

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Whale Gulch by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | March 2020

Whale Gulch

by Mike Bozart

© 2020 Mike Bozart

“Dag darn it!” he shouts in exasperational frustration from the transom of the skiff. “No luck. Don’t know what the hell the problem is.” *Can’t believe this has happened. Right now. Such terrible timing. Need to get this outboard motor started ... quickly. We’re drifting in ... in towards those nasty-looking rocks. Not good. Not good at all.*

“Is it out of fuel, mon beau?” [‘my boyfriend’ in French] an early-30-something, light-brown-haired, crimson-jacketed Canadian American woman queries from the front of the 15’ (4.72 meters long) open-air, wooden vessel.

“No, sweetie; it’s got plenty of gasoline,” the yellow-to-blond-haired, barrel-torsoed, 40-ish, vanilla-white-face-becoming-flushed Norwegian American replies in a highly annoyed tone of voice. “It was running just fine. I can’t believe the damn thing crapped out.” *Crapped out?*

“Is there anything that I can do to help, honey?” the slender lady asks with a suddenly concerned look.

“Sweetheart, grab an oar and use it to fend off the rocks. You take the port side; I’ll take the starboard side.”

“Port is left, right?” *She remembered. / Left is right. Such an odd language.*

“Correct, sweetie. Get ready to push off. A rock is coming up. See it? It’s just under the surface. Easy does it. Don’t lurch out too far and fall overboard.” *Of course not! Does he really think I’m ‘that’ clumsy?*

“I see it. Got it.” *Nice. She did that perfectly.*

“Excellent, my sexy sailor. I’ll now push off the one on my side. We’ll just float in and let the boat beach itself. Anyway, it will be easier to diagnose this – much easier for me to think – without all of the nauseating motion from the ocean.” *Ocean motion? He’s panicking. Sure hope he can get it running. What if we’re stranded here for the night? Who would know where we are? Did he tell anyone about our outing? How cold is it going to get tonight? / God, I sure hope I can get this engine running. Soon. Forgot to tell Martin [a dockhand] which way we were headed. Boy, the pressure is certainly on now. This could be a long, cold, disastrous night. Valérie would never forgive me. Would she even break off our engagement? No wedding next year? Susan [Valérie’s best friend] said that she’s a woman who*

does not tolerate incompetence. I have got to get this outboard started. Some way. Somehow. No two ways about it. Hope I get lucky. Please.

Jørn surveys the scene as some mid-afternoon sunlight slithers through rips in the low-hovering overcast blanket. The water is now only about five feet (1½ meters) deep. The small swells continue to push the watercraft beachward. *Looks completely deserted. Must get this engine running. / Don't want to be stuck on this beach overnight. Hope he gets it fixed before dark.*

“Almost there, honey,” Jørn announces as he gives one last shove from a buried-except-for-an-angular-protrusion chunk of gabbro with the splintering-from-dry-rot oar.

The skiff slides onto the ash-colored northern California sand. Jørn jumps off the bow and pulls the boat further up the beach. An unexpected, biting chilly, northwesterly maritime gust makes his back momentarily shiver. Then the muted sun disappears again behind the pewter-gray, sky-spanning cloud curtain. *Feels like I'm in a bad [silent] movie – a tragic movie. Must try to stay positive. Must not panic. Must methodically troubleshoot this.*

Jørn then helps Valérie off the skiff. She takes a seat on the trunk of a downed tanoak. Her mirthless, worried expression scares the seabirds away. Soon Jørn is trying to figure out exactly where the glitch is on the silver outboard motor.

“Hello there!” The adult male voice startles Valérie. “My name is Matt. Having some engine trouble?” *Where did he come from? Out of the woods it would seem. Hope he isn't trouble.*

Jørn snaps his head around. “Yeah, you could say that.” *Wonder what that fellow does for a living. Hope he's not up to no good. Don't have any kind of weapon. Wish Valérie would get back in the boat.*

“What kind of outboard is it?” the rustically clothed, black-wool-beanie-capped, four-days-of-rusty-stubble, late-twenty-something Caucasian man asks.

“It's a '27 Champion – a St. Paul [Minnesota] model. Guess I should have stuck with Evinrude.”

“Champions are fine,” Matt assures.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

