

New Horizons

This summer was the worst. Alone in a cabin on the beach with only my boring mum to keep me company. Some might find it fun to spend some alone time with their mum, but not me. I find it a waste of time playing scrabble, walking on the beach and listening to her rattle on about the “good old days” when you could be watching the latest YouTube reel from Mr Beast. But nonetheless, my mum has dragged me to my grandfather's old cabin, to clean out the filth, so that it would actually appeal to potential buyers. “Jackson!” Mum’s sudden outburst snapped me back to reality. “Come help me clean up these dusty boxes!” she yelled. Sighing, I put my phone in my pocket and walked over to where she stood in front of a doorway blocked with old cardboard boxes. It was going to be a long week.

After a day of cleaning, gardening and playing board games, I was very happy when I finally got to lay down on my bed and look at my phone. I typed my password in and opened up YouTube. “Great!” I yelled, throwing my stupid phone on the stupid bed, “No Wifi!” I took a moment to calm down, slowly breathing in and out. When I finally walked outside, I noticed mum on the deck, looking at the sunset. I took a seat next to her and looked towards the horizon. The sun was a beautiful golden arch that shone radiantly over the illuminated sea. “Your grandfather used to tell me stories about the sun when I was young,” whispered Mum, “how it was playing hide and seek with the moon and its favourite place to hide was behind the horizon.” A tear rolled down her cheek. It had already been a year since her dad had died and she was still trying to recover from the loss. Mum got up and walked away, probably to wash away the tears. I stared at the horizon for a bit more, soaking up the cold night air. I suddenly saw something strange in the distance. It looked like a ship, but it was more of a whisper of a ship. It also looked like it was growing bigger as it came towards me. I turned away. Probably just my tired eyes, I thought, as I walked back to bed.

I woke up with a start. Sweat was running down the sides of my head and I was breathing hard. The nightmare had been as clear as if I had been awake, making it extremely intense. It had kept going back to that wisp of cloud that had been on the horizon, the one that looked like a ship. Its very presence had injected fear into me. Shivering, I climbed out of bed, changed into my clothes and hurried to the kitchen, eager to eat. The smell of syrup hit me as I rounded the corner. "I thought you deserved a treat for how much you helped me yesterday," said Mum, smiling as she flipped over a pancake on the pan. I had a feeling it was going to be a good day.

The day turned out to be a repeat of yesterday, except for one major event. I was going around the house looking for wi-fi spots and I found one! It was right next to the heater, so I dragged over an old bean bag and scrolled through YouTube shorts. I didn't even notice mum walking in and washing her hands. "Do you feel like going for a walk on the beach and getting some fresh air?" I barely moved a muscle and kept scrolling, unaware of the disappointed look creeping onto Mum's face. That night Mum went to bed early and I was left lying exhausted by myself on the deck. I was about to get up when I looked at the horizon and I noticed that the cloud thing, a ghost ship I like to refer to now, was even closer than last night. So close, in fact, that I could actually row a boat out and meet it. My spine started tingling with fear. I closed my eyes, counted to three and opened them. The ghost ship was gone. Relieved, I walked to bed and fell asleep.

It felt like only a minute when I suddenly woke and decided I was hungry. It was still dark as I crept towards the kitchen, my stomach growling. Suddenly, a movement outside the kitchen window made me look up. What I saw almost made me faint. A large bulking man with scars all over his face was walking past, heading towards the beach. If that wasn't enough, he was translucent! My heart pounded as loud as a speaker on bass boost. After a long minute, a thought popped into my head. I couldn't let this strange ghost man do whatever he wanted in this house. An immediate burst of adrenaline went through me as I took a peek outside the window, quietly hoping

he wouldn't spot me. I quickly noticed that the bulky man had disappeared. All I saw was ongoing darkness as I looked outside. Suddenly, a shuffling sound came from behind the house. The newly cleared doorway gave a soft creak as I opened it and poked my head outside. Trees and overgrown shrubs surrounded the place. I was about to go back inside when I caught sight of a light flickering through the trees. I reminded myself that there was a small path leading to the beach somewhere around here. As I started to follow the path, my mind drifted to Mum and wished that I had gone on that walk with her today. It was then when, out of nowhere, the big scarred face filled my view as something struck my head and I was knocked out.

My eyes slowly opened, taking in my surroundings. One was the scar faced brute I had seen passing the window who was holding a club. The second one wore an eye patch and towered over the others like a skyscraper. The third had an enormous gold earring and wore a large, bushy beard that looked extremely grimy. "What did you think you were doing, snooping around?" the bearded pirate grunted. His voice was very rough and scratchy. I was too stunned to speak. "If you don't answer, I'll drop you into the sea!" Skyscraper exclaimed. My eyes searched this way and that, looking for a way out. "I, um, heard a noise from out back and thought I'd investigate," I squeaked.

I was getting really desperate. With time ticking away, I had searched and searched for an escape route. There was only one possible way out, but the chances of it happening were low. I had barely listened, but the pirates had managed to have a whole conversation. I only caught stuff like "we've got to hide the book" and "we should take the kid with us." No, I thought, I would not let that happen. Also, what was this mysterious book they were talking about? Well, I was about to find out. Skyscraper took out a large shovel and started digging uncontrollably. It had already been five minutes when he stopped, staring proudly at his work. "Now give me the book and chest," Beardy yelled. As requested, Bulky went over to their pile of stuff and retrieved a little book and a chest. The

book had a leather cover that looked old and worn. Out of the corner of my eye, I was surprised to see that my grandfather's name was etched on the cover.

What I was about to do sounded crazy in my head. The pirates had taken a long time to figure out how to lock the chest and in that time I had come up with a plan. It was pretty obvious that I had to get that book. Now, I had to execute. Waiting for the right time was painful, but it finally came. At full speed, I ran into Skyscraper, going straight through him as planned. I grabbed the chest and bolted. I had to go fast so that Bulky wouldn't hit me with his bat. I turned around, fear clutching my heart. The pirates were chasing me, as expected, but it seemed like they were burning up. "Sunlight!" screeched Beardy. Visible pain was on their faces as they fell to the ground, a vile smell of smoke filling the air.

It was the last day of cleaning and I helped mum the whole day, while also spending some time walking and playing board-games. My phone was left buried underneath my grandfather's book I had found as I went on walks with Mum. Since I could not fall asleep last night, I decided I would give the old book a go. It turned out to be a journal, containing all the inspiring adventures my grandfather had gone on. Reading it made me feel sad about the lack of time I had spent with mum and it really inspired me to get off my phone. To be honest, the book really opened up a new horizon for my life.