

The Fearless Four. Adventure No. 7. Chapter Two. “Huzzah!”

‘Ha-ha-hallo,’ said Twinblade.

‘Quiet!’ said the leader of the umbrella men. A least, he seemed to be the leader, because he had the stariest eyes. ‘Move!’ he shouted. Lily and Twinblade stumbled down the slope feeling rather scared. The umbrella men marched silently behind the children.

When they reached the village of wooden huts, the children were pushed into the darkest one and the door slammed and locked behind them with rattling chains.

‘Well, at least it’s not raining in here,’ said Twinblade, trying to be brave for Lily’s sake.

‘Where’s Jackely?’ asked Lily.

‘Don’t know.’ said Twinblade. ‘I think he ran off when the umbrella men appeared.’

‘Why do they carry umbrellas?’ asked Lily.

‘Because it’s raining, silly.’ said Twinblade.

‘Well, I think there’s something funny about it,’ said Lily.

‘Look,’ said Twinblade. ‘Let’s plan an escape. No time to lose.’ He strode up and down, purposefully. ‘Now, we can’t hit them over the head when they come in because of the umbrellas. So I’ll have to do a rugby tackle and then you bash them when they fall over.’

‘What will I bash them with?’ asked Lily, looking round. ‘There’s nothing in here.’

‘Eh?’ said Twinblade, also looking round. ‘Oh. Alright. Then this is what we’ll do.

When they open the door, I’ll do a rugby tackle and then we’ll both dash out. O.K.?’

‘Alright,’ said Lily. ‘But ...’

‘No buts,’ said Twinblade, still trying to feel brave and strong. ‘Just run as fast as you can.’

Mr. Million drove the motor-boat up onto the beach and jumped out.

‘Get out and get a move on or we’ll never catch them!’ he shouted to Miss

Schutzenfuffen. Miss Schutzenfuffen did what she was told and tried to jump out of the boat. Unfortunately she slipped and fell back in a heap on the floor.

‘Where the devil are you?’ shouted Mr. Million. Miss Schutzenfuffen put her head up over the edge of the boat and said weakly, ‘I’m coming. Oh dear’. They squelched up the beach as it was now raining hard. Miss Schutzenfuffen looked at Mr. Million and shuddered slightly. He rain had drenched his shirt and his bulging muscles showed through, raindrops dropped off his bushy eyebrows and his face was very red with anger. Miss Schutzenfuffen wished she was back in her cosy cottage with a nice cup of tea and a dry biscuit. Now they were stumbling up a slope.

Jackely ran about in the rain, bewildered. There was no scent to follow to get back to the others. And he was feeling very hungry. He sniffed around in circles for a bit, and eventually came to the edge of the sea. Should he turn right or left? He sniffed one way; he sniffed the other. He didn’t know what to do. Finally, he decided to leave it to doggy instinct and trotted off to the left. And then in the misty rain, he made out Emily and Bloodblade still trying to light a fire in the rain. His tail wagged joyfully. He was really

hungry now.

‘Oh, Jackely!’ said Emily. ‘There you are! Where are the twins?’ Jackely ignored her and sniffed around for food.

‘Here,’ said Bloodblade. ‘Have some camembert. It’s all we’ve got left.’ It’s well known that dogs don’t really like camembert but Jackely was so hungry he gave it a try. Not so bad after all, he decided.

‘Jackely!’ said Emily, louder. ‘Where are the twins?’ Jackely looked around in case there was anything else to eat. There didn’t seem to be, so he wagged his tail at the children and trotted off through the rain in the direction he had come. They followed him anxiously. They ran along the beach, crunching on the pebbles. Emily noticed a small white stone which seemed to shimmer. She stopped and picked it up. It felt strangely warm.

‘Oh, come on! Hurry up!’ shouted Bloodblade.

Jackely seemed to be unsure of which way to go and went around in long circles for a while, much to the irritation of the children. They ran along the beach. Eventually they crested a hill and there was the village.

‘Doesn’t look very welcoming, does it?’ said Bloodblade. A voice behind him said; ‘More of these damn kids!’ It was the umbrella men again.

‘I say,’ said Bloodblade, ‘Who are you?’

‘Never you mind, sonny. Move it!’ So Emily and Bloodblade took the same route as Lily and Twinblade before them and were thrown into the same dark hut.

‘Oh no!’ cried Twinblade, ‘Not you as well?’

‘Oh dear,’ said Lily with a trembling lip. ‘What are we going to do?’

‘Here.’ said Emily. ‘Let’s all have a jelly-baby.’ They all sat down and thought about their situation and chewed the jelly-babies.

‘I’ve got a plan,’ said Twinblade. ‘When they come to interrogate us, we rush them with rugby tackles and run off as fast as we can. Bet they can’t run as fast as us, with those umbrellas.’

‘Interrogate us?’ cried Lily.

‘Don’t worry,’ said Emily. ‘We’ll be gone before that happens.’

‘That’s not a bad idea, Twinblade,’ said Bloodblade. At that moment they heard the chains rattling as someone prepared to open the door. ‘Are we ready?’ he whispered. The door opened slowly. An umbrella man stood there with some bread on a tray. The boys rushed him and pushed him over. The children all ran out as fast as they could. Into a ring of umbrella men looking very angry. There was no way out. The children came to a scrambled halt in the middle of the circle. The umbrella men closed in. Emily found herself rubbing the shiny white stone from the beach. Suddenly there was a blinding flash of lightning, a very loud thunderclap, a whooshing noise and the children heard someone shout: ‘HUZZAH!’

They looked around half-dazzled. Standing next to them was a tall, well-built man dressed in white clothes which seemed to shimmer. He was smiling. The rain had stopped. The umbrella men seemed frozen; they did not move. The children clutched each other. The man in white looked around him, at the umbrella men, and then at the children.

‘Hallo,’ he said.

