

Dear diary,

Today, the day I thought would never come, has finally arrived after so many months of meticulous planning – my companions and I reached one of the Galapagos Islands – off the coast of Ecuador. Upon arrival, I was overwhelmed by the intense heat as well as the fresh scents of nature and was left speechless by the staggering beauty of Mother Nature.

As you can imagine, I feel so privileged to have travelled through the Azores and Cape Verde on our route and at twenty-two years old, it makes it even more extraordinary. As soon as it was possible, I rapidly grabbed my trusty notebook and dad's pen, and then proceeded to explore the land around where our ship, the Beagle, had anchored. Within minutes of observation, I noticed a finch (similar to those in England); however it possessed a much longer, narrower beak than the ones at home. I wonder if this is an adaptation specific to the Galapagos Islands? I'm so jubilant already – I cannot contain my excitement!

As the evening fire was prepared by my shipmate George, I began to ponder further about the finch I had witness flying delicately earlier today; my stomach turns in anticipation for what I might learn or discover tomorrow. Just as I was thinking, I heard a shrill squawk from the nearby foliage – many of us leaped out of our skins – only to realise it was an albatross! My, oh my, I had never seen one before, it was truly remarkable.

Now that I am ready to sleep, I am looking up to the illuminating stars and wait in anticipation for the adventures that tomorrow will bring.

Charles

15th September 1835