problems in Chicken when she socializes with the Indians and accepts Indian children into the school. Throughout her stay in Chicken, she has problems with Mr. Vaughn and Angela Barrett, two of the three members of the school board.

Her problems intensify when she falls in love with Fred Purdy, a half-breed. The school board threatens her position in Eagle the following year if she continues to see Fred Purdy. He finally takes a job in another town trying to ease the strain on Anne and his mother. The problems in the town finally come to a head when Mary Angus, the mother of two half-breed Indian children, Chuck and Ethel, dies. Anne brings the children to live with her and then decides she wants to keep them and raise them as her own. She has the consent of their father, Joe Temple, who tells her that she is asking for trouble. The trouble comes in the form of a group of people kidnapping the children. Anne goes to Fred for help and the result is a sled chase across the Alaskan snow.

Her love for Fred continues but he refuses to marry her because he has no money and won't marry her until he can support her. She says she will wait and goes to Eagle to teach.

Anne is nineteen when she first arrived in Alaska in 1927. She was looking for adventure and she found it. But she also had a desire to help people, especially children, which is what led to her adopting Chuck and Ethel and so many other children over the years. At the end of her first year in Chicken, one of the men in the town said she was a true Alaskan, which is the highest complement anyone could have paid her.

The book is enjoyable reading as the reader learns the living and social conditions of the time in Alaska. There is none of the modern conveniences and the nearest doctor was one hundred fifty miles away. People fended for themselves and helped each other.

Tisha is a fast reading book. The reader will enjoy the characters and the experiences Anne has as she learned to cope with the people and the living conditions.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary and Analysis

It was September 4, 1927, when the pack train left Eagle for Chicken, Alaska. The trip is a four-day trip by horse and Anne is a little nervous about the horse, Blossom, that she will be riding. Mrs. Rooney and Mr. Strong tell her that she will be fine. She has to pay ten dollars per day for the trip which includes meals. Mr. Strong helps her into the saddle and adjusts the stirrups for her. He will have a smaller saddle for her when they reach Liberty.

Anne met many of the people traveling in the pack train at the party the night before. The people are all calling her Teacher since she is going to Chicken to teach. The pack train begins to move under the leadership of Mr. Strong. She has been treated like a raving beauty during her travels because there are so few women in the area. Several places gave dances in her honor and on the riverboat to Juneau, she sat at the Captain's table.

The first few miles were enjoyable until the wagon road narrowed to a trail. Anne had to hold on tightly to avoid falling off. She was happy when Mr. Strong gave her a cap and mittens. They will have a rest stop in seven or eight miles at Gravel Gulf, but they have to cover twenty-five miles before nightfall. Mr. Strong checks Anne several times and did stop to give her a rest. She was pretty sore physically from the trip and is happy when they reach Gravel Gulch. After dinner and a rest, they travel again and reach Liberty around eight in the evening. Anne skipped dinner and went right to sleep.

Chapter Two begins with Mr. Strong waking her for the next day's travels. She is so stiff and sore that she has to be helped into the saddle. Her second day in the saddle was as bad as the first. A grizzly bear attacked a caribou calf in front of her and she fell off Blossom, who bolted. After that, she rides next to Mr. Strong and they talk. They come to a very steep trail and Mr. Strong leads Blossom. When they cross the river to Steel Creek, Blossom stumbles but makes it to the other side. Nancy Prentiss helps Anne to the house and into a hot bath. Her mother, Mrs. Prentiss, bandages Anne's raw spots.

The next morning Anne has breakfast with the Prentiss family, which has eight kids. Mrs. Prentiss asks if Nancy can stay with Anne in Chicken when she send her for school there. Anne says she will think about it. Mr. Strong advises Anne to take Nancy because she would be a big help to Anne. Anne agrees and tells Mrs. Prentiss, who will send Nancy to Chicken in the next few weeks.



Chapter 3-4

Chapter 3-4 Summary and Analysis

Mrs. Prentiss gives Anne more suitable clothing for the rest of her journey to Chicken. Since she was feeling better, she paid more attention to the scenery. She saw a variety of wild animals and when they stopped at an Indian village, she was shocked at the living conditions. A woman named Cathy Winters helps Anne dismount and leads her into the house to rest. Cathy introduces her to a boy named Chuck, who will be traveling with them. Cathy is the school teacher at the Indian village.

Cathy introduces her to the village people and shows her around the village. She asks Anne to look after Chuck as the pack train leaves. Chuck refers to Anne as tisha. After the second time he fell off the mule, he rode with Anne on Blossom. At the rest stop, Anne paid for the boy's meal and they continue on to the O'Shaughnessy roadhouse, where they spend the night.

Chapter Four begins with Chuck riding his own mule since Anne showed him how. When they are outside Chicken, Anne asks if they can stop so she can wash and change clothes. She wants to make a good first impression.

These are about thirty people waiting in Chicken, where Chuck finds his mother. The people are friendly and warmly greet Anne, who falls off her horse and into the mud. She meets Angela Barrett and Maggie Carew who show her the school house where her quarters are. Anne is a little disappointed in the condition of the school room and her quarters, but Maggie says she will help fix them. They go back outside and Maggie tells the men they need the furnishings for the cabin. The people say they will return what they borrowed and donate other items. By the end of the day, her quarters are completely furnished.

Joe Temple invites her to dinner the next evening and she accepts. Mr. Strong said he would bring her dinner that evening. When she goes out for a pail of water, she realizes she is in the middle of the wilderness and is a little afraid. Mr. Strong tells her that Joe Temple is Chuck's father and is not married to Chuck's mother.



Chapter 5-6

Chapter 5-6 Summary and Analysis

Anne has trouble sleeping the first night. She thinks of the supplies she needs for the schoolhouse and remembers her interview with Lester Henderson in Juneau. Anne decides to write him about the supplies she needs.

Mr. Strong showed her the store in the morning. She purchased some food and cooked breakfast for him. He gave her a key to the store so she could get whatever she needed and said they would settle on a monthly basis. Later that morning while she was working on the schoolroom, Mrs. Purdy comes with her kids Fred and Isabelle. They talk about fixing up the building and Fred doing the work. He returns that afternoon with supplies and begins working; other people drop in with items they think she can use. She and Fred worked all day and then she went to dinner with Joe. The Carews joined them after dinner and they sat and talked as other people arrived and joined them.

The next day Anne learns from Fred that Joe broke up with Mary Angus over a year ago. They work on the school house all day and then walk to his house, since Mrs. Purdy had invited her for dinner. On the way, they stop at Mary Angus's house and Fred introduces them. Anne enjoys her dinner with the Purdys; the next day Fred shows her how gold mining is done.

In another two days, the repairs to the school building were completed and school begins the next day. In Chapter Six, the next day, Anne has a case of stage fright in front of the class. The kids show her how to make a fire in the stove. She and the children talks and become acquainted and she administers some diagnostic tests to learn their math and reading levels. At the end of the school day the kids didn't want to leave so she made cocoa and cookies for them.

Fred came by after school to see how her day went. She tells him that she needs a project to make the students feel like a class and decides on a map. One of the Vaughn girls comes in looking for a mitten she hadn't worn to school. Her father had come over last night when Fred was there. He is a member of the school board.



Chapter 7-8

Chapter 7-8 Summary and Analysis

During the next school day, Merton Atwood visits, as many of the old timers often did. He asks Anne to teach him arithmetic and she agrees. He drew a map of Chicken on the board for her project for the children to learn about Chicken. After school, Rebekah Harrington arrives to enroll her four-year-old, Lily. She will stay in class with the young child.

After the first day with Rebekah in the classroom, there is a school board meeting. The board consists of Maggie, Angela and Mr. Vaughn. The board doesn't like Rebekah being in the classroom, and Lily is too young for school. Students must be between five and sixteen years of age. Anne is not allowed to have Lily and Rebekah in the classroom. Anne has to tell them the board's decision the next day and says she will tutor Lily on her own time. The next day, Rebekah, Lily and Jake Harrington arrive with Jake saying he will talk to the school board. Lily remained in the the class.

Anne's map project was a success with the class as students did projects and reports related to the map project. There were plenty of interruptions during the day as the town residents continually dropped in. When Chuck appeared at the school the following week, it brought on another school board meeting. There is a great deal of prejudice against Indians, even among the children. Anne tells them that she is part Indian. The next day, five of the children didn't attend school.

At the school board meeting Vaughn makes it clear that the Indian children should attend the school in the Indian village, not in the school house. He says that the law, and Anne argues with them. The board voted against Anne and Anne says she will close the school since they don't have enough students according to the law. Maggie warns Anne that she won't teach in Eagle the following year.

Chapter Eight begins with all the children showing up for school. There was now open antagonism with the old timers siding with Anne. Mrs. Purdy advises Anne to back off on the Chuck issue and to be careful. Chuck stayed in the class and took the abuse of the other students. Finally, Anne bought him some new clothes and told him he couldn't have them unless he bathed. He bathes. They kids call him teacher's pet when they find out.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

Anne gives the kids the afternoon off the day the pack train is due. This is always a big event for the settlement. Today Nancy was supposed to arrive and Anne was looking forward to her arrival. Vaughn and Angela are mad because she gave the kids the afternoon off without consulting them. Mert cuts in with that's always been the policy. The words become heated and drew the attention of the crowd, and Vaughn threatened to take Anne over his knee. Fred tells Vaughn that he won't lay a finger on her. Anne calms tempers by saying she'll meet with the school board.

Anne takes Nancy to her quarters and reads the note Mr. Strong delivered from Mrs. Prentiss. She found that Nancy didn't read well even though she had gone through the eighth grade. She couldn't pass the territorial examination since she couldn't read it. Nancy didn't want to be enrolled because she didn't want to face another failure so Anne said she would tutor her.

Nancy was a big help with the household chores. Anne relied on her experience but had problems with her in school. She wouldn't do the work. Nancy only seemed to like Joe Temple and didn't like the kids visiting and was critical of the Indians visiting. Soon they both became petty, and Nancy began to refuse to do chores and continues to visit Joe. Finally, Anne suggests that Nancy return home for a while to give them both a break. Later that evening they talked and decided to give it another try.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

Nancy changed and began doing the chores. They talked again after a few days and the girl was more open and grateful. She tried harder with her school work and made an effort to get along with the other students. Since Nancy was good with math, she helped the other students. Anne also had her watch out for Chuck.

Anne learned to ski and Fred gave her some lessons in ski-joring. She and Fred are becoming more attracted to one another. Anne doesn't know how to encourage Fred and feels he would act differently if he wasn't a half-breed. He will be leaving soon for trapping and promises to take her on a snow picnic when he returns. Fred hates trapping and only does it to help his family. He kisses her and then apologizes and says he shouldn't have done it. They kiss again and sit and snuggle and then talk about Fred's plans for the future. He wants to farm and travel. Fred loves Alaska.

Nancy notices that Anne is happy when she arrives home. She tells Anne that there is a lot of talk going around about Anne and Fred. Some people have been writing Juneau about the situation. Anne tells her that she likes Fred.

The cold weather began. It was so cold that one of the students stuck to the seat in the outhouse. The cold weather didn't keep people from attending the dance. The dances were always a lot of fun and Anne enjoyed them. After the dance, Anne went to the road house to eat with Joe. She talks to Joe about Mary and Joe says he hasn't seen her in a month.



Chapter 11-12

Chapter 11-12 Summary and Analysis

When Fred returned from trapping, he went to see Anne. They set the date for their snow picnic. On Saturday, they will go to West Fork, which is two hours away. Before then Mrs. Purdy came to talk to her saying she does not understand what Anne sees in Fred. People are talking, and Mrs. Purdy asks Anne to stay away from Fred. Mr. Strong has been to see her and Mrs. Purdy asks Anne not to come to her house again.

Fred appeared on Saturday for their snow picnic. They travel in a dog-drawn sled with Anne controlling the reins part of the time. The couple arrives at West Fork and selects their picnic spot. They talk about their relationship and how upset his mother is. They spend the days at West Fork and then head back to Chicken. On the way back, the sled tipped. When she arrives homes, she finds that Cabaret Jackson from Eagle will be visiting.

In Chapter Twelves, Cab arrives. He fancies himself in love with her. After he leaves, Nancy tells her that Cab is running liquor. He will be back in time for the next dance which will be the Thanksgiving dance. The Thanksgiving dance and party was the biggest event they had and they spent weeks planning it. Anne cut Nancy's hair and helped her with her make up. Even her own classmates didn't recognize her. When Cab came in with liquor, Anne told him to get ride of it even though people were drinking from flasks.

Cab challenges Fred to a dog sled race but Fred declines. For the first time Fred danced the Home Sweet Home waltz with Anne. Nancy ended up with Cab. The custom was that whoever danced the Home Sweet Home waltz together went to dinner at the roadhouse. As they were finishing their meal, Nancy warned them to leave because there was trouble brewing. It began when Cab and Fred had words over who would hep Anne into her coat and take her home. Maggie told them if they were going to fight to go outside. Cab shoves and punches Fred and the men haul them outside. Jake shoots a gun and tells Cab that it is over. Fred leaves with Anne. Later an Nancy tells her that Vaughn said Anne was going to have Fred's baby, which isn't true.



Chapter 13-14

Chapter 13-14 Summary and Analysis

One Monday, Anne learns that Fred has gone to Steel Creek, though no one knows why. His father says he went to see some people there. She receives a letter from Lester Henderson who tells her about the letters he received about her association with Indians and Fred Purdy. He says her personal life is her own and to be diplomatic if she wants to teach in Eagle next year. She also received an invitation from Cathy Winters to spend a few days at the Indian village during Christmas. Anne writes back that she will come if she can arrange transportation.

One of the old timers, Uncle Arthur, comes to tell Anne that Mert is sick and wants to see her. Uncle Arthur is afraid Mert is going to die. Mert wants Anne to write his funeral service. He doesn't want anything with Chuck or ministers. Arthur will do his service and is to receive all his belongings. When she returns home, Fred is waiting for her and tells her he is moving to Steel Creek to take a mining job and is leaving the next day.

Fred says he is leaving so he doesn't hurt Anne. He can't take care of her or support her. She begs him not to go, but he says he is going. As he walks out the door, he says he loves her. The next day after doing some chores, she goes for a walk. She takes another long walk the next day and came back with frostbite. Soon after she left for the Indian village and Nancy went home for a visit.

Anne is happy to see Cathy who is working on her doctoral thesis. She also had letters written about her for her relationship with the Indians. Because of a flu epidemic, they didn't have much time to talk. Cathy tells Anne that she told her not to judge the Indians by white standards.

They attend the dance and afterward talk about the living conditions of the Indians. They discuss how the Indians lived before and after the arrival of the white man. The next day she returns to Chicken with Nancy and Mr. Strong.



Chapter 15-16

Chapter 15-16 Summary and Analysis

Anne arrives back in Chicken on New Year's Eve and skipped the party at Maggie's roadhouse. She wrote a letter to Fred telling him how much she missed him and wondered if he didn't really care about her and that was why he left. Nancy left the party and came over to wish her Happy New Year at midnight. Anne still refuses to come to the party.

When school began, Anne felt different. She decided she was going to teach the students, and Rebekah, as much as she could before June. Anne stopped being what people wanted her to be and was now herself. Other people knew it, too.

Fred wrote and told her that his feelings for her were sincere and that he did what he thought was right. He may stay in Steel Creek during the summer so when he returns, she'll be teaching in Eagle. She writes him that he should come back. She will respect his feelings and not even talk to him.

Nancy's mental block against reading disappeared and she began to read. Maggie has them to dinner and Anne learns that the Carew's are moving to Eagle. Maggie brought a roadhouse there. A cold winter tested everybody's nerves and Anne waited for something to happen. It began with the Vaughn girls taunting Rebekah, who told the girl off and scared her. Then they heard three gunshots outside, the signal that somebody needed help. She dismisses the students and goes to help. She learns that Mary Angus has died. Jake, Joe Temple, Angela and the Carews are in Mary's house when Anne and Rebekah arrive. They are trying to decide what to do with the kids, Chuck and Ethel, and Anne says she will take them.

In Chapter Sixteen, Nancy and Anne leave with the kids, with little Ethel screaming. The kids both cry when they reach Anne's home. Anne tries to explain that their mother is dead. They have to cut Ethel's clothes off to give her a bath. The child screamed the whole time. Maggie brings some clothes her children have outgrown for the kids. Anne decides she wants to keep Chuck and Ethel instead of sending them to the Indian village.



Chapter 17-18

Chapter 17-18 Summary and Analysis

Anne has to talk to Joe Temple about keeping the kids because they are his kids. They keep Ethel in the classroom during the school day and the kids are good to her. She quickly learned English words. When one of the Vaughn girls tells Chuck that he and Ethel will be sent to the Indian village on the next pack train, he thinks Anne lied to him. She has to explain that she has to talk to his father.

That night she goes to Joe Temple's house. She asks for the kids and he says okay but it's going to upset people. Anne finds Joe doesn't like Alaska but stays because he can't afford to leave because of his investments there. He tells her that Fred Purdy understands the prejudice and did the right thing by leaving. She will have problems with the local people if she takes his Indian children. He gives her two black fox pelts as a peace offering. They decide not to say anything about Anne keeping the kids when the pack train comes.

In Chapter Eighteen, Mr. Strong and the pack train arrive. Maggie Carew's daughter, Jeanette, son-in-law, Elmer and baby were aboard. Anne receives a letter from Lester Henderson saying she may not be able to teach in Eagle, but there are plenty of other openings. At the store, Anne learns that Fred Purdy is back. She tells Mr. Strong that Chuck and Ethel will be staying with her.

While she is sitting in her quarters, Nancy arrives with Maggie right behind her. Angela had hit Nancy. Maggie tells her that there will be trouble if she keeps the kids. A group of people at the roadhouse are talking about taking the kids, so Anne goes and gets her revolver. She tells Maggie to tell the group that she will shoot anyone who tries.



Chapter 19-20

Chapter 19-20 Summary and Analysis

Anne was tense in class until she heard Mr. Strong and the pack train leave. Rebekah tells Anne she made a mistake in keeping Chuck and Ethel. After school, Fred came to pick up Isabel. He is serious about not resuming their relationship. Mrs. Purdy comes to talk to her the following week about the children. She tells Anne that there is talk among the people and that they are angry.

At the next dance, very few people talk to Anne. When they form a square dance, Chuck pairs with Elvira Vaughn, and her father slaps her and sends her home. Jeanette came to dance with Chuck. Anne danced the Home Sweet Home waltz with Joe Temple and went to the roadhouse with him. Chuck and Ethel were sleeping. Joe tries to cheer her up but also tells her to expect more trouble.

The next time Mr. Strong and the pack train arrive, there is a letter from Mrs. Prentiss telling her to send Nancy home. She is angry because of Fred and the kids. Nancy asks Anne to ask Mr. Strong to talk to her mother. Mr. Strong tells Anne that he won't. He is on the school board in Eagle and says they will make their hiring decision at the end of the next month. Nancy leaves the next morning.

With Nancy gone, Anne had to do all the household chores, plus taking care of the kids. That night Cab Jackson appears with a gift of perfume for Anne. He also talks to her about not keeping the children and says that Eagle would have already canceled her contract for next year if Mr. Strong hadn't told them to wait. The next day while she is detained at the store, Cab leaves with Chuck and Ethel in his sled.

In Chapter Twenty, Anne finds out who was involved in taking Chuck and Ethel. Maggie Carew arrives saying she knew about the plans. Anne tells her she is going to the Indian village the next day and there won't be any school on Monday or Tuesday. Maggie says that after Cab finishes talking to the Indians, they won't let her have the kids. Strong won't bring provisions to the village. Anne shouldn't waste her time.

Anne goes to the Purdy's and tells Fred what happened. He agrees to take her in his sled to catch Cab. At the roadhouse, they find the Carew's are worried about Jeannette and Elmer who never reached Steel Creek. Fred and Anne begin their journey. When they stop at a cabin, they find that Cab is three hours ahead of them. They go on to the O'Shaughnessey roadhouse and find Cab departed a half hour earlier.



Chapter 21-22

Chapter 21-22 Summary and Analysis

Fred borrows some supplies from Mr. O'Shaughnessy. While the men are outside, Anne learns that Ptarmigan Drop is a dangerous pass, but a shortcut. She then realizes that her outer clothing is outside with the men. Fred says he can make better time without Anne but finally agrees to her coming along. The hardest and most dangerous part of the trip is ahead of them.

When Anne sees Ptarmigan Creek, she tells Fred that there is no way they can go that way, but he tells her that he is going. From where they are they can see Cab's sled. Anne goes down the drop with some of the dogs and Fred follows with the sled. Fred used chains on the runners of the sled to slow it on the steep incline. They make it to the bottom and resume their chase after Cab. When they are close enough to his sled, they call out his name, and he stops and then resumes, slower than his earlier pace.

When they catch Cab's sled, they find the children are safe. Cab challenges Fred to a race, and Fred accepts or Cab won't stop. Cab beat them to Cross Creek, where he stopped. Cab won't allow them to remove the children. The men begin to fight until Cab is beaten into unconsciousness. They revive him and Cab complimented Fred on how he handled himself.

As they are preparing to leave, Titus Paul and a group of Indians arrive. They explain the situation to Titus Paul. Cab wants Titus to take the kids to the Indian village. Titus leaves the kids with Anne and challenges Cab to a race to the village.

In Chapter Twenty-two, Fred, Anne and the kids are on their way back to Chicken. They run into bad weather on the way to the O'Shaughnessy roadhouse. Fred knows of a cabin they can take shelter in and they begin to look for it. They come to a place where the dogs refuse to move. They explore the area on foot and find the remains of dogs and of a sled. Further up there is a pack of wolves circling an area. Fred shot one and the rest of the pack ran off. They find Jeanette, Elmer and the baby in an ice cavern. Jeanette is still alive.

Chuck and Fred find the cabin. Fred starts to work to free Jeanette. Elmer is dead and Jennie has a broken arm. The baby is still alive. They began to try to move Jennie.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary and Analysis

Fred and Anne manage to move Jennie to their sled. They also move some food and supplies. Fred set traps to keep the wolves away from Elmer's body. They went to the cabin for shelter. The baby is a blue color and Jennie has a frozen leg. Jennie needs a doctor and they talk about what to do. The nearest doctor is in Dawson, one-hundred fifty miles away across the Canadian border. He decides to sleep in a few hours before setting out with Jennie. Anne stays at the cabin with the three children.

After Fred and Jennie leave, Anne tends to the baby, Patricia. Anne falls asleep for several hours and awakens to the baby's crying. She tries to feed the baby but the baby won't take the bottle and falls back to sleep. Patricia wouldn't eat again when she awoke later. Anne finally fed the baby with an eyedropper from the first aid kit. After a day, the baby begins to feed from the bottle. Chuck and Ethel let her sleep and take care of the baby, feeding her when she wakes up. The four of them wait for someone to come for them.

The next day Mr. Strong's sled appears. Fred had left a message at Steel Creek. They moved Elmer's body to the cabin and then started traveling, stopping only at the O'Shaughnessy's. They safely reached Chicken and Anne gave the baby to Maggie.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary and Analysis

Maggie made dinner for Anne and the kids for the first weeks after their return. Mr. Carew left for Dawson. Fred returned after eight days. He had transferred Jennie to a faster sled at Forty Mile and Percy de Wolfe took her to Dawson. They had telegraphed the authorities in Dawson who responded that they had doctor waiting at the hospital. Three weeks later they receive a telegram from Mr. Carew. The doctors had to amputate Jennie's foot but she would be fine. The people in Chicken became more tolerant of Anne, Chuck and Ethel.

One day Maggie asks Anne if she has secured lodging in Eagle and she says no, she doesn't know if she will be teaching there. She tells Maggie that she wants a cabin big enough for Chuck and Ethel to have their own rooms. In mid-April, she receives the news that has been accepted to teach in Eagle. Fred stayed away from her for the first three weeks after his return.

She began to have problems with Chuck and Ethel. She was being strict with them because she wanted them to fit in in Eagle. One day, they ran away. People helped to look for them but didn't find them. Later when Anne finds what is missing from the house, she knows where to find them and goes to the cabin where Mary had lived with them. She finds the children asleep there. She wakes them and talks to them and realizes she had been too hard on them the past month. They return home with her.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary and Analysis

Anne changed the way she treated Chuck and Ethel and focused more on their happiness and less on their behavior. Soon it was spring and the snows were gone. Anne began taking the students on field trips, something they all loved.

Nancy returned for her territorial exam at the end of Mary. She was planning to attend high school in Fairbanks. There was a pageant for the end of the school year and everyone looks at what the children had accomplished in the past year. There would be a dance that night.

The school would be closing since there would not be enough enrollment to keep it open. Angela planned to use the building for a roadhouse.

Anne is sad at the dance even though Fred is there. She knows she and the kids will be leaving in a few days. She danced the Home Sweet Home dance with Fred. The townspeople had arranged it and they danced alone. They went to the roadhouse for dinner and Maggie made a cake for her. The townspeople pitched in and bought her a camera. They said she was a true Alaskan.

Since the children were sleeping, Fred and Anne went for a walk. Fred says he will visit them in Eagle. She says he's probably happy she's leaving so she stops chasing him. He says he'd marry her if he could support her. She says she will wait for him to come and marry her.

They didn't marry until ten years later, on September 4, 1938. Anne went on to adopt three more children and another four after she and Fred were married. They had twenty-eight happy years together before he died.



Characters

Anne Hobbs

Anne is the main character of the novel and is nineteen in 1927 when she arrives in Eagle, Alaska. She is supposed to spend one year teaching in the town of Chicken and then return to teach in Eagle. She was born in Colorado and taught in Oregon before accepting a job in Alaska. When she was a child, she was often sent to live with her grandmother in Missouri, and it was her grandmother who always told Anne to be a teacher so she could go wherever she wanted. Anne accepts a teaching job in Chicken, Alaska and has to learn how to survive in the wilderness. She also has to learn to deal with the prejudice against Indians, especially when she falls in love with Fred Purdy. Fred leaves the area because of the prejudice and says he doesn't want to cause trouble for Anne. While he is away, Mary Angus dies and Anne takes in her two children, Chuck and Ethel. She faces the bigotry for taking in the children. The people are so opposed to her having the Indian children that one night they detain her at the store and a group kidnap the children. Cab Jackson is on his way to take the children to the Indian village before Anne knows about it. She and Fred go retrieve them. Anne wants to marry Fred and doesn't agree with his reason for waiting to marry, but she waits ten years before they marry. She adopts seven more children over the course of her life.

Fred Purdy

Fred Purdy is a very young half-breed Indian who lives in Chicken with his mother and family. He helps Anne organize the school house and does the necessary repairs. Fred also gives Anne advice and tells her about local customs. He is attracted to Anne and finally, before leaving for trapping, kisses her. Right before Christmas, he tells Anne he is going to work in Steel Creek until June. He doesn't want her to be hurt or lose her chance to teach in Eagle the following year. Fred understands the prejudice and how hard the whites will make it on Anne. Fred returns from Steel Creek early but has little to do with Anne, even though he says he still loves her. They stay apart until Ethel and Chuck are kidnapped; then Fred takes Anne to retrieve the children, fighting Cab Jackson for them. On the way back, they find Jennie and her baby, and Fred takes the seriously injured Jennie for medical treatment. Before Anne leaves for Eagle, Fred tells her he won't marry her until he can support her, and she says she will wait. They marry ten years later on September 4, 1938, by which time Anne adopted three more children. Fred and Anne adopt another four together. They had twenty-eight years together before Fred dies.

Cabaret Jackson

Cabaret Jackson lives in Eagle when he first meets Anne. He wants to marry her but she declines. He gives her a revolver to keep with her for protection. He arrives in



Chicken at Thanksgiving and picks a fight with Fred Purdy over Anne. Cab, like the others, doesn't like the idea of Anne keeping the Indian children. He is involved in the kidnapping of the children and is on his way to the Indian village with them when Fred and Anne catch up with him. Cab fights Fred for the children and is beaten soundly into unconsciousness. When they revive him, he compliments Fred on the way he handles himself.

Mr. Strong

Mr. Strong is the leader of the pack train that goes from Eagle to Chicken. He lived in North Carolina until he ran away to California. He came to Alaska when he was in his late twenties and has been there for twenty-one years. He lives in Eagle where he is a member of the town council and the school board. He also has a store in Chicken to which he gives Anne the key. She runs the store for him in his absence. He is very critical of Anne and her dealings with the Indians. In spite of this, he is a friend and supporter of hers and rescues her from the cabin after Fred leaves with the injured Jennie.

Nancy Prentiss

Nancy Prentiss is one of eight children in the Prentiss family and lives at Steel Creek. She first meets Anne when the pack train stops at Steel Creek. Nancy's mother asks if Nancy can live with Anne in Chicken, and Anne says okay. When Nancy arrives, she is difficult until Anne threatens to send her home. After that, Nancy changes her behavior and the two become friends. Nancy remains with Anne until Chuck and Ethel come to live with them. Then her mother orders her home. She returns for the territorial examination which she passes. She plans on attending high school in Fairbanks.

Joe Temple

Joe Temple is a resident of Chicken. Joe has been in Alaska since 1920 and both served in the Army and attended Washington State University. Joe has two children, Chuck and Ethel, by an Indian woman he never married. When the woman dies he allows Anne to take the two children.

Maggie Carew

Maggie Carew is a resident of Chicken. She is about forty years of age and has a married daughter living in Eagle. Maggie works as the school janitor and operates a restaurant called Maggie's roadhouse. She is a member of the school board. Maggie and her family are moving to Eagle where she plans to open a roadside Inn.



Chuck

Chuck is the half-breed son of Joe Temple and Mary Angus. Anne first meets him at the Indian village and he travels with Anne to Chicken. She cares for him on the way and sees him united with his mother. When Mary dies, Anne cares for the boy and his sister, Ethel, and adopts them.

Angela Barrett

Angela Barret is a resident of Chicken and a member of the school board. Several times she admonishes Anne about

Anne allowing Indians into the school. Angela drinks too much. She plans to turn the school house building into a roadside inn since Maggie is moving to Eagle.

Ethel

Ethel is the youngest child of Mary Angus and Joe Temple. When Mary dies, she and her brother Chuck go to live with Anne.

Mr. Vaughn

Mr. Vaughn is a member of the school board in Chicken. He is very prejudiced against Indians and very antagonistic towards Anne.



Objects/Places

Eagle

Eagle is a town in Alaska near the Canadian border from which the pack train departs in September 1927.

Chicken

Chicken is an Alaskan town ninety miles south of Eagle.

Gravel Gulch

Gravel Gulch is a town near Eagle where the pack train stopped.

Liberty

Liberty is a town between Eagle and Chicken where the pack train spends its first night.

Steel Creek

Steel Creek is a farm on the way to Chicken from Eagle where the pack train spends the second night. It is where the Prentiss farmhouse is located.

Lost Chicken Hill

Lost Chicken Hill is an area near Chicken where there is gold mining.

West Fork

West Fork is an area about two hours from Chicken where Fred and Anne go for a snow ticket.

Indian Village

The Indian village is located between Eagle and Chicken and is where Cathy Winters teaches.



Ptarmigan Drop

Ptarmigan Drop is known as the Drop and is a dangerous pass.

Dawson

Dawson is a Canadian town about one hundred-fifty miles from Chicken where Jennie is taken for medical care.



Themes

Prejudice

One of the most dominant themes of the book is prejudice. Anne finds it everywhere she turns in Alaska. This is very difficult for her to deal with because she respects people and accepts them for what they are. Her attitude isn't the kind of attitude she finds in Alaska. The white people were very prejudiced against the Indians, most of whom lived in deplorable conditions. Anne comments on this to Cathy Winters at the Indian village and is told not to judge the Indians by white standards. Anne takes offense at the remark but then comes to understand it.

Anne is part Indian herself and cannot tolerate the bigotry against the Indians or being told she can't allow Indian children in her classroom. This causes her to have several nasty meetings with the school board, but she keeps the Indian children in her class. She also faces social problems when she falls in love with Fred Purdy, a half-breed. The school board tells her that if she doesn't change her behavior, she won't teach in Eagle the following year.

When she tells Joe Temple, the father of the two Indian children, Chuck and Ethel, that she wants to keep them, he says okay but that she is asking for trouble with the town. The people fail to see that the problem is with them and not with Anne.

Relationships

Relationships are another theme of the book. Anne's relationship with Fred Purdy begins as soon as she arrives in Chicken. He does the repair work on the school building, so they spend time together. She has dinner with the Purdy family and Fred shows her some things about life in Alaska. She begins to spend time with him as he shows her around the area and teaches her things like gold mining, skiing, etc. Whenever Fred is at the school house, Mr. Vaughn send his daughter over on some pretense.

As Fred and Anne's relationship intensifies, so do the comments from the townspeople, until Fred finally decides to take a job in Steel Creek to relieve the strain on his mother and Anne. He comes back early but stays away from Anne. He keeps telling her that she doesn't understand the ways of the people in Alaska and he doesn't want to cause her to lose her job in Eagle. He says he loves her but won't marry her because he has no money and can't support her. Anne said his having no money does not matter to her. Before leaving for Eagle, she says that she will wait for Fred until he is ready, and she does wait, for ten years.

They finally marry on September 4, 1938 and spend twenty-eight wonderful years together before Fred dies. Anne says they had a wonderful life together, doing whatever they want.



Adventure

A third theme of the book is adventure. This is to be expected given the fact that the setting is in the Alaskan frontier in the late 1920s. The people live in little villages in the wilderness. There are no modern conveniences and the nearest doctor is in Dawson, a Canadian town one hundred-fifty miles away.

Anne's adventure begins in Eagle. There are few single women in the area and the people hold dances in her honor. There she has her first experience with a pack train across the Alaskan wilderness as she travels to Chicken. The pack train consists of horses and mules that stop at the few road houses and villages along the way. Anne has to learn how to light the stove from the children in her school. The girl who comes to live with Anne, Nancy Prentiss, shows her how to deal with everyday life in the wilderness. There is no running water or indoor plumbing.

Transportation is usually on foot, skis or sled. Many of the people find traveling easier in winter because they can use sleds, even though it is during the cold Alaskan winter. Many of the local dishes use moose meat.

Anne has an adventurous spirit and isn't afraid to try new experiences. This is why she was successful in adapting to life in Alaska and why she liked living there so much that she remained.

Style

Perspective

Tisha is the story of Anne Hobbs. Even though the book is written by Robert Specht, it is the story that Anne Hobbs told and is written from her perspective. The book is written in the first person with the author being the narrator, with Anne speaking through him. Usually the use of the first person is limiting to the reader because the knowledge of the reader is confined to events that take place in front of the storyteller. The reader has no knowledge of any action that occurs away from the story teller, in this case Anne, but in this kind of novel, it works. The reader doesn't lose anything because it is Anne telling the story as it happened in front of her and to her.

Telling the story from Anne's perspective reveals the prejudices that existed at the time against the Indians and anyone who socialized with them. Anne, who is part Indian, could not understand or tolerate this prejudice. She also faced the bigotry for taking Indian children into her school, for falling in love with a half-breed and for adopting two half-breed children after their mother died. Anne explains her feelings and why she made the decisions she did. Many times she acted on principle; those times that she kept her mouth shut, she regretted it.

The use of the first person is the proper perspective for this book because Anne told the story of Tisha to author Robert Specht and it is her story.

Tone

Since Tisha is Anne's own story, she tells the events as they happened to her, so the book is subjective in this sense. She tells the reader how she feels and the reasons for her actions. Anne is intolerant of the prejudice and treatment of the Indians and she lets this be known. She tells of what happened and how she was treated by the people, including their comments. Anne stood on her principles. She did not see anything wrong in falling in love with a half-breed or in adopting half-breed children. She faces the anger and actions of the town because of her principles. She was also willing to close the school if they did not accept the Indian children and to forgo the teaching position in Eagle. Her tone varies from excitement to fear to anger to contentment.

The tone of the book is appropriate to the book, Since the book is about Anne's first year teaching in Alaska, it is appropriate for it to be somewhat subjective. Anne tells the events as they happened with her own feelings mixed in, which gives the book its ambiance. The book would be rather boring if the reader didn't have Anne's personal reactions. The reader also has to appreciate the tone of the book since it makes the story more real for the reader and adds to the enjoyment of the book. Most readers would find the book boring if it read like a textbook.

Structure

The structure of the book is relatively simple. These are twenty-five chapters in which Anne tells her story. The book begins with the day she leaves Eagle on the pack train and tells of her one year teaching in Chicken. She talks about her experiences over the course of the year and in the last chapter tells Fred that she will wait for him. On the last page written in 1975, Anne tells how she waited ten years for Fred to marry her and how they had twenty-eight happy years together.

The book is chronological, which is to be expected for a book of this type. There is some jumping around in time as Anne tells of events from her childhood, especially her days with her grandmother and Miss Ivy, both of whom were instrumental in her wanting to be a teacher.

There is no Table of Contents or Index but none are needed. There is a section on Author's Note in the beginning in which Anne explains her reasons for writing the book and the few changes she made in the geography. It would have been nice to have some maps in the book showing the geography of Alaska and Chicken, but none were included. Maps and sketches would have given the reader a better idea of the layout of the town area and the distances involved. Some pictures would have been helpful also, but Anne didn't receive a camera until she was leaving the town.

The simple structure of the book makes for fast reading since there is nothing to slow down the reader.



Quotes

"Only one or two of the white women had even danced with the Indian men. The rest looked down their noses at them or, like Mrs. Rooney, disliked them outright." (Chapter 1, pg. 6)

"The main thing is not to judge what you see here by white standards. Most of these people didn't meet whites until about thirty or forty years ago. Up to then they were living in the Stone Age." (Chapter 3, pg. 36)

"I have the feeling that you are a pretty tolerant young lady - young enough to be open to new ideas. Where you're going you'll find that most people are not. They have their own code and they don't take to anybody who tries to go against that code or change in." (Chapter 5, pg. 66)

"I couldn't believe it - that people could act that way. Just because someone was an Indian. I was ashamed of them." (Chapter 7, pg. 97)

"When you lived in close quarters with someone and you weren't getting along, everything that person did annoyed you. Sometimes it was all you could do to keep your temper. That's what was happening with Nancy and me." (Chapter 9, pg. 128)

"From then on Nancy changed. She hadn't been one to show her feelings much before we had the argument, and she didn't make any big display after it, but I could see the difference in her right away." (Chapter 10, pg. 134)

"Maybe I hadn't had that much experience with boys, but that didn't matter, I knew I'd never felt this way about anybody and that I never would again about anybody else. And I saw in his eyes that it was that way with him too." (Chapter 11, pg. 159)

"They were doing the best they knew how, and the last thing in the world they needed was to have people look down their noses at them. They had guts." (Chapter 14, pg. 201)

"I couldn't put my finger on what it was, but I felt different, all right - as if all my life I'd been trying to be what other people like my parents or Mr. Strong or all the people here in Chicken wanted me to be. Now I was going to be myself." (Chapter 15, pg. 204)

"You mean it doesn't seem peculiar to you when a young single girl decides all of a sudden that she's going to play mother, especially when she knows that everybody isn't exactly fond of the offspring she'll be playing it with." (Chapter 17, pg. 228)

"Before I went out he said, 'Generally the school board in Eagle would have made up their mind by this time whether or not to retain your services next year. We have not done so as yet, but we will do so by the end of next month, then we shall telegraph our decision to the commissioner in Juneau. I'm sure you realize what I am trying to say.'" (Chapter 19, pg. 254)



"He put his arms around me and held me for a few moments. 'I fell the same way about you,' he said. Then he let me go and we went on. I felt as if I could take on anything after that." (Chapter 21, 278)

"There were so many things I wanted to say to him - how much I admired him, how much I needed him and wanted him, how deeply I loved him. But there was no time." (Chapter 23, pg. 312)

"Chuck and Ethel were worrying me. Ever since I'd brought them back to Chicken we hadn't been getting along." (Chapter 24, pgs. 324-325)

"Because I'm never going to marry anybody else, I mean that, Fred Purdy. If you don't marry me some day I'm going to be an old maid." (Chapter 25, pg. 339)



Topics for Discussion

What motivated Anne to become a teacher? Why did she go to Alaska?

What kind of prejudice does Anne find in Chicken? How does she deal with it?

Why does Fred Leave? Were his reasons legitimate? Does Anne view the situation the same way Fred does? Why or why not?

Why does Anne decide to keep Chuck and Ethel after Mary Angus dies? What problems does she face because of her decision?

What happens to Chuck and Ethel? Who is involved and what were their reasons?

What happens that changes the attitude of the people in the town?

Anne leaves Chicken for Eagle with Chuck and Ethel. How long does she wait for Fred to marry her? What does she say about her life after leaving Chicken?