When the Waves Hit

A long while ago there lived a young wannabe sailor named Soul, just starting to make his way in the world. With no family or friends he lived a lonely existence. Dreaming of the sea was Soul's only escape. Well, that and his reading. He loved to read anything he could get his hands on – short stories, novels, even comics! But his favourite thing to read was ancient diaries he found in the local library of old sailor's adventures in the big Orange Sea. He would sit up at night by candlelight and devour them for hours, the stories fuelling his love for the sea even more.

On a wet and stormy night Soul was walking by the docks, watching all the big boats prepare for their voyages.
"Hey!" yelled a voice behind him. "You looking for a job young boy? We need another deckhand to come out right now, we are down a shipmate. You look strong."
Before he could get any words out to reply, Soul's legs began running so fast taking him towards the ship in excitement.
"I take that as a yes," the man mumbled under his breath.

As the ship set sail, the rest of the crew welcomed Soul and showed him around the deck. His job was to scrub the decks, tie the ropes and to do anything else the Captain asked. It would be long, tough work but Soul couldn't believe his luck! Anyone else would have feared the lengthy hours, heavy workload and fierce Orange Sea, but not him. This was his dream come true! After his short tour of the deck, he was shown to his sleeping quarters below.
"You rest up now, I'll take the first watch," said Adam, his deck mate. "We can swap shifts in a few hours. You better be ready."
For the first time in a long while, Soul felt content and blissful, and sleep came easily – he felt at home.

BANG! CRASH! Soul awoke with a thud. He had been thrown to the floor.
"HELP, PLEASE HELP!" he heard being screamed from above.
He tried to run but immediately fell. He was being thrown from side to side and could barely stand up straight. The yelling and screaming got louder as he finally got the balance to make his way up the stairs.
"IT'S TOO LATE, WE ARE GOING DOWN!"
When Soul appeared from below deck, he saw everyone running, scrambling to save themselves.
"Save yourself young boy," yelled Adam when he saw Soul. "We've hit a rock and been taken by the sea".
"What do you mean?" Soul replied. "Someone tell me what's going on!" he pleaded.
But to the rest of the crew, he was invisible. It was every man for themselves. As he looked up, he saw the giant waves crashing all around them. It was like a whirlpool of orange water, swishing them around like they were nothing. A black shadow lurked

high behind him, a wall of orange water stood high and with one last big breath, the wave took Soul down, down, down.

Soul felt peaceful and warm. As he opened his eyes he saw blue skies and felt the sun beaming down on him, warming his bones. He sat up with a jolt, immediately remembering the events of the night before. How did he get here? Where was everyone else? What happened to the ship? He looked around – sand, palm trees and no one else in sight.
"Hello? Anyone there?" No reply. He stood up and to his surprise he was completely uninjured, apart from a couple of scrapes and bruises. He began to search the shore for signs of any of his crewmates, hoping with all his might that he was not alone here. He walked for hours searching, screaming and pleading for any sign of life. Just when he was about to give up hope, Soul spotted something sticking out of the sand. It looked like a book. As he got to his knees and dug it out, he read the title, *Diary of Sofia – My Adventure in the Orange Sea*.

Soul sat in the sand and began reading the diary. It seemed to be the words of a young girl, aged 12, named Sofia. She wrote about how she had washed up on an island after being crushed by waves on her family's ship. Soul was intrigued that he appeared to be in the same situation as Sofia.

The diary spanned 77 pages, each page detailing a different day on the island. Soul restricted himself to reading one day of the diary at a time, so as to make it last. He didn't know how long he would be trapped here for. As the days went by, Soul read about how Sofia survived. She learnt to catch fish with a stick that she carved into the shape of a hook, she threw rocks at the palm trees to knock coconuts down to drink the water from inside them and built shelter out of old palm leaves, some boulders and sticks. Soul took all these ideas on board, hoping he would have the same fortune as Sofia did. He too learnt to catch fish with a stick, knock coconuts down to drink the water and make shelter out of palm leaves he found on the island.

The 77th page of Sofia's diary was the day she was rescued from the island. At last, Soul had hope that he too would be rescued. But it was not to be.

After 104 days, the fish began to swim away, the coconuts stopped growing and the shelter fell. It had been 6 days since Soul had eaten, 4 days since he had anything to drink and 3 days since he had last slept. His hope was gone. His body frail, tired and in need of help. As he laid his head down on the sand for what he had accepted would be his last night on earth, he thought he caught a glimmer of something in the ocean far away, a ship's sail maybe? But his eyes could not stay open, his body too weak to yell and his spirit destroyed. The blackness overcame him.

Once again, Soul awoke.
How can this be? he thought to himself. *Please not again. I cannot take this island any longer*. But as he slowly opened his eyes, it was not the island. He saw lights, white walls, windows and people buzzing around busily.
"Sir, sir, how are you feeling?" said a soft, female voice.

"Where am I?" Soul asked. "How long have I been here?"

"You are in Seaweed Bay Hospital," she replied.

"Oh, thank you, thank you for rescuing me! I thought I would never get off that island," Soul said.

The nurse looked confused. "Island? No sir, you were pulled from the sea last night after your ship capsized. You have been here just a few short hours now".

"No, you must be mistaken," Soul replied. "After our ship sunk, I washed up on an island and have been there for months!"

"I can assure you, you did not touch an island. I was here myself when the ambulance brought you and your crewmates in. You were wet from the ocean and mumbling about diaries, you were delirious. Just rest up now and I'll bring you something to eat," said the nurse in a caring tone, and she left the room.

Soul was silent. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. Had it all been a dream? But it felt so real! Just then he saw Adam, his deck mate from the ship, walk past his room.

"Adam," he called. Adam stopped in the doorway.

"Soul, thank goodness you are okay! What a great first trip, hey buddy! That's one you'll never forget," he chuckled. "Everyone is okay mate, we were all rescued by a nearby helicopter, pulled out of the ocean and we were all brought here. The ship ain't so lucky though."

"So, there was no island then?" Soul asked.

"No mate, you gave us all a good laugh last night mumbling about some island, you must have been having a good old dream. I'll leave you to get some sleep now, sounds like you need it."

As Soul rolled over, he started to think everyone was right. It must have been a dream. The island, the diary everything. Just then, the nurse came back with some food.

"Here you go, this will make you feel better. Oh, and you had a book with you when you were rescued, I've put it in the top drawer next to your bed."

Soul opened the drawer, took out the book, read the title and gasped *Diary of Sofia – My Adventure in the Orange Sea*. The nurse gave him a wink, as she set down his food tray. He looked at her nametag . . . "Sofia".

The End.