

# SHARK ATTACH



Collins English Library Level 2

# SHARK ATTACK

Jan Keane

Illustrations by Michael Strand

Collins ELT

© Jan Keane 1986

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Published by William Collins Sons and Co Ltd  
Glasgow G4 0NB

All rights reserved. No part of this book  
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval  
system or transmitted in any form or by  
any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying,  
recording or otherwise, without the prior permission  
of the Publisher.

First published in Collins English Library 1986

ISBN 0 00 370168 9

Cover photo by Ben Cropp/Camera Press

Cover design by Lim & Lim

Printed in Great Britain by Martin's of Berwick

## Chapter One

"Look, Mal. Over there."

The two boys started to swim back to the sand. They were the only swimmers that day, so they knew the young girl had her eye on them. Both boys moved very fast in the water, like two large fish. They reached the sand and ran across to her.

"Hi. I'm Barry and this is Mal. We haven't seen you round here before."

The girl's face turned a little red. Her eyes were brown, and her black hair shone in the sun.

"I'm new here. My family has just arrived. We're from Greece."

"Greece. That's a long way from Australia. You speak English well. What's your name?" asked Barry.

"Despina."

"What do you think of Melbourne?"

"Melbourne's OK. I like the hot weather, but I'm a bit afraid of the sea. In Greece our village was high up in the mountains. I never saw the sea there, and I can't swim very well yet."

"Mal and I can teach you. We grew up around here. We swam before we could walk! There's nothing to be afraid of."





"Thanks. I'd like that. But I could never swim out there like you do. The water's much too deep for me."

Barry laughed. "That's not deep. We often go miles out in a boat and swim around for hours."

"But isn't that dangerous? My father said there are things in the sea that can kill you."

Barry laughed again.

"He means sharks. They're the only dangerous fish. And we're not afraid of them, are we Mal?"

"No, not a bit. We're fishermen. We didn't like school, so we left when we were sixteen. My father has a big fishing boat and he gave us jobs. Barry's father works for my dad, too. And I bought a boat last year. It's old, but it works well. Barry and I go out in it most weekends. So we know all about sharks."

"Sharks." Despina's face turned white. "Are there sharks around here?"

"Sometimes," said Barry. "Sometimes they come in and attack the swimmers. It's happened in less than one metre of water."

Mial said, "The life-savers keep their eye on the sea all day in summer. They have a machine that makes a loud noise. If they see a shark, they turn it on, and the swimmers come out."

"But we're not children," said Barry. "We



don't want life-savers. Come on, Mal. Let's show her."

Suddenly the two boys ran into the sea. They went under the water, and for a minute Despina couldn't see them. She saw their long strong bodies move through the water. Ten minutes later they were back with her again, wet and happy.

"You see? Nothing happened. No sharks can get us. We always see them first," said Barry. He sat down on the sand and closed his eyes.

"That's right," Mal said. "One tried to attack Barry years ago, but we stopped it."

"Attack you! Where? What happened?"

"Here," Barry answered. "Mal and some other boys were in the boat. I was in the water fifty metres away. Mal started screaming, 'Look out, look out'. For a second I didn't understand. Then I saw it. It was a hundred metres away."

"I swam really fast. I was a lot younger then but I still couldn't get away. I saw the shark under the water. It passed me, then it turned back and passed me again. The second time, my right leg suddenly felt cold, but I didn't stop. 'I'll get away from you, old shark,' I thought.

"I saw the other boys reach the sand. Mal wasn't there. Then I saw him. He was in the water.

"The shark came back again. I screamed a





Mal to get away, but he didn't stop. He didn't come to me – he swam to the shark.

"The shark was after me, so it didn't know Mal was there. Its head came out of the water, and its mouth opened wide. For a second I thought it was the end. Then Mal hit it in the eye with his fishing knife."

"What happened then?" asked Despina.

"I got to the sand and I saw blood all over my leg. It didn't hurt much but it was badly cut. Look. You can still see it."

He turned over and showed her the back of his leg. There was a bright red line about thirty centimetres long.

Despina felt sick. "A shark did that! It tried to kill you!"

"I don't think it did," said Mal, with a laugh. "One bite was enough. Barry doesn't taste very good."

"Look," Barry said, "Mal and I are going out fishing tomorrow. Come with us. Maybe we'll get a shark or two."

"Why do you want to get sharks? Why put yourselves in danger?"

"It's not dangerous. Not if you know what you're doing," answered Barry. "And we do. The men on our boat still think we're children. But if we can get a shark, they won't think of us that way. One day we'll get a really big one. But tomorrow we're not after sharks. Come. You'll

enjoy it.”

“I don’t think my father would let me.”

“Well, don’t tell him. We’ll meet you here at 9.00.”

The two boys ran away along the sand and into the sea.

## Chapter Two

Barry and Mal were more than good friends. They were like brothers. But this wasn’t because Mal saved Barry from the shark. They were friends long before that.

But Barry knew they could never be *real* brothers. So he thought of something better. They could be blood-brothers. Barry had a small knife. He cut his own hand and then gave the knife to Mal. Mal did the same. When there was lots of blood, they held hands, and their blood ran together. Now they were closer than real brothers.

Barry told Mal what blood-brothers meant. They would always be friends. Each would help the other in every way. And, if things got dangerous, each would die for the other.

So, when the shark was after Barry, Mal didn’t think twice. Barry would do the same for him. They were blood brothers now. It would be that



way for ever.

Mal's boat was called 'Sharkey'. It was eight metres long and mostly wooden. The sides were bright blue, and the wheel-house was red. It was old, but it was big enough and strong enough.

Mal and Barry hoped to go into business one day. Lots of rich Americans came to Australia to fish. And with big fish like sharks there was a lot of money in the sport. Mal had the 'Sharkey' and Barry was a good fisherman. They worked very well together. But people didn't want to go fishing for sharks with two boys. Well, they were still young. With one big shark they would be famous. Then they'd get a lot of business.

At 9 o'clock, Barry carried the fishing lines on to the boat. Mal went to the wheel-house and started the motor.

"I don't think she's coming," he called out to Barry.

"No, maybe not. If she told her father, she won't be here."

The boat started to move away. Then Barry saw Despina. He held out his hand.

"Here, jump in. We didn't think you'd come. OK, Mal, let's go."

Mal turned the boat out to sea and called to Barry.





"Where will we go?"

"Over near Mornington. About eight kilometres away. There were lots of fish there yesterday morning."

It was a beautiful day. There was no wind, and the water was still. Barry gave Despina some small dead fish. He taught her how to tie them on the fishing-lines. After forty minutes, Mal turned off the motor.

"OK," he said to Barry. "We'll try here for a while."

"Try for what?" Despina asked.

"Small fish, big fish, any fish." Barry smiled and put the lines into the water.

Half an hour went by. Nothing happened. Another half hour passed but they didn't want to move. The sun was warm, and it was quiet. Suddenly Barry spoke.

"The fish knew we were coming. Let's go out a bit. Maybe another kilometre."

The next place was better. Barry caught five fish in ten minutes. Mal caught three, and Despina got a small one. She felt a bit sick when Barry cut it open with his knife. But she wanted to learn everything. After lunch they fished some more. Then it was time to go back.

"That's enough, Mal. I'll bring the lines in and . . . Wait! I've got a big one." Barry held the line with both hands. The fish was heavy





and it was difficult to get it into the boat. When they did, Despina couldn't believe her eyes. This fish was ten times larger than any of the others, and it had a big black fin on its back. It moved around the floor of the boat and tried to escape.

"What's that?" asked Despina.

"A small shark. I said we'd get you one." Barry brought his foot down on the shark's head to stop it moving about. Then he cut it open with his knife. The smell was very bad. Pieces of fish and small stones fell out. Despina looked ill.

"Mal, Despina, look at this. It's from a dead man's hand." Barry held up a man's finger.

"How did that get there?" Despina spoke in a quiet voice, and her face was white.

"Don't be afraid," Mal said. "It's not difficult to understand. These small sharks sometimes move around on the bottom of the sea. So they pick up all kinds of things, not only food."

"Yes," said Barry, "Remember what happened in Sydney, Mal?"

Poor Despina. She was so afraid and she didn't want to hear any more. But Barry went on with his story.

"There was a thief, and he took a lot of money that belonged to a rich man. So the rich man killed him. The police thought the thief was dead, but they couldn't do anything about it because they couldn't find the man's body. Weeks later a fisherman got a large shark. When

he cut it open, he found a man's hand inside. There was a ring on one of the fingers. The fisherman called the police. They saw the ring and they knew it was the thief's hand. In the end the rich man told the police the story. Then he showed the police the place where he cut up the thief's body and put it into the sea."

"I don't believe you," Despina said. "No-one would do a thing like that."

"It's true," said Barry. "And there are worse stories than that. You read about them every day in the newspapers."

"Well, I don't want to know about them." She started to walk away.

"Look, Despina," Barry answered. "If you live by the sea, you must understand the sea. Man eats fish, and some fish eat man. That's life. I don't want to hurt you, but it's better to know about these things."

Despina was not very happy now.

"I want to go home. Please take me home."

Barry put his arm around her.

"Come on, it's all right. We'll take you home."



## Chapter Three

Next weekend Despina was afraid to go out in the boat. But she met the boys when they came back. They were very nice to her. Of the two, she liked Barry more, and he seemed to like her a lot.

"Come out with us next Saturday, Despina. This good weather won't stay for long. Mal's boat is strong. Nothing can happen to us."

She wanted to spend more time with Barry, so she said yes.

Back in Greece, in Despina's village, there was a boy called Stavros. He and Despina were the same age. The villagers thought they would get married one day. When she left Greece, Despina thought the same. She wasn't sure now. Stavros wanted to come to Australia in 12 months. But Greece and Stavros seemed a long way away now.

There was nothing wrong with Stavros. He was a kind person, and Despina liked him. But she didn't love him. She didn't love Barry either. Barry was different, that's all. She enjoyed being with him. He showed her a lot of new things. And she felt happier than ever before. Despina forgot about Stavros when she was with Barry.