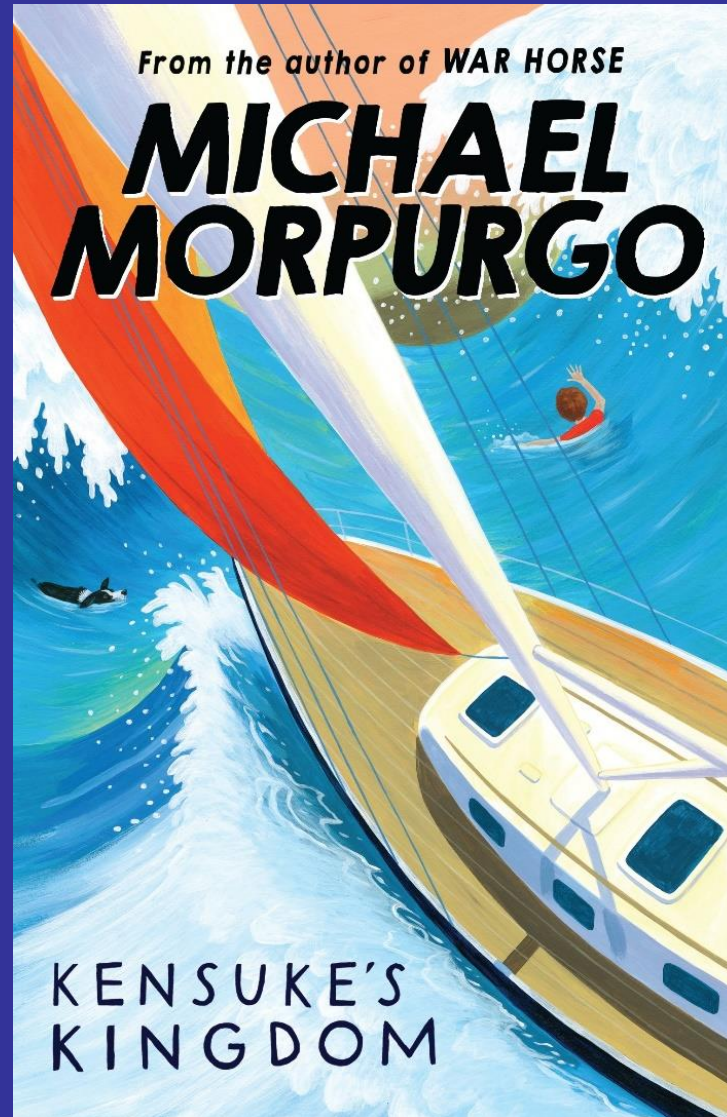


Kensuke's Kingdom
by Michael Morpurgo



Chapter 2
Water, water
everywhere

Chapter 2, page 1

They say water covers two thirds of the earth's surface. Sea water, rain water all of it wet. I spent most of the time soaked to the skin even though I wore all the right gear. The skipper made sure of that.



Even down in the cabin everything was damp even the sleeping bags. When the sun shone and the sea was calm we brought everything on deck and hung it on a long washing line from bow to stern.



There was always a lot to do on board. In daylight there was never a dull moment. I was always busy, taking in sail, winching in, letting out. Taking the wheel which I loved.

Helping my dad with repairs.



Chapter 2, page 2

I'd forever be mopping up, brewing up, washing up, drying up. There was never a dull moment, but I would be lying if I said I loved it all. I didn't.



Only Stella Artois was allowed to be idle. She spent rough days curled up on my bed in the cabin. When the weather was calm and fine she was up on deck, watching for anything that wasn't just sea.



If there was anything out there she would spot it. Porpoises diving in and out of the waves.



Chapter 2, page 3

A family of dolphins along side, so close you could reach out and touch them.



Whales, sharks even turtles. We saw them all.



My mother photographing them, while my father and I fought over the binoculars. Stella was in her element a proper sheepdog again barking her commands at the sea creatures. She could be annoying, bringing her smelly wetness everywhere, but she was our greatest comfort and we never regretted bringing her along. When my mother was seasick Stella would sit on her lap in the cabin, and when I was terrified by the mountainous seas she curled up in my bunk with me.

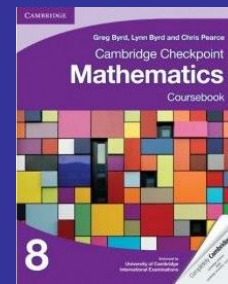
Chapter 2, page 4.

At times when I was frightened I always kept Eddie's football beside me as well. The football had become a sort of talisman for me, a lucky charm, it really seemed to work. At the end of every storm we were still there, still alive and still afloat.



I had hoped my parents would have forgotten about the planned school work. But once we had settled well into our voyage my mother was adamant I was going to keep up with my schoolwork. At home she had been my mother and I could argue with her, but not on the Peggy Sue here she was the skipper.

Between them they had devised an entire programme of work. There were maths course books which my father helped with if I got stuck. For geography and history I was to find out and record all I could about the countries we visited as we went round the world.



For environmental studies and art I was to note down and draw all the birds we saw and all the creatures and plants we came across.

Chapter 2, page 5.

My mother taught me navigation too. "Barnacle Bill taught me," she said "I'm teaching you. I know its not on the curriculum, but it could come in handy, you never know."

She taught me how to use a sextant.



How to take compass bearings.

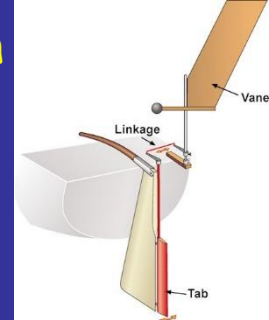


She taught me how to plot a course on a chart. I had to fill in the longitude and latitude in the ship's log every morning, every evening, without fail.



Chapter 2, page 6.

I don't think I ever really noticed stars before, but when ever I was on the cockpit at night with the Peggy Sue on wind vane self steering.



The others asleep below, the stars would be my only company. Gazing up at them I sometimes felt we were the last people alive on the planet.

There was just us, the dark sea about us and the millions of stars above.

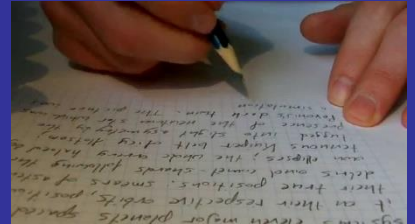


It was on watch at night I would often do my 'English'. It was my own version of the ships log. I didn't have to show it to my parents, but they encouraged me to write in it every few weeks. It would be my own personal, private record of the voyage.

At school I had never been much good at writing. I could never think what to write or how to begin. But on Peggy Sue I found I could open my log and just write.

Chapter 2, page 7

There was always so much I wanted to say. I found I didn't really write it all down. I spoke it from my head, down my arm, through my fingers and my pencil on to the page. That's how it reads to me now. All these years later, like me talking.



I'm looking at my log now. The paper is a bit crinkled and yellowed with age. My scribbly writing is a little faded but still legible.

What follows are a few chosen extracts from this log. They are quite short but tell the tale.

This is how I recorded our great journey. This is how it was for an eleven year old boy as we rode the wide oceans of the world on board the Peggy Sue.

