Extreme Action Series

NOBODY CARES

By Frances Croft

Nobody Cares
Part One

"Hurry up, John," Steven called. "Surf looks great. I'm off." Without waiting for his twelve year old brother, Steven picked up his surfboard and walked across the sand away from the small car park and towards the sea. Suddenly he stopped and yelled, "John!"

"I'm coming," replied John sulkily.

"Then hurry up. I don't know why I've got to look after you."

"You don't. I can look after myself."

"Mum and Dad said you're supposed to get more exercise. You're not allowed to lie on the sand and read your book," said Steven firmly.

"Shut up," John muttered under his breath. "I know what they said."

Steven, who had just turned fourteen, shrugged his shoulders. The waves rolling onto the shore were perfect for surfing. They watched a few of the surfers already out there. "Hey John", Steven said, "check out Matt coming in on that wave! Not bad hey?"

"No," said John sulkily. Steven didn't seem to notice. He was too busy watching the surf.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," Steven said. "Chris rang. He's going to take Matt and me flying when the Aero Club has its next open day. Dad said he's going to let me go."

"You and Matt don't like flying," said John, annoyed. "I'm the one who likes planes." Steven ignored him and continued on,

crumpled. Then, without warning, the old, green car, still moving with no driver, had swung across the road and had come straight towards him. There wasn't time to scream. It wasn't real. It wasn't happening to him. He was thrown forward with the impact. He couldn't breathe. Everything was so hot. There was a crackle, a hiss and a roar, and flames leapt high into the air. The back of the car was on fire. He was going to die! He'd remembered nothing more until he'd opened his eyes in hospital and saw his parents sitting by his bed gazing at his badly burnt body.

John took a deep breath. As if in a dream he heard the waves crashing on the beach and smelt the sea. He felt the hot sand on his feet and realised where he was. He sat up. No one could see the massive scars under his wet suit but he knew they were there. People said he was lucky that his face hadn't been burnt but most days he just wished he'd died. He didn't like being different.

He looked around. Behind him the plane was still burning. The car park was full and Brent Jackson and his sons were keeping everyone away from the area. Small groups of people were talking and pointing to the burnt out plane.

John looked out to sea. If he paddled out past the breakers there would only be the sea and his surfboard. He frowned. Could he let his board drift with the current and end it all?

The doctors had worked hard to save him but he'd never be able to wear shorts again, his legs were so badly scarred. It made him feel like a freak.

No, he decided, he wouldn't go in the water, he'd stay where he was. No one would miss him. He was a misfit. When Steven came back, he'd tell him he'd been too tired to surf and he wanted to finish his book. Steven and his friends didn't want him. They didn't care what he did. All they thought about was themselves. He leaned forward, clenched his hands and stared at the surf.

caught the board, tossed it like a piece of paper, turned it around and pulled him with it. He was drifting rapidly away from the shore. On his left the headland stretched out to sea and in the distance he could hear the sound of the waves crashing onto a rocky outcrop. The tide was pulling him fast towards it. In a short time there wouldn't be anything left of him. He would be smashed on the rocks like a piece of dead wood.

"Help!" he yelled. He dug his hands in the water and paddled, desperately trying to turn his board around. He had to turn it. The nose had to point to the shore. His heart pounded. It was no use. The current was too strong. The panic rose in his chest. He would die. No one would know how he'd struggled to get back.

"I'm not going to die," he muttered, breathing hard. He paddled frantically. A cold wind blew across the sea. The tide was going out! He could feel it under his board. Desperately he tried to paddle faster. His hands clawed the water. It was no use. He couldn't fight any more.

He looked up just as his head clipped the side of a jagged piece of rock. His head dropped onto the tossing board. His arms dragged in the water and his body went limp as his board was pulled back and forth into the rocks.

"John, John," yelled a voice against the wind, "grab my hand." But Peter's voice fell on deaf ears.

"Steven, go on the other side," said Peter,

"Quickly, hold the board. John, we're going to take you back to the shore.

"The wind's changed. It'll help us. Come on, Steven, paddle!"

As if in a dream John heard voices but was unable to move. It was as if he wasn't really there. He felt nothing. At one stage he seemed to be looking down at his limp body on the board. He gasped for air.

"John, hang on, you're going to be all right. Steven, paddle. Now, together, we'll go over to the left, across the current," Peter called. Together they paddled, their hands dipping in and out of the water in unison.

"That's it, Steven. Keep it up. Take some deep breaths. Concentrate, kick hard." Peter's voice was blown away by the wind. "We'll make it. Everything's going to be all right, John."

"It's too far. I can't do any more. I'll have to let go," Steven shouted at last.

"We're nearly there," Peter cried. "Come on, Steven." The constant battle with the outgoing tide had been almost too much.

"This way," a voice cried. "I'll take over."

The boys looked up to see the lifeguard. "Thank God," Steven gasped.

"You're doing well boys," Jason, the lifeguard said. "Not far to go now."

Thankfully Steven swam slightly to his right and Jason took his place. The waves