

# SHOEBOX BABY by Sharon Bruce

## EXCERPT

The winter of nineteen hundred and thirty-six and thirty-seven dragged on. The freezing temperatures and relentless snowstorms seemed endless. These were especially difficult times for a family who had so little. Since the birth of Suzie, the family was kept busy trying to feed themselves, keep the home warm and attend to the wee life in the shoe box whose nursery was the warming oven.

Fran and Marg were kept home from school to help attend to the baby. The supply of driftwood had to be kept stocked, so Critch also stayed home.

In preparation for his wood gathering he put on his patched, oversized, thin winter coat, his newspaper-soled gum rubber boots, a scarf that once belonged to his father, and mittens given to the family by the Salvation Army.

Just before he left the house, Grace would wrap Critch's scarf snug around his head and neck and say, "Don't doddle. Ifin you get cold, light a small fire but mind you don't burn all the wood. Be back afore sundown. You know me and your fadder are glad fer a child like you. Be careful me boy!"

Then she would hand him the pork lard sandwich she had made him and wrapped in newspaper. Grace knew he should have more to eat but a whole pork lard sandwich was a double portion in their home during these difficult times.