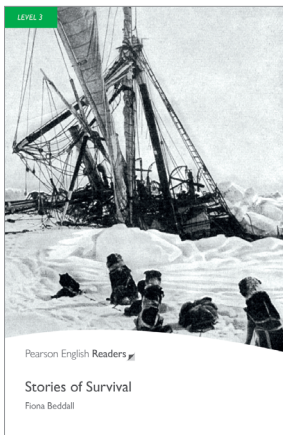


Stories of Survival

Fiona Beddall



Summary

This book tells eight incredible stories of survival that took place in different parts of the world over a period of almost 500 years.

An Island of Sand: Pedro Serrano is stranded on a desert island after his ship sinks in the Caribbean in the 1520s. At first he is afraid but he overcomes his fears and looks for food and drink. He also makes a fire to get the attention of passing ships, but it fails to attract anybody. He begins to lose hope of being rescued. Three years later, another ship sinks and the sole survivor swims to the island. When this sailor sees Serrano, who now looks like an animal, he is scared. Serrano is also scared and runs away shouting, "Help me, Jesus!" The sailor is no longer afraid and after a long chase the two become friends. They live together for many years more. Eventually a ship sees their smoke and sends a boat to the island. Although the sailors are afraid at first, they rescue the two men and take them onto their ship. Unfortunately Serrano's friend dies on the way home, but luckily Serrano arrives back safely to Spain and becomes rich and famous for his adventures.

Attacked by a Bear: Hugh Glass is looking for animal skins with friends in the American West. One day he is attacked by a bear. Glass shoots her, but she hits and bites him before dying. When his friends find him, they think he won't survive the night because his injuries are so bad. However, he does survive and the men make a bed of sticks to carry him around. After three days, their boss, Andrew Henry, decides Glass is slowing them down and offers two men, Fitzgerald and Bridger, some money to stay with him until he dies. They accept but after four days, Fitzgerald suggests leaving him as he is afraid that they will be attacked by Native Americans. Although Bridger isn't happy about this at first, they finally

leave, taking Glass's bag and his gun with them. Glass is very angry and promises himself that he won't die until he gets his gun back. Slowly he gets a little strength back and begins his journey, dragging himself along the ground with his one good arm and leg. Many months and many adventures later, Glass finds Fitzgerald and recovers his old gun.

Under the Volcano: Johanna Beyerinck and her family are living in Sumatra in 1883. Their house is near the island of Krakatoa and its volcano starts to erupt, causing an enormous wave to wash away part of the house. The family escapes to a house in the hills. The next day, large pieces of rock fall through the roof of the house and everything goes black. Johanna hears screams and bodies fall on top of her. She manages to get out of the house and realises she is badly burnt. Her husband finds her and one of the servants brings Johanna her baby son, who dies in her arms. Days later, some Sumatrans tell the Beyerincks that they must leave the house as it is also built on a volcano. They hurry down the hill to Ketimbang, but find it has been destroyed. It begins to rain earth. After, the sun eventually appears bringing light after the darkness. The volcano of Krakatoa has destroyed itself and thirty-six thousand people have lost their lives.

Escape from the Ice: Shackleton and his men want to make the first trip in history across Antarctica, but are forced to stop their ship because of the ice. They have to wait there for nine cold months. When spring arrives, the ice gets softer and pushes against the ship and breaks it. They abandon the ship and head for the nearest place with shelter. They start on their journey, pulling the small boats from the ship, but eventually they have to stop and wait many months until there are breaks in the ice. They continue their journey and reach the uninhabited Elephant Island, where Shackleton leaves most of the men behind. He goes with five others in a small open boat through terrible storms to South Georgia. When they eventually land there, they have to cross a mountain range to get to the nearest town. They succeed in doing this and then Shackleton sends rescue parties for all those men he has left behind.

133 Days on a Raft: In 1942, a Chinese man, Poon Lin, goes to work on a British ship to escape attack from the Japanese. His ship is sunk by the Germans, however, and he has to jump overboard. Once in the water, surrounded by dead bodies, he sees one of the ship's small rafts. He manages to get onto it and finds enough food and water to survive a month. The days pass and he

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is lonely and a passing ship and planes fail to see him. He realizes his only hope is to stay alive long enough to drift 1,200 kilometers to the Brazilian coast. 131 days later, after drinking and eating anything he could get his hands on, he sees land. Poon has survived and his 133 days on a life raft is a world record.

Plane Crash in the Rain Forest: Juliane Köpcke is travelling with her mother from Lima to Pucallpa, a city in the middle of the Peruvian rain forest. There is a bad storm and the plane crashes. Juliane finds herself on the ground with several injuries but alive. Realizing that rescue planes will not be able to see through the trees, she decides to walk to find people. She begins to follow a stream and then a river. Food is a problem as are the animals and insects. After many days Juliane eventually sees a boat and a nearby shelter. She goes there to rest and later hears the voices of some woodcutters. They rescue her and take her to the nearest doctor. Juliane has survived, the only one of the ninety-two passengers on board the plane.

Murder in Rwanda: In 1994, Hutus are killing Tutsis and Immaculée, a young college student, is caught up in the middle of it. Her father tells her to go to Murinzi's house until it's safe. Murinzi is a good Hutu and he hides Immaculée and five other Tutsi women in a small bathroom. There is very little space and it's hot and uncomfortable. The next day Hutu killers search the house but find nothing. Murinzi blocks the entrance to the bathroom with a cupboard to try to keep it more secret. The women hear the screams of many Tutsis being murdered around them. Six weeks later two more women are brought to the hiding place, but eventually one of the servants realizes what's happening and Murinzi has to take the women from the house. They manage to run to the tents of some French soldiers and there they get protection. Immaculée has survived, but her family and many others have not.

Desert Runner: An Italian, Mauro Prosperi, is taking part in a very difficult race across the desert in Morocco, when he gets lost in a sand storm. The next day he climbs to the top of a hill and waits for a rescue plane. One flies past, but the pilot doesn't see him. The following morning he starts to walk and takes shelter in an abandoned building. Another plane passes, but the pilot doesn't see him. Prosperi despairs and tries to kill himself, but fails. He then begins to walk through the desert, eating and drinking the little he finds until one day he sees a small girl. He is safe, but 200 kilometers away from the race in Morocco.

Background and themes

Survival instinct: Although some luck played a part in the outcome in each story, the survivors also saved themselves by refusing to be beaten by adversity, eating and drinking anything they could find and by fighting death every step of the way.

Disasters or challenges: In some of the stories the need to survive arises from the occurrence of a disaster, be it natural such as the eruption of a volcano or the failure of a means of transport, or man-made as in the case of war. In other stories, the survivors find themselves in the position they are in because they have set themselves a great challenge such as crossing Antarctica or running through the desert.

Discussion activities

Before you read

- Discuss:** Write SURVIVAL on the board and elicit the meaning. Now put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: *In which places in the world do people find it difficult to survive? What kind of things sometimes happen before a person has to try to survive? What kind of people are the best survivors? What things do you need to survive?* Get feedback from the whole class.

An Island of Sand

While reading (p. 1, after, "His new home was a desert.")

- Guess:** Put the students in pairs to guess and then write down the answers to the following questions: *What will Serrano eat and drink? Where will he sleep? How will he get the boats to notice he is there? What dangers will he meet? How long will he have to stay on the island?* Get feedback, writing the suggestions on the board. Ask the class to say which answers they think are more probable and write them down. Check these predictions at the end of the story.

After reading

- Write and discuss:** Tell students they have to imagine they are going to spend a year on a desert island. Individually ask them to make a list of ten things they would take with them. Go around the class helping with vocabulary as they do this. Now put them in pairs to negotiate one common list of ten things, justifying to each other why what they have on their list is useful. Finally, try to make a class list with different students suggesting different things and have the class voting for the top ten.

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Attacked by a Bear

Before reading

- 4 **Pair work:** Write DANGEROUS ANIMALS on the board and give students in pairs two minutes to make a list of them in English. Ask which group has the most words and write them on the board. Let other groups contribute more and then ask the pairs to discuss which three are the most dangerous and why. Get feedback.

After reading

- 5 **Discuss:** Put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: *What did Glass eat in the story? Do you or would you eat any of these things? What's the strangest thing you have ever eaten?*

Under the Volcano

After reading

- 6 **Write and guess:** On the board, write *Johanna Beyerinck was English*. Elicit which word is wrong from the students (Dutch not English). Now students choose a sentence from this story and rewrite it changing one word. Students walk around the class, reading out their sentences, and the other students have to identify and correct the mistake.
- 7 **Research:** Write NATURAL DISASTERS on the board and explain the meaning. Now ask students to do some research using the Internet to find out about a natural disaster that has happened in history. When they have done this, put them in small groups to tell each other what they have found out.

Escape from the Ice

Before reading

- 8 **Write, describe, and guess:** Write COLD on the board and give students two minutes to write a list of words they associate with cold. Now put the students in pairs. Get them to take it in turns to explain the words they have written without saying the word itself. Their partner has to guess what it is.

After reading

- 9 **Pair work:** Remind students that Shackleton went on a very long trip. Ask them to think about the last trip they went on and to make a few notes about it, including how they traveled, who they went with, where they stayed, what they did, etc. In pairs, students then tell each other about that trip.

133 Days on a Raft

Before reading

- 10 **Pair work:** Explain to the students that the next story is about a man who works on a ship. Put them in pairs to brainstorm other forms of transport that they know in English. Get feedback and then ask them to discuss the following questions: *How often do you travel by ...? When was the last time you traveled by ...? Which way of traveling is cheaper/more comfortable/quicker/safer? Which way of traveling do you prefer?*

After reading

- 11 **Write and ask:** On the board, write *Where was Poon Lim from?* Elicit the answer (China). Ask students to write another question about something in this story. Check their work as they do this. Now have students stand up and walk around the class, asking and answering each other's questions.

Plane Crash in the Rain Forest

Before reading

- 12 **Research and write:** Tell students that the next story takes place in Peru and ask them to do some research using the Internet about this country. In class, put them in small groups to share their ideas and then individually, students write a short descriptive piece about the country.

Murder in Rwanda

After reading

- 13 **Discuss:** Write WAR on the board and elicit/teach the meaning. Now put students in small groups to discuss the following questions: *Are there any wars happening at the moment? Why are they happening? What past wars can you think of? Why did they happen? Are some wars right and some wars wrong? Can we stop wars happening?*
- 14 **Role play:** Tell the students to imagine they work for a newspaper and they are going to interview Immaculée about her experience. Put them in pairs to write about eight questions that they would ask. Now change the students around so that they all have different partners. The pairs then act out the interview, with one student being the reporter and the other answering as if they were Immaculée. They can then switch roles.

Desert Runner

After reading

- 15 **Pair work:** Remind students that Prospero liked sports. Put them in pairs to answer the following questions: *What sports do you do? How often do you do them? What sports did you do when you were a child? What good things do you get from doing sports? Is there anything bad about doing sports?*