Unit 6

Sam and the Secret Call A

Sam and his parents have been coming to the same island every summer, ever since he could remember. They always stay in the same small house which has a fantastic view of the glittering sea. The first evening back on the island, Sam and his family decide to go out to their favourite island restaurant, 'Ocean'. While they are eating dinner, Dominic, the head waiter, tells them about his cousin, Armando. He says that Armando has a boat and can take Sam swimming with the dolphins. Armando even has a secret call that brings the dolphins to him. Sam is very excited to hear this. The next day, Sam's family takes him to meet Armando. Will Sam get to swim with the dolphins? Read on to find out.

It was time to go. Sam waved goodbye to his family as the little boat chugged out to sea.

Armando threw him a life jacket. "Put this on," he said. "I have promised your mother that you will wear it."

Lying on the small deck with the chugging of the boat in his ears and a gentle sea breeze fanning his face, Sam almost fell asleep. At last, Armando's voice brought him wide awake.

"Okay, Sam, we here now, yes? Help me drop the anchor please."

Armando and Sam dragged the heavy anchor to the side of the boat and then heaved it into the water.

"Now, we whistle for the dolphins," Armando said.

Armando put his thumbs together and blew thinly through the gap between them. A strange noise came out—halfway between a whistle and the hoot of an owl.

Sam copied Armando exactly but when he blew, no sound came out at all.

chugged out: moved slowly towards the sea making the sound of an engine

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horizon: the line at which the sky and the sea appear to meet

(showed) the exact pressure Sam should blow through them with his lips: Armando knew that for the sound to come out, Sam must not blow too soft or blow too hard. Armando taught Sam the correct amount of force he must use.

"I tell you it is difficult," laughed Armando. He made the same strange whistling noise again.

"Look!" cried Armando, pointing. "Here they come!"

Sam couldn't believe his eyes. On the horizon, heading straight for the boat was a small school of dolphins. There were about twelve of them and they were leaping through the water and criss-crossing each other.

"Now I show you something," said Armando. Armando threw a fish out of the boat and a dolphin leapt into the air and caught it.

"Please, please may I swim with them?" begged Sam.

"Sure! Jump right in," laughed Armando. So Sam dove into the water.

A few dolphins leaped through the air, then dived just below the surface while Sam swam alongside. The other dolphins swam close by, as if trying to catch them. It was the most amazing game Sam had ever played. He swam and played with the dolphins for a long time until he finally heard Armando's voice from the boat.

"Sam! You must come aboard now. We must go back."

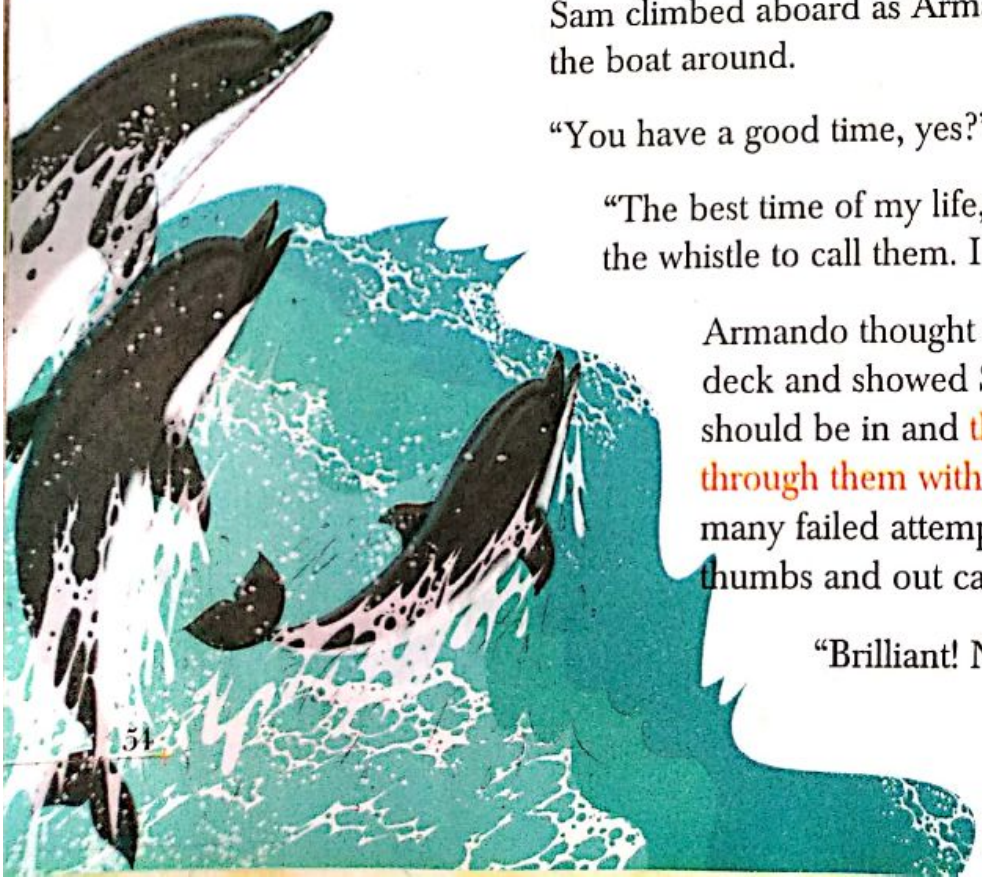
Sam climbed aboard as Armando started the engine and turned the boat around.

"You have a good time, yes?" asked Armando.

"The best time of my life," replied Sam. "Please teach me the whistle to call them. I promise I won't tell anyone else."

Armando thought for a moment. Then he sat on the deck and showed Sam the exact position the thumbs should be in and the exact pressure Sam should blow through them with his lips. After half an hour and many failed attempts, Sam finally blew through his thumbs and out came a perfect whistle.

"Brilliant! Now you can do it!" said Armando.



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By now the wind was stronger. The sea was choppy and the little boat was swaying in the water. A large wave crashed on over the side of the boat, throwing Armando on the floor where he lay without moving. Sam tried to revive him but it did not work. Sam looked around nervously. All he could see around him were the blue waters of the sea. He had never felt so lonely before. He looked at Armando again.

'Where can I get help?' wondered Sam. He had an idea. He put his thumbs in his mouth in the correct position and blew through the gap between them. The whistle came out long and low, cutting through the noise of the rain and the wind. Again and again, he whistled.

Then he heard a noise. And there they were—thirty or forty of them—swimming through the waves towards him. They surrounded the boat and began to push it along, using their heads.

Sam was so relieved that he wanted to cry. The dolphins pushed the little boat for many hours until the storm had passed and the sky was clear.

Up on the deck, Sam had tried to make Armando as comfortable as possible. Suddenly, Armando groaned and sat up.

"Ow! My head. What happened?" he asked.

"You knocked your head when a wave crashed on the boat. So I whistled for the dolphins and they saved us!" said Sam breathlessly.

"Incredible!" Armando said. "In all my years, I never see anything like this. It is a good thing I teach you the whistle, yes?"

Armando leaned down to the dolphins. "Thank you, my friends. I fix the engine well now. You can rest."

The dolphins stopped pushing, slowly turned around and then joyfully leaped through the waves back out to sea.

choppy: rough with many waves because of strong winds

revive him: bring him back to consciousness

relieved: did not feel frightened anymore

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"Thank you my friends! You saved my life!" yelled Sam waving at them.

Not long after, the engine roared to life.

"We will be back very soon now," said Armando at the wheel. "Well, young Sam. What a day you had, eh?"

But Sam wasn't listening. He was watching the last of the dolphins flying like a bird through the golden water, its majestic fin glinting in the rays of the setting sun.

glinting: sparkling

Note: Armando's English is a little different because his home language is not English.

Understanding the Text

A. 1. At first, Armando hesitated before teaching Sam to whistle. He was glad later on that he had taught Sam how to whistle. Give reasons for both of Armando's feelings.

2. What did Sam do while the dolphins were pushing the boat? Why?

3. At the end of the story, Armando was talking to Sam, but Sam wasn't listening. Why? What was he thinking?

B. 1. "Lying on the small deck with the chugging of the boat in his ears and a gentle sea breeze fanning his face, Sam almost fell asleep."

Why did Sam feel sleepy?

2. It was the most amazing game Sam had ever played.

Describe the game that Sam played.

3. "Sam was so relieved that he wanted to cry."

Why did he feel relieved?

4. "Thank you, my friends. I fix the engine well now. You can rest."

Who says this and to whom? Why does the speaker ask them to rest?

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C. Read these sentences. Write what the character was feeling at that time.

1. Lying on the small deck with the chugging of the boat in his ears and a gentle sea breeze fanning his face, Sam almost fell asleep.	relaxed
2. Sam saw on the horizon, heading straight for the boat, was a small school of dolphins.... about twelve of them	
3. dolphins leaped through the air... Sam swam alongside... other dolphins swam close by	
4. Sam finally blew through his thumbs and out came a perfect whistle.	
5. "Where can I get help?" wondered Sam.	
6. And there they were—thirty or forty of them—swimming through the waves towards Sam...	
7. "In all my years, I never see anything like this," said Armando.	

Appreciating the Text

By adventure we mean an unusual and exciting—and sometimes dangerous—experience. We do not always know how an adventure might end. Complete these sentences to explain how Sam's experience was an adventure.

1. a. Sam's experience was unusual because very few people find themselves completely alone in the middle of a sea.
   b. His experience was also exciting because...
   c. Sam's situation could be dangerous because...
   d. There is also suspense in his story—we do not know how it will end—because...
2. Armando allowed Sam to enjoy himself but also took care of him. Do you agree? Underline sentences from the text prove this.

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