

Read

You are going to read another excerpt from *Kensuke's kingdom*.

Before you read

1. Why is there a date at the beginning of the excerpt?
2. This excerpt is from *Chapter Three: Ship's log*. What is a ship's log?
3. From the title of the chapter, what do you expect to read about here?

Read

July 28

I look around me. It's a dark, dark night. No moon. No stars. But it's calm again, at last. I'll be twelve tomorrow, but I don't think anyone except me will remember it.

We've had a terrible time, far worse even than in the Bay of Biscay. Ever since we left Sydney, it's been just storm after storm, and each one blows us further north across the Coral Sea. The *rudder* cable has snapped. Dad's done what he can, but it's still not right. The self-steering doesn't work anymore, so someone's got to be at the wheel all the time. And that means Dad or me, because Mum is sick. It's her stomach cramps again, but they're a lot worse. She doesn't want to eat at all. All she has is sugared water. She hasn't been able to look at the charts for three days. Dad wants to put out a **Mayday** call, but Mum won't let him. She says that's giving in, and she's never giving in. Dad and I have been doing the *navigation* together. We've been doing our best, but I don't think we know where we are any more.

They're both asleep down below. Dad's really wiped out. I'm at the wheel in the **cockpit**. I've got Eddie's football with me. It's been lucky for us so far. And now we really need it. We need Mum to get better, or we're in real trouble. I don't know if we could stand another storm. Thank God it's calm. It'll help Mum to sleep. You can't sleep when you're being slammed about all the time.

It is so dark out there. Black. Stella's barking. She's up by the bow. She hasn't got her harness clipped on.

Michael Morpurgo. *Kensuke's kingdom*, pp. 40-42



Word list

cockpit – small cabin from which boat is steered

Mayday – emergency call for help