

Munchkin started to scoop the water back into the sea, but before he had made any difference, another wave swamped them.

"Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" said Zoe.

Munchkin kept baling, but it seemed hopeless.

"Leave it!" shouted Zoe. "Help me point her into the waves."

For a little while longer, they struggled to keep Lycia on course, with her nose into the oncoming waves.

Then it ended. Munchkin fumbled his stroke into the water so badly that he went flying backwards. The oar slipped from his hands and was eaten up by the waves.

"No!" yelled Zoe, but she was too late.

Munchkin had leant forward again, grasping for his oar. The boat had turned and a huge wave slammed into their side. Munchkin went flying overboard.

"Munchkin!" she screamed, and without thinking flung herself to his side of the boat. The sea pushed her in after him.

For a second or two she was under the water, then her head broke surface. She gulped for some air. Something pulled at her. Turning, she found Munchkin beside her in the water.

"Zoe!"

He grinned. They grabbed each other for a second, then broke to tread water.

"What now?" he yelled.

"Where's the boat?"

Munchkin nodded. Zoe turned to see Lycia a long way off, overturned. The sea pushed her around like driftwood.

"Come on!" Zoe yelled. They tried to swim for Lycia.

The waves broke roughly over them all the time now. And

after each one a stinging salty spray whipped their faces, making it hard to see.

Zoe could feel herself tiring. The water was freezing, stopping her arms and legs from working. She went under. She broke surface to see Munchkin a little way ahead of her, still fighting the waves.

She went under again. Longer this time. Strangely, it was much quieter under the water. She no longer felt the cold. She no longer felt anything. Darkness was all around her. She knew she was about to drown. Another second and it would be over. The waves pulled themselves to pieces above her. She tried to look up through the water, and thought she saw a light. She wondered vaguely if dawn was coming. Had they been struggling with the sea for so long? It seemed to be getting brighter every second.

Then with a shock, Zoe thought she felt the bottom with her feet. She looked up again. The light was a brilliant point in front of her now. And then she felt herself being pulled up out of the water. She was being taken towards the light. Pulled upwards by an unstoppable force.

Her head broke through the water and she gasped for air, choking on sea water, but breathing again.

A strong light shone into Zoe's eyes.

"She'll be okay," said a voice.

"Bit close for comfort."

"Yeah. Any more in there?"

"No, don't think so. Let's get home."

The light flicked over her face once more, and she blacked out.

As she went, she just had time to realize something. The light. The light was from a torch. An electric torch.