

## Twilight sailing

‘We’re going to win tonight, Dad,’ says Sophie. It is a summer evening on Sydney Harbour. Sophie Jarvis and her father, Tom, are on their yacht, *Salsa*. They are at their sailing club in Mosman Bay.

‘Yes, skipper,’ says Tom.

Sophie loves sailing. Every Friday evening she and Tom sail in their club’s twilight race. The race starts and finishes in Athol Bay, near the club. The yachts race down Sydney Harbour, and then they turn and race back again.

Every week, Tom is the skipper and Sophie is his crewman. The skipper sits at the back of the boat and turns it with the tiller. The crewman pulls on ropes to move the sails. The skipper tells the crewman what to do.

This evening, for the first time, Sophie is the skipper and Tom is her crewman.

‘You’re going to work hard tonight!’ she says to him.

Sophie sees her friend Toby. He’s with his father, Jack, on their yacht, *Capricorn*. Jack and Tom are friends. Every week, one of the fathers buys dinner for everyone on *Salsa* and *Capricorn*. It’s always the father on the slower yacht.

This evening, Toby is going to be the skipper of *Capricorn* for the first time too. Sophie waves to him and shouts, ‘I’m going to give you a sailing lesson tonight, Toby!’

‘Ha, ha, Sophie!’ replies Toby. ‘We’ll be in front of you all the way!’

Then Sophie says to her father, ‘Okay, Dad, the race starts in twenty minutes. It’s time to put up the mainsail.’

*Salsa* has two sails – the big mainsail in the middle of the yacht, and another sail, the jib, at the front. At the bottom of the mainsail, there’s a long piece of wood, the boom.

Tom puts up the mainsail and Sophie takes *Salsa* out of Mosman Bay. They can see the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. There are houses and tall buildings



and parks on the hills beside the harbour. There are small islands in the middle of the harbour. And there are always a lot of boats, ferries and big ships on the harbour.

Sophie loves being out on the harbour. 'Can we come out here on Sunday night to watch the fireworks, Dad?' she asks.

'No, we can watch the fireworks on TV, Sophie. I don't like being out on the harbour on New Year's Eve. There are always too many boats out.'

People come to Sydney from all around the world to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks.

Sophie and Tom sail to Athol Bay. The club's motorboat is in the bay, and there's an orange buoy in the water near it. To start the race, the yachts have to sail between the motorboat and the buoy. That's the starting line.

This evening, there is a big luxury yacht near the starting line.

'Wow, Dad, look at that yacht!' Sophie says.

Tom looks, and says, 'Ah, that's *Zenith*.'

'Oh!' says Sophie. 'The Rossiters are staying on *Zenith*, aren't they?'

Everybody in Sydney is talking about the Rossiters. Conrad Rossiter is an American billionaire. He and his seventeen-year-old son Ryan are in Sydney for ten days. The father is here on business and the son is on holiday.

There is a police boat near *Zenith*. Motorboats have to keep away from the luxury yacht. The police boat is there to stop them. But it's not stopping the club's yachts. They can go near *Zenith* – they always start their race here in Athol Bay.

Sophie looks at *Zenith*. The crew of *Zenith* are all wearing white caps.



‘Look, Dad! There’s Ryan Rossiter!’ says Sophie.

The billionaire’s son is standing on the deck of *Zenith* and watching the yachts. He is tall and thin and he has long, brown hair. He’s wearing shorts and a T-shirt.

Sophie waves to Ryan – and he waves to her!

But Tom says, 'Hey, Sophie, come on – we're here to race! Where's *Capricorn* now? We have to get a good start. I want to go across the starting line in front of Toby and Jack. I don't want to buy dinner tonight!'

At the sailing club, three men get onto a boat named *Windfall*. They take the boat out of Mosman Bay and go towards Athol Bay.

'There's *Zenith*, boys,' says the man at the tiller of *Windfall*. He is a tall man with a long face and small eyes. His name is Frank Henson but his men call him 'Boss'.

One of the men says, 'I can see the billionaire's kid on the deck, Boss.' This man is big, with long black hair. His name is Pete.

'Good,' says Frank.

'And there's only one police boat, Boss,' says the other man. He's short, with red hair, and his name is Dave.

'That's good,' says Frank. 'But put up the big sail now, you two. Tonight we're sailors in a yacht race, okay?'