

Reader's
Digest

☆☆☆☆ PART 1

New Reading
Skill Builder

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New Reading Skill Builder

PART ONE

Prepared by

LYDIA AUSTILL THOMAS, Executive Editor,
Reader's Digest Educational Division

Consultant:

JOHN C. MANNING, Associate Professor,
Department of Elementary Education, University of Minnesota

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TREASURE HUNT. . . in the pages ahead!

... *Looking for action and excitement?* Likely places are on pages 4, 109, 125 and 133.

... *Or are you spying out humor?* Follow these clues: pages 54 and 70.



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Decision at Sea

John J. Cadigan, Lt. Comdr., U.S. Coast Guard

The red distress flare shot up from the sinking ship, the *Smith Voyager*. Every man aboard our Coast Guard cutter, the *Rockaway*, knew that time had run out. We had been circling the crippled freighter *Voyager* for seven long hours that stormy day, waiting for the 35-foot waves to ease up. But now the crewmen remaining aboard the *Voyager* had to be rescued. And quickly.

The 439-foot ship was being hopelessly beaten by the sea. With each roll she took in more water. The last life raft had broken away, and darkness would fall in half an hour. We could wait no longer.



... *Maybe science and invention are marked with X on your map.* Then turn to pages 62, 76 and 118.

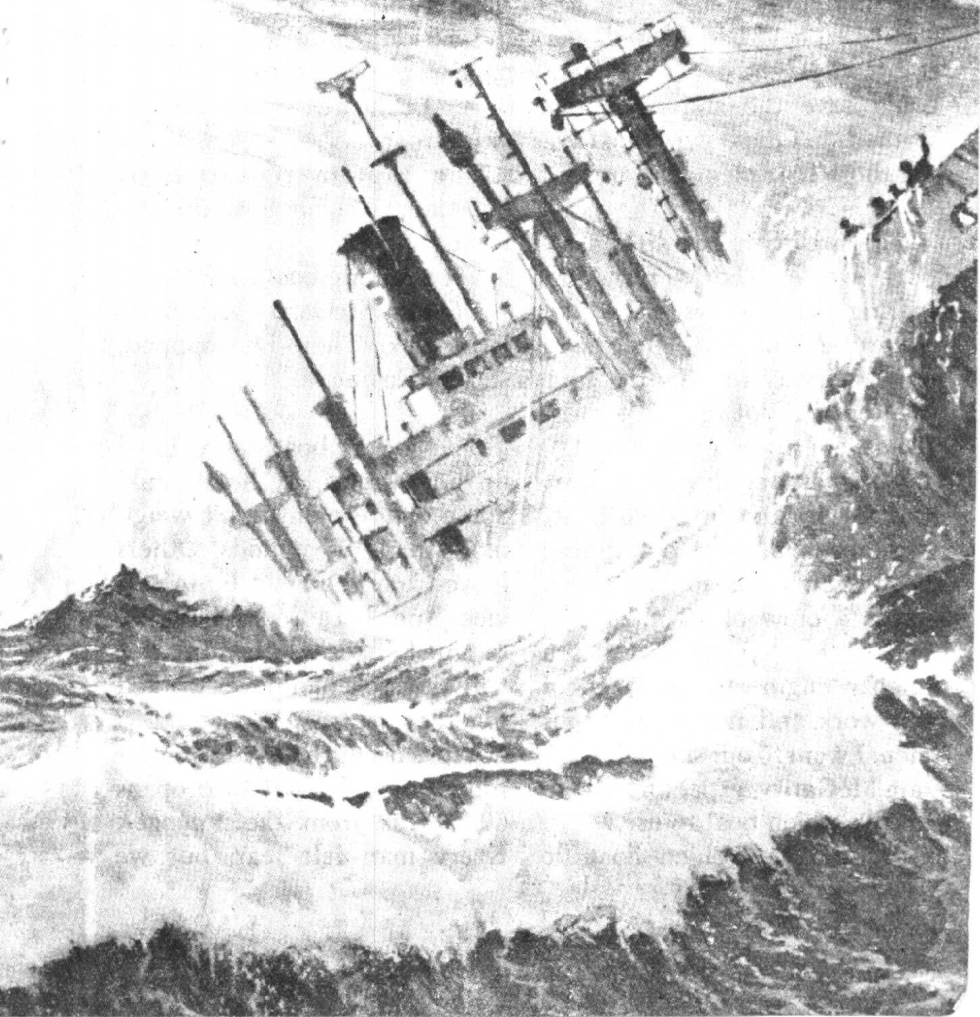
... *Animals and nature . . . exploration . . .* What appeals to you? Search it out, and enjoy the rich rewards that good reading offers.

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*Short story without quizzes

†Stories for which dramatized Audio Lessons are available

The Coast Guard has a saying: "You've got to go out, but you don't have to come back." But somebody has to decide how you go out — and that can make a difference.



The SOS from the *Voyager* had reached us the afternoon before. On patrol 300 miles away, we immediately speeded toward her position. Another vessel had picked up 34 survivors, but the *Voyager's* captain and three crewmen had stayed aboard. They had hoped the storm would die down and they could save the ship. But the storm didn't die down. And saving those four men was our job.

The weather couldn't have been worse. The winds were roaring. The waves were like watery mountains. There was only one way to save the four men on the *Voyager*. We must pick them up in a small boat.

Commanding the rescue boat was my assignment. Two boats were ready. The 26-foot pulling boat, which has to be rowed, needs a crew of 12 men. The equally long powerboat has a mighty engine to do much of the work and needs only four men. I went to our skipper, Captain McGarity, expecting him to decide which boat to use.

He didn't. "Which boat do

you want to take?" he asked.

I thought hard and, for better or worse, made up my mind. With a pulling boat, the lives of 12 men would be in danger. But if we used the powerboat, an engine failure could mean disaster. The bits of wreckage could easily snarl our propeller. And if a man went overboard, he might never be heard above the engine's roar.

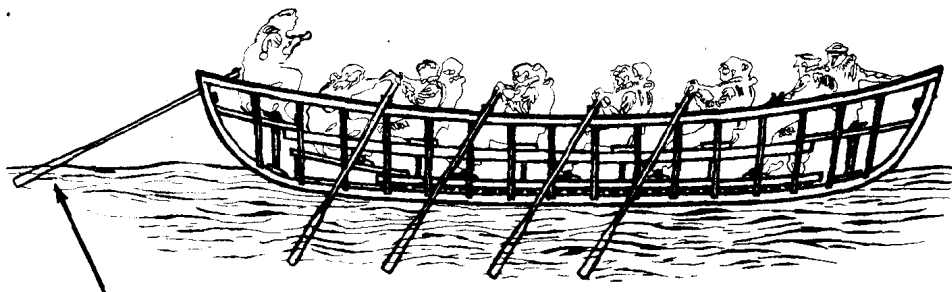
The captain repeated his question, "Which boat do you want to take?"

"The pulling boat, sir," I said.

Captain McGarity gave me a long look. Then he snapped, "Okay. Go ahead."

The pulling boat's crew lined up before me. My heart sank! Some of the men didn't weigh more than 135 pounds. Others looked too young to be in service. And, because we had had so much bad weather on this trip, the crew had never worked together in a rescue boat.

We said little as the cutter rolled and plunged to drop us 500 yards from the *Voyager*. Every man felt fear, but we

U.S. Coast Guard 26-foot pulling boat

STEERING OAR

tried not to show it. One of the oarsmen joked, "Is it too late to quit? I kept forgetting to take my name off the volunteer list."

"The exercise will do you good," said another seaman.

It took ten minutes to reach the wreck. The oarsmen strained at the two rows of oars. Usually, one man can handle the sweep oar which acts as the rudder and steers the boat. But in these wild seas both the "extra" man and I had to grip the sweep oar. We struggled to keep the boat from swinging sideways, because one wave could flood our boat in a second.

Cautiously, we worked our way up to the *Voyager*. We had

to get as close as possible to the survivors, but we dared not move too close. As the *Voyager* rolled down, we could be sucked over the deck. Then we would be smashed to splinters as she rolled up again. Or we could get caught under the 20-foot waterfalls that plunged off the decks with each roll.

As the wreck drifted closer to us, we could see the captain and the three crewmen clinging to the rails. I threw out a floatable line. The survivors jumped into the water and grabbed hold, but there was no time to pull them aboard. The last two men on the line looked dangerously close to being washed back onto the crashing decks of the *Voyager*.

"Let's get out of here!" I shouted. Now the most important moments were upon us. The men bent over the oars. I held the sweep oar with one hand. With my other hand, I clung to the rescue line, because I'd had no time to tie it to the seat of the boat.

The men rowed hard — but nothing happened. The drag of the survivors and the pull of the seas seemed to nail us to that one spot.

Why, why, I thought, didn't Captain McGarity tell me to take the powerboat?

"Harder!" I shouted. As the men strained, I could see drops of blood oozing between their fingers. But their struggle wasn't enough. The wreck was drifting down on us. *If that's all the strength you've got, I thought, we're all through.*

"Give, give!" I yelled. I was praying for something more than muscle.

We were rolling so wildly that I couldn't see when it began to happen. But, suddenly, as if by a miracle, the wreck was

no closer. And then we began inching away.

"Keep it up — keep it up. We're not out of trouble yet!"

Then, all at once, we were. We were free of that sinking monster of a ship.

The pull of the rescue line on my hand became unbearable. It cut into my fingers. My arm felt unhinged at the socket. I was losing the struggle to keep hold of the line. "They're pulling me out of the boat!" I yelled.

The "extra" man leaped toward me. He jammed the line down hard on the edge of the boat. Unwinding the rope from my hand, I hitched it around a seat. And the oarsmen never missed a stroke.

Then a funny thing happened. Someone started to sing. It was the first man on the rescue line. And his favorite song at that moment was "Cruising Down the River on a Sunday Afternoon." The words came joyously and bravely through the howling wind. What a strange scene it was — 12 men in the boat, four men hanging onto the

line, giant waves, the beating rain. And then that gay song.

In 15 minutes of brutal rowing we had traveled only about 125 feet from the wreck, but now, at last, we could drag in the line. We pulled in the survivors like sacks of potatoes and rowed on before the wreck got dangerously close again. The freighter's captain gasped, "I couldn't have held on two minutes longer."

By this time darkness covered us, but we kept on rowing until we saw our cutter creeping toward us. Her searchlights were driving holes in the rain and dusk, so we rowed for the lights.

Ten minutes later we were

pulled aboard. The Coast Guard has a saying, "You've got to go out, but you don't have to come back." We were bruised, drenched and totally exhausted — but we were back.

I was dry and warm under sweaters and blankets when Captain McGarity came by. "Congratulations on a fine job," he said quietly. "And especially for being smart enough to have picked the pulling boat."

He left as quickly as he had appeared.

I thought about his words. For the first time I began to understand what had actually brought us back alive.

I had chosen the pulling boat

Lt. John J. Cadigan and his pulling boat crew—December 1964



for good reasons, but I had not thought of the most important reason. The engine in that powerboat has only a limited amount of strength and power. A machine can not give beyond its limit. Without knowing it, I had

gambled our lives on a special power that can never be built into an engine. It is the *extra* strength that men can always find within themselves when they know they must. I had gambled and won.

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1219 ÷ MINUTES READING TIME = RATE:

I. NOW YOU DECIDE!

1. As the story turned out, what was the most important reason for using the pulling boat?
2. Decide upon the word or phrase that best describes Commander Cadigan's feelings at each of these times: (a) when he first saw the crew of the pulling boat; (b) when the man being rescued started to sing; (c) when the captain congratulated him. Give reasons for your answers.

II. THROW A LINE TO THE RIGHT ANSWER

Underline the words that complete each sentence correctly.

1. Commander Cadigan decided not to use the powerboat because
(a) it might risk the lives of 12 men, (b) its engine might fail,
(c) the waves were extremely high.
2. A few of the oarsmen joked because they (a) did not realize the danger facing them, (b) were in a jolly mood, (c) were trying to hide their fear.

3. It was not safe for the rescue boat to get very close to the *Voyager* because (a) wreckage might snarl the propeller, (b) the oarsmen were losing strength, (c) the pulling boat might be smashed against the ship.
4. The most important moments in the rescue occurred when (a) the boat had to get away from the *Voyager*, (b) one survivor began to sing, (c) Commander Cadigan let go of the rescue line.
5. The most important reason for using the pulling boat was one that (a) Commander Cadigan had not thought of, (b) the "extra man" knew all the time, (c) Captain McGarity had mentioned.

10 points for each correct answer

My score:

III. WHAT'S ON HIS MIND ?

What thought was probably in Commander Cadigan's mind for each statement below? Put a ✓ before the thought.

1. "You've got to go out, but you don't have to come back."
... *I must try to save those men, even if I die.*
... *I don't have to come back unless I want to.*
2. "We knew that time had run out for the freighter."
... *The freighter will surely sink.*
... *The freighter has time for one more run.*
3. "The weather couldn't have been worse."
... *Thank goodness the weather is not one of our problems.*
... *Better weather would make our task much easier.*
4. "For better or worse, I made up my mind."
... *It's easy to make this decision; I know I'm right.*
... *I can't be certain that my decision is the right one.*

5. "A machine can not give beyond its limit."
 ... *I learned that men have a power that engines lack.*
 ... *I wish I had taken the powerboat.*

10 points for each correct answer

My score:

PERFECT TOTAL SCORE: 100

MY TOTAL SCORE:

IV. APPRECIATE THE WRITER'S WORD CHOICE

Below each sentence, write the word or words the writer used to picture the idea in italics. You may refer to the story.

1. The waves were *very high*. (p. 6)
-

2. The pull of the seas seemed to *keep us from moving*. (p. 8)
-

3. My arm felt *as if it were being pulled off*. (p. 8)
-

4. The searchlights were *shining* in the rain. (p. 9)
-

V. NEW SEAS TO SAIL

1. Imagine that you are the captain of the *Voyager*. Write or tell your story of the rescue.
2. In the story locate expressions that make you *hear, see* or *feel*. Be ready to share your choices with the class.
3. Find out about and then discuss the work of the Coast Guard.
4. Tell about a time you had to make an important decision.

Adapted from *Decision at Sea*
 The Reader's Digest, January '67



Following his nose pays off for —

Rolf, the Dog Who Finds Things

Robert Littell

Day after day, a small blue truck speeds along the roads of Denmark's island of Funen. A big dark dog sits beside the driver, looking at him as if listening to his instructions. Whenever the truck goes by, the people of Funen turn and stare, some in wonder, others in recognition. For on its side are printed the words *Sporhunden Rolf* (Rolf, the Tracking Dog) and a telephone number.

Yes, the passenger in the blue truck is Rolf, a dog that is hired to find things people have lost. Within seven years, Rolf and his owner have found close to \$400,000 worth of missing items. Among them are watches, jewelry, tools, money, cows, geese, pigs and other dogs. And what is Rolf's secret? His sensitive nose!

The owner of that nose is a ten-year-old German Shepherd.

And the owner of the German Shepherd is Svend Andersen. Together they answer the 600 to 700 calls for help that they get each year. Four out of five times they find what they are asked to look for.

Whenever the telephone rings in Andersen's house, Rolf is instantly alert. He dashes to the truck, eager to be off.

On the way, Svend repeats again and again the name of what they are going to look for. So, by the time they arrive, Rolf is ready to get to work. He circles, backtracks and circles again. This he continues until he picks up the faint scent of an object lying in a spot where it doesn't belong.

One spring I went to Funen to make sure that Rolf's detective work was not some kind of fairy story. Over coffee and cakes Svend and I talked and watched Rolf. The dog's stare was mysterious. He seemed alert yet calm. The telephone rang, and then I heard Svend saying, "A wallet? I can't promise, but we'll do our best."

An hour later we were in a park, tramping among the trees with Axel Jensen, the man who had phoned. Jensen had lost his wallet somewhere in these woods ten days before, while picking flowers with his wife. Since then, hundreds of people had gone walking here, and it had rained. Finding that wallet wouldn't be easy!

For half an hour Rolf roamed in wide, broken zigzags. Occasionally, Svend would call him back or tell him to keep looking. No wallet was found.

We drove to another part of the forest. Again Rolf roamed with his nose to the boggy earth. Svend encouraged him from time to time. I don't know at what moment we began to notice that Rolf was padding about in smaller circles. Svend was now standing at the edge of a ditch. He was tense, as if giving orders that only Rolf could hear.

Suddenly, Rolf began to paw the soft earth. He stopped, looked about and scratched again a few feet away. Then he changed his mind and began to

dig further to the right. All at once he trotted out of the bog, head high. He was holding something dark in his mouth. It was the wallet! Jensen roared with surprise and joy.

"Tell me, Svend," I said later, "how on earth does a dog go about finding a wallet five by seven inches in a huge forest covered with undergrowth?"

Svend smiled as he replied, "I knew there was nothing in the first 75 acres because of Rolf's lack of interest. But in the swamp I could tell from the way Rolf acted that he had

picked up a trail. The scent had reached him through the air from the spot where the wallet was dropped ten days ago."

How did Svend come to own this dog with a detective's nose? He picked Rolf from a litter of seven pups because Rolf had the biggest head and snuffled more eagerly along the ground.

When he was only five months old, Rolf found his first missing object. It was a neighbor's watch. After a year's careful training, Rolf became a professional, ready for work.



One time Svend had an unusual call. A visitor to a cattle show sneezed so hard that he lost a gold filling. Did Rolf find it? Of course! And the speck of gold lay several yards from the place of the sneeze, in ground that had been trampled by hundreds of feet.

Another time Rolf saved an 11-year-old girl from a stern scolding. She was playing with her grandmother's fine watch when she lost it in a haystack. About 50 children were turned loose to look for it. No luck. Next day the police came with two dogs; both failed.

Nine days later, Rolf was sent for. Paying no attention to the haystack, Rolf began to nose about in a pit some distance away. He found the watch in a matter of minutes. Someone had dumped a forkful of hay from the stack into the pit.

Rolf does not always meet with success, but he tries very hard. Sometimes he tries too hard. Once when Svend scolded him sharply for failing to find a lost watch, Rolf crept away.

He returned a little later in triumph with a watch in his mouth. Close behind him was an angry, half-naked man. He shouted: "I was getting dressed when this dog poked his head in the door and lifted my watch from the table. He's a thief!"

Nothing ever gets lost in the Andersen house. Rolf picks up coins, nails, buttons, all without being told. To show me this, Svend put a spoon on the floor and then called Rolf in from the next room. The dog was ordered to lie down. We went on talking. Rolf couldn't stand it. In a few minutes he got up, seized the spoon in his mouth and brought it to his master.

Andersen and Rolf definitely are partners. Between them there is a deep understanding. When Rolf fails on a job, Svend lies awake that night. In his mind he goes over and over the ground they searched. Often he gets out of bed and drives with Rolf to the scene of their failure. There they go hunting again by flashlight.

"The night is quiet," he says,