Memoires

**Introduction**

My parents met at a dance organised by an Air Force colonel, my mothers' uncle.

After finishing his training as a teacher my father was fulfilling his draft as a sergeant.

It was love at first sight. They soon got married and had three children in quick succession as being a practising Catholic dictated in those times.

The country was still in the post-war depression, so my father restless and adventurous as he was soon decided to move his family to the island of Curacao, one of the Dutch Antilles, which had just become independent in 1954.

After living in a house with no heating or hot water and a bike to share between them, ex-pat life with more luxury, they had a car !, than they ever dreamed off was very nice in the beginning.

But after nearly twelve years my mother wanted to go back to the Netherlands, to be nearer her family.

It still took them two more years to accomplish this.

My story starts about the time the idea to go back was very much nearly a fact.

I was 14 at the time and had very much adapted to the slow island pace.I kept a diary from April 1968 until I had children myself, which was in 1988.

The earlier years will be talked about as far as they can be remembered.

**Spring 68**

In spring of 68 I had already heard that my best friend M.J.and her family were going to "go back" to the Netherlands. I was devastated as we had practically had grown up together. The first time we met we were both about 3 years old and sitting in a child seat on our dad's bikes when they met accidentally in Nijmegen. They knew each other from some teacher event, as they were both teaching lower grade school. During their conversation they found out that they both had just applied for a job in Curacao in the Dutch Antilles, which just had changed its status from colony to an independent government.

The educational system was mainly ruled by the Catholic church and the sole teaching language in the schools was Dutch. That is why my father had to start out in a Catholic school even though he hated religion, "poison for the people, as he called it". But the church paid the passage to the island for him and his family. So in order start their adventure, he had to let go of his principles to be able to give his family a good life. The Netherlands was suffering from a post’-depression period and it was hard to make a living. My mother had to tell the rent collector quite a few times, that her mother was not at home to pay and to come back another day, as she looked too young to be a wife and mother of three.

His subjection to religious rule did not last not very long, but more about that later.

That first meeting must have sparked my friendship with M.J. because when we later met again in Curacao and came to live in the same street after a few years we were inseparable. We even looked like each other. In many school holidays the families switched children. I would go and stay with her parents while her younger brother Robbie went to stay with his best buddy, my little brother Clemens. After a week or so we would switch houses.