

# OUTHOUSE ADVENTURES

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I was rather pleased with the facilities. My daughter was confused and outraged. "I need to go to the bathroom," she repeated in her demanding five-year-old voice. "I know, and this is it," I said, gazing around the rather spacious outhouse. "Where is the toilet?" I pointed. "It looks funny." "It works just fine." "I don't like it."

This was what comes of taking a five-year old camping for the first time. Everything goes fine until it's time for little one to use the toilet facilities. Then suddenly you have an emerging bathroom critic.

As far as outhouses go, this was quite a nice one. And by nice, I mean posh.

*As far as outhouses go, this was quite a nice one.*

I had encountered a plethora of outhouses during road trips in my childhood. Some were one-of-a-kind exhibits. Some gave me nightmares. There were outhouses occupied with more spiders and bugs than I could count. Outhouses so shot up there was no bad odor, but the breeze entering the holes froze my backside. Outhouse with roofs so leaky I needed an umbrella inside when it was raining. Outhouses perched on the edges of steep mountain cliffs, so emerge slowly. Outhouses missing a door, or a good portion of a wall. Outhouses so narrow

in depth that the door wouldn't close unless you had no knees. And more outhouses minus toilet paper than I would care to remember.

Yes, my childhood had made me a connoisseur of outhouses. That was how I knew this one was quite nice.

It had a lot going for it. It was new, had toilet paper, still had the seat intact, and did not even smell. It looked like it was hosed down regularly and there were no missing boards or holes big enough to let peeping spectators get a free show. It was also big enough to hold four people and two chickens.

I decided to impress little one with history. I explained this was an outhouse and not that long ago her grandad had used one of these as a small boy. In fact, toilets had only recently moved indoors.

She didn't look impressed. "Couldn't they smell back then?"

"Of course," I said.

"And how do you flush it?"

"You don't."

She decided she didn't have to go. Not now. Not tomorrow. Not before we left in two days.

"Okay," I said, wondering how long she could last.

Just as we were leaving, she asked, "Where is the sink to wash your hands?"

I raised my eyebrows. "It's called the creek or the outdoor faucet."

"Creeks don't have soap," she said, and walked out.

It was about then I decided maybe we should visit a few of the more nostalgic outhouses from my childhood travels.

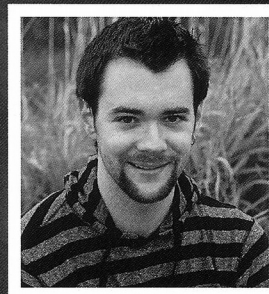
Perspective—that was what she needed.

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