

lines of poison longitude

In this chapter, a group of sailors enjoys a day on the water, with Sol attempting to impress her grandfather, Griff, by constantly providing food. Griff, who has a history of sailing dreams, discusses his past, including the extravagant lifestyle of astronauts. As he takes the helm, however, he struggles to follow directions. Initially, he fails to understand port and starboard, causing the boat to veer off course multiple times, creating chaos onboard, with items flying about. Despite Sol's efforts to help her grandfather with steering, it's evident he cannot effectively adjust to the changing circumstances.

As the day progresses, Griff attempts to demonstrate his knowledge of weather forecasting, sharing his created almanac filled with future predictions, reflecting on his confidence and understanding of various sciences. However, as the wind picks up and the conditions worsen, he becomes increasingly agitated and eventually resorts to actions that threaten the vessel's stability. His panic culminates in an incident that almost sinks them but is averted when Sol successfully manages the boat after shutting off the intake he opened.

During the night, the situation remains tense. The sailors press on, facing the challenges of rough seas and sleeping only fitfully. The narrative hints at Griff's deteriorating state, culminating in him becoming unconscious after some distressing episodes. As dawn breaks, they discover they have arrived at an island, potentially offering shelter. However, their relief is short-lived when they spot a daunting, unfamiliar ship anchored nearby, marking a shift in their journey's tone.

The chapter closes with an ominous sense of betrayal as the protagonists face a threat from individuals on the ship who seem to be observing their every move. Among them is a man named Tom Skint, recognized from past encounters, intensifying the feeling of danger and foreshadowing future conflict. The description of the ship reflects a sense of decay and menace, reinforcing their apprehension as they cautiously assess their new predicament.