

The light refracted through the window, illuminating my empty page. The pen cast a shadow across the margin, amplifying the unoccupied space my thoughts were yet to fill.

I lifted my gaze to the window, taking in the curvature of the distant hills, the brilliant green complimenting the deep blue of the clearest of skies. The room around me reverberated with the sounds of furious writing; scratching pens and shuffling papers. I breathed in deeply, willing my thoughts into something constructive. Time was limited, but even my imminent educational demise wasn't enough to rid my mind of the wisps of the wildest daydream.....

The horizon stretched before me, dipping rhythmically with the gentle swells that rolled beneath the hull of my ship. I pressed the periscope to my eye, scanning the vast expanse of the romantic-Atlantic for signs of life. Nothing. I was alone. My sails hung listlessly in the windless humidity; the ocean surface shimmering like oil. Marooned in the doldrums with no signs of a breeze, and no human company. Trapped on the equator while I was meant to be pursuing my life's greatest adventure, solo sailing around the world. A lone bird circled overhead, contemplating a perch on the deck. It must have flown thousands of kilometres to meet me here. Truth be known, I could do with the company.

By late afternoon the bird had landed and proceeded to poop bountifully over my deck. Below deck, I perused my pantry, impassively seeking inspiration for yet another tinned meal. Abruptly, a thunderous bang exploded overhead, and the boat lurched wildly to port. I flew across the galley, smashing my hip on the table as I grasped for a hold. Voices, speaking foreign languages, ricocheted across the deck above. I froze; fight or flight. Who could it be? I was meant to be alone...

I scrambled towards the ladder, anxiously trying to glimpse the invaders. My heart pounded vigorously against my ribs, white knuckles appearing as I gripped the handrail. Wedging my body behind the stairs, my hip throbbing, I stole a glance skyward hoping to see the invaders above. My eyes strained against the golden rays streaming through the manhole. A shape passed the corner, just long enough to cast a shadow over the stairs. I made out a sleek, muscular figure as drops of water pattered down the stairwell.

I started as a drop of water hit my hand. Contrarily, it was warm and sticky. I blinked and shifted my weight. I brushed my chin, damp from the drool that had been trickling from my mouth onto my outstretched hand. I refocused, anxiously scanning the room, embarrassed at my indiscretion. The scratching pens and shuffling papers persisted. The light continued to illuminate my blank page. No one looked up. No one seemed to have noticed.

I sighed wearily and checked my watch. Ten minutes to the bell. It was now or never - I needed to plan my next lesson. I was, after all, the teacher.

Dr Walton-Jones