

Chapter 2 – Water, Water everywhere




They say that water covers two thirds of the earth's surface. It certainly looks like that when you're out there, and it feels like it too. Sea water, rain water – all of it is wet. I spent most of the time soaked to the skin. I wore all the right gear – the skipper always made sure of that – but somehow the wet still got through.

Down below too, everything was damp, even the sleeping bags. Only when the sun shone and the sea had stopped its heaving, could we begin to dry out. We would haul everything out on deck, and soon the *Peggy Sue* would be dressed overall, one great washing-line from bow to stern. To be dry again was a real luxury, but we always knew it could not last for long.

You may think there was not a lot for three people to do on board, day after day, week after week. You'd be quite wrong. In daylight there was never a dull moment. I was always kept busy: taking in the sail, winching in, letting in, letting out, taking my turn at the wheel – which I loved – or helping my father with his endless mending and fixing. He often needed another pair of hands to hold and steady as he drilled or hammered or screwed or sawed. I'd forever be mopping up, brewing up, washing up, drying up. I'd be lying if I said I loved it all. I didn't. But there was never a dull moment.

Only one of the crew was allowed to be idle – Stella Artois – and she was always idle. With nothing much to bark at out at the open ocean, she spent the rougher days curled up on my bed down in the cabin. When it was fine and calm, though, she'd usually be found on watch up at the bow, alert for something, anything that wasn't just sea. You could be sure that if there was anything out there she'd spot it soon enough – an escort of porpoises perhaps, diving in and out of the waves, a family of dolphins swimming alongside, so close you could reach out and touch them. Whales, sharks, even turtles – we saw them all. My mother would be taking photographs, video and still, while my father and I fought over the binoculars. But Stella Artois was in her element, a proper sheepdog again, barking her commands at the creatures of the sea, herding them up from the deep.

- 1) Name five animals that Michael and his family saw from the boat.
- 2) *We would haul everything out on deck...*
What does the word 'haul' make us think about the items put on deck?
- 3) Which word in the text means the same as 'lazy'?
- 4) Which phrase suggests that Stella Artois was happy to be on the boat?
- 5) How does Michael feel about getting so wet on the *Peggy Sue*? (2 marks)

Content domain	 Fetch	 Infer	 Meaning of words	 Effect of words
Question numbers				