



Castaway Island



Susan Kay Martin



Castaway Island

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Chapter 1

The Life Boat

Scott was the first to see it. He ran to it and examined the little boat thoroughly. It was blue, with black letters that read “U.S.S. Independence.”

And it was empty!

His mind went quickly into action as he pulled it ashore—just far enough to keep the bow over the water-line. After all, it was just a bit heavy, even for a strong twelve-year-old boy. “A life-boat!” he thought with growing excitement, “There musta been a wreck!” He tied the boat up the best he could and ran back to his small house just above the tide line.

“Krina, Lisa, come and see what I found!” he shouted, running through the door.

“What, Scott?” Krina asked. She put down the dishtowel and ran into the living room.

“Is it big or small?” Three-and-a-half-year-old Lisa asked as she ran.

“Big!” was the instant reply.

“What?” They both yelled.

“A boat. A lifeboat from a wreck!” Scott shouted with joy.



"Gosh," Krina said. Then..."Mommy, can we go to the beach?"

"Of course, dear. But be back before lunch. Daddy wants lunch early."

"Okay."

"And watch Lisa good."

"Don't worry, I will!" Krina said. She took her sister by the hand and led her down with Scott toward the beach. They surveyed the lifeboat and decided that it had surely come from a wreck, but it was in perfect condition — well, *almost* perfect condition.

"A beautiful boat, Scott," Lisa commented. "Is it ours?"

"Sure is," Scott said in confidence, "How 'bout a ride?"

"Oh Scott, can we?" Krina asked hopefully.

"Well, I'm not the best rower in the world. But maybe after lunch."

"Say, lets have lunch here," Krina suggested.

"Sure, a picnic!" Lisa clapped her hands.

"Well, we can at least ask, but first let's clean up the boat and get it ready for our ride." The children grabbed a broom and swept and cleaned it.

"Gosh, what a lot of stuff," Krina said as she pushed under the seat: a tarpaulin, blankets, a rope, two lanterns, and three cans of oil.

"Sure," Scott said with a superior air, "Lifeboats always come equipped with junk like that."

"Well, we better leave it for now." The twelve o' clock bell from the town tower was sounding. "We'd better get home," Krina reminded her brother. The three children trooped over the sand and up to the house.

"Mommy, can we have a picnic?" Lisa yelled as she rushed into the house.

"Well, I suppose so, but you better be home before three. We're going shopping, remember?"



“Okay, we’ll remember,” Eleven-year-old Krina assured her. She grabbed her sandwich and milk, and raced out of the house. She was quickly followed by Lisa and Scott.

When they reached the boat, they all scrambled into it, and Scott shoved off with the oars. It was a breezy day, and Scott did not have to row very hard.

“This was a great idea, I must admit,” Scott said, and drank the rest of his milk.

Suddenly, a gust of wind caught Lisa’s paper plate and took it far over the water. As she leapt to catch it, Lisa gave a scream and fell over the side of the boat. Scott grabbed at her and got her hair. With another hand, he yanked her arm pulled her over the side.

“Ouch! You hurted my hair,” Lisa complained.

“Well, did you want me to leave to there?” Scott asked. Lisa fell silent. Scott began to row. He splashed his sisters as many times as he got his oar in the water.

“We better get back now, Scott. The sky is sure getting dark,” Krina observed. There were white caps on the water, and it was beginning to rain. “Scott, its 2:30.” Krina said, looking at her watch.

“I dropped the stupid oar. Give me a change to find it.”

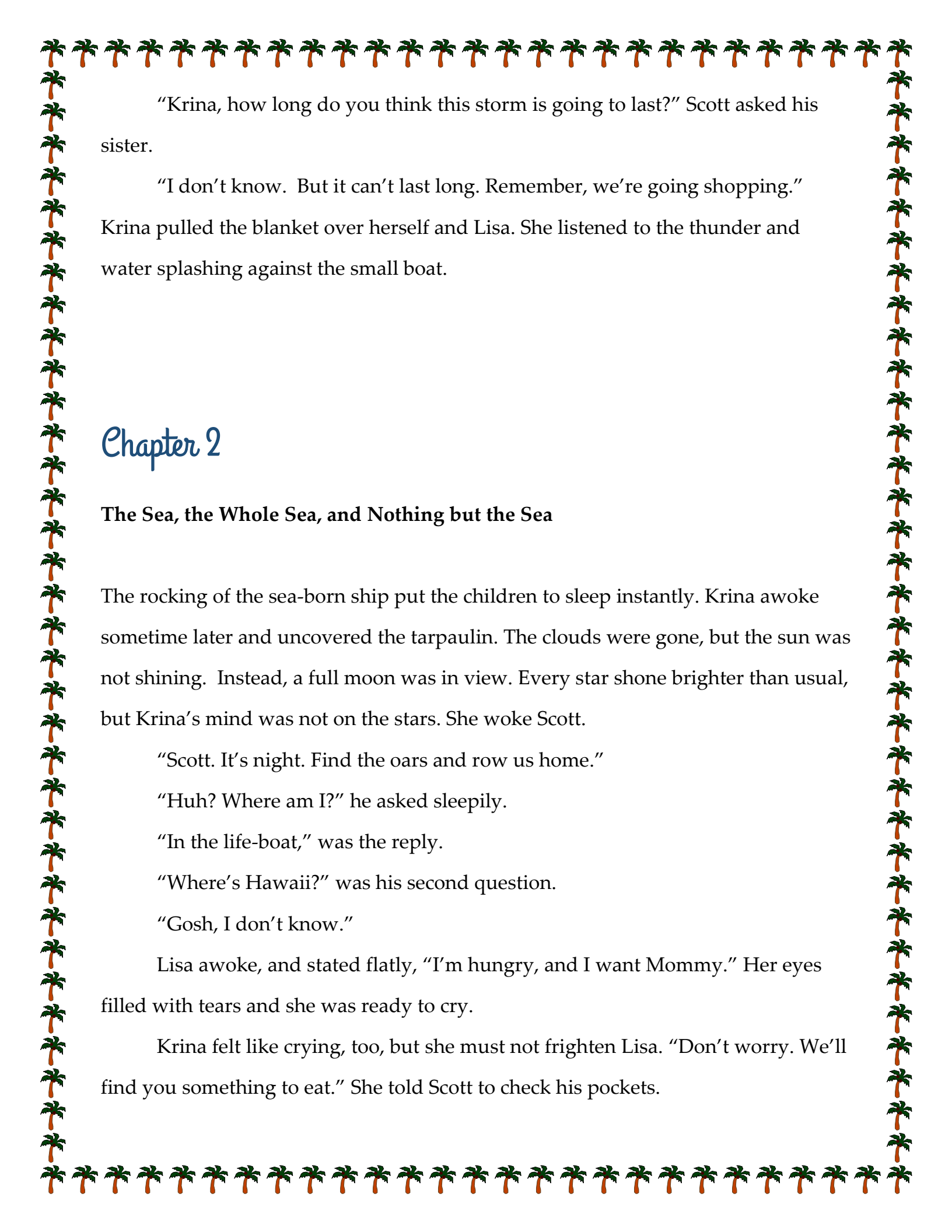
“Hurry, Scotty, it’s cold,” Lisa said.

“It must’ve dropped somewhere on the bottom of the boat. Help me find it.”

Lisa started to yell. “I wanna go home!” She was soaked and crying.

Krina pulled a blanket around her sister. “Scott, why don’t we wait untill it stops raining, then maybe we can find the oar easier.”

This sounded like a fair idea, so Scott pulled the tarpaulin over the boat and settled down beside his sisters.



“Krina, how long do you think this storm is going to last?” Scott asked his sister.

“I don’t know. But it can’t last long. Remember, we’re going shopping.” Krina pulled the blanket over herself and Lisa. She listened to the thunder and water splashing against the small boat.

Chapter 2

The Sea, the Whole Sea, and Nothing but the Sea

The rocking of the sea-born ship put the children to sleep instantly. Krina awoke sometime later and uncovered the tarpaulin. The clouds were gone, but the sun was not shining. Instead, a full moon was in view. Every star shone brighter than usual, but Krina’s mind was not on the stars. She woke Scott.

“Scott. It’s night. Find the oars and row us home.”

“Huh? Where am I?” he asked sleepily.


“In the life-boat,” was the reply.

“Where’s Hawaii?” was his second question.

“Gosh, I don’t know.”

Lisa awoke, and stated flatly, “I’m hungry, and I want Mommy.” Her eyes filled with tears and she was ready to cry.

Krina felt like crying, too, but she must not frighten Lisa. “Don’t worry. We’ll find you something to eat.” She told Scott to check his pockets.



Scott pulled out two marbles, a piece of crumpled paper, two pencils, a piece of chalk, a matchbook, and a nickel. Krina was more orderly and placed on the seat: three pennies, a chocolate bar (which Lisa promptly stuffed in her mouth), a portable calendar for last year, and a little New Testament.

"I'm still hungry," Lisa repeated.

"Go back to sleep. Tomorrow we'll find something for you to eat." Krina covered Lisa back up, and she fell asleep.

"Are we very far from home, Scott?" Krina asked.

"I don't know. We could have been swept out to open sea. But listen...my teacher says there are millions of little islands around here."

"But," Krina began, tears streaming down her face, "I don't want any of island. I want to go home."

"Hey Krina, don't cry. You'll scare Lisa. Then she'll cry, and then I won't know what to do! Promise me not to cry when Lisa's around, okay?"


Krina nodded and wiped her eyes.

"Let's look for something to eat," Scott said. "It seems strange that a lifeboat would not have any food aboard."

Krina gladly began the search. Anything to keep her mind off Hawaii. They searched under the seats and blankets.

Scott was just about to give up, when he knocked against something hollow. "Golly, Krin, it's hollow!" He struggled with the panel, and suddenly it snapped open. Scott looked hopefully inside. "It's empty, sister. Somebody must've taken advantage of a little extra food back on the ship where this boat came from."

Krina was ready to cry again, but instead she whispered, "Scott, whatever are we going to do?"



“Nothing, I guess,” he mumbled and thrust his hand way toward the back of the storage area. He pulled out two small containers. “At least they left the water.”

* * *

The morning sun broke through and woke the children. Lisa woke first and looked around. She blinked for a few seconds because of the glare of the sun, and then poked Krina.

“Krina,” she said, “I’m hungry.”

“I know, Lisa. So am I. Would you like a drink of water?” Lisa nodded, and Krina let her sip from the jug. “That’s breakfast, I’m sorry to say. But just you wait. We’ll find food in a jiffy. Maybe on an island. Would you like to find a nice little island?”

“I wanna go home.”

“But Lisa! An island would have all sorts of nice bananas and other food you like.”

“Bananas?” Lisa asked. Her face brightened. She loved bananas.

Krina nodded. She was glad she had interested Lisa in something besides going home when she, herself, did not know how long they would be afloat. Scott and Krina exchanged glances, and as the morning sun grew hotter, Krina began to tell Lisa a fairy story.

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Chapter 3

“Land Ho!”

The afternoon sun made the children swelter in the heat. Lisa was sleeping, and the two other children were playing a game called “Let’s take a trip.” But soon they grew tired of it and just sat, staring at the sea. It was all around them. The waves lapping against their boat seemed to be laughing at them for getting lost.

“Well, it wasn’t *all* our fault,” Krina said out loud.

“What?” Scott asked.

“Oh, nothing. Just talking to myself.” Krina dropped her hand over the boat and let the cool water run through her fingers. Somehow, though, it did not seem to help. She was still sweating. Suddenly she sat up and said to Scott; “I have the best idea!”

“What?”

“Let’s go swimming in the sea.”

“Right here?” Scott gasped.

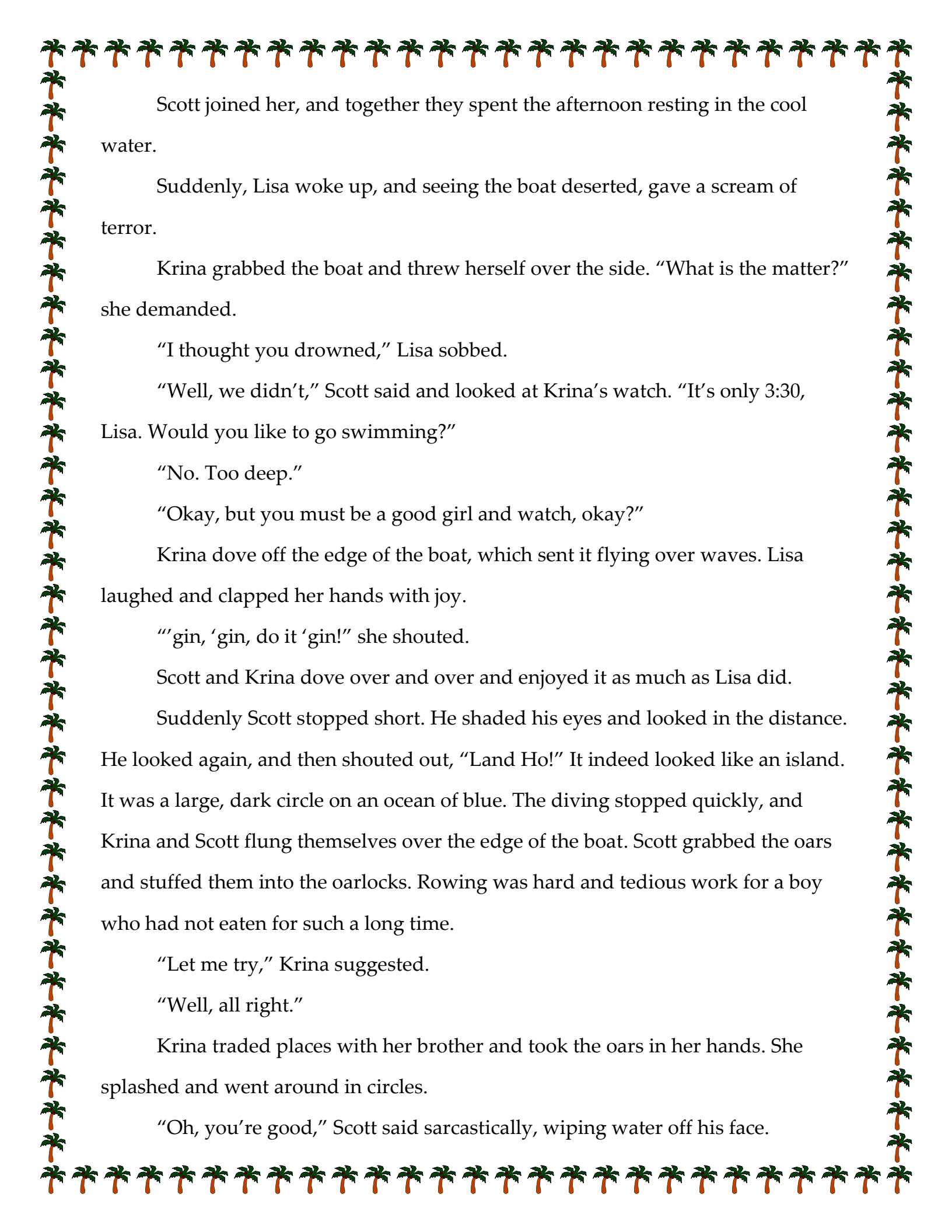
“Sure.”

“Well, of all the nutty ideas . . .”

“And what’s so nutty about it?” Krina asked. “Are there sharks?”

“I don’t know. Probably not. Only *dumb* fish come this far out.”

“So we’re dumb fish, right?” Krina was angry, and hungry. “I’m going swimming. Come if you feel like it.” She jumped right in, and cool liquid surrounded her, making her feel good all over. She grabbed the edge of the small boat and begged her brother to come in. “It’s wonderful,” she said.



Scott joined her, and together they spent the afternoon resting in the cool water.

Suddenly, Lisa woke up, and seeing the boat deserted, gave a scream of terror.

Krina grabbed the boat and threw herself over the side. "What is the matter?" she demanded.

"I thought you drowned," Lisa sobbed.

"Well, we didn't," Scott said and looked at Krina's watch. "It's only 3:30, Lisa. Would you like to go swimming?"

"No. Too deep."

"Okay, but you must be a good girl and watch, okay?"

Krina dove off the edge of the boat, which sent it flying over waves. Lisa laughed and clapped her hands with joy.

"'gin, 'gin, do it 'gin!" she shouted.

Scott and Krina dove over and over and enjoyed it as much as Lisa did.

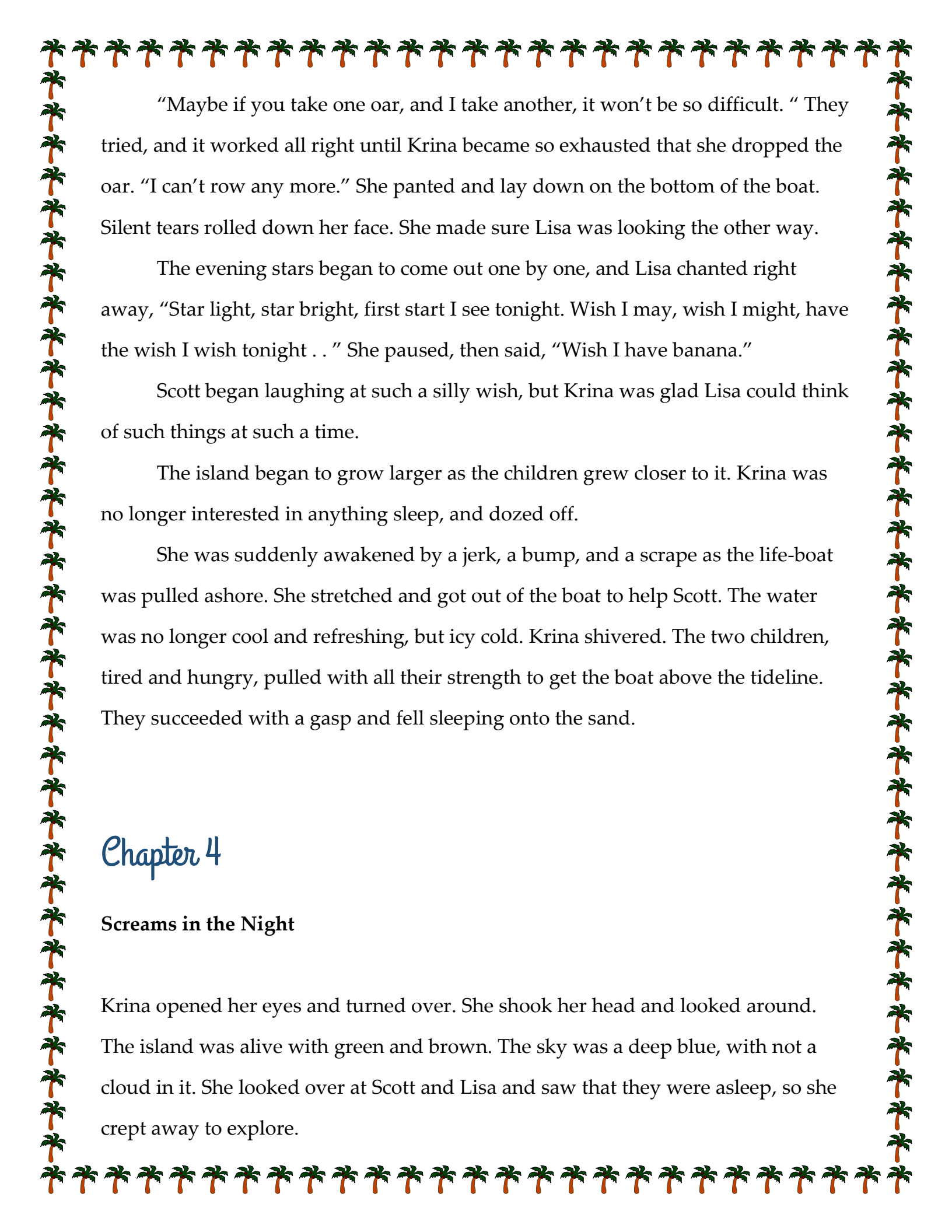
Suddenly Scott stopped short. He shaded his eyes and looked in the distance. He looked again, and then shouted out, "Land Ho!" It indeed looked like an island. It was a large, dark circle on an ocean of blue. The diving stopped quickly, and Krina and Scott flung themselves over the edge of the boat. Scott grabbed the oars and stuffed them into the oarlocks. Rowing was hard and tedious work for a boy who had not eaten for such a long time.

"Let me try," Krina suggested.

"Well, all right."

Krina traded places with her brother and took the oars in her hands. She splashed and went around in circles.

"Oh, you're good," Scott said sarcastically, wiping water off his face.



“Maybe if you take one oar, and I take another, it won’t be so difficult. “ They tried, and it worked all right until Krina became so exhausted that she dropped the oar. “I can’t row any more.” She panted and lay down on the bottom of the boat. Silent tears rolled down her face. She made sure Lisa was looking the other way.

The evening stars began to come out one by one, and Lisa chanted right away, “Star light, star bright, first start I see tonight. Wish I may, wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight . . .” She paused, then said, “Wish I have banana.”

Scott began laughing at such a silly wish, but Krina was glad Lisa could think of such things at such a time.


The island began to grow larger as the children grew closer to it. Krina was no longer interested in anything sleep, and dozed off.

She was suddenly awakened by a jerk, a bump, and a scrape as the life-boat was pulled ashore. She stretched and got out of the boat to help Scott. The water was no longer cool and refreshing, but icy cold. Krina shivered. The two children, tired and hungry, pulled with all their strength to get the boat above the tideline. They succeeded with a gasp and fell sleeping onto the sand.

Chapter 4

Screams in the Night

Krina opened her eyes and turned over. She shook her head and looked around. The island was alive with green and brown. The sky was a deep blue, with not a cloud in it. She looked over at Scott and Lisa and saw that they were asleep, so she crept away to explore.



Lisa rubbed her eyes and looked at Scott. "Scotty, Scotty, we here!" She jumped up and down and threw sand into the water.

Krina returned from the jungle, her arms loaded with bananas. "See what I've found! Bananas. Loads of them."

"Oh, goody," Lisa said. Immediately the children fell upon them, and each ate three large, ripe bananas. They were delicious. Now that their stomachs were full, they could think about other matters.

"Hey," Krina thought out loud, "Shouldn't we put up a flag, and claim this place or something?"

"Oh yes, but what shall we use?" The children looked around the boat for a piece of cloth or something of that sort, but to no avail.

Suddenly, Lisa spied a piece of rag under the seat. "It dirty," she said.

"But it'll do," Krina finished, and took the rag from her sister. She wiped it off the best she could, then told Scott to get a stick. He set out quickly, and returned with just the thing. The girls, in the meantime, had dug a suitable hole, and when the flag was put together, they stuck it into the hole.

"I claim this island . . ." Scott began. Then, "Hey, what's the name of the island?"

"I don't know. Make one up. What do you think other castaways like us did?"


"That's it!" Scott shouted.

"What's it?"

"I claim this island to be called 'Castaway Island,' and we are the claimers, Scott, Krina, and Lisa Johnsen."

"Someday we'll make a better flag, okay?" Krina asked.

"Okay."



“Well, what do we do now?” Krina asked. She picked up a handful of sand and watched the wind blow it away.

“Well, we’ll need fresh water ‘cause the jug is almost empty.” Scott peered into the water jug, but could not see a thing. He continued, “We could build our home by a stream, you know.”

“Yes, that would be good,” Krina agreed, “Let’s look for a stream.” She stood up and shook the sand off her pants.

The day grew longer and it was lunchtime when Krina finally fell down from exhaustion. Scott was carrying Lisa piggyback. He set her down, breathing hard. Suddenly Krina lifted her head. “Listen Scott. I think I hear water running.”

Scott cocked his head in the direction Krina was listening. “Yes, it sounds like a creek,” he agreed. Scott walked a few paces and yelled, “It is a creek, and the water’s fresh!”

Krina scrambled to her feet and dragged Lisa with her, as she made her way to the creek. “Oh, it’s a fresh, nice creek.”

They sat there for a while, just enjoying the stillness of the day and the coolness of the water.

“Let’s go upstream and find a clearing for a house,” Krina suggested.

“Okay,” Scott agreed, and stood up. He marched into the jungle, following the creek. The stream followed the trees and brush. Suddenly, Scott stopped. He stood in a clear, grassy area, sheltered by a large, branched jungle tree. A shimmering little waterfall completed the scene, making it look like Paradise to three children.

“Oh, pretty!” Lisa lay down and rolled through the long grass. Krina investigated the waterfall, while Scott climbed the tree.



“What a neat place to build a tree house,” he said. “It forks into a lot of branches, and is spaced just right.”

“It would be nice. But we’d have to have a temporary house, so we could have shelter while we made the tree house.”

“Yeah, I guess so. Let’s go back to the boat and get the tarpaulin and stuff after lunch.”

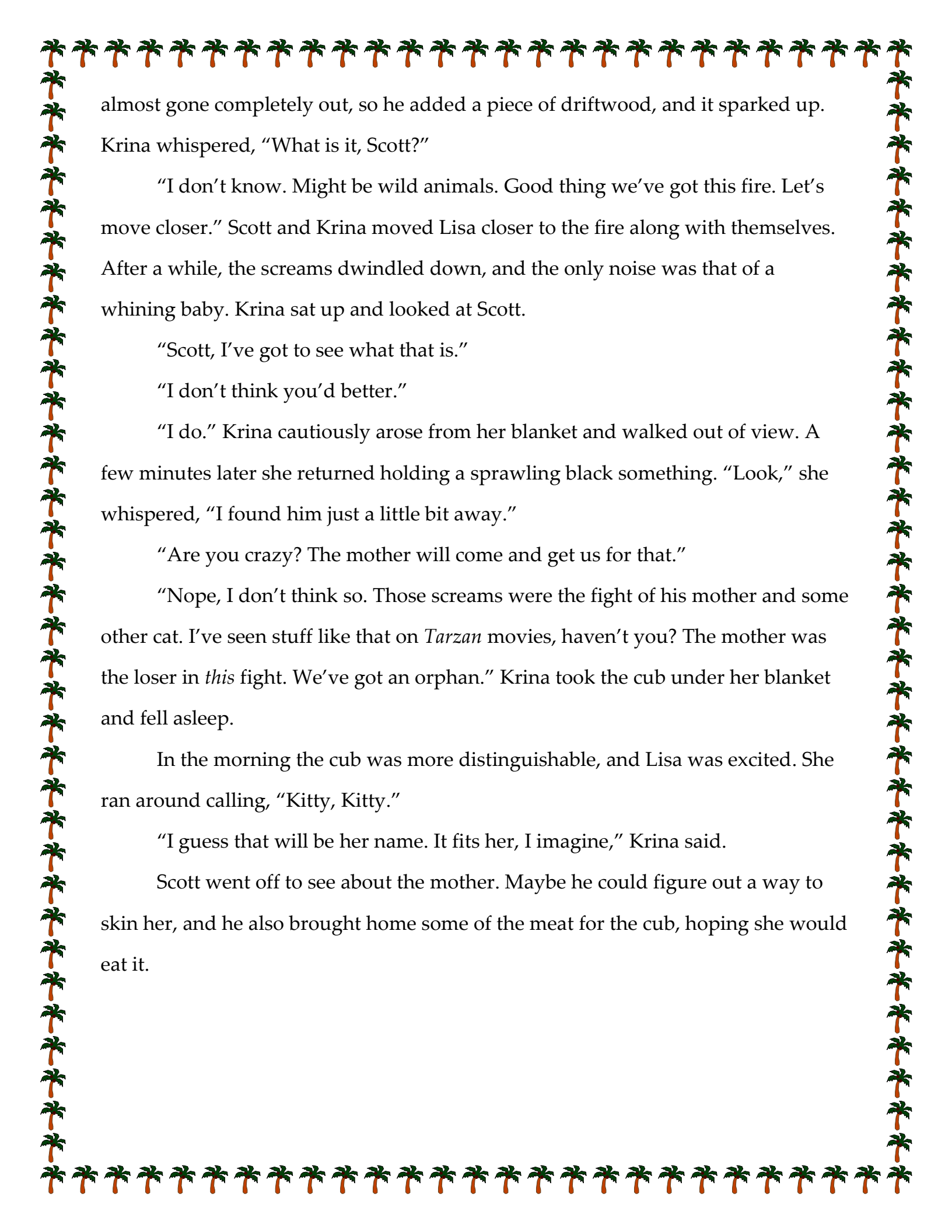
The boat was heavy as the children pushed it through the water. Lisa ran along, half skipping, half-running, throwing rocks into the aqua-colored waves as they lapped peacefully at the shore. The water was too shallow to row in, and Krina and Scott did not want to take the chance of rowing farther away from shore, as the tide was going out.

The children finally made it to the creek in the early evening. They struggled and pushed to drag the boat up the shallow stream. It struck bottom and refused to move any farther.

“I guess this is the end of the line.” Scott decided, and tied the boat to a tree. They unloaded all the necessities to build a temporary tent, and Scott made a clearing with a circle of rocks. He took a match from the matchbook and lit some brush. He then added some driftwood to the growing fire.

Krina gave her brother and sister each a banana and some pineapple. Water was plentiful, and they were thankful to have found the pineapple. The shadows of the jungle grew longer, and the fire soon became the only source of light. Scott added another piece of driftwood before closing his eyes in sleep.

It seemed like only a few minutes later when Scott was awakened by a scream. He looked in Lisa’s direction, but she was sound asleep. The fire had



almost gone completely out, so he added a piece of driftwood, and it sparked up.

Krina whispered, "What is it, Scott?"

"I don't know. Might be wild animals. Good thing we've got this fire. Let's move closer." Scott and Krina moved Lisa closer to the fire along with themselves. After a while, the screams dwindled down, and the only noise was that of a whining baby. Krina sat up and looked at Scott.

"Scott, I've got to see what that is."

"I don't think you'd better."

"I do." Krina cautiously arose from her blanket and walked out of view. A few minutes later she returned holding a sprawling black something. "Look," she whispered, "I found him just a little bit away."

"Are you crazy? The mother will come and get us for that."

"Nope, I don't think so. Those screams were the fight of his mother and some other cat. I've seen stuff like that on *Tarzan* movies, haven't you? The mother was the loser in *this* fight. We've got an orphan." Krina took the cub under her blanket and fell asleep.

In the morning the cub was more distinguishable, and Lisa was excited. She ran around calling, "Kitty, Kitty."

"I guess that will be her name. It fits her, I imagine," Krina said.

Scott went off to see about the mother. Maybe he could figure out a way to skin her, and he also brought home some of the meat for the cub, hoping she would eat it.

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Chapter 5

Assignment: Find Lisa!

The days and weeks went by. Lisa had her fourth birthday. Kitty was growing in size, and it had only been three weeks since he had been found.

“Hey down there! Hand me up another bamboo trunk,” Scott yelled.

Krina struggled to get the trunk tied to the rope, and motioned that it was ready. “One bamboo tree coming up, first class!” she yelled back, and waved it off. She continued to pull branches off of the trunks of small bamboo trees, and lined them up for Scott.

“I sure don’t know how Tarzan did this. This is hard. Another bamboo, sis.”

Krina started to tie them on, when suddenly she let go. “Lisa, don’t pull Kitty’s tail! He will scratch you.”

“Krina, the boards,” Scott reminded his sister.

“Oh yes.” Krina finished tying them and turned around. She heard a scream and saw Kitty leap gracefully over the stream.

“So, he scratched you, eh? Good, serves you tight. Now leave him alone.” Lisa went crying into the tarpaulin tent.

She returned later eating a banana and walked over to the waterfall.

“Don’t go far,” Scott shouted to her as he grabbed another piece of vine.

“Find Kitty,” she said in a soft voice. She walked through the stream and into the jungle. There was a trail that Scott had broadened, but Lisa cut her own way towards the middle of Castaway Island.



“Lunch time!” Krina banged the lantern that sent monkeys chattering and birds flying.

Scott jumped from the lowest branch and ran to the fire. “It smells good. What is it?”

“That fish that took you two hour to catch yesterday, remember?”

“Yep...say, where’s Lisa?”

“I don’t know. That’s why I’m banging this lantern. She always comes running.”

“Do you suppose she’s wandered off?” Scott began to worry.

“Don’t be ridiculous. She’s just hiding again. Eat your lunch.”

The dishes were finished, and lunch done. Scott was ready to finish tying a vine when Krina announced, “We’d better look for Lisa. She’s never hidden this long before.”

Scott broke his way through the jungle with Krina close behind. “I don’t know where she could have gone,” he said. “The rain we had last night made the trails muddy, but there aren’t any footprints.”

“Maybe she took another trail.”

“Maybe she didn’t even take a trail. Look!” Indeed, the bushes and undergrowth were broken. “Animals are careful not to make the bushes break. That could only mean that . . .” A nipping at his leg cut off Scott. He froze in fear until Krina shouted,

“Oh, Kitty, where’s Lisa?”

As if he understood every word, Kitty bounded playfully into the underbrush, followed quickly by Scott and Krina. They walked on and on for half an hour until they came to a stone trail, overrun by jungle growth. The children hardly noticed it as they jumped over the vines. Suddenly Krina stopped.



“Listen.”

“Help! Help! Krina, Scott!” It was Lisa. She broke into loud sobs.

Krina and Scott ran a few short paces, and came to a frightening stop. Right in front of them was a deep pit. The crying seemed to come from there.

“Lisa, are you down there?” Scott asked.

“Yes, Scotty, get me out!” she screeched.

Scott reached his hands as far as he dared, but he couldn’t reach his sister.

“Krina, get the rope from the lifeboat.”

With Kitty at her heels, Krina raced through the jungle at top speed, only resting long enough to catch her breath. She reached the clearing in twenty minutes and snatched the rope and a banana for her trip back. She was tired, so it took her longer to get back to the pit.

Meanwhile, Scott had jumped down into the pit with Lisa.

“Golly, what makes it so light down here?” He asked. “Probably something in the rocks,” he answered himself. He heard a voice and yelled, “Done here, Krina! Throw the rope down.”

Krina tied the rope securely to a palm tree, and threw the rope over the edge. Then she jumped down.

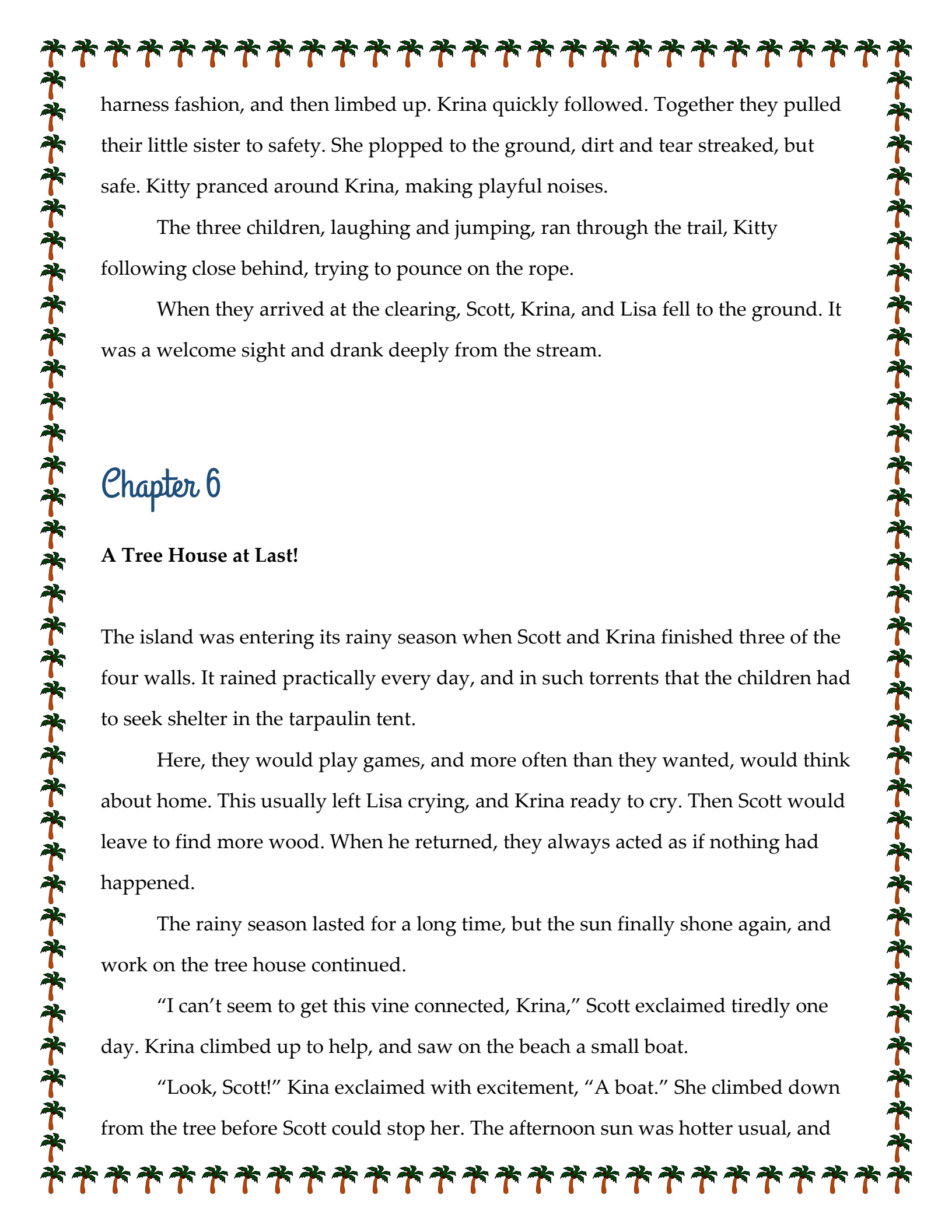
She gasped. “What is this?”

It was a cavern with a pale, glowing light coming from the walls. On the ground were jewels and precious stones, silver bracelets and gold chains. A scent of incense was present. “Oh, this is beautiful.” Krina admired the cavern.

“How did it get here?”

“I don’t know. There’s some writing. That might tell.”

Scott laughed. “Oh, sure. I’m an expert on island native languages.” He tugged at the rope and said, “Let’s get out of here.” He tied the rope around Lisa in



harness fashion, and then limbed up. Krina quickly followed. Together they pulled their little sister to safety. She plopped to the ground, dirt and tear streaked, but safe. Kitty pranced around Krina, making playful noises.

The three children, laughing and jumping, ran through the trail, Kitty following close behind, trying to pounce on the rope.

When they arrived at the clearing, Scott, Krina, and Lisa fell to the ground. It was a welcome sight and drank deeply from the stream.

Chapter 6

A Tree House at Last!


The island was entering its rainy season when Scott and Krina finished three of the four walls. It rained practically every day, and in such torrents that the children had to seek shelter in the tarpaulin tent.

Here, they would play games, and more often than they wanted, would think about home. This usually left Lisa crying, and Krina ready to cry. Then Scott would leave to find more wood. When he returned, they always acted as if nothing had happened.

The rainy season lasted for a long time, but the sun finally shone again, and work on the tree house continued.

"I can't seem to get this vine connected, Krina," Scott exclaimed tiredly one day. Krina climbed up to help, and saw on the beach a small boat.

"Look, Scott!" Kina exclaimed with excitement, "A boat." She climbed down from the tree before Scott could stop her. The afternoon sun was hotter usual, and



Krina stooped beside the boat. "Scott! There's a boy in here. Come quick, and bring the water jug." She tugged at the boy and lifted him out of the boat. He tumbled onto the sand.

Scott brought the water jug and splashed it on the stranger's head.

"Scott!" Krina was shocked at his behavior.

The boy shook his head and looked up. Instantly, he was on his feet, a knife in his hand.

"Yikes!" Scott backed up a little.

"We're friends," Krina began, shaking a bit.

"Maybe he isn't the friendly type," Scott whispered.

"Be quiet," his sister commanded. The boy said something un-English and advanced toward them, replacing his knife at this side.

"Tijorn," he announced and jabbed himself with his brown thumb.

"Krina," Krina said and pointed to herself. He repeated it and smiled. Tijorn pointed to Scott and asked something again in a strange Language.

"I'm Scott."

Suddenly Lisa and Kitty emerged from the foliage. The boy looked startled and drew his knife.

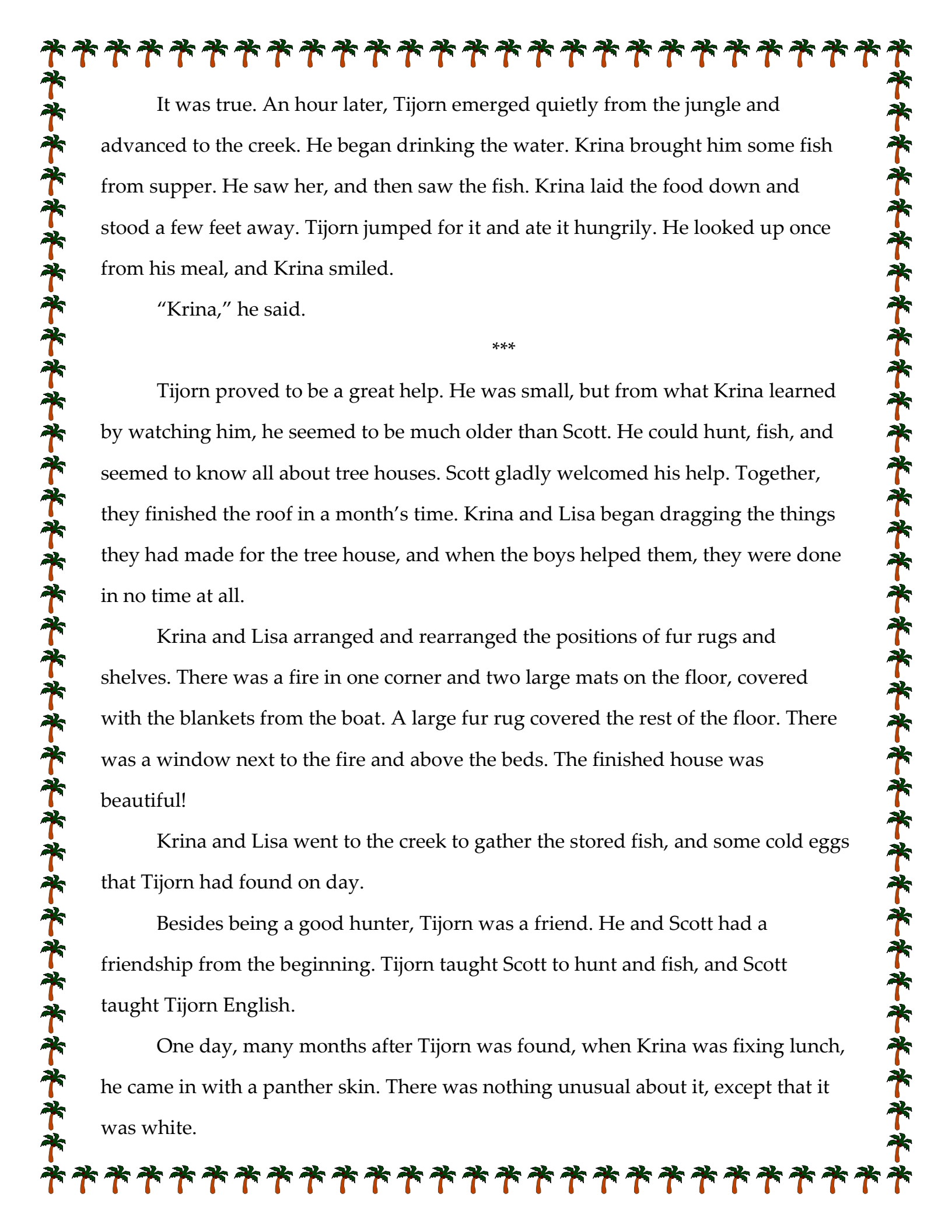
"No!" Krina ran to Kitty and hugged her.

"You sure like to play with knives. Welcome to our island," Scott said, approaching him.

But Tijorn, sensing something new and unfamiliar, rushed off into the jungle.

"Now we've don't it." Krina sighed and pushed Kitty back towards the clearing.

"Wait and see," Scott said. "He'll come back."



It was true. An hour later, Tijorn emerged quietly from the jungle and advanced to the creek. He began drinking the water. Krina brought him some fish from supper. He saw her, and then saw the fish. Krina laid the food down and stood a few feet away. Tijorn jumped for it and ate it hungrily. He looked up once from his meal, and Krina smiled.

“Krina,” he said.


Tijorn proved to be a great help. He was small, but from what Krina learned by watching him, he seemed to be much older than Scott. He could hunt, fish, and seemed to know all about tree houses. Scott gladly welcomed his help. Together, they finished the roof in a month’s time. Krina and Lisa began dragging the things they had made for the tree house, and when the boys helped them, they were done in no time at all.

Krina and Lisa arranged and rearranged the positions of fur rugs and shelves. There was a fire in one corner and two large mats on the floor, covered with the blankets from the boat. A large fur rug covered the rest of the floor. There was a window next to the fire and above the beds. The finished house was beautiful!

Krina and Lisa went to the creek to gather the stored fish, and some cold eggs that Tijorn had found on day.

Besides being a good hunter, Tijorn was a friend. He and Scott had a friendship from the beginning. Tijorn taught Scott to hunt and fish, and Scott taught Tijorn English.

One day, many months after Tijorn was found, when Krina was fixing lunch, he came in with a panther skin. There was nothing unusual about it, except that it was white.



“Oh, how pretty!” Krina exclaimed.

“Pretty, yes.” Tijorn understood. Tijorn’s English vocabulary continued to grow every day.

They decided that the white skin was going to be a dress for Lisa’s fifth birthday. She needed new clothes badly, for her old ones were too small for her. Lisa was running wild all over Castaway Island. She knew her way as well as any of them, and she was always ready to prove it with a mad game of chase.

One day, she returned home with a goat. Tijorn gave a little cry and said something to the goat, and the goat bleated.

“Cala, Cala, this Cala, this mine,” He said in broken English. “Jump from boat, run off,” he explained to the amazed children. Then he turned back to the goat. Where Ralie?”

“Ralie?” Lisa asked.

“Ralie . . . Cala’s brother.”

A few days later, Cala led Ralie into the clearing of green grass. They both stayed with the children.

Lisa’s birthday was a real surprise. There was meat from a wild boar, with fresh pineapple and of course, bananas. For a special treat, there was sugar cane. Lisa danced around and around in her new white skin. It was an excellent piece of work. Even Scott admired it, and Lisa wore it to bed.

That night, Krina whispered into her sister’s ear, “Remember, you tell Tijorn ‘thank-you’, ‘cause he got the skin in the first place.”

Lisa nodded back and turned over with a sigh.



Chapter 7

Lisa Goes to School

Lisa pulled at Krina's shirt. "Play with me," she urged.

Krina ignored her as she pulled up a bucket of water.

"*Sinie kan seh!*" she yelled in Tijorn's language.

"No, not know. But if you make the beds, I'll play after breakfast."

"Oh, *lyat!*" she shouted with joy, and hurried to make the beds.

Krina sighed. It had been seven months since Lisa's fifth birthday, and Lisa was talking more and more in Tijorn's language. There was really no harm, except that she might decide not to speak English again.

"Krina, *sinie kan seh*, now?"

"I said after breakfast," Krina replied. "Lisa, you must stop mixing your English with Tijorn's language."

"*Sinie kan seh!*" the little girl persisted.

"Lisa Ann, you aren't even listening to me," Krina said. "*Meno, nakua.*"

Lisa obeyed and sat down. Her food was set before her, and Krina called the boys, who came in with a pile of wood.

"*Buenos dias, señorita,*" Scott said, practicing his grade school Spanish. He bowed politely. "How are you this fine morning?"

"Oh, fine," she said, "But I'd be better if everyone kept to English." And she sat down.

"Lisa, how would you like to go to school?" Scott asked one day during mid-afternoon.



“School?” Lisa and Krina looked at Scott.

“Sure, you can teach her, Krina.”

“Thanks,” came Krina’s sarcastic reply.

Lisa was all for the idea. She jumped up and down, reciting her “a,b,c’s” with joy.

“You remembered them, from two years ago,” Krina asked. “How?”

“I memor . . .”

“Memorized,” Scott helped.

“Oh, yes. That’s right. I just said them every night after my prayers.”

It was settled. Lisa would learn to read, starting tomorrow.

Lisa was up at the crack of dawn the next day, grabbing the dried bark Scott had prepared, and the charcoal Krina had salvaged from the fire.

“I wanna learn to read, and write, and do ‘rithmetic.”

“Go to bed, Lisa,” Krina commanded, “*Chone!*”

“Ah, please?”

“Later. I can hardly see around here.”

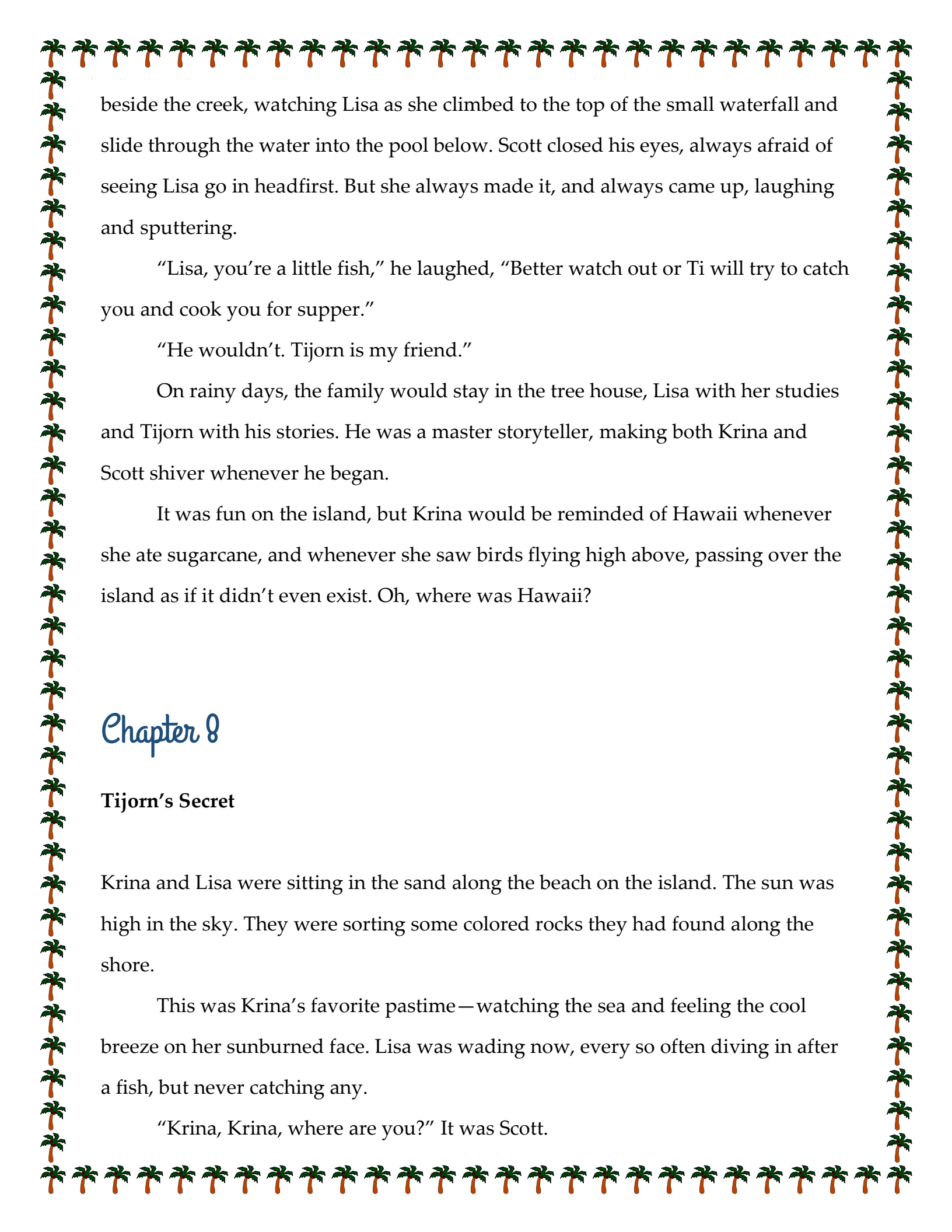
“Golly, gee whiz,” she muttered, sliding beneath the covers.

The day dawned bright and beautiful. Krina led Lisa to the creek to sit in the grass next to Kitty. Scott and Tijorn went hunting. Krina printed words in bold letters, and Lisa was so excited. She was going to learn to read!

Lisa’s lesson went on until noon, when the boys returned with a much-earned wild boar. Scott was limping badly, and Tijorn was supporting him.

“Scott! What in the world happened?” Krina screamed.

“Well,” Scott managed a smile, “The stupid pig decided to try me out for lunch. I ran, but he caught up with me.” Scott spent the rest of the afternoon resting



beside the creek, watching Lisa as she climbed to the top of the small waterfall and slide through the water into the pool below. Scott closed his eyes, always afraid of seeing Lisa go in headfirst. But she always made it, and always came up, laughing and sputtering.

“Lisa, you’re a little fish,” he laughed, “Better watch out or Ti will try to catch you and cook you for supper.”

“He wouldn’t. Tijorn is my friend.”

On rainy days, the family would stay in the tree house, Lisa with her studies and Tijorn with his stories. He was a master storyteller, making both Krina and Scott shiver whenever he began.

It was fun on the island, but Krina would be reminded of Hawaii whenever she ate sugarcane, and whenever she saw birds flying high above, passing over the island as if it didn’t even exist. Oh, where was Hawaii?

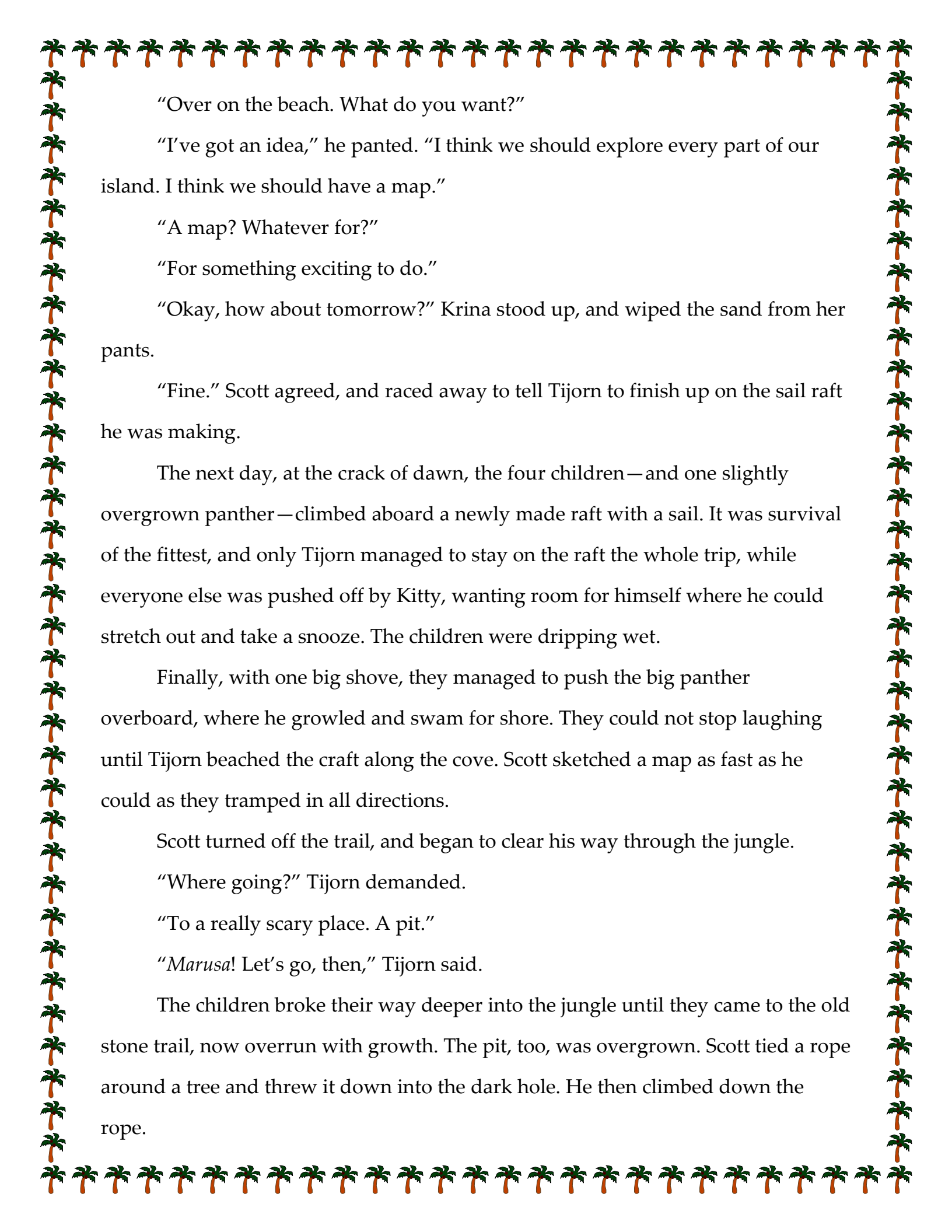
Chapter 8

Tijorn’s Secret

Krina and Lisa were sitting in the sand along the beach on the island. The sun was high in the sky. They were sorting some colored rocks they had found along the shore.

This was Krina’s favorite pastime—watching the sea and feeling the cool breeze on her sunburned face. Lisa was wading now, every so often diving in after a fish, but never catching any.

“Krina, Krina, where are you?” It was Scott.



“Over on the beach. What do you want?”

“I’ve got an idea,” he panted. “I think we should explore every part of our island. I think we should have a map.”

“A map? Whatever for?”

“For something exciting to do.”

“Okay, how about tomorrow?” Krina stood up, and wiped the sand from her pants.

“Fine.” Scott agreed, and raced away to tell Tijorn to finish up on the sail raft he was making.

The next day, at the crack of dawn, the four children—and one slightly overgrown panther—climbed aboard a newly made raft with a sail. It was survival of the fittest, and only Tijorn managed to stay on the raft the whole trip, while everyone else was pushed off by Kitty, wanting room for himself where he could stretch out and take a snooze. The children were dripping wet.

Finally, with one big shove, they managed to push the big panther overboard, where he growled and swam for shore. They could not stop laughing until Tijorn beached the craft along the cove. Scott sketched a map as fast as he could as they tramped in all directions.

Scott turned off the trail, and began to clear his way through the jungle.

“Where going?” Tijorn demanded.

“To a really scary place. A pit.”

“*Marusa!* Let’s go, then,” Tijorn said.

The children broke their way deeper into the jungle until they came to the old stone trail, now overrun with growth. The pit, too, was overgrown. Scott tied a rope around a tree and threw it down into the dark hole. He then climbed down the rope.



"C'mon down. It's kinda light," he yelled up.

Tijorn jumped down with Krina at his heels. Lisa hesitated a little, then cautiously slid down the rope.

"*Marusa!* How strang,." Tijorn said.

"I don't like it. *Sah turshay,*" Lisa whispered.

Scott laughed. "Oh, Lisa. It isn't bad. You're just mad 'cause you fell in it that time."

Krina ignored them both and walked quietly to a wall. She followed it and found that it went deeper and deeper under the ground. It was darker now, and Krina had to grope to see if the cave went any farther. There was some kind of light coming from the other end, but Krina did not know what it was. Suddenly, coming from up ahead, Krina saw two yellow eyes. She didn't wait to see more. Instead, she gave an ear-piercing scream and ran as fast as she could through the dark, back to where Lisa was crying, Scott was pale, and Tijorn's knife was ready.

"It's coming . . . yellow, huge eyes are after me!" Krina broke into hysterical sobs.

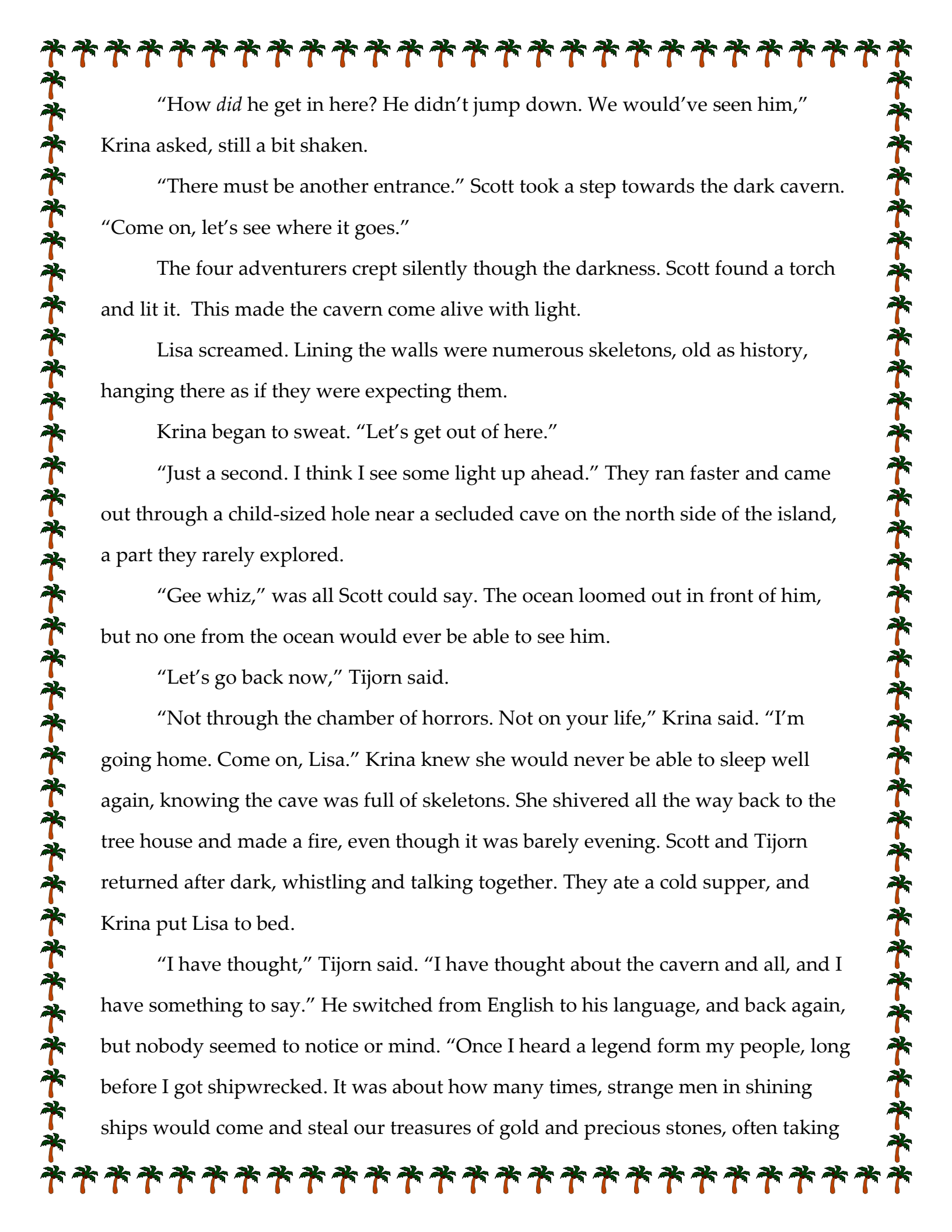
Scott pulled his knife, and the two girls stood close to the rope. They waited. Nothing happened. Scott sighed, and turned around to look at his sister. "Maybe it was your imagination."

"No, I saw it."

"Her scream scared it, maybe," Tijorn said.

"It's Kitty!" Lisa laughed. Indeed it was. Kitty walked slowly towards them, out of the shadows, and went over to Krina with a look as if to say, "Why did you scream at me like that? I only wanted to be stroked." His yellow eyes gleamed and Scott sighed again.

"Stupid cat. How did you get in here?"



“How *did* he get in here? He didn’t jump down. We would’ve seen him,” Krina asked, still a bit shaken.

“There must be another entrance.” Scott took a step towards the dark cavern. “Come on, let’s see where it goes.”

The four adventurers crept silently through the darkness. Scott found a torch and lit it. This made the cavern come alive with light.

Lisa screamed. Lining the walls were numerous skeletons, old as history, hanging there as if they were expecting them.

Krina began to sweat. “Let’s get out of here.”


“Just a second. I think I see some light up ahead.” They ran faster and came out through a child-sized hole near a secluded cave on the north side of the island, a part they rarely explored.

“Gee whiz,” was all Scott could say. The ocean loomed out in front of him, but no one from the ocean would ever be able to see him.

“Let’s go back now,” Tijorn said.

“Not through the chamber of horrors. Not on your life,” Krina said. “I’m going home. Come on, Lisa.” Krina knew she would never be able to sleep well again, knowing the cave was full of skeletons. She shivered all the way back to the tree house and made a fire, even though it was barely evening. Scott and Tijorn returned after dark, whistling and talking together. They ate a cold supper, and Krina put Lisa to bed.

“I have thought,” Tijorn said. “I have thought about the cavern and all, and I have something to say.” He switched from English to his language, and back again, but nobody seemed to notice or mind. “Once I heard a legend from my people, long before I got shipwrecked. It was about how many times, strange men in shining ships would come and steal our treasures of gold and precious stones, often taking



many of us along to be slaves. It was said that they traveled to another island, where they hid the treasures. They always waited for another ship to come and take the treasures away. Many of our tribesmen followed in pursuit, but they never returned. We thought some sea monster swallowed them . . .”

“There’s no such thing,” Scott said.

“Be quiet, Scott,” Krina commanded, “I want to hear the rest.” Even Lisa, who was supposed to be asleep, was sitting up, taking it all in.

“There really is no more. No others dared followed. It is only a legend.”

“Sounds to me like you’re describing our skeleton friends exactly, and that goes for all that loot too. I’d bet you it even has a curse on it.”


“Oh, Scott, that’s ridiculous,” Krina said, but she shivered, and stood up. “I think I’ve heard enough for one day. I’m going to bed. Krina crawled under the blankets next to a warm little Lisa, but somehow she could not get to sleep.

Chapter 9

Intruders

A crisp wind blew through the trees as Krina threw out a pan of wash water. “What a nice day to wash clothes. The wind is good,” she said as she grabbed a pile of clothes and swung down on a vine to the hot springs below. She threw the clothes into the water to soak, and sat in the grass, listening to birds.

She picked up Lisa’s good white skin and sighed. Lisa had been making mud pies the day before, and the white skin showed every bit of dirt. She finished the washing and hung it on the rope that stretched across two trees to dry.



Suddenly, a low, sharp whistle broke through the morning air. It was the danger signal. Krina relayed it to Tijorn, who was swimming in the reek, and together they met in the tree house.

“What’s wrong, Scott? Tijorn asked.

“I saw a boat over on the west side of the island,” he panted, and took a big gulp of water.

“Maybe we’re being rescued,” Krina said.

“Mom didn’t even know we had a boat, silly.” The children ran to where Scott had seen the boat. It had anchored offshore. A small dingy made its way to shore.

“The shining ships, maybe?” Tijorn asked.

“I’d say a cabin cruiser, myself,” Scott said, climbing the nearest tree. “I’m going to follow them.”

Krina, Tijorn, and Lisa quickly ran back home, where Tijorn sharpened his knife and took off to be with Scott.

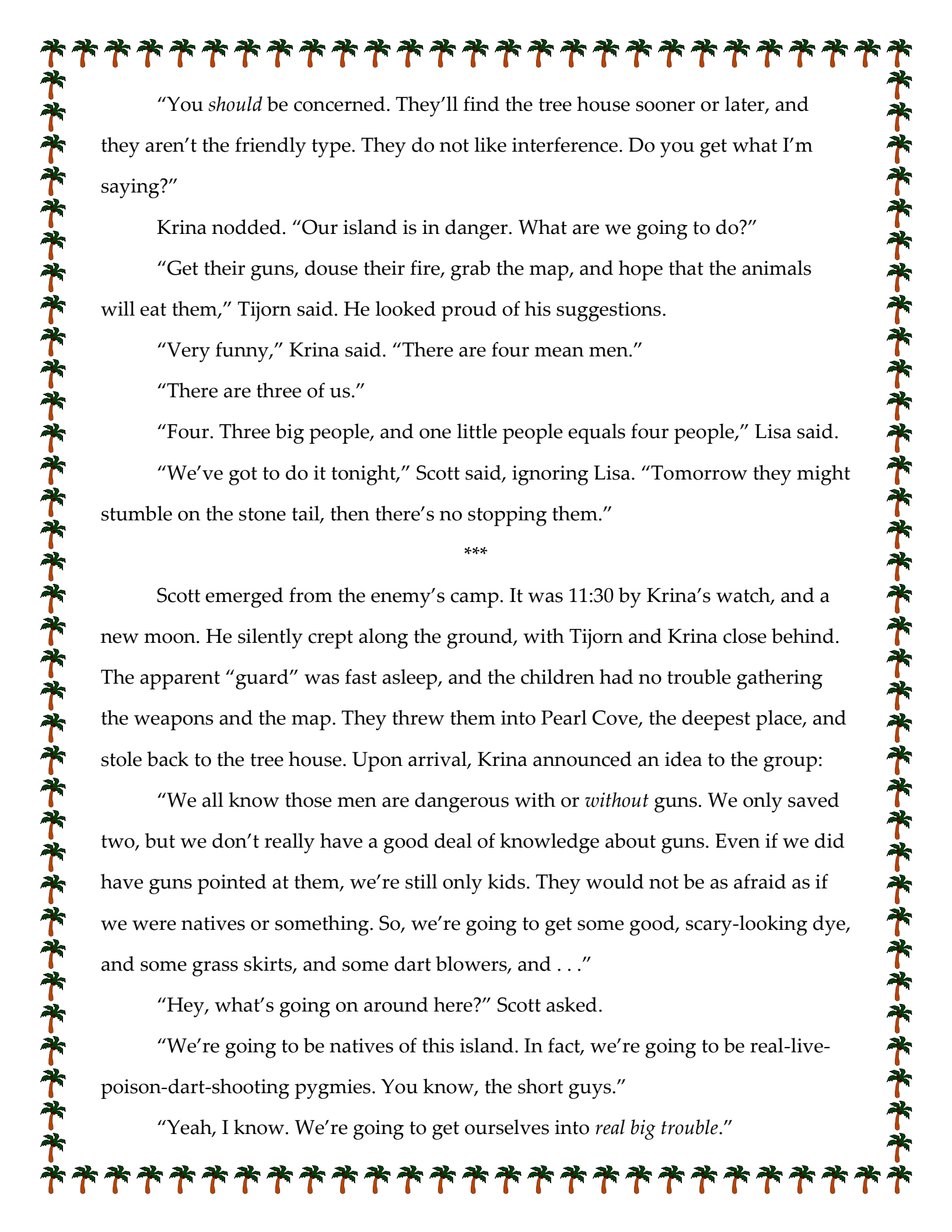
The boys returned sometime later. Scott sat down, exhausted. Krina gave them supper, and sat down with Lisa to listen to her read.

“They’ve got a map,” Scott said after he ate, “but they’re completely lost. We’ve followed them around in so many circles, I’m getting dizzy.” He laughed. Then he got serious. “I know what they’re after.”

“Oh?”

“The pit. They talked quite a bit about the place where some ‘loot’ was stashed.”

“They can have that silly ol’ place as far as I’m concerned,” Krina said.



"You *should* be concerned. They'll find the tree house sooner or later, and they aren't the friendly type. They do not like interference. Do you get what I'm saying?"

Krina nodded. "Our island is in danger. What are we going to do?"

"Get their guns, douse their fire, grab the map, and hope that the animals will eat them," Tijorn said. He looked proud of his suggestions.

"Very funny," Krina said. "There are four mean men."

"There are three of us."

"Four. Three big people, and one little people equals four people," Lisa said.

"We've got to do it tonight," Scott said, ignoring Lisa. "Tomorrow they might stumble on the stone tail, then there's no stopping them."

Scott emerged from the enemy's camp. It was 11:30 by Krina's watch, and a new moon. He silently crept along the ground, with Tijorn and Krina close behind. The apparent "guard" was fast asleep, and the children had no trouble gathering the weapons and the map. They threw them into Pearl Cove, the deepest place, and stole back to the tree house. Upon arrival, Krina announced an idea to the group:

"We all know those men are dangerous with or *without* guns. We only saved two, but we don't really have a good deal of knowledge about guns. Even if we did have guns pointed at them, we're still only kids. They would not be as afraid as if we were natives or something. So, we're going to get some good, scary-looking dye, and some grass skirts, and some dart blowers, and . . ."

"Hey, what's going on around here?" Scott asked.

"We're going to be natives of this island. In fact, we're going to be real-live-poison-dart-shooting pygmies. You know, the short guys."

"Yeah, I know. We're going to get ourselves into *real big trouble*."



The rest of the night was spent fashioning skirts and dart blowers. Krina rubbed the dye into Lisa's hair and skin, and into her own. Scott did the same, and Tijorn joined them reluctantly. When morning broke, the children circled the camp of the intruders.

The men were awakened by a loud war cry from Tijorn. They looked astonished and reached for their guns. They were gone! One of the children blew a dart and missed one of the men by an inch. Scott shouted something in Tijorn's language, and the men huddled closer together.

"Them's pygmies, I tells ya. With poison darts to be sure! Do as they says if ya don't wanna be hurt. They're as flesh hungry as that panther over there." He looked amazed at the panther and began to faint. Krina spoke to Tijorn, and they started towards the men. Kitty yowled affectionately.

They herded the men into a clearing. Tijorn tied them securely to the posts they had previously set up.

Towards noon, Krina, who was watching for any seacraft, made a signal. She had spotted a ship on the horizon, making tremendous speed. All but Tijorn met together at the tree house. Tijorn was guarding the prisoners, making funny little noises, and licking his lips once in a while.

"Is it another intruder?" Lisa wanted to know.

"I hope not," Krina answered.

"Maybe Castaway Island is the newest thing in resort areas this time of year," Scott stated.

"Oh, Scott, how can you be funny at a time like this?" Krina sighed. "What are we going to do?"

“Nothing,” Scott answered, “What *can* we do?”

The boat anchored offshore shortly after noon. The children watched from secluded bushes, waiting for nothing in particular. A large dinghy sputtered noisily onto the beach, and Scott and Krina gasped. The dinghy said “U.S. Coast Guard” in bold, black letters.

Lisa rushed up to the nearest man, and asked, “Are you a good guy or a bad guy?”

“Lisa Ann!” Krina shouted.

“Are you looking for four men?” Scott asked.

“Are you really the Coast Guard?” Krina wanted to know.

“Hold everything!” the captain shouted. “Where are you kids from?”

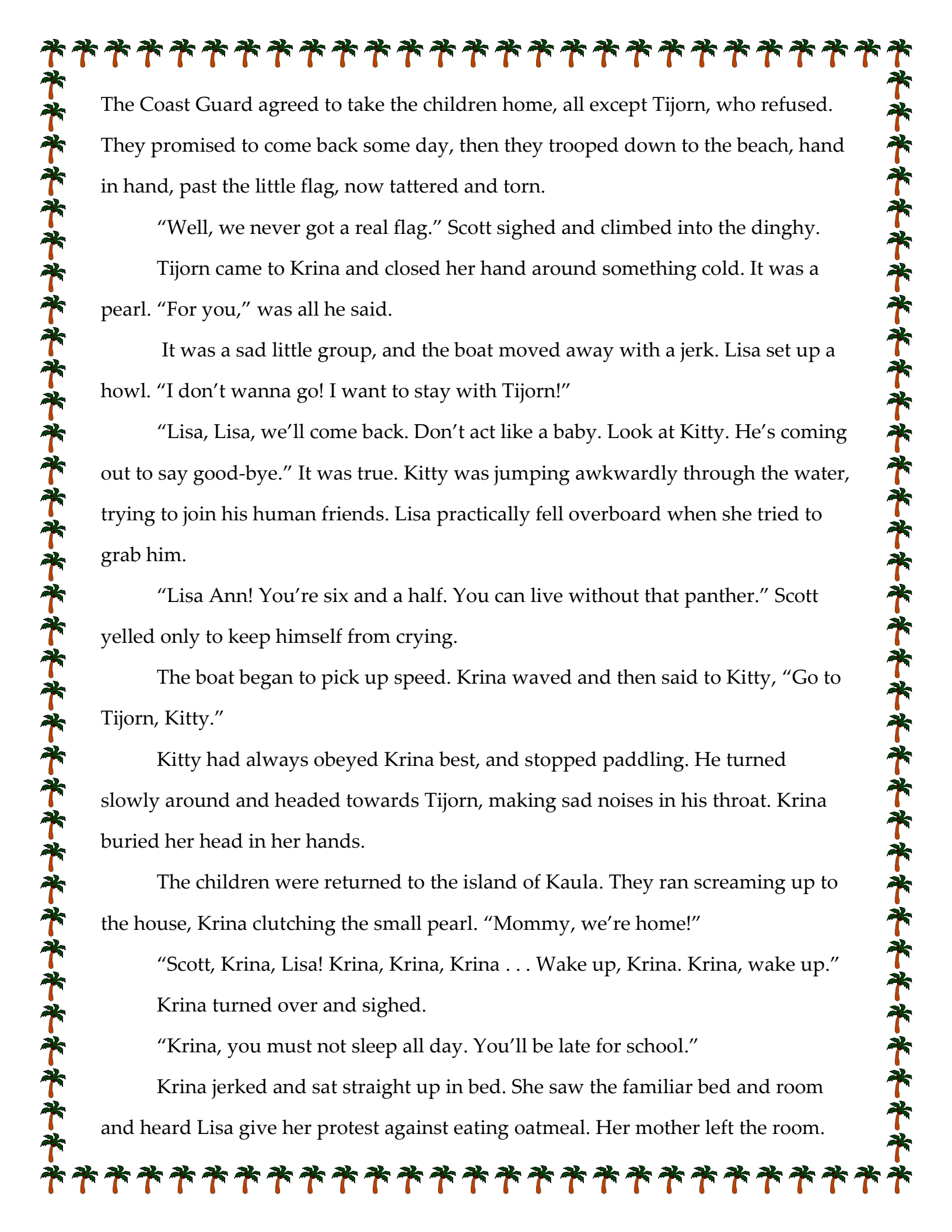
“Hawaii, originally. We’ve been here for three years and our mother doesn’t know where we are. We found a pit, and captured four men, and . . .” Scott began to reveal the whole story as they walked through the jungle where Tijorn and the four men were.

The captain and his crew were laughing so hard they could not control themselves. “We’re really grateful to you kids for the capture of these men.”

The men’s mouths dropped open. Kids had captured them!

Epilogue 1-The Original Ending

Author’s note: *I was young when I wrote this tale. Don’t ever end a story the way I did in this first epilogue—that it was all a dream. *no, no, no* It’s a lousy way to end a story and shortchanges your reader. Scroll down and read Epilogue 2, which was written by Sadie S., a fan who created a much better ending. Thank you, Sadie!*



The Coast Guard agreed to take the children home, all except Tijorn, who refused. They promised to come back some day, then they trooped down to the beach, hand in hand, past the little flag, now tattered and torn.

“Well, we never got a real flag.” Scott sighed and climbed into the dinghy.

Tijorn came to Krina and closed her hand around something cold. It was a pearl. “For you,” was all he said.

It was a sad little group, and the boat moved away with a jerk. Lisa set up a howl. “I don’t wanna go! I want to stay with Tijorn!”

“Lisa, Lisa, we’ll come back. Don’t act like a baby. Look at Kitty. He’s coming out to say good-bye.” It was true. Kitty was jumping awkwardly through the water, trying to join his human friends. Lisa practically fell overboard when she tried to grab him.

“Lisa Ann! You’re six and a half. You can live without that panther.” Scott yelled only to keep himself from crying.

The boat began to pick up speed. Krina waved and then said to Kitty, “Go to Tijorn, Kitty.”

Kitty had always obeyed Krina best, and stopped paddling. He turned slowly around and headed towards Tijorn, making sad noises in his throat. Krina buried her head in her hands.


The children were returned to the island of Kaula. They ran screaming up to the house, Krina clutching the small pearl. “Mommy, we’re home!”

“Scott, Krina, Lisa! Krina, Krina, Krina . . . Wake up, Krina. Krina, wake up.”

Krina turned over and sighed.

“Krina, you must not sleep all day. You’ll be late for school.”

Krina jerked and sat straight up in bed. She saw the familiar bed and room and heard Lisa give her protest against eating oatmeal. Her mother left the room.



It had all been a dream. Or had it? Krina looked down at her hand. In her palm lay the pearl. Krina never could explain where it had come from. Not to her brother, Scott, or to her baby sister, Lisa.

Epilogue 2-by Sadie S.

The children were returned to the island of Kaula. They ran screaming up to the house, Krina clutching her small pearl. “Mommy, we’re home!”

“Scott, Krina, Lisa! You’re home!”

The children’s mother rushed out the door of the house, trailed immediately by their father.

“We were so worried!”

Relief was sketched on Kristi’s face, covering up the grief at the thought that her kids could have died. “Where on earth have you been?”

One year later . . .

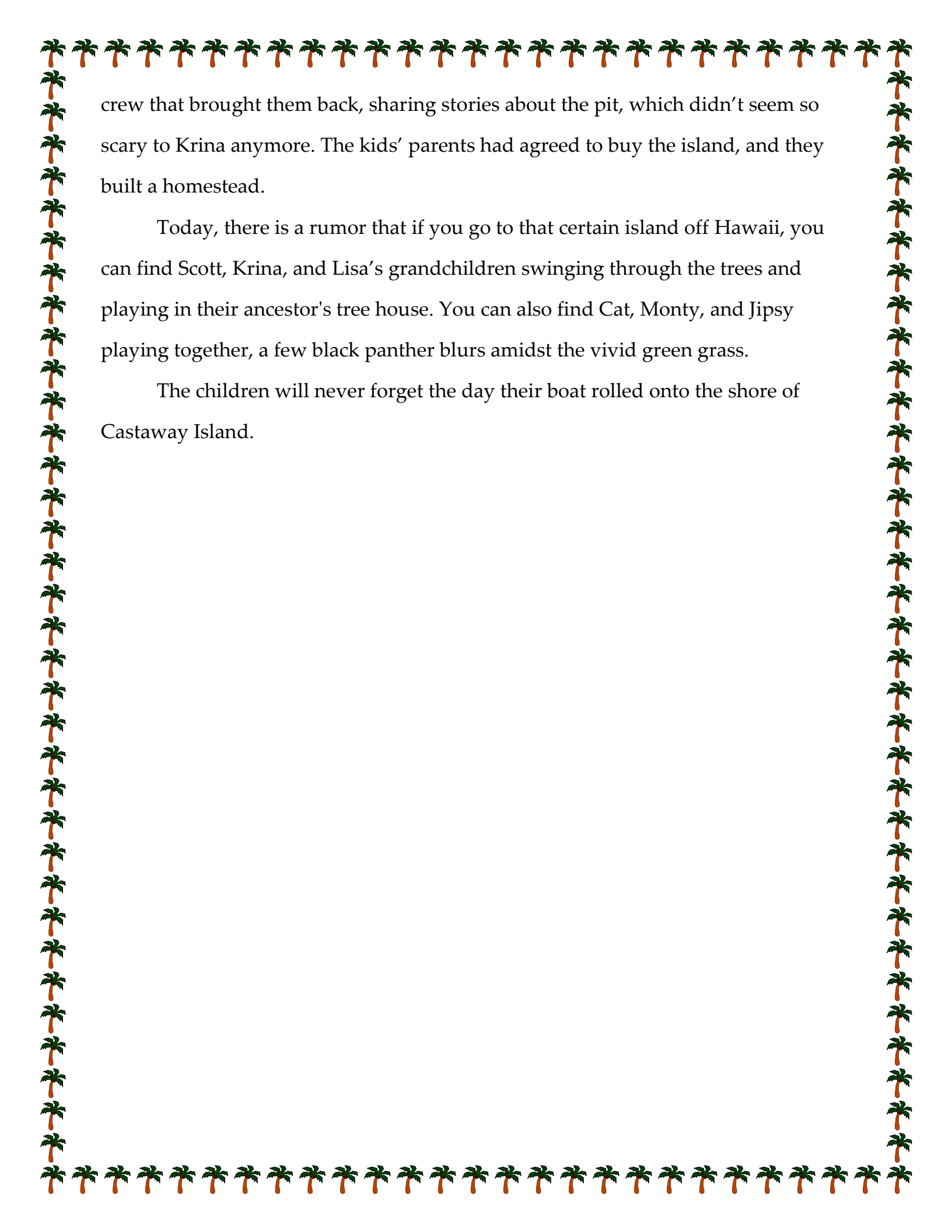
“Tijorn!” Krina exclaimed, rushing onto the shore of Castaway Island. She enveloped him in a hug as Kitty rushed to her side.

“Kitty! Oh, I missed you so much!” Lisa screamed, pulling the black panther’s attention away from Krina.

Lisa hugged Kitty so tight, Scott thought that the poor panther would suffocate. “Lisa! Let go of that ol’ rascal and come look at this flag!” he shouted.

Sure enough, a tall flag waved in the gentle jungle breeze. A real flag.

The whole family sighed and recalled the last few days. After a whole year, the kids were finally allowed to go back to Castaway Island. They traveled with the



crew that brought them back, sharing stories about the pit, which didn't seem so scary to Krina anymore. The kids' parents had agreed to buy the island, and they built a homestead.

Today, there is a rumor that if you go to that certain island off Hawaii, you can find Scott, Krina, and Lisa's grandchildren swinging through the trees and playing in their ancestor's tree house. You can also find Cat, Monty, and Jipsy playing together, a few black panther blurs amidst the vivid green grass.

The children will never forget the day their boat rolled onto the shore of Castaway Island.