

Isabelle – Year 6

"ROUND' FROM FINNLEY'S COVE, AND RIGHT FROM BRYON BAY"

He chuckled as he loaded the pair of shoes in a waterproof container. "You can never be too safe!" he joked, "you never know when you might get invited to a formal dress party!" Ollie grinned, and waved, as the boat pushed off from the sandy bank. It bobbed in the water, just like a cork. "Remember, I'll be back before you know it!" he called as the boat grew smaller and smaller on the horizon. ...

I'll be back before you know it...

The seven phantom words echoed in Ollie's mind. It had been three years. Her father had been gone for three years. Three whole years, of no contact, no letters, no indication that he was still out there, living his dream. I'll be back before you know it... Pah! Ollie thought. She shook the thought out of her mind, and stepped out of her log cabin.

The yellow sun smiled brightly overhead, as Ollie walked from under the shady palm trees that surrounded her cabin. Her mother was still sleeping, just across the island. The grains of sand wriggled under her toes, as she jogged down to the water.

Suddenly, a dark object atop the water floated closer to the sand. Ollie scooped it up, and peered closely. The dark leather peeled off from the frame, and stitches surrounded the sole. She blinked. It was a shoe. Dishevelled, but still, a shoe. Ollie remembered the pair of the shoes that her father had taken on his voyage. They matched the ones exactly. Her heart jumped, and she sprinted towards Allison's cabin.

"Allie!" she squealed. Her best friend turned from the desk. "I found my father's shoe!" Allison stared at her and raised one eyebrow.

"The father that has been missing for three years, in the open ocean, with millions of other islands, and you have found 'his' shoe?" Ollie frowned, and showed her the letters of the underside of the sole. "I take what I said back," Allison said.

"Look, I found the shoe on the east side on the cliff, where the sun first hits the sand. I think it came from an easterly direction, and," she paused, "and I don't know how it got there." Allison stared long and hard. On her chair, she wheeled herself towards the giant map she had of the island.

"If you did say it came from an easterly direction, then it could have taken the Alzyla current of the Boral current. But, because the leather on the shoe is brittle," she glanced at the shoe in Ollie's hand, "I think it took the Boral current as it doesn't feed off a freshwater spring like the Azyla current. Then..." Allison traced her finger on the map, travelling east. "Then, that brings us here, to the east of our island. So, it's just a matter of searching... the unknown." her finger rested on the blank sea.

Ollie felt a tinsy bit guilty, as the island grew smaller. They could have borrowed Uncle Sam's boat, but they needed to be quick. Moon's tide was coming in, and that was when the sea grew dangerous. Allison studied the map that she had taken from the cabin. The sea spray kept hitting her face, and the map curled, not wanting to be read. It was like a stubborn child. Allison sighed and stood up.

"We just have to round from Finnley's Cove, and Right from Bryon Bay, and see when that takes us. Hopefully, we can find your father." Her last unspoken statement hung in the air, if he's still alive... Ollie pushed off the feeling of unease that crept, clawing her chest. He just had to be alive. Ollie tightened her bandana.

"Then we'll just have to see where the current takes us." Ollie said defiantly.

They travelled across the seas. Suddenly, something snapped. Ollie froze, and slowly turned to Allison. "Did you perhaps, check the boat was sturdy enough?" Her best friend winced and shrugged. Immediately, water trickled in the side of the hull. "Bail it out!" Ollie barked, then focused on the upcoming rocks. She twisted the wheel, and the boat groaned turning. But not fast enough. The side grazed on the rough edge of the smallest one.

A scraping sound could be heard, like nails on a chalkboard. Allison clamped her hands firmly on her ears. "It probably isn't too bad?" Ollie said hopefully. She glanced at the side of the boat. A huge gash ran down the side. It wasn't long before it took on water. Ollie sucked in a breath, "We have to lighten the load, if we have any chance of making it across." That meant throwing most of their food and water overboard. The wise thing to do, was to turn back, but she wasn't going to give up now. Not when she had had the first lead from her father in years.

A splash sounded. Allison looked over the side, seeing the food sink. It was too late to turn back now. Ollie guided the boat forward.

They made a journey of about a kilometre, before the boat started to show signs of danger. A large crack ran down the middle of the hull, and the boat creaked ominously everytime it rode a wave. Suddenly, Ollie squinted. "There!" she called out, "There! An island, if only we could just make it there!" She murmured encouragement to the boat. It groaned in reply.

He stood on the shore, searching for his shoe. He had left them out to dry, but somehow, the tide had come, snatching one away. His best leather shoe. The unforgiving sea had probably destroyed the glue. Suddenly across the horizon, he saw a speck. The speck grew bigger, until he could finally make out the object. It was a boat. And there was someone important on that boat. "Ollie!" he yelled happily. She disembarked and hugged him. "You've grown bigger."

"Well I should have. It's been three years."

She and Allison have made it to the island, where they fixed up the boat, and set off again, only to find her father. "I think," Ollie paused, "It's time, you came home!"

Her father grinned, and Ollie smiled.