

A Beacon of Hope

Dodo opened his eyes. He was out at sea. Curiously, he leant forward precariously to see the raging waters below, and recoiled as crashing billows bubbled onto the edge of the pygmy, puny, splintered raft that Dodo was perched on. The frothing tide sprayed him with a ferocious valour akin to a pack of ravenous wolves stalking its prey. He tasted salt water and his eyes stung; not only because of the brine but of the sheer hopelessness of the situation – stranded, alone in an ocean of dreads.

[splendid job in providing context and background behind Dodo's story!](#)

It just seemed like yesterday that Dodo had fled from his abusive parent. His mother was dead; his father, a savage brute of a man. At that period of time, running away from home had seemed like a good idea, but suppose anything to get away from the hurt and abuse seemed like a beacon of hope in a dark abyss then. Dodo had been planning his grand escape for months, starving himself to pack food in a dusty sack, the lumpy, dinky dinners that consisted of lettuce floating in a bowl of soapy water, mixed with bread crumbs which smelled frightful and tasted foul and revolting. His stepmother would sourly deposit outside his room – or closet, more like while his father feasted outside. When it was oh-so quiet Dodo would tiptoe out and steal no more than an apple, or a pear. When his sack was filled, he put his most prized possessions: a picture of his mother and a single toothpick, the only present anyone had given him that was all his mother could afford before she died – in a rucksack. Then Dodo fled. Running and running, he stole a raft and paddled out to sea.

A deafening crash brought him back to the present. The overhead storm was heckling him, sending gusts of arctic wind that fractured the raft, splitting it clean in half. “No!” Dodo clinged to a shred of wood for life, screeching in terror. He tasted bile as a daunting, treacherous wave lifted him up in the air. And as maniacal blasts of whirlwinds demolished everything around him, shivering and oscillating, chilled to the marrow, Dodo let go. Stupefied before he hit the water, at that moment; everything went black.

Sand. That’s the next thing Dodo felt. He tried to move, open his eyes, but every bone in his gaunt, weakened body throbbed. So he just lied there, peacefully, on the warm, snug, comforting sand. He vaguely felt gentle, strong arms lift him up and place him onto a bed that smelled like coconut, that felt like soft vines and leaves. In his mind’s eye, he saw a woman leaning over him, soothing him with her nurturing voice. Was he dead? If this was heaven, Dodo wanted to stay forever.

[The fog lifted as Dodo opened his eyes*](#)

[Then the fog lifted; Dodo opened his eyes.](#) The woman rushed over – the one who had the gentle voice. “You have washed up on the sand of our island, boy,” said she, who Dodo later found out was called Za. Dodo had been called ‘boy’ many times before, usually with hate or loathing, but this time it was lovingly tender. “We, the eternal maidens, welcome all travellers; but no one can stay unless one is a maiden. We shall send you on your way, boy.” Dodo sighed forlornly. “I’m on a wretched, despairing quest. I’ll never succeed – it will surely bring me to a painful death!” Za shook her head. “Even in trouble, you will find a lifeboat. Do not give up yet!”

A few days later, with a reasonably sized canoe and enough supplies for him to eat like a king for a month, ^{the maidens*}The Maidens bid him farewell. With a smile on his face and hope in his heart, Dodo knew – whatever challenge would be in front of him, he would face it, for even in an abyss of fear, loss and terror; there would be a beacon of light.

Splendid ending! This work is beautifully written. I also really liked how you provided a little background story as to why Dodo ended up in the middle of the sea. Your storyline is up the top and is unique in every way. My most favourite part is the ending as it gives off a good long lasting impression of hope. Please see and take note on the minimal corrections found in your work. Good job big dog!

Mark (50/50)