

Selkie's Song

The little wooden boat floated in the middle of nowhere. For thirteen days they had been drifting in the vast ocean. A storm off Foula had blown them off course, and the last they remembered was the purple heather fading out of view.

Exhaustion and hunger had turned the men against each other:

"Maybe lack o sleep is why your ideas are rubbish!" snapped the oarsman Lowrie

"At least wir trying tae get home," sighed Magnus

This only got worse the longer they stayed on the cursed boat, and only the skipper had tried to keep everyone on track.

The skipper, Callum, was the oldest and the most experienced. After the boat got caught in the storm and shrouded in thick fog, he got turned around and it was hard to tell where they were. He was fifty two and had built his mental map to perfection which meant he had learnt where he was, all from experience. He chose not to use real maps as it was a faff. Unfortunately, this storm was different and the tides made no sense anymore. And besides, even if they had a map, it would be no use since they didn't know where they were.

The men now thought that surviving was just a wish, but Callum insisted it wasn't. "If we dunna try den wha will we get home tae? Think o your wife! Think o your bairns. Wha's we me?"

There was a small pause as they thought about it. Then Olav stood up and said, "Let's ge it a go."

Which way to go though... Callum scooted over to Olav and whispered, "Olav can du hear yun soond?"

"Da sea?"

"I mean da humming noise, lik a song."

"No, I canna hear onything."

Callum didn't believe him. He went to Magnus and asked about the voice. The answer was the same: "Get some rest!"

.....

He woke up from an uncomfortable snooze. The voice hadn't gone. If anything, it was closer. The beautiful melody still rang in his ears.

He decided to check on the others. Maybe they should follow the hum if it could be a sign of life.

"Awake I see," Magnus smiled. "Feeling ony better?"

"I Dunna ken," sighed Callum.

"Wit should we do?" Magnus asked

"Get ready to row."

"How do you kean which wye?"

"Just a good feeling. Row yun wye." he replied quickly

"Just fur da record, I'm no following imaginary soonds." Magnus replied coldly.

"No wye," they agreed.

Callum was outvoted.

"Wit else can we do?" he thought out loud.

There was a moment of silence.

"It's worth a try," one of the men mumbled. "I just wish we kent whar we wir at..."

Callum breathed a sigh of relief and they started rowing again in the direction he pointed.

A few hours later they were starting to doubt, when Callum's face lit up. "We're going da right wye, da voice is closs! Although he was unsure, he still was hopeful.

The boat continued slowly and Callum saw something unbelievable...

On a rock, sat a beautiful girl.

"Wit are you dooin oot here?" Callum shouted. She turned her head but said nothing. Her sparkling blue eyes looked like the soft waves on the ocean. Her curly ginger hair fell to her shoulders. She smiled in a way that made you feel at home and out of reach from harm. The freckles on her face made her smile stand out like the warmth from the sun.

His thoughts were interrupted by the laughing of the men.

"Wit's wrang?!" Callum said angrily.

"It's just that we dunna normally talk to Haff fisk!" teased Olav. "Onyway, we must be getting closer."

"It's no a Haff fisk, it's a lass!" This just made them laugh more.

He looked on to the horizon.

"Land!" Sure enough, the unmistakable shape of Foula came into view as the mist lifted.

As they rowed, Callum found himself puzzled. Why was she *there*? He turned his head but she had disappeared, where she was before, a lazy seal lay on its back. *Maybe I did just have a sore head.* He smiled and turned his face into the breeze.

"You don't always need a map to find your way home."