

Gabrielle Roy, the author of *Windflower*, shows us through her main character, Elsa Kumachuck, that isolation can have unfortunate effects on an individual and the people around them. We, as readers, are in the beginning given the impression that Elsa is a fit mother who is responsible and knows how to raise her child properly. Later on though, we realize that it's the influence of other people in her life and the experience of isolation later on that lead her to make the decisions that she does.

Elsa Kumachuck was at one time just a carefree teenager, going to the theater to watch movies, laughing with her friends, and discussing sex. Her whole life changes in one night though, when Elsa is raped by a GI soldier, and as a result, gets pregnant. Elsa experiences a very dramatic change in herself, both physically and emotionally, and seems to lose all interest in the things that she used to enjoy. When her baby, Jimmy, is born however, she appears to be herself again. She snaps out of her depression as she observes the little boy she has given birth to. The unique little boy with blond hair and blue eyes takes her breath away. It seemed that in giving life to her child she had restored her own life to herself.

Although Jimmy is a joy and a blessing to Elsa, he also creates a conflict for her. She does not know whether she should raise him as an Eskimo like herself, or white like the father. Elsa takes advice from a lady she once worked for, named Madame Beaulieu, the only white woman she knew. Elsa is soon dressing Jimmy as the white do, and is keeping her hut clean and tidy. The people from the Eskimo society are in awe at the beautiful baby with blond, curly hair, and the ways in which Elsa is raising him. They always want to borrow Jimmy and they even start to bathe their children as Elsa does, at the same time every day. Elsa is proud to be the mother of the baby whom everybody seems to want, and she tries to make decisions that are in the best interest of her child. These decisions however, anger her mother, Winnie. Winnie believes that Jimmy should be raised according to the ways of the Intuit only. So when Elsa decided to go back to work for Madame Beaulieu to support her child, Winnie breaks all of the habits that Elsa has set for Jimmy. Winnie felt it was wrong to discipline a child or restrict him from doing certain things. Soon Jimmy gets too attached to his grandmother and Elsa decides to take him and leave her village and go to Old Fort Chimo.

When they arrive at their destination, Elsa and Jimmy settle in and make a wonderful home for themselves. They never hear from anyone back home for a number of years until Jimmy's father contacts them and moves in with them. He is was a jerk before but both Elsa and Jimmy decide to give him a chance. The two get married and have another child, a girl. And everyone lives happily for the rest of their time.

