

Chapter 1 Ship on the Rocks

It was the seventh day of the storm. We didn't know where we were. Everyone on the ship believed that death was very near. My wife and my four young sons moved close to me.

'My dear children,' I said, 'I don't think we're going to die.'

Then, above the noise of the storm, I heard a cry: 'Land! Land!' And the ship hit the rocks.

We heard someone shout, 'There's no hope now. Let down the boats.'

'No hope!' cried the children.

'Be brave, my boys,' I said. 'The land isn't far away. We'll save ourselves – we'll find a way. I'll see what we can do.'

I left our room and looked around, but there were no sailors on the ship. They were all in boats on the sea. We were alone!

I returned to my family. 'It's all right,' I said. 'The front part of the ship is between two rocks, so it's above the water. Tomorrow the sea will be calmer and we'll be able to reach the land.'

The children immediately became happier, but my wife understood the danger of our position. She prepared a meal and the boys went to bed, but my wife and I stayed awake and watched.



The next day, it was not as windy and the sky was clear. We could see that we were near land.

'Now,' I said, 'let's go round the ship. Let's look for things that will help us to reach the land. We need food and water too. Then we'll meet again here.'

Fritz, my oldest boy, brought back guns and gunpowder. My second son, Ernest, found a box of tools, a lot of nails, a big knife, some small knives and some other things. The box was very

heavy, but Fritz helped him with it.

When my third son, Jack, opened the door to one of the rooms, two big dogs jumped out at him. They were quite friendly and he brought them with him.

Then my wife came with Franz, our youngest son.

‘Good news,’ she said. ‘A donkey, two goats, a pig, six sheep and some chickens are still alive.’

I said, ‘Those will all be useful – but not the dogs. They’ll eat too much.’

‘But Father,’ said Jack, ‘they’ll help us to catch animals for food when we reach the land.’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but we haven’t reached it yet. We need to make a boat. Let’s get some barrels and some pieces of wood.’

So we started to work and we made a boat. We used one of the pieces of wood to hold the sail.

At last everything was ready, and we lowered the boat into the sea. It was too late to leave the ship that night so I tied one end of a long rope to our boat and the other end to the ship. Then we had a meal and went to bed.

Chapter 2 The Island

We all woke up early the next morning. I called the children together and said, ‘First, we must feed the animals. I hope we’ll be able to come back for them later. Then let’s take everything that will be useful to us.’

We took guns and gunpowder, and bags of food. We took some cooking pots, the tools, nails and knives. We brought sailcloth to make a tent. The chickens seemed sad, so we brought them too.

‘The dogs,’ I said, ‘can swim behind the boat.’

At the last minute my wife came, carrying a big bag. I didn’t ask her what was in it.

At first, the boat turned round and round, but after a time I learned to sail it.

‘Look!’ cried Fritz, as we came nearer the land. ‘Those are coconuts. We’ll have coconuts to eat.’

The dogs were swimming towards calmer water.

‘They know the best place to land,’ I said. ‘I’ll follow them.’

Three of the boys jumped on to the beach. Then they helped Franz to follow them. We took everything out of the boat and freed the chickens. Then I cut some wood from the trees, put it in the ground and made a tent from the sailcloth.

‘Now,’ I said to the children, ‘go and bring some dry grass for our beds.’

While they were doing this, I found some big stones for a fireplace. I soon made a good fire, using dry wood from the beach. My wife got a pot of water from the river and put it on the fire. Then, helped by little Franz, she began to cook a meal.

Fritz took a gun to the other side of the river. Ernest went to the right along the beach and Jack went to the left. Suddenly, I heard Jack shouting. I took a gun and ran to help him. I found him standing in water up to his knees.

‘Come here, Father,’ he shouted. ‘Come quickly. I’ve caught something really big!’

‘All right,’ I said, ‘bring it here.’

‘I can’t. It’s caught me.’

I laughed. Then I hit the large shellfish with my gun and freed Jack. It was only holding on to his clothing, so he wasn’t hurt.

‘Well, Jack,’ I said, ‘you’ve caught our first fresh food.’

Just then, Ernest came. ‘I’ve found some things that are good to eat too. But I need help to get them.’

‘What are they?’

‘They’re shellfish too, but I can’t get them off the rocks. We’ll take them later, after our meal.’

‘The food’s ready,’ said my wife, ‘but we should wait for Fritz.’

She looked at her pot. 'How shall we eat it? We can't eat soup with a knife! We need spoons, but we haven't got any!'

'We can cut coconuts in half and use them.'

'We can, but we haven't got any coconuts,' I said.

'There are the shells on the rocks!' said Ernest. 'We can use them if you help me.'

Fritz arrived, so the boys all went to get the shellfish. When they came back, Jack tried to open one with a knife.

'I can't do it!' he said. 'I can't open it.'

'Put them near the hot fire,' I said, 'and they'll open without your help.'

So we sat down to our meal. We ate the shellfish first, and then we used the shells as spoons for the soup.

'But we haven't got any plates!' said my wife.

'I've got a plate,' said Ernest, showing her a very big shell. 'I found it on the beach. There are lots of these shells near the place where I found this one.'

'Then why,' I asked, 'didn't you bring plates for all of us?'

The sun was going down when we finished our meal. Then my wife opened her bag from the ship and began to throw corn to the chickens. I stopped her.

'I'm very glad that you've brought this. But we mustn't give it to the chickens. We must plant it. Then, when it grows, we can make bread. The chickens can have other food.'

It was time for everyone to go to bed. We took our guns with us into the tent.

Chapter 3 The Baby Monkey

We woke up very early the next day.

'First,' I said, 'we must see if any of the sailors from the ship have reached land.'