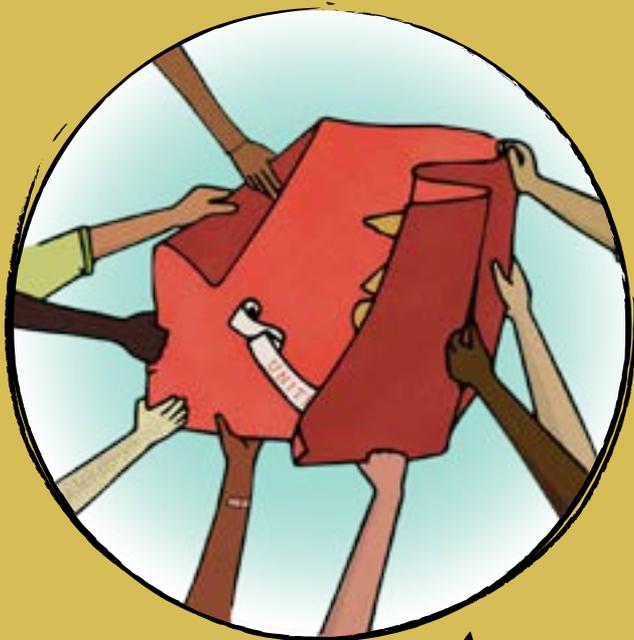


PICKING UP THE PIECES

by Dr. Roy Smith



THE CAMPFIRE GANG



BOOK #5



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*Dedicated to those who have great value
and God-given potential. (This means you!)*
*As you enjoy this series, may you discover
your greatness.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

*I am honored to be part of the journey of the following
young men. May you grow strong, have courage,
act wisely and change the world.*

*Silas, Jorah, Alexander, Nathan, Mason, William,
Lucas, Cody, Elijah, Kent, Colt, Ian, AJ, CJ, JJ, Gavin,
Ryder, Braxton*

*It is my privilege to be part of the lives of the following
amazingly gifted and powerful young women.*

May you make a difference in the world.
Remi, Reese, Alycea, Joy



CHAPTER 2

RESCUE MISSION

As BB opened his eyes, Pete disappeared and Thundershell was standing there in his place. He was holding BB by the shoulders, trying to wake him up.

BB blinked hard, waiting for his eyes to focus and wondering what Thundershell was doing there.

“You’ve been sleeping for more than 12 hours!” the Lizard exclaimed. “I wanted to make sure you’re okay.”

BB sat up and shrugged. “I’m fine,” he sighed. “I just can’t believe I’m stuck on this side of the Impossible River—without my friends. I really just want to be left alone and finish my

dream. At least I was back home doing something fun.”

Thundershell didn't look convinced, but he wasn't sure what else he could do for his friend.

“You can sleep for another hour,” he said firmly. “Then it's time for you to get up, eat something and spend some time with us. We're your friends too, and we're *going* to help you get out of here!”

BB nodded. He knew Thundershell was right.

As BB lay back down, Thundershell set his rock on the ground next to him.

“I'll leave the rock here for you in case you want it when you wake up,” Thundershell said. “I know it seems rough right now, but everything will be okay, BB. Remember, Pops is always here for you.”

Thundershell hoped to comfort BB with his words, but BB had already fallen back to sleep.

At the same time, his friends called a team meeting to try to figure out another way to get BB over the river. But like BB, they felt helpless.

“Pete’s punkin chunkin machine was our only way to cross the Impossible River,” Kerry said. “And now it’s smashed!”

“I think I missed something big in my plan,” Pete said. “We should’ve carried a rope over with us that was anchored to something sturdy on the other side. If we’d done that, we could’ve made a rope bridge to get back over to BB.”

“That’s not just your fault,” Kerry said. “It’s all of ours. I didn’t think of it either. A bridge over the river would’ve been really helpful to the Lizlards too.”

Cliff covered his face with his hands and groaned. “How are we going to figure out another way across? We’ll never see BB again!”

“Guys, we have to remember our rule,” Sammy stated. “We stick together—no matter

what. Leaving BB here alone isn't an option."

"You're right," Toby agreed. "We just need to come up with a plan. But first, since BB was our leader, I think we need to decide who can step into his shoes and be our new leader for now."

"I vote for Sammy to be our stand-in leader for BB," Spencer chimed in.

"I like that idea," Pete agreed. "Sammy's really good at helping us get organized so our plans work."

"And he always seems to know what the rock is trying to tell us to do," Cliff added.

Spencer stood up on a boulder and shouted, "All in favor of Sammy stepping in to be our leader?"

"Aye!" everyone called back.

"Sammy, are you okay with filling in for BB?" asked Spencer.

Sammy nodded. "Thank you guys for believing in me. Now let's start figuring out how to

bring BB home!”

“I think we should map out the area and figure out where we need to go after we get BB across the river,” Spencer suggested. “Sammy and I didn’t get very far when we were scouting here earlier. We didn’t see any other creatures or dangers, but that doesn’t mean they’re not out there.”

Sammy nodded. “I agree. Spencer, why don’t you and Kerry do some more scouting for us?”

“Sounds good to me!” Kerry replied.

“Me too!” said Spencer.

“Now, does anyone have any ideas for getting BB over here?” Sammy asked.

“We could build another punkin chunkin machine over here,” Pete said. “We built one—we can definitely build another. Kerry and Spencer could look for a pond or some other landing spot on the other side. Then you could launch John

and me over and we could build a third machine for BB and us to get back over.”

John nodded. “I think that would work! Who wants to help me gather wood to start making the base?”

Toby and Cliff volunteered right away.

“Our plan still has one big problem though,” Pete said.

“What’s that?” Cliff asked.

“We used Bat Bird tendons for the launch arm of the punkin chunkin machine,” Pete said. “So we’re going to need to find and kill at least one Bat Bird—preferably two.”

Toby groaned in frustration. “Well, that’s just great. So you’re telling us we’ve got to get two giant, man-eating birds to attack us so we can try to kill them?”

“Toby has a point,” Sammy stated. “We need to think this plan through again. Maybe we can come up with a better one. It’s easy to think

that just because something worked once it'll work again, but that's not always true."

"We also need to make sure we encourage BB," Cliff added. "I'm sure he's already trying to figure out his own plan. But he also needs to know we're here for him and we're not just ditching him!"

Sammy nodded and smiled. "I agree. Before we move forward with the plan, I want to see if the rock has any advice for us."

Everyone became silent as Sammy stepped on the rock. It let out a loud groan. Then it began to vibrate, and the voice said,

*"God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us." **

Sammy thought about the verse for a moment. Then he said, "I think it's telling us we

* Ephesians 3:20

should trust that God will help us save BB. God can do things we can't even imagine.”

“So how should we get started?” Toby asked.

“Remember what BB taught us about S.M.A.R.T. goals?” John asked. “I think we can practice it here. ‘S’ stands for Specific.”

“Well, our plan is definitely specific!” Spencer replied. “We know exactly what we want to do—build another punkin chunkin machine.”

“And we know what parts we need and how to build it,” added Pete.

“Great!” John said. “And ‘M’ stands for Measurable.”

“Well, we’ll know we’ve achieved our goal when the punkin chunkin machine sends one of us successfully across the river,” Kerry replied.

“What about ‘A’?” John asked. “That stands for Accurate.”

“It’s hard for me to think about anything

other than helping BB,” Sammy said. “I think as long as our plan is focused on that, it’s going to accurately achieve what we want.”

“That makes sense,” John said. “Next is ‘R,’ which stands for Realistic.”

“Obviously the first punkin chunkin machine worked,” Toby pointed out. “We’re over here, so we know it can be done.”

John nodded. “Last is ‘T’—Timely.”

The gang was quiet as they all thought. Then Cliff said, “I think if we can’t get BB over here within the next month, some of us should try to get home to get help.”

“I hope it doesn’t come to that,” John said, “but I think Cliff’s right. I vote that we see where we are in a month and make a decision then.”

“Does everyone agree?” Sammy asked.

“Aye!” everyone replied.

“Great. Now we need to split up our responsibilities,” Sammy continued. “Let’s come

up with a list and decide who's doing what."

"Kerry and I are doing the scouting!" replied Spencer. "We'll look for any new creatures, escape routes, dead Bat Birds we can use for parts and a pond we can land in."

"Pete, John, Toby and I will look for what we need to build the punkin chunkin machine," said Cliff. "But we won't start putting it together until Kerry and Spencer find a pond. We don't want to have to move it. Remember how heavy it was! And this time, we won't have the Lizlards to help us."

"We'll have our spears ready too," Toby added. "If we see any Bat Birds, we'll be all over them!"

"And I'll help both groups with whatever you need me for," Sammy said. "I'll also keep BB filled in on our plan to help keep his spirits up. The river is really loud, but I'll try to hoot even louder."

Sammy continued, “We also need to remember to check back in with what the rock has to say. God may give us a different way to get across the river. Remember, the rock said He can do more than we could ever imagine. Let’s meet back here again at the end of the day to see where we’re at. Does everyone agree?”

“Aye!” everyone cheered, each excited to get started on his part of the plan.

“Before we split up, can I say a prayer?” Sammy asked.

Everyone nodded in agreement, and Sammy said, “God, we’re worried and afraid for our friend BB, and we’re sad that he isn’t here. Please guide us and help BB keep his spirits up. We’re all afraid that we’ll never see him again, but we know you can help us. Please show us the plan you want us to follow. We know your plan is the best plan. Amen.”

The gang quickly scattered. Spencer and

Kerry headed upriver to scout out landing ponds and map out the area. They purposely walked out in the open, keeping a constant watch for Bat Birds. It was risky, but they knew they needed their tendons for the punkin chunkin machine. But they saw no sign of Bat Birds—or other creatures.

Pete and John began the tedious process of making bark tree ropes. Toby and Cliff gathered various branches and limbs to use for the wooden parts of the machine.

Sammy found a spot by the riverbank that would let him keep an eye on the punkin chunkin machine's progress and watch out for BB. He wished there was something more they could do for their friend, but he also knew they were doing everything they could. He understood this was all a part of God's plan and that He would help them solve this problem.

Waiting was hard—Sammy just wished they could solve it a little quicker.

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

Good questions help us learn.

• • •

1. After being separated from his friends, BB dreams about the day they won the baseball championship. What is one memory that always makes you feel better when you think about it?
2. What position would you want to play in baseball, if any?
3. Everyone likes Sammy's dad. John even thinks he'd be a good teammate (page 11). Which of your friends' fathers do you think are cool?
4. The gang likes Tanya because she's a great pitcher and is always up for an adventure. Do you have any female friends? If so, what do you do together?
5. In Chapter 2, the gang tries to come up with a plan to solve the problem of getting BB across the river. What's one of the biggest challenges you've ever faced in your life?
6. What's a goal you want to accomplish? Is it a S.M.A.R.T. goal (Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic, Timely)?
7. Before they start building a second punkin chunkin machine, Sammy says a prayer (page 26). He asks God to guide them, keep BB's spirits up and show

them the plan He wants them to follow. What are three things you pray to God about?

8. Pops asks the gang if they think girls are like them or different from them (page 34). How would you answer that question? Have you ever had or wanted a girlfriend?
9. Kerry has a sister named April who has Down's syndrome. What is Down's syndrome? Do you know anybody with it?
10. What do you dream about? Have you ever had a dream teach you anything?
11. In Chapter 4, BB feels lonely and sad from being stuck on the other side of the Impossible River from his friends. Have you ever had a close friend move away? What did it feel like to be separated from them?
12. Up on the mountain ledge, BB thinks about how he's been struggling to believe that God has a plan for him. How easy or hard is it for you to trust God to get you through a difficult time?
13. The first Principle of Manhood states, "Males are born, while men are forged" (page 51). Why do you think that in order to become a man, you have to face painful experiences that challenge you?

14. Have you ever heard God speak to you? What was going on in your life when this happened?
15. On page 61, Spencer shares Psalm 46:10 with Kerry. What do you think this verse means? How can you apply it to your life?

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

16. In Chapter 5, BB decides to make his relationship with God a priority. Have you made your own faith choice? What have you decided to believe about God?
17. Principle of Manhood #5 says, “Men do whatever it takes” (page 65). When have you shown courage and refused to give up on a goal or problem?
18. Principle of Manhood #10 says, “A man accepts that to live is to be challenged through crisis and hardship” (page 66). What are some ways life has challenged you? How did you overcome these challenges?
19. In Chapter 7, Thundershell asks BB to help his Lizard scouts with a problem they’re having. Who relies on you for help? How do you help make their life better?

20. BB is faced with an unusual task in Chapter 8. He has to teach the Lizlards to fart. Do you like farting? How would you explain it to someone who's never farted before?
21. If you had to fall into a hole with one of the gang, who would you want it to be with, and why?
22. At the beginning of this book, the gang tries to figure out a way to rescue BB. At the end of the book, Sammy has to figure out a way to rescue everyone. Have you ever had to rescue someone or help them out of a problem? What did you do?
23. What's one verse the rock said that you want to remember? Write it down here:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

. . .



After becoming a grandfather, Dr. Roy Smith was inspired to write a book series for his grandsons and boys and men of all ages—so he embarked on a journey to creatively teach character development. Being a psychologist and counselor for more than 35 years, Roy understands how important it is for young men to develop and use their full

potential. Roy's goal is to help young men become mentally strong, address their emotions and develop social skills so they can have a powerful impact on the world. They need to meet God and integrate who He is and His Word into their daily decision-making. Another goal of Roy's is to help men grow and learn how to lead more effectively, contributing to the overarching goal of positively changing our culture. This goal led him to develop Knights of the 21st Century (www.K21.men), a ministry that produces books and DVD series for men. Roy has written and cowritten several books in the area of men's issues, including *Bull*, *Being God's Man*, *Basic Warrior Training*, *Manhood Journey* (Volumes 1-5), *Why Not Try to Hit the Real Target—Men* and *You're Not Dead Yet*. He has also consulted on and written several women's DVD series (www.realwomen21.com).

IT'S NEVER GOOD TO BE ALONE...

*W*hile BB tries to figure out a way across the river, the rest of the gang struggles to help their friend and to stay together. Between Bat Bird attacks and mysterious disappearances, they do their best to stick by each other. But will that be enough?

Through it all, the boys learn lessons about life and about God. They never stop fighting for each other—and sometimes for their own lives!

*FIND ALL OF THE CAMPFIRE GANG ADVENTURES AT
www.TheCampfireGang.com*