



# **Drawn to Sea: Paintbrush to Chainsaw-Carving Out a Life on BC's Rugged Raincoast**

*Yvonne Maximchuk*

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In the early 1980s, Yvonne Maximchuk, a single mother of two, was living in Whiterock, BC, and making a living as a working artist and art instructor. Then she fell in love with Albert, a crab fisherman who fished the waters of Boundary Bay. Drawn to his seemingly idyllic life and her desire for connection with the natural world, Yvonne and her children moved with Albert to Echo Bay, a tiny settlement east of Vancouver Island.

Life in this remote community was a lot different from life in the city: there was no running water and electricity had to be generated. The closest grocery store was two hours away by boat, and even a small emergency could be life threatening. But in spite of the challenges, they persevered, building a homestead and thriving “off the grid.” In this new life, Yvonne learned to do things she had only dreamed of. She cleared land, helped build their home and got to know the community of hardy folks who were always there to help one another.

Soon after arriving in Echo Bay, Yvonne met Billy Proctor, a BC coastal icon and fisherman. Intrigued by his life on the sea, she asked to join him as he fished the coast looking for chinook and sockeye salmon, ling cod and tuna. Eight seasons of fishing with Billy took her on many adventures to the challenging waters and enchanting islands of BC. Inspired, she captured on canvas the mysteries and treasures of the wild Pacific coast.

In *Drawn to Sea*, Yvonne creates stunning, lyrical word pictures of her home in the Broughton Archipelago. Making the most of the tools available, from paintbrush to chainsaw, she has flourished in this remote area, carving out a home and a career in a place far from just about everyone.

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