

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

4 BOOKS
IN ONE VOLUME

Adventures in
ODYSSEY



**DANGER
LIES AHEAD!**

PAUL McCUSKER



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Danger Lies Ahead

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A note to readers: The Adventures in Odyssey novels take place in a time period prior to the beginning of the audio or video series. That is why some of the characters from those episodes don't appear in these stories—they don't exist yet.

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Summary: Four stories set in the fictional town of Odyssey follow Mark, Patti, and other members of the Whit's End gang as they learn of loss, love, and of life.

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Book
One

*Lights Out
at Camp
What-a-Nut*



Chapter One

THE BANNER “Welcome to Odyssey Municipal Airport!” stretched across the airline gate, ready to greet the passengers on the approaching plane. Mark Prescott leaned across his mother’s seat to get a closer look out the window. Although the pane was dotted with raindrops from yet another late August storm, he could see the banner and felt his heart leap at the name “Odyssey.”

“Are you glad to be back?” Julie, his mother, asked.

Mark nodded.

Julie rubbed Mark’s back. “I was just thinking how nice it is to be home again. Funny, huh?—thinking about Odyssey as home.”

Mark understood what she meant. When his parents separated the previous June, Mark was sure nothing worse could ever happen to him. That is, until Julie moved Mark to her grandmother’s house in Odyssey, halfway across the country from his father, Richard, and their home in Washington, D.C. Then Mark *knew* it was the end of the world.

But that was last June.

In the three months since then, he had made new friends, enjoyed Odyssey’s gentle charm, and taken part in some exciting adventures (including taking a trip in a time machine and solving a mystery). Slowly, Mark felt less like a stranger and more like a welcome friend. By August, it was as if he’d always been there—and always would be.

Mark and Julie followed the crowd of passengers from the plane to the baggage-claim area. A horn sounded a warning blast, and the conveyor belts loudly whirred to life. Mark stood nearby, grabbing their luggage when it came past. They tossed the cases onto a cart and pushed it to the long-term parking area where Julie had parked the car only a few days before.

Only a few days? It seems longer than that, Mark thought, then said so out loud.

“Did it seem long because you didn’t enjoy yourself?” Julie asked as she closed the trunk.

“I guess so,” Mark said with a shrug. “It wasn’t as much fun as I thought it would be. It’s like . . . our house wasn’t ours anymore.”

Julie nodded her head, a lock of her long, brown hair falling across her face. “I understand. Everything looked the same as it did before we left, but it seemed different somehow. Once or twice, I felt like I was a visitor in a museum.” She started the car and backed out of the parking space.

“All my old friends were either away on vacation or they didn’t want to see me,” Mark complained. That bothered him a lot. Somehow it didn’t seem fair that they went on with their lives without him being there to give his approval.

Julie paid the parking attendant, wound up her window, and pulled away. “That’s the hardest part. When you go away, you think everyone should suddenly stop in their tracks and never do anything important without you. You think you’re the only one who can change and make new friends or have new experiences. And when you come back, it’s a shock to find out that their lives kept going—just like yours did.”

“Yeah, but Mike Adams is hanging around Tom Nelson! They couldn’t stand each other before!”

Julie laughed and said, “Just like you never thought you could have a girl as a friend.”

His mom was referring to Patti Eldridge, a girl who had become Mark’s closest friend in *Odyssey* during the summer.

“That’s different,” Mark replied. He stared out the passenger

window thoughtfully. “And I thought you and Dad . . .” He glanced down at his lap uncomfortably.

Julie finished his sentence: “You thought your dad and I would get back together again. I know.”

She was right. The reason they had gone to Washington, D.C. in the first place was so that Mark’s mom and dad could iron out their differences. But by the time Richard dropped Mark and Julie off at the airport for their return trip to Odyssey, it was clear that wasn’t going to happen.

“I’m sorry, Mark,” Julie said. “I really thought your dad and I would work it all out. I thought this trip would be the end of our separation. I know you’re disappointed.”

“Wars have ended quicker than you two getting back together,” Mark said as they drove away from the airport.

Julie smiled wearily in return. “You have to be patient. You may not see the improvements, but they’re there.”

“Then why aren’t we together again?”

“Because we’re not ready,” she answered. “I won’t get back with your father until I’m sure we’re ready.”

“But that’s what you and Dad keep saying!”

“I know. But some things came up in our counseling session that we have to figure out.” Julie sighed. “You wouldn’t understand.”

“What wouldn’t I understand?” Mark snapped. “Why do you always think I don’t understand?”

Julie glanced at Mark, a pained expression on her face.

“I’m sorry,” Mark said. “I didn’t mean to be so sharp.”

Julie acknowledged the apology with a nod, then reached across the seat to touch Mark’s hand. “It’s all leading somewhere, Mark. You have to trust us. We’ve needed this time to mend our wounds.”

Mark shot her an ornery look, then said, “Maybe you should buy some Band-Aids.”

She pinched him playfully and drove on.