

Beneath the Waves

Leah groaned, clutching her stomach as the world jolted and swung sharply beneath her feet. The ground wasn't supposed to shift and roll like a fairground ride. She'd never realised how brilliant that was, the way the land was firm, flat and reliable and didn't make you want to throw up just by standing on it. It was hard to believe that, only this morning, she had been excited to step onto a boat for the first time. Now, an hour and a half into the eight-hour ferry journey, she had definitely changed her mind. Any excitement she had felt had shrivelled up with the first wave of nausea. She would never, ever take dry land for granted again.

She wanted to hide in the cabin with a blanket over her head and pretend that none of this was happening. Her nan had other ideas and shepherded her back up on deck. "Fresh air is what you need," she said breezily, ignoring Leah's protests. "You'll be right as rain in a few minutes."



As ever, Leah's nan had been right. Sitting on the deck of the ferry, with the cool breeze on her face and the sharp smell of salt in the air, she did feel slightly better. The sky was clear and blue, the sun's glow providing warmth against the rush of the sea air as they sped through the water. Maybe boats weren't so bad after all. She wouldn't ever make a world-class sailor, but she'd probably survive the journey. Probably.

Nearby, Leah's nan was settling into her chair delightedly. She had made herself at home with a glass of orange juice, a blueberry muffin and a shabby paperback book spread out on the table beside her. She had enthusiastically embraced being on holiday — the fact that they hadn't actually arrived yet was of little consequence — and was wearing a floppy, wide-brimmed hat, clutching it firmly to her head as it threatened to blow away into the sea.

The story continues over the page. ➔