

Extreme Action Series

TOO FAR OUT



By Frances Croft

Too Far Out

Part One

Paul looked towards the car park behind the club house. "Cathy and Tim have arrived," he called to Bruce who was preparing his rig.

"Tim's got a new board again," Paul murmured.

"Comes from having a rich father," Bruce half laughed, standing and holding the mast. "I couldn't afford anything like that."

This was the best windsurfing area along the coast. A few years ago the local community had helped raise money for the simple but effective clubhouse. There had always been some friction between the club members and Tim. Bryan Carter, Tim's father, had paid the major bills for the clubhouse when it was being built. Since then Tim seemed to think that he could do as he liked. He hadn't helped with any painting or manual work. When anyone asked him to help, he always said, "I've done my part. Remember, Dad paid most of the bills. You guys can finish it."

"Hi," Paul called to Cathy and Tim as they approached. He picked up his gear to carry it down to the water's edge. "Going out?"

"Sure," Tim answered. "We're going to try these new boards. I hope they're as good as they're supposed to be."

"They're brilliant. I was looking at them in town. Should be able to go well out with them." Bruce couldn't keep the envy out of his voice.

"Hey Tim, is that yours?" Paul nodded upwards in the direction of the new black convertible parked on the road.

"Yeah, I got it from Dad for my eighteenth last week," he smiled. Bruce and Paul said nothing for a minute, looking at the new car and wondering what it must be like to be given one.

"Come on, Cathy. Let's go out," said Tim, snapping the boys out of their dream.

"The weather report's not good for this afternoon," Paul said staring out to sea. "There could be the odd thunderstorm."

Ignoring Paul, Tim walked across the sand. "Coming Cathy?"

She hesitated and glanced at her friends. Her slender fingers twisted her blonde hair. What if Paul was right and the wind got up? She hadn't been windsurfing very long. Yesterday, when Tim had rung, she'd said she wouldn't go out with him. At the last minute she'd changed her mind although her parents weren't happy about it. They thought she should be studying for her exams.

"Are you coming, Cathy?" Tim called sharply. His dark eyes flashed and his face twisted in annoyance. "There's not a cloud in the sky. Cathy, are you coming or not?"

Casting a quick apologetic look at Paul and the others, she hurried after him.

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Part Five

"I'll go," Paul called a short time later when he heard a knock on the door. "It'll be Bruce." He hurried to the door. "Come in. Dad's in the kitchen."

"Good morning, Mr Walters," Bruce said. "I haven't slept all night thinking about Tim. It's warm in here but it's so cold outside I can't imagine being out there in the water."

"Neither can I," Michael Walters replied. "How are you, Bruce?"

"Pretty sore but glad to be alive."

"Let's see if we can work out where Tim could be. This is where we last saw him or thought we saw him," Paul said eagerly. He waved Bruce over to the map and pointed to the area well to the north.

"Time for the latest news," Michael Walters said. He pulled up a chair beside the table and turned up the radio.

"Tim Carter, son of a prominent lawyer, Bryan Carter, has been lost at sea while windsurfing," came the announcer's voice.

"Tim could be on that island if the wind changed and blew from the south," Paul said at last. "What do you think, Bruce?"

"Could be, but what if the wind veered to the west? If that happened, he could end up over here." He pointed to an area well south.

"It's very rocky around there," Paul's father murmured.

"That's it! The wind must have veered to the west," Paul exclaimed as he swung round and stood up. "Dad, can I borrow your car, please? I don't know how long we'll be. If we take the road along the top of the hills, we might see something. As you said, the coastline's very rugged to the south."

"I still think he'll be on one of those islands to the north. There are some tiny islands that could provide him with enough shelter to survive," Bruce replied leaning over and pointing to some small dots on the map.

"The lifeguards will check them. That's easy with the helicopter," Paul sighed.

"I'll make you guys some breakfast before you go," Matthew Walters stated. "It could be a long day."

"Thanks, Dad."

Both boys quietly wondered what chance they had of finding Tim. While they ate, they heard the continual drone of the helicopter in the distance.

"Look, down there, between those rocks. I'm sure I saw something," Bruce said, pointing at two huge rocks. "Have a look."

Carefully, Paul adjusted the binoculars. "I can't see anything."

"Down there. More to the left, between those rocks. That way," he said as he pointed again. "Come and stand where I am."

"You're right!" said Paul. "There's a bit of colour. Could be part of Tim's sails. I'll call the police." He ran to the car....."They're sending a helicopter," he shouted to Bruce. "They'll give us a call if they find anything." He put the phone down.



"Well I guess there's nothing more we can do," said Bruce.

"I'm not going until I see if it is Tim," Paul said as he sat on the damp grass. "Have another look, Bruce."

They looked closely again at the speck of colour, and agreed it could be Tim's rig.

"There's the helicopter," Bruce exclaimed waving his arm. They watched anxiously as it circled over the tiny, rocky area.

"They must have found something," Paul shouted. "They're dropping someone down."

"I can't see what's happening," Bruce moaned. "They're behind that huge rock." At last there was a movement and very slowly a stretcher was inched up. "It must be, Tim."

The mobile rang. "I'll get it," Bruce shouted and then called, "Tim's unconscious and he's going to hospital."

"Let's go home," Paul said. "I'm exhausted." His mind refused to think. His dream had been true.

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