

GRACE DARLING - HEROINE OF THE SEA

2: The rescue

Louise: Hello, My name's Louise. I'm a volunteer for the Royal National lifeboat society, or the RNLI, as it's called for short. We go out and rescue people who are in trouble at sea.

Do you remember last time, I got a call on my pager, telling me that a boat needed our help and you came 'out on a shout' - that's a rescue mission - on the lifeboat with me? Well, I'm on duty again today and I've got my pager with me, just in case I'm needed. But in the meantime, I'm going to tell you the next part of our story, all about my heroine, Grace Darling. Do you remember what's happened so far?

SFX *Rough sea, music*

It was September, in the year 1838. Grace was alone with her parents in the lighthouse where they lived in the Farne Islands, when the weather turned from bad, to worse...

That night, Grace couldn't sleep. At a quarter to five in the morning, she looked out of her window and saw the shipwreck.

Let's find out a little more about this ship. She was called the *Forfarshire* and she was a steam ship.

SFX *Steam ship - engine, hoots*

The *Forfarshire* was on a voyage from Hull to Dundee and she was carrying, as her cargo, soap, hardware and materials for spinning. Also on board were sixty crew and passengers.

She set sail on the 5th September 1838, but the next day, the boiler began to leak...

SFX *Steam ship's engine - louder*

On the morning of the 7th September, the engine stopped altogether. With no engine to power it, the ship began to drift. The sea became rougher and rougher...

In a moment you're going to be one of the passengers on the ship. Imagine you're standing in your cabin - you could be putting things away, or making your bed. As you do this, the sea gets rougher and rougher, making it harder and harder for you to move around, as the boat rises up and down and rocks from side to side. Show that you're starting to feel rather anxious with all this pitching and rolling! Off you go!

SFX *Signal*

Find a partner, and sit down in a space to listen to the next part of the story.

[PAUSE]

At about 4am, there was a huge crash. The ship hit Big Harcar Rock.

SFX *Crash as the ship hits the rock*

When it hit the rock, it broke in two.



SFX *Ship breaking, rough sea*

It happened so quickly that there was no time for anyone to get into the lifeboats. The back half of the ship was swept away in the sea and with it, most of the passengers. A few survivors in the front managed to cling onto Big Harcar Rock.

At 7am, it became light enough for Grace and her father to see.

- Grace: There are some people on the rock! Dad, I can see them! They're moving, I'm sure of it! They're alive! Can we row out now?
- William: Are you sure you want to do this, Grace? It's just you and me. The cobbles meant to be rowed by three or four men and on this rough sea...I don't know if we'll make it...
- Grace: Dad, you must let me help! I can do it! I know I can!
- William: Grace. I don't know if I can let you risk your life...
- Grace: I can do it! Please, Dad! There's not much time, if we going to reach those people. You know I can row as well as any of my brothers. I can do it! Mam, tell him I can!
- William: Grace! We need to think about it. Tell me again: what you can see.
- Louise: Now you're going to work together in your pairs so stand ready together in a space.**
[PAUSE]

Are you standing ready with your partner?

- [PAUSE]
In a moment, one of you is going to be like Grace and the other is like her father, William, so decide who you're going to be now.
[PAUSE]
Now, stand next to each other, facing the front.
[PAUSE]
Imagine one of you, like Grace, is standing at the top of the lighthouse, looking out towards the shipwreck on Big Harcar Rock.
[PAUSE]
Your partner is downstairs, like William, so you'll need to sit down on the floor.
[PAUSE]
In a moment, if you are like William, ask what Grace can see. What are the right questions, to find out as much information as you can, as quickly as possible? Ask them now! And if you're like Grace, answer as best you can. Off you go!

SFX *Signal*

Sit down with your partner and listen.
[PAUSE]
As it became lighter, William turned to Grace...

- William: Very well, my brave girl. We'll row out together. I'll row with one oar. You take the other.
- Grace: I won't let you down Dad. Goodbye, Mam!
- SFX *Boat being pushed out and Grace and William climbing in*
- William: That's it. We've got her. You in?



Grace: Yes!

William: Take the oar, quick!

Louise: So, just as it was getting light, Grace and her father rowed out into the treacherous sea.

The cobble they rowed was twenty-one feet long - that's more than three times the length of a tall grown up and it was meant to be rowed by four people! But Grace was strong and determined. She took one oar and her father took the other.

William: Are you alright, Grace?

Grace: Yes, Dad.

William: It's a long row. Don't tire yourself too quickly. Nice and steady! That's it. You're doing well.

Grace: Not far now, Dad!

Louise: Now, in a moment, when you hear the music imagine, with your partner, that you're like Grace and William rowing through the rough sea.

You're going to sit one behind the other, facing the same direction and row on the spot, turning every now and then to look behind you to make sure you're going in the right direction!

Then, when the music ends, take it in turns to say your thoughts out loud about the people you are trying to reach. Off you go!

SFX Rough sea and music

SFX Signal

Relax and listen to what happened next.
[PAUSE]

SFX Rough sea

At last, Grace and her father reached Big Harcar Rock. The survivors had seen them coming and were waiting on the rock, desperate to climb aboard the cobble.

William: *[To the survivors]* It's alright, we're here now! We're going to help you, but you can't all come on at once, you'll overload the boat. Wait a moment! I'll come up!
[To Grace] Now Grace, you'll have to hold the boat steady, while I go onto the rock to organise things. Do you think you can do that?

Grace: I think so...

William: Hold it steady now!

Grace: I will, Dad!

SFX Oars in the water

Grace: You will hold still. You will!

William: Listen everyone! We'll take you back, but you can't all come at once. You understand? It's too much for the boat.

Louise: On the rocks, still alive, were eight men and a woman.



William: We need to decide who should come first back to the lighthouse and who can wait just a little longer. Are you alright, Grace?

Grace: Yes...I can hold it!

William: We'd better hurry!

Louise: **Grace held the cobble steady, while her father helped on some of the survivors. First on were the woman, a man who had been injured and three of the other men.**

Now, you are going to work in groups of four to show a still picture of this rescue scene. So first of all, join up with another pair and sit down in a space. If you can't make a group of four, get into a group of three instead.

[PAUSE]

Now, with your group, decide which part of the rescue you'd like to show.

Perhaps you'll show the survivors beckoning to Grace and her father, as they row towards them on the rock.

Or you might show Grace holding the boat steady, while her father scrambles onto the rocks to organise the survivors.

Or perhaps you'll show the survivors climbing into the boat. It's up to you!

So decide who you're going to be and practise making your still picture now. Then be ready to show it to everyone else.

SFX Signal

And sit down in a space again with just a partner.
[PAUSE]

Once the boat was full, it was time to row back.

SFX Sea, waves etc, creaking of boat as William climbs in

William: All in! *[Calling to survivors]* Don't worry! We'll be back for the rest of you soon. *[Quietly to Grace]* Well done, Grace! You held the boat steady. I'm proud of you.

Grace: Thanks, Dad.

Louise: **Grace's father and three of the rescued men rowed Grace, and the woman and the injured man back to the lighthouse.**

Grace then stayed at the lighthouse while her father and two of the rescued men rowed back to Harcar Rock to rescue the other four men.

Later, they learnt that only nine other people had survived. When the ship had broken in two, they'd managed to climb onto its lifeboat and were rescued, later that night, by a passing ship.

After this day, Grace's life was to change forever. The story of how she had rescued some of the crew, by rowing out in the storm and risking her own life was on the front pages of all the newspapers. Everyone wanted to find out about her. With your partner, imagine that one of you is Grace and one of you is a reporter from the newspaper, the *Sunderland Herald*.



Reporter, ask Grace as many questions as you can think of, such as: 'Were you frightened? Did you think of turning back? Was it difficult to hold the boat still on your own? Had you ever rowed in a storm before?'

It's up to you - but try and find out everything you can and Grace, do your best to answer! Be ready to show your scene if you're asked.

SFX Signal

Louise: Sit down in a space, to listen to the last part of the story.
[PAUSE]
Grace was a national heroine. Many people wanted to visit her and she was sent hundreds of letters and presents.

SFX Sea, wind, rowing boat

William: Delivery for Miss Darling!

Grace: What've you got there, Dad!

William: More presents for you Grace. Every time I go to the mainland, there's more!

Grace: More?

William: Aye - look - the boat's sinking under the weight of them all!

Grace: Why do they keep sending me all these things?

William: You're a heroine, Grace! You did a great thing!

SFX Clock ticking. Grace opening letter

Grace: What's this one! [Reading to herself] 'Dear Miss Darling, I would love to come and paint your portrait...' Mmm...very well then, if you must. Oh, look at this one...beautiful writing! Now... [Reading slowly] 'Her Royal Highness...her Royal Highness!' Mam! Dad! It's a letter from Queen Victoria! Oh! She's sent me fifty pounds!

Louise: Grace carried on living at the lighthouse, then sadly, just four years later, when she was only twenty-six, she became ill with tuberculosis. This was a very common disease in the 19th century. A few months later, she died. There was a very big funeral for her in the nearby village of Bamburgh and hundreds of mourners came to say goodbye.

Well that's the end of my story, but you ever go to Bamburgh, you can still see Grace's memorial in the churchyard. You can also visit the *Grace Darling Museum*.

Now, if there's time, get into your groups of three or four again and sit down together in a space.
[PAUSE]

In a moment, in your group make an exhibit, which you think could be displayed in the *Grace Darling Museum*, and which tells us about the most important moments in Grace's life.

It could be a short video, or it could be a model that might move or speak for a few moments - it's up to you!



Work together with your group to make your exhibit and then be ready to show it to everyone else.

SFX

Bleeps

Oh, that's my pager! A boat's in trouble out at sea and the lifeboat's needed. I can't stop! I'm out on a shout! I've got to get down to the lifeboat station quickly! So, get to work on your exhibits now and until another time, it's goodbye!