



Learn English Through Stories

B1 Novels and Stories

Pre-Intermediate Level

**Adopted and modified by
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Pauline O'Carolan

Double TROUBLE



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By Pauline O'Carolan

CHAPTER ONE

Tavioka Island

Iveri sat at the back of the boat and steered it slowly over the water. His day's work on Papaya Island was finished. If he went fast, Iveri could get home to Tavioka Island in fifteen minutes. But he wasn't in a hurry today.

It was a warm and sunny afternoon. Iveri stopped the boat and turned off the motor. He threw the anchor into the water. The anchor hit the sand below and the boat rocked gently in one place. Iveri sat in the bottom of the boat and lay back with his hands behind his head.

Today was a special day for Iveri. It was the day a family from New Zealand was coming to stay on Tavioka.

Iveri knew all about tourists. He had started work at the Papaya Island Resort when he left school. He took the tourists horse riding along the beaches and into the centre of the island. Sometimes he and some other Fijian boys played music in a band while the tourists at the resort ate their dinner. When he finished work each day, he left the tourists on Papaya.

But today was different. Now the first tourists were going to stay on Tavioka. They were going to stay with Iveri's family. He wasn't very happy about that.

The boat rocked and Iveri's eyes closed. He was tired.

Then he remembered that his mother had told him not to be late. 'The Robinsons have two children,' she'd said. 'Please be nice to them.'

Iveri sat up and pulled up the anchor. He started the boat's motor and steered towards Tavioka again.

When Iveri got closer to home he saw two people - girls on the beach near his village. They weren't looking towards him. He turned off the motor and let the boat drift along the shore away from the young people. They still didn't notice him. The girls had blond hair. They both wore T-shirts and long shorts. One was shouting at the other. The other one had her head down and was kicking the sand with her toe. Iveri thought, it's going to be an interesting week!

The boat was drifting too far from shore. Iveri started the motor and steered closer. The girls turned and looked at him as he came into the shallow water. He dropped the anchor, climbed out of the boat and walked towards them.

'Hello! Bula!' he said. Then he stopped and looked closely at the girls. The one in the red T-shirt who had been shouting was a girl. But the other one in the green T-shirt was a boy. Iveri smiled. The boy's hair was almost as long as the girl's hair. They were twins.

Michelle didn't like the way the tall Fijian boy stared at her. Maybe he's never seen twins before, she thought.

'Bula to you,' she said, but she wasn't very friendly. She wasn't feeling very happy. She hadn't wanted to come to Fiji.

'I've seen enough Pacific islands in my life!' she'd said to her brother Peter before they came. 'It's okay for you. You do anything Mum wants.' Michelle had wanted to go skiing in Europe. She certainly didn't want to stay in a Fijian village. But their parents wanted a different holiday this year.

'At least we could have gone to Papaya Island Resort instead of this place,' Michelle had said to Peter. 'There are lots of things to do there.'

Peter was quite happy to come to the village. The family's holidays were usually too busy for him.

Michelle asked Iveri, 'Do you live here?'

'Yes,' he replied. 'Tavioka is my home.' He put out his hand to Michelle. 'My name is Iveri. Your family is staying with mine.'

Michelle shook his hand. 'I'm Michelle Robinson,' she said. She pointed at her brother. 'And that's Peter.'

Peter said, 'Hello! Bula!'

Iveri shook his hand.

Michelle said, 'Our mother said your father is the chief here.'

'Yes, I am the chief's son,' said Iveri. 'I must go home. My mother wants me.' He began to walk up the path from the beach. Michelle and Peter walked with him. Three small children with big smiles were playing with a dog beside the path. They called out, 'Bula!' to Iveri.

'So, if you're the chief's son, does that mean you'll be chief one day?' Michelle asked.

'Oh no, I'll never be chief. My father has brothers and I am my father's youngest son. When my father dies, the clan will choose another chief. The clan won't choose me.'

Peter said, 'We met your mother. She's very happy about our family coming to Tavioka.'

'Yes, she is,' said Iveri. 'My mother works at the resort over on Papaya. She likes tourists.'

Maybe she won't like tourists after living with Michelle for a week, thought Peter.

CHAPTER TWO

A village welcome

They were at the village now. It was quite small. Most houses were made of cement and painted bright colours like blue, green or pink. More children looked out of windows and doors at them. 'Bula!' Women sat in doorways and said, 'Bula!' when they passed.

Michelle and Peter had already seen the house they were going to sleep in. It was a cement house next to Iveri's family bure, a house made of wood and grass. The Robinsons' house had two rooms. One was for Tom and Nicola, the twins' parents, and the other was for Michelle and Peter. The rooms had beds and cupboards in them and a chair or two. The floors were covered with grass mats. There was no electricity on Tavioka, so they were going to use oil lamps at night. Nicola told Michelle and Peter that it was an adventure. Michelle thought it wasn't her kind of adventure!

Tom and Nicola were standing with Iveri's mother, Tema, on the rara, the village green in the centre of the village. Tema was a big woman. She was wearing a long yellow dress with white flowers on it.

Tema said, 'Iveri, I see you have met the children. Tom, Nicola, here is my youngest son, Iveri.'

Iveri shook hands with Tom and Nicola and said, 'Nice to meet you. Welcome.'

'We hope you like it here,' Tema said to the Robinsons. 'There are a lot of things to see on Tavioka - the beach, the reef, the river, the hills. If you need anything, please ask.'

A noise made them all look around. A man had begun to hit a wooden drum in the centre of the rara.

Tema continued, 'Iveri, now it is time for sevusevu.'

'Sevusevu?' said Michelle.

Peter said, 'The ceremony to welcome us to the village.' Everyone smiled at him.

Peter thinks he knows everything, Michelle thought. Mum thinks he can't do anything wrong.

The man kept hitting the drum. People came from their houses. Some women were carrying plates of food.

Tema said, 'We will all eat. Our men have been working very hard.' She pointed behind them. 'They are building a new church. Our old church is too small.'

A small man with white hair came out of the church. He walked slowly. His face was tired.

'Here is my husband, Ratu Loti,' said Tema.

'Ratu means "chief",' Peter explained quietly to Michelle.

Ratu Loti shook everyone's hands.

Tom gave him a small paper bag and said, 'This is a gift from us to you - kava powder.'

'Vinaka,' said the Ratu. 'Thank you.'

The women put mats on the grass and put the plates of food on the mats. The women and children and young people sat down.

'You can sit with me,' Tema said to the Robinsons.

The men of the village sat together in a circle. Ratu Loti began to speak. He spoke in Fijian for a long time. Other men spoke. They were welcoming the Robinsons to Tavioka.

Then Tema said to Tom, 'You must speak now.'

Everyone looked at Tom. He smiled and said, 'Thank you for welcoming us to your village. Nicola, Peter, Michelle and I are very happy to be here on Tavioka Island. We've been to a lot of places in the Pacific - I do a lot of work in the islands with my building company - but we've never really seen the way people live outside the resorts. I think we're going to enjoy staying here and learning about your life. We hope that Tema's homestay business will help everyone here.'

One of the men opened the paper bag and put the powder into a bowl. Then he picked up a bucket, poured water from the bucket into the bowl and mixed the water with the powder.

'He is making kava,' Iveri said quietly to Michelle and Peter.

The man took the bowl around the circle of men. He gave Ratu Loti a cup made from half a coconut. Ratu Loti clapped once and then drank some kava from the coconut cup. He passed the cup to the man next to him and then clapped

three times. The bowl and cup went slowly around the circle of men, then someone passed it to Tom. He clapped, drank, passed it to Nicola, and then clapped three times. Nicola did the same. Then Peter drank, and passed the cup to Michelle. She looked at the kava in the cup. It was brown.

'What's it like?' Michelle quietly asked Peter before she drank.

'It's okay,' he said.

Michelle drank. It had a taste like pepper. Her tongue and mouth were burning.

Peter laughed. Nicola said, 'Clap, Michelle!'

She put the cup down, clapped and got up from the mat. Nicola said, 'Michelle!' but Michelle didn't stop.

'I need water to wash away that taste!' she said.

Iveri watched Michelle run away from the ceremony.

'Where is your sister going?' he asked Peter.

Peter laughed. 'I don't think she likes kava.'

'Oh, well. The food is good,' Iveri said. He gave Peter some small cakes. The boys talked a little about life in the village and life in New Zealand. Iveri was sixteen - a year older than the twins.

'I wish I was still at school. I left last year,' Iveri said. 'I really wanted to go to a good school in Suva but we are a very poor village. I had to leave school and get a job.'

After the meal Iveri said, 'I have to help my uncle in his garden now.' He said goodbye to Peter and went to look for his uncle. He was surprised that Uncle Vili hadn't been at sevusevu. Maybe he was late coming home from work on Papaya Island. Uncle Vili was a gardener at the resort.

Iveri went to his uncle's house. Uncle Vili lived alone. He wasn't there. Iveri took a machete and a sack and walked out of the village to the hills behind it. The plantations, the villagers' gardens, were there. He cut bananas and coconuts down from trees with the machete. He dug tavioka and dalo from the ground. He put everything in the sack and carried it back to his uncle's. When he got home, he found Uncle Vili, Tema and Ratu Loti sitting together outside the bure. They were drinking tea.

'Uncle, I've been to your plantation. I got some fruit and vegetables for you. I put them in your kitchen,' said Iveri.

'I will bring you some later, Tema,' said Uncle Vili. 'You will need a lot of food for these tourists.'

'Thank you,' Tema smiled. 'Eroni is bringing me some fish too.'

Eroni was one of Iveri's brothers. He was a fisherman. He and his wife and children lived close by.

'You work very hard already, Tema,' Uncle Vili continued. 'These tourists will be too much work for you.'

'I told her that too,' said Ratu Loti. 'We had to build new houses, a special toilet and a new shower room.'

'Loti,' said Tema. 'The houses weren't new. They were houses that belonged to our family already. We just made them better.' Her face was sad. They were the houses of Iveri's oldest brothers. Aseri lived in Suva and Simoni lived in Australia, playing rugby. 'And Simoni sent us money for the toilet and shower.'

Uncle Vili shook his head. 'These people will be trouble. They should stay in the resorts with the other tourists.'

'The village will get all the money from the homestay business,' said Tema. 'It will be good for all of us.'

Ratu Loti smiled at Tema. 'We will see, my dear.'

Tema told Iveri, 'Time for a wash. Remember you're taking the Robinsons to the meke on Papaya tonight.'

Iveri went to have a shower in the new shower room. It was nicer than washing in the water trough behind the bure. But there was someone already in the room. He could hear a beautiful voice singing in the shower. Michelle or her mother, he thought. He washed in the water trough then he saw Peter come out of the shower room. Peter looked at him uncertainly.

Iveri said, 'Good singing!'

Peter smiled and said, 'Thanks, Iveri. I love music. I'm really looking forward to the concert tonight.'

'Yes, you'll enjoy the meke,' said Iveri.

After dinner, Iveri took the tourists to Papaya Island Resort in Ratu Loti's boat. Uncle Vili came too.

Uncle Vili sat with Tom and Nicola. 'You will like the resort,' he told them. 'There are many things to do there.'

There was singing and dancing at the meke. A man played a wooden drum. Iveri and his band played and sang. Peter and his parents smiled and clapped. Michelle didn't smile once.

After the meke, Iveri showed the family around the resort. It was a beautiful place with a lot of shops and many things to do. He heard Michelle say, 'I'd love to stay here. It's nicer than the village.'

Nicola said, 'Sh!' angrily.

It was time to go back to Tavioka. The Robinsons waited on the wharf while Iveri looked for his uncle.

He found Uncle Vili sitting with two men outside a bure in the resort. They were drinking kava. One of the men was a tall thin tourist. He was bald and was wearing a red shirt with white flowers on it and blue shorts. His legs were white and hairy. The other man was a Fijian called Sami.

Iveri said, 'Bula!' to the men. 'We are ready to return to Tavioka, Uncle.'

'Go without me, Iveri. I will stay on Papaya tonight.'

Iveri walked away. He was surprised to see Sami there. Sami was a bad person. He had once lived on Tavioka but the Ratu had made him leave the island. He had gone to Suva and got into trouble there. What was Sami doing on Papaya? And why was he drinking with Uncle Vili?

CHAPTER THREE

Nothing happens on Sunday

After breakfast, the Robinsons went to church with Ratu Loti, Tema and Iveri. They wore their best clothes. Michelle wore her new silver flip-flops. They all had to leave their shoes at the church door.

Peter loved the church. He sang all the songs. The words were Fijian, but that wasn't a problem for Peter. He just sang, 'La, la, la!' The Fijians all turned to look at him. Michelle wanted him to stop. She kicked him.

When church was over Michelle hurried outside. She looked for her flip-flops, but they were gone.

'What's wrong, Michelle?' Tom asked.

'I can't find my flip-flops.'

'You must be looking in the wrong place,' he said.

'No, I'm not,' she said. 'I put them by the door.'

'That's strange,' said Tom. Then he said, 'Hey, where are my shoes?' He began to look among all the shoes. 'I can't see your mother's shoes, or Peter's.'

Tema came up and asked, 'What's wrong, Tom?'

'Michelle can't find her flip-flops and I can't find my shoes. Nicola's and Peter's shoes have gone too.'

Most of the villagers had taken their shoes. There were only a few shoes and flip-flops left outside the church.

'Somebody has taken our shoes,' said Michelle angrily.

Tema said, 'Sorry! It must be a mistake.'

'How can somebody take four pairs of shoes by mistake?' Michelle shouted.

Tom and Nicola both said, 'Michelle!' and Peter said, 'Be quiet, Michelle. Maybe someone needs shoes more than we need them.'

Michelle marched off angrily and sat in her room. Why did we come to this silly village? she thought. I want to go and stay at the resort.

After lunch, Ratu Loti asked Iveri to take the twins to the river. 'The river is a wonderful place,' he said. 'I am too old to swim now, but when I was a young man I went there every day.'

Iveri wanted to visit friends. But he was a good son and always did what Ratu Loti asked him.

Michelle liked the idea. Swimming was something she was good at. She went to change her clothes.

'I'm not a very strong swimmer,' said Peter.

'That's okay, it's an easy place to swim,' said Iveri, and Peter went to change too.

When the twins returned, Iveri said, 'Let's go!'

The young people walked through the village towards the plantations.

'I didn't know there was a river on Tavioka,' said Peter.

'I thought you knew everything,' said Michelle.

'Shut up!' said Peter.

Iveri didn't want them to fight. 'It's only a small river,' he said.

They walked between thick fruit trees towards the hills. Then they came to the river. Peter and Michelle followed Iveri across the river where it was very

shallow. The water moved fast over the rocks. One of Peter's flip-flops fell off and was carried away by the river.

'Oh no,' said Peter. 'I'll have no shoes left!'

When they were across the river, Iveri led them along the bank to a sandy area. 'The river is deep here and it moves fast,' he said. 'If you jump in here you will drift a long way. It's fun!' He jumped into the water. The river carried him downstream, away from the twins. Michelle jumped straight in after him. Peter sat on the bank with his legs in the water.

Iveri and Michelle swam back up the river. 'Come on, Peter!' said Iveri.

Peter shook his head. 'I don't really like swimming in rivers or the sea,' he said. 'I like to see the bottom.'

'Just get wet,' said Michelle.

Iveri watched as Peter slowly walked off the bank and into the water. He sat down and let the water cover him to his neck. 'It's nice,' he said.

When Iveri and Michelle were tired, they sat with Peter in the water.

'You two are very different,' said Iveri. 'You look the same but you're not like twins at all!'

Michelle looked angry but Peter laughed. 'Did you think twins didn't fight? We're just like any brother and sister, you know.'

'Bula!' called a voice behind them. It was Uncle Vili. He was carrying his machete and a sack over his shoulder. He smiled. 'It's nice to be a tourist,' he said to the twins. 'No work.' He walked past them.

Iveri showed Peter and Michelle that the riverbank was made of clay. 'The women in the village make pots from it,' he said.

'I know something you can do with clay,' said Michelle. She dug some clay out of the bank with her fingers. Then she put the clay on Peter's nose.

Iveri laughed at the look on Peter's face. He stopped laughing when Michelle put clay on his nose. Then he took some clay and tried to catch Michelle. The three of them had a clay fight. It was good fun, and they got clay all over them. Afterwards they washed it off in the water.

The sun was going down when Iveri took the twins back to the village. Michelle suddenly stopped. She pointed at something on the path. 'What's that?' she asked.

Iveri said, 'It's a toad. They live near the river.'

'Yuck! They're ugly,' said Michelle. 'Let's go!'

'Can we come here again, Iveri?' Peter asked.

'I have to work at Papaya Island Resort most days,' Iveri said. 'But you two can come here any time.'

Michelle and Peter were tired and went to bed early. It was very dark on the island at night. There was lamplight, but when the lights went out there was only the light from the moon and stars.

Peter woke when something fell onto his bed. He put his hand out and touched it. It was wet and moved. He felt something else jump onto the bed. He got out of bed quickly and looked for the lamp. Something moved near his foot. He lit the lamp. The room was full of big toads. Their eyes stared at him. A fat toad jumped onto Michelle's bed and she woke up. When she saw the toad on her bed, she began to scream.

There were screams coming from Nicola and Tom's room too. That's Mum, Peter thought. Then there was the sound of feet outside and Iveri called, 'What's wrong?'

Peter stepped over the toads and opened the door. Iveri and Tema were there.

'Look!' Peter said.

They looked inside. Michelle stopped screaming.

'Where did the toads come from?' Tema asked.

'Look. Someone has cut the flyscreen,' Iveri said. There was a big hole in the flyscreen. A sack was lying in the corner of the room. More toads were coming out of it.

Tom and Nicola came to the door.

'Tema, our room is full of toads,' said Tom. Then he saw that Peter and Michelle's was too.

Iveri and Peter went to look at the flyscreen in Tom and Nicola's room. It had been cut too.

'Who did this?' Tema asked.

'Maybe someone in the village doesn't like tourists,' said Tom.

'No!' said Tema.

'They are just toads. We won't leave because of a few toads,' Nicola said bravely.

Tema tried to smile.

Iveri said, 'Help me get the toads out of the rooms, Peter. They won't hurt you.'

First Peter took some photographs. He wished he'd taken a picture of Michelle's face!

It was fun getting the toads out of the rooms. Peter chased them and Iveri caught them and put them back in the sack. 'I'll take them to the river before work tomorrow,' he said.

Peter and Michelle went back to bed but Michelle made Peter keep the lamp on. 'I hope there aren't any snakes on Tavioka,' she said.

CHAPTER FOUR

Out on the reef

Iveri took the toads away from the village early in the morning and let them go near the river. When he arrived home, the Robinsons were eating breakfast outside their house. Ratu Loti was sitting with them.

'Uncle Vili will take your mother to work on Papaya,' said the Ratu. 'This morning I want you to take our visitors out in the new boat. Show them the reef.'

'That will be fun,' said Tom.

Iveri heard Michelle say to Peter, 'How many coral reefs have we looked at? I'd rather dive on one!'

Iveri said, 'I can take you diving one day.'

Michelle smiled at him. 'Thanks.'

'Vinaka,' Peter said. 'That means, "thank you".'

Michelle gave Peter a hard push. 'You think you know everything,' she said. She walked away from the boys.

Iveri shook his head. He was glad she wasn't his sister!

Tema was ready for work. She gave the Robinsons a basket of food to eat on the boat. 'I will walk to the beach with you, Iveri. Your Uncle Vili will be waiting to take me to Papaya.'

Iveri led the way to the beach. The 'new' boat was an old one Ratu Loti had bought from Papaya Island Resort. He and Iveri had painted it blue and white. It was a special boat for looking at the coral reef. When you looked through the glass boxes in the floor, you could see the reef under you.

Uncle Vili was waiting for Tema. He helped her into his boat. 'Bula!' he said to the Robinsons with a big smile. 'Where are you taking our friends today, Iveri?'

'To the reef near Papaya.'

'Show them the Tavioka reef too. But be careful! No more surprises for the Robinsons!' said Uncle Vili. He laughed.

Iveri thought, My mother must have told him about the toads.

Uncle Vili started his boat's motor. Tema waved to them as the boat moved off towards Papaya Island.

Iveri helped the Robinsons into the boat. It had long blue seats along each side and a seat for Iveri in the back. Tom and Michelle sat on one side and Nicola and Peter sat on the other. The two glass boxes were in the middle of the boat. There were wooden covers over the boxes. Iveri started the motor and steered the boat away from the shore. Children on the beach waved to them.

It was a beautiful day. The sun was hot. Everyone wore hats.

Tom said, 'Where are the lifejackets, Iveri?'

Iveri said, 'We don't have any!'

Tom wasn't happy about that. 'You should have lifejackets. We could have an accident.'

'I'll be very careful, Mr Robinson,' said Iveri. 'And I will ask the Ratu to buy some lifejackets. Perhaps we can get some from the resort.'

There were other boats out on the reef. Most were from the resort. The tourists from the resort went diving and looked at the coral.

In some places, the reef was in shallow water. Iveri had to be careful not to steer the boat near those waters. In other places, the reef lay down deep. He steered through the reef for a while and then he said, 'This is a good place.' He turned off the motor and threw out the anchor.

'Won't the anchor hurt the coral?' Nicola asked.

'No,' said Iveri. 'I am careful. The anchor is in the sand.'

Peter said, 'It's very deep out here.'

'You'll be okay,' said Tom.

Iveri took the wooden covers off the boxes. 'Look down!' he said. 'You'll see the coral and a lot of fish.'

The bright colours below them were amazing. The coral was blue, pink and red.

'Wow! Look at the blue starfish,' said Peter.

'I wish I was down there with the fish,' said Michelle.

They drifted on the water and watched the fish swimming through the coral reef. Some were blue and others were yellow. Some were black and white.

Nicola said, 'Some of the coral is brown, Iveri. Is it dead?'

Iveri told them that too many people dived on the reef and that pollution from the resort was killing the coral. 'There is no pollution on Tavioka,' he said. 'Shall I show you the reef there?'

'Okay,' said Nicola.

Iveri pulled up the anchor, started the motor and steered towards Tavioka. No one noticed a white boat begin to follow Iveri's boat. It was just another tourist boat out on the reef.

They passed Iveri's brother Eroni, the fisherman in his fishing boat. He waved to them. He was going home to Tavioka with a basket full of fish. 'Fish for dinner,' said Iveri.

'Again,' said Michelle very quietly.

Then they were alone on the deep blue sea. The boat was moving fast. Iveri wanted to get to the reef and then home again before he had to go to work at two o'clock.

Iveri heard the sound of another motor. He looked behind him. A white boat was coming quickly towards them.

Tom looked at the white boat and shouted, 'What's that fool doing?'

Nicola screamed, 'He's going to hit us!'

The white boat was almost on top of them. Iveri saw the driver. He was a Fijian and he was wearing sunglasses. He steered right at them. He wasn't going to stop.

Iveri tried to move out of the way but his boat was heavy and slow. The white boat hit them. There was a loud noise and Iveri's boat rocked wildly. Peter was scared and tried to stand up.

'Sit down, Peter,' his father shouted.

The white boat had turned and was coming towards them again.

'Peter, sit down!' Nicola screamed. The boat hit them for the second time. Peter fell into the water. The white boat circled their boat once, then went off very fast.

Iveri stopped the motor. Nicola was screaming. She and Iveri stared over the side of the boat. There was no sign of Peter in the water. Michelle dived into the water. Tom followed her in.

Iveri didn't know what to do. Should he go into the water too? Or should he stay with Peter's mother?

He put his hand on Nicola's. 'Mrs Robinson, they will find Peter.'

'He'll drown,' cried Nicola.

'He'll be okay.' Iveri hoped he was right.

Then they heard a shout. It was Michelle. 'I've got him!' she called.

Nicola and Iveri watched Michelle pull Peter through the water, holding him under the arms. Tom swam beside her.

'His eyes are closed!' said Nicola.

'He's okay!' Tom called. 'His eyes are closed because he's scared.'

Tom got back into the boat and took Peter from Michelle. Nicola covered Peter's face with kisses. Iveri helped Michelle back onto the boat.

'You are very brave,' he said.

Peter opened his eyes. 'Thanks, Michelle,' he said. 'I wish I could swim like you. I wish I was brave like you.'

Michelle's face went red. 'You're okay, Peter. I couldn't let you drown.'

Tom and Nicola told Michelle that she was wonderful. Iveri thought she was too.

CHAPTER FIVE

A strange meeting

There was a small hole in the side of the boat but it was above the water level, and the motor still worked. The Robinsons were very quiet as Iveri took them home. Tom sat close to Michelle and Nicola held Peter's hand. Peter was still shaking. Iveri was quiet too, but his thoughts were very busy. The man in the white boat had been wearing sunglasses but Iveri knew him. It was Sami.

Iveri heard Nicola say to her husband, 'Perhaps we should leave Tavioka, Tom. Too many strange things have happened and Peter nearly drowned.'

Tom said, 'I think we'll have to tell the police. There may be a police station on Papaya.'

When they arrived at Tavioka, the Robinsons walked to the village together. Michelle turned and said, 'It'll be okay, Iveri.'

Iveri tried to smile, but he was unhappy. Poor Peter! And he was worried about his mother. Tema hoped a lot of tourists were going to come to stay on Tavioka. She didn't want to work in the resort. She wanted to stay at home and look after Ratu Loti.

Iveri looked for his father and found him at the church. He told him what had happened. Ratu Loti shook his head.

'My son,' he said. 'This homestay business is a lot of trouble. Tonight I will talk to your mother about it. And I will send someone to look for Sami. He must explain.'

When Iveri got back from work that evening, he found Tema, Ratu Loti and Uncle Vili sitting on the mats inside the bure.

'Where are the Robinsons?' he asked.

'They have already gone to their rooms,' said the Ratu. 'The boy isn't very well.'

'I think they will leave soon,' said Tema.

Uncle Vili said, 'I told you tourists should stay in resorts. They should stay with other tourists.'

'But the only way for people to understand Fijians is to live in a village,' said Tema. 'And their money will come right into the village this way.'

Uncle Vili looked at Ratu Loti and said, 'I have a better idea, Tema. The resort developers are always looking for land. They want to build more resorts. I think we should lease some land to a developer. Maybe some land near Baka Bay. We will get a lot of money. Our people can work in the resort. But we can keep the village for Fijians.'

Ratu Loti listened carefully to his brother. 'There are many things to think about,' he said. 'First we will see what the Robinsons want to do. They were talking about going to the police tomorrow.'

In Nicola and Tom's room, the Robinsons talked.

Nicola said, 'I really think we should leave. It's not safe here.'

Peter was lying on his parents' bed. 'That's not fair!' he said. 'I love it here. And it wasn't Iveri's fault that I fell in.'

Nicola said, 'I think we've learnt enough about village life now. We could go and stay in Papaya Island Resort. Michelle liked it there - didn't you, Michelle?'

Michelle was quiet for a minute. Then she said, 'Someone wants us to leave here. I don't think we should go. Ratu Loti will find them soon. Then things will be okay.'

Nicola said, 'I don't know.'

Tom said, 'Ratu Loti said he was going to find the driver of the white boat. Maybe we should give him a day to do that.'

Peter and Michelle went to their room.

'I thought you wanted to stay at the resort,' said Peter.

'I did. But I've changed my mind. I like the people here. I want Iveri to take me diving. And I want to swim in the river again.'

'I don't think I want to go near water again for a while,' said Peter. 'I was very scared.'

They lay in the dark, talking quietly. They were friends again.

'I'm tired,' said Ratu Loti. Uncle Vili went home, and Tema and the Ratu went to bed.

Iveri stayed up. He was thinking. Why did Uncle Vili want the Ratu to lease some Tavioka land to a developer? Uncle Vili had never wanted any tourists to come to the island.

Iveri needed to talk to his uncle. His uncle hadn't really explained his reasons. Why was a resort better than Tema's homestay business?

The light from the moon was bright as Iveri walked to his uncle's house.

The house was dark. Iveri called out, 'Uncle!' but there was no answer. He went inside and called his uncle again. His foot kicked against something on the floor. He picked it up. It was a small shoe. He took it outside the house and looked at it in the moonlight. It was one of Michelle's silver flip-flops. Had Uncle Vili taken the Robinsons' shoes? Why?

Iveri thought hard. Did Uncle Vili want to make trouble? Was he trying to end the homestay business? Iveri remembered that he had seen Uncle Vili and Sami together at the resort. Were they working together?

Iveri took the flip-flop home and hid it there. Then he walked through the quiet village to the beach. He got into his own boat, pulled up the anchor and began to row across the water. He didn't want to start the motor yet.

It was a windy night and it was hard to row. When his arms were tired, Iveri stopped rowing and started the boat's motor.

On Papaya, he anchored the boat away from the wharf. He walked through the shallow water to the shore. He looked for the bure where he had seen Uncle Vili on Saturday night. He moved from bure to bure. It was easy to see in the moonlight.

When he found the bure, there was a light on inside. He watched and waited. The door opened and Iveri saw Uncle Vili come outside. The bald white man followed him. The man shook Uncle Vili's hand and gave him something. Quickly and quietly, Iveri went closer. He wanted to see what it was. Uncle Vili had some small pieces of paper in his hand. Was it money? The bald man called someone. Sami appeared with a bag. Uncle Vili began to put the paper into the bag. Then the wind blew and a piece of paper flew into the air. It was money. Sami began to chase it at the same time as Iveri ran forward out of the shadows to pick it up. Sami saw him and shouted, 'Stop!'

Iveri didn't look behind him. He held the money in his hand and ran straight for the beach. He wished he was as fast as his brother Simoni, the rugby player. He heard feet coming fast behind him.

CHAPTER SIX

Night on the beach

Peter woke in the middle of the night. The wind was loud outside and he could hear a tree branch hitting the roof. He sat up and said softly, 'Michelle?'

'Are you awake too?' she asked.

'The wind woke me,' said Peter. 'What time is it?'

'Just after two. I can't sleep,' said Michelle. 'I've been thinking about all the things that have happened. Someone doesn't want the homestay business on Tavioka. Who?'

'I don't know,' said Peter. 'But someone must have a reason.'

It was hot in the room. Michelle said, 'Let's go for a walk.'

All the houses in the village were dark, but the moonlight was bright. There were a lot of coconuts on the ground because of the wind. The twins walked to the beach. There were more coconuts there. Peter picked one up. It was heavy. He rolled it along the hard wet sand. Then Michelle picked up a coconut and rolled it at Peter's. It was fun.

Suddenly they heard a boat's motor out to sea. It was coming towards them fast. In the shallow water, the driver threw out the anchor and ran up onto the beach. It was Iveri. He said, 'What are you doing here?' at the same time as Peter said, 'Hey, Iveri, what's happening?'

'Someone's coming after me,' Iveri said. 'I'm going to hide behind the bushes. Don't tell him where I am.' He ran off.

They could hear another boat coming. Iveri's footprints were clear in the moonlight. Peter said to Michelle, 'Quick. Let's roll coconuts over the footprints.' So they took a coconut each and rolled them on the sand. They jumped all over the footprints too. Soon no one could see where Iveri had been.

The second boat came quickly towards the beach. The driver stopped his motor and jumped out into the water. He saw the twins on the beach and came up to them. It was a Fijian man. He was tall and heavy and he wasn't smiling. Peter stood next to Michelle. He wanted to look after her.

The man pointed at Iveri's boat and said, 'Did you see a boy in that?'

'No,' Peter said. 'You're the first person we've seen.'

'I don't believe you,' said the man. His face was angry.

'There's no boy here,' said Michelle.

'Are you hiding him?' the man asked. He came closer. He put his big brown hand on Michelle's arm. 'If you are hiding him, I'll hurt you.'

'No, you won't,' said Peter and moved the man's hand off Michelle's arm. 'I know you! You're the man who tried to drown me. I'll tell Ratu Loti.'

The man marched back to his boat. He sat in it for a minute, then started the motor and steered away.

When he was gone, Iveri came out from behind the bushes.

'Vinaka! Thank you!' he said.

Michelle said, 'Peter was very brave. That was the man in the boat yesterday.'

'He's Sami,' said Iveri. 'Come back to my bure. I have something to show you.'

They walked through the village. When they got to Iveri's bure, he said, 'Wait!' and went inside. He came back out with something in his hand.

'Can we go to your room?' he asked them. 'But we must be quiet.'

Michelle lit the lamp inside their room. Iveri showed them two things. One was Michelle's silver flip-flop, and the other was the money.

He told them the story of the night's adventures. Michelle's eyes shone brightly in the lamplight.

'I think the bald man is a developer. I think he's paying Uncle Vili to stop the homestay business,' said Iveri.

'When are you going to tell the Ratu, Iveri?' Peter asked.

Iveri shook his head. 'I don't know what to do, Peter. My father will be so unhappy. How could his brother do this thing?'

'Your Uncle Vili was very nice to us,' said Michelle. 'And he is very nice to your mother. I'm surprised that he could do such bad things. The developer must be giving him a lot of money.'

'My uncle has no wife or family,' said Iveri. 'He wanted to marry my mother when they were young. My mother chose the Ratu. It made Uncle Vili very unhappy. But he stayed on Tavioka and has been a good brother and a kind uncle. Now my father is old and not very strong. My uncle wants to be chief when the Ratu dies.'

Peter said, 'Will you tell the Ratu in the morning? He needs to know what's happening.'

'Yes,' said Iveri. 'I'll tell him in the morning.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

Enter Mr Brown

Peter was tired in the morning and wanted to sleep longer. Nicola wanted to read a book. So Michelle and her father went for a walk on the island without them. They watched children washing in water troughs outside their houses. They visited the village shop and bought a clay pot for Nicola. Michelle took Tom to the river and showed him the place where she and Peter had swum with Iveri. Everywhere they went people called, 'Bula!' and smiled big, happy smiles.

'It's a lovely place,' said Tom. 'It's hard to believe someone wants us to leave.'

Michelle wanted to tell her father about Uncle Vili, Sami and the developer. But she didn't want him to go to Ratu Loti before Iveri could tell his father the story. She just said, 'The Ratu will find the bad person soon, Dad. I know it.'

When they got back, Peter was awake. He and Nicola were sitting in the sun outside the house.

'Have you seen Iveri this morning?' Michelle asked Peter.

'No,' he said. 'Mum and I went for a little walk but we didn't see him.'

'Maybe he went to work,' said Michelle.

Tom and Nicola were talking. Nicola called the twins over. 'We've decided to stay here for the week.'

'Thank you,' said Peter.

'Vinaka!' said Michelle.

Later, Tema returned from Papaya Island Resort. She almost cried when Tom told her the family was staying. She made them a picnic and they took it to the beach. They sat under a coconut tree and watched the boats out to sea. A white boat was coming towards Tavioka.

'Isn't that the boat that hit us yesterday?' said Peter.

The Fijian, Sami, was steering. The bald man was sitting next to him. Sami stopped the boat close to the shore. The bald man climbed out. He was wearing a purple shirt and white shorts.

'It can't be,' Tom said. 'It's Jasper Brown!'

'Isn't he the man who got you to build him a big hotel in Nadi?' said Nicola.

Peter said, 'And the hotel burnt down before you got paid?'

'Yes. That was Jasper Brown,' said Tom. He put down the banana he had been eating.

'Dad,' Michelle said, 'there's something we have to tell you.'

Tom didn't listen. He marched down the beach towards the men. Nicola and the twins followed.

'Hey!' said Tom. 'I want to talk to you!'

Sami walked towards Tom.

'What were you doing in that boat yesterday?' Tom shouted.

'Tom!' cried the bald man. 'Tom Robinson! What a surprise!' He walked forward with his hand out.

Tom looked at him. 'Brown,' he said. He slowly shook Mr Brown's hand. 'Is that man with you?' he asked.

Mr Brown walked away from Sami. Tom followed him. Nicola went over to Sami and started talking to him angrily.

Michelle went close to Tom and Mr Brown. She wanted to hear what they said.

'Sami's helping me here in Fiji,' said Mr Brown. 'He told me about yesterday. He made a mistake. He thought the Fijian boy was someone else.'

'What? Does he always hit other boats like that? He's dangerous!' said Tom. 'He could have killed us all! I'm going to the police.'

'He's very sorry,' said Mr Brown.

'Dad,' said Michelle.

'Later, Michelle.' Tom kept talking to Mr Brown. 'What are you doing here on Tavioka?'

'I have business with the Ratu,' said Mr Brown.

'Bula!' Uncle Vili appeared along the path. 'Good morning, Mr Brown. Come with me. I will take you to the Ratu now.'

'We'll meet again, Tom,' said Mr Brown.

'Perhaps,' said Tom.

Sami hurried after Uncle Vili and Mr Brown. He looked behind him at Nicola. His face was scared.

'What did you say to him, Nicola?' Tom asked.

'I told him I'd find his mother and tell her what he did,' said Nicola.

Peter and Michelle looked at each other and smiled. Their mother wasn't a big woman, but she could scare people when she was angry.

Tom gave Nicola a kiss. 'Let's forget about Brown and Sami and finish our picnic.'

They ate their food and later Michelle and her parents went swimming. Peter sat in the shallow water and watched them.

They were still on the beach when Iveri came back from Papaya.

'I couldn't tell the Ratu this morning,' said Iveri to Peter and Michelle. 'My mother was crying about the homestay business. I'm going to tell him now.'

The twins told Iveri about Mr Brown and Sami. He listened, then said, 'I have to go,' and ran along the path to the village.

When Iveri got to the rara, he found everyone there. There was a sevusevu ceremony. Mr Brown had given Ratu Loti a bag of kava and the Ratu was welcoming him into the village. Iveri didn't think the Ratu was happy, but Uncle Vili was sitting proudly with Mr Brown. Iveri looked for Sami but couldn't see him.

After the ceremony, Mr Brown walked around the village with Uncle Vili. He talked to everyone and went everywhere. Iveri watched them.

Later, when Iveri went back to his family's bure, Tema told him Mr Brown was coming for dinner. Iveri said, 'Where is my father? I must talk to him.'

Tema said, 'He is very tired. He is sleeping.'

Tema made a fine meal for dinner that night. Everyone sat on mats on the floor. The Robinsons weren't happy to be eating with Mr Brown, but they did it

for Tema. Everyone ate with their hands, but Mr Brown asked for a fork and spoon. Mr Brown and Uncle Vili talked and laughed.

After dinner, the Robinsons said goodnight and left. Mr Brown stayed and talked. He talked about the resort business in Fiji. He told the Ratu that there were a lot of jobs in the resorts for villages that leased land to developers. The Ratu listened. Iveri listened too. Tema went into her kitchen.

Later Uncle Vili said, 'I will take Mr Brown back to Papaya now.' Sami still had not appeared. Where is he? Thought Iveri.

Uncle Vili didn't take Mr Brown back to the boat. He took him to see Tom instead.

Iveri followed them, and watched from the shadows.

Mr Brown knocked softly on the Robinsons' door.

Tom opened the door. The smile on his face disappeared. 'Oh, it's you,' he said. 'What do you want, Brown?'

'Tom,' said Mr Brown, 'listen to me. I want to lease a large piece of land here on Tavioka. Some people I know plan to build a big resort here. We'll need a good builder. Why don't you help me? You'll make a lot of money. Vili says the Ratu likes you. You could tell him that a resort will be good for the village.'

Iveri stood very still. He liked Tom Robinson. He wanted him to say no.

Tom said, 'I quite like Tavioka without a resort.'

Mr Brown laughed. 'Money, Tom. Money. We could make a lot of money.'

'Mm. I'll think about it. But I still remember the Nadi hotel,' said Tom.

'That was an accident!'

'Goodnight, Brown. My wife is waiting for me.' Tom went inside and closed the door behind him.

Mr Brown stood at the closed door, and Iveri heard him quietly say, 'Fool.'

Uncle Vili and Mr Brown walked away towards the beach.

Iveri wished Tom had just said no. Any resort that Mr Brown built was not going to be good for Tavioka.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Answers

Early the next morning, before work, Iveri talked to the Ratu. He told his father that Uncle Vili was working for Mr Brown. He showed him the banknote and Michelle's flip-flop.

Ratu Loti put his head in his hands. 'Oh, Vili... He should have been the Ratu after me. The clan liked him. Now he will have to leave us. He could have had everything. Now he will have nothing.'

Ratu Loti asked Iveri not to tell Tema. 'I must speak to Vili first.'

Iveri and Tema went to Papaya Island together. On the way, Tema talked about Mr Brown. 'Why did your uncle bring him to Tavioka?' she asked. 'I don't want the Ratu to listen to him.'

'He won't,' said Iveri.

The Robinsons ate breakfast outside again. The Ratu was very quiet and sad. He sat in the sun with his eyes closed. Then he said, 'I'm going to see the men at the church now. Tema and Iveri have gone to work. I've asked another of my brothers, Josefa, to take you for a walk today. Josefa will take you across the hills.'

The family went to put their walking shoes on.

'I think Iveri has told him about Uncle Vili,' Peter said to Michelle quietly.

'I think you're right,' said Michelle. 'What will he do?' Their parents were talking about Mr Brown.

'If you help that man I'll never talk to you again,' said Nicola. 'I know his kind of resort. The villagers work hard for very little money. There'll be false sevusevu ceremonies and false mekes.'

'I was never going to help him, Nicola,' said Tom.

'Why didn't you say no last night?' Nicola asked.

'It's better not to answer a question like that straight away. I've seen an angry Jasper Brown before.'

Michelle said, 'Dad, we've been trying to tell you about Mr Brown.'

She and Peter told their parents about Mr Brown giving Uncle Vili money. They told them about Michelle's flip-flop.

'Right,' said Tom. 'I'll talk to the Ratu.' He got up to go to the church to find Ratu Loti.

Just then, Mr Brown appeared with Uncle Vili. 'Tom!' he said. Today he was wearing a pink shirt and black shorts. He was smiling. The Robinsons didn't smile back.

Tom walked towards him. 'Do you want my answer, Brown?'

'That's why I'm here,' said Mr Brown.

'I know what you've done,' said Tom. 'You've tried to stop Tema's homestay business. Your man nearly drowned my son. I know that was part of your plan.' He went very close to Mr Brown and spoke very quietly. 'I'll never help you put a resort onto this island.'

Mr Brown's smile disappeared.

Tom continued, 'I have some of my own ideas about helping the village. I'm going to talk to the Ratu about them today.'

Mr Brown's face was as pink as his shirt. 'You're a fool, Robinson.' He stared at the family one by one. 'You'll be very sorry.'

He marched away. Uncle Vili put his head down and followed quickly.

Tom said, 'I'll be back soon.' He hurried away to the church.

When he returned, Josefa had arrived to take them for the walk across the hills. Tom said, 'We'll talk later.' They followed Josefa quietly. There was a lot to think about.

When Iveri and Tema returned to Tavioka at the end of the day, the Ratu was sitting outside with Tom Robinson. They were drinking tea. 'Have you seen Vili?' the Ratu asked. His face was tired. 'Was he on Papaya today?'

'I saw him,' said Tema. 'He was with Sami.'

'Mm,' said the Ratu. 'Come and sit with us, Tema. You too, Iveri.'

He told them that Tom wanted to help the village.

'Yes,' said Tom. 'I will help you with the homestay business, Tema. I know a lot of people who will come here to stay. I will help you build some bathrooms. I can bring electricity to the village.'

They talked for a long time. They made a lot of plans. Tema was very happy. The Ratu's face was still sad.

Tema made a big meal for dinner. Nicola helped her. The women talked and laughed happily.

Uncle Vili still didn't appear.

It was a warm night. After dinner, Iveri and the twins went for a walk on the beach. Then Iveri said, 'I must go. I have work again tomorrow.'

'You work too hard, Iveri,' said Michelle.

Iveri laughed. 'Horse-riding with the tourists? It's not so hard. Tomorrow after work, we'll meet some of my friends. We'll have a game of football on the beach.'

That night, Michelle dreamt that she was in Austria. She'd been skiing and was very tired. She was sitting by a wood fire. It was warm, and she watched the orange light. It was so real. She could even smell the smoke from the fire. She was getting too hot. She fought to wake up - it wasn't a dream. There was a fire in the room, and smoke was everywhere.

'Peter!' she called. He didn't answer.

Michelle couldn't see through the smoke. She remembered the lessons about fire she'd learnt at school - Get down low. Go!

She lay down on the floor and moved towards the wall. She found the wall and then the window. She pushed the flyscreen and climbed out of the window.

'Help!' she cried, but her voice was weak.

Suddenly someone came out of the darkness and climbed quickly in the window. Michelle couldn't see who it was.

She banged on her parents' door and called, 'Fire! Our room's on fire!'

Tom and Nicola came running out. Nicola screamed, 'Where's Peter?'

'He's in the room. I couldn't get to him.' Michelle was crying now.

Tom ran to the twins' room. Just then, the door opened and out of the smoke came Uncle Vili and Peter. Uncle Vili was helping Peter to walk. Both of them were coughing from the smoke.

Uncle Vili gave Peter to Tom, then fell onto the ground and lay there. Nicola knelt beside Vili. 'He's been burnt,' she said.

Suddenly Tema was there, and Ratu Loti too. 'Vili!' cried the Ratu. 'No!'

Uncle Vili opened his eyes and looked at the Ratu. 'Is the boy okay?'

Tom was sitting on the ground with Peter now. Peter was still coughing, but he wasn't hurt. Tom said, 'Yes, Peter's okay. We've been very lucky.'

The Ratu looked down at Uncle Vili. 'Tell me you didn't do this too?' he asked.

'No,' said Uncle Vili. 'I didn't.' Tears ran down his face. He took his brother's hand. 'I told Mr Brown I wasn't going to work for him anymore. I gave him back

his money. He said I was going to be sorry.' Uncle Vili stopped for a moment, then went on. 'I think Sami started the fire. I saw him earlier. He was walking through the village with a lamp. Then I saw him later, and he didn't have the lamp then. I called to him but he began to run. Then I saw the smoke from the fire.'

'Thank you for getting Peter out,' said Tom. 'You saved his life.'

Other villagers appeared out of the night. People began to fight the fire with water and wet sacks.

'They've got him,' someone shouted.

Two Fijian men were coming forward, holding Sami between them. One was Eroni, Iveri's brother, and the other was Ratu Loti's brother, Josefa.

'We found him running to the beach,' said Eroni. 'We knew the Ratu wanted to find him.'

'He has a lot of questions to answer,' said the Ratu.

Tom said, 'We need to get Vili to a doctor.'

The Ratu said, 'There's a doctor at the resort on Papaya. We'll take him there.'

'What about Sami?' said Tema.

'We'll take him too. The police will want to talk to him.' Tom said, 'The police need to find Mr Brown too.'

'Yes, they do,' said the Ratu. 'Come, Eroni. You too, Iveri. We will go to Papaya now.'

Some villagers carried Uncle Vili gently to the beach. Sami was led away. The fire was put out.

'What will happen now?' Michelle asked.

Tom said, 'Sami and Brown should go to prison. There'll be no resort on Tavioka.'

'What about Uncle Vili?' Peter asked. 'He saved my life.' Tema said, 'The Ratu loves his brother. Vili knows he did wrong and is very sorry. I don't think the clan will send him away now. When he's better he can come home and help me with the homestay business.'

Later that week the Tavioka villagers stood on the beach. They had just sung a goodbye song for the Robinsons. Iveri, Tema and Ratu Loti watched the Robinsons' boat leave Tavioka Island. Tema waved for a long time.

Iveri's family was sad to say goodbye to the Robinsons, but they knew they were going to see them again. Tom was coming back with some men to rebuild the visitors' house and to bring electricity to the village. More tourists were going to come to Tavioka when Tom and Nicola and the twins told everyone about the beauty of this place and its people.

Tema turned to Iveri and said, 'You will soon follow our friends, my son. The Robinsons are going to send for you when school in New Zealand begins again.'

Iveri smiled. Peter had told Tom and Nicola about Iveri's wish that he still went to school. So Tom and Nicola had talked to Tema and the Ratu about Iveri. Then they'd asked Iveri to come and live with them while he went to school in New Zealand.

'Living with the Robinsons is going to be an adventure,' he said to his mother, 'but I'll always come back to my island home.'

- THE END -