

# chapter 2



## *Island of Secrets: Of Sea Monsters and Survival*

The jaws of Guff, and his wife Bess, were collectively dropped. Before them, rising out of the water as tall as a skyscraper, was an enormous serpent. The snake-like creature had a shimmering, blue body with a pristine, white underbelly. Orange spines jutted out from its back—leading up to a pointed head with sharp fangs and slippery tentacles. Bess and Guff were so astounded by the appearance of this beast; they were frozen just like a deer in headlights. However, when the sea monster roared, and flung its tail into the air, Guff blinked and immediately wrapped his arms around the bulky Bess.

Yanking on the scared woman with all his might, Guff tossed her into the shallow waters near the island sandbank. Then, with one last look at the serpent's tail before it came crashing down, he dove from the canoe just prior to it be smashed to bits.

The water must have shocked Bess to her senses, as a passing

moment later, she pulled Guff from the surf and onto the sandy beach. He hacked and coughed up salt water—almost drowning.

“You never were much of a swimmer,” said Bess.

Guff nodded and spurted up even more liquid from his lungs as he allowed his sight to scan the ocean beyond for any sign of the horrid creature. At first, Guff was relieved at seeing nothing. But, that feeling of respite was soon replaced with dread and terror. The waters near shore began to bubble and shake just as before. “I don’t suppose, by chance, that you’re much of a monster killer?”

Bess smiled and picked up the steering pole from the canoe that had just washed to shore with a flick of her foot—tossing the big stick into her meaty hands. “You start the fire, my love,” she said in response. “We’re eating some tasty sea snake tonight.”

With those words, the serpent once more rose out of the waves

with an explosion of water. Bess stepped toward this terror of the ocean and Guff passed out, face-first, into the powdery sand.

When Guff awoke, night had overcome day. His nostrils took in the pleasant aroma of searing flesh. Flames danced near him. Sitting upright, he brushed the sand from his beard and watched his wife cook. “You saved us,” he said with hoarse words.

“Nah!” countered Bess. “I was simply hungry. Have you not learned by now that a starving girl will do anything for food—including the stabbing of a spear through the eye of a monster?” Bess laughed, picked up a plate with her bloodstained fingers, and handed the dish to Guff. Famished, Guff chowed down as though it would be his last meal.

“Eat up, sweet cheeks!” said Bess gleefully. “At dawn, we’ll open the box and peek inside.”

*...to be continued.*

**1. In Your Own Words:** What happened in the passage you've just read? Summarize the story events.

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**2. Can You Relate?** Have you ever eaten a wild animal cooked over an open fire? Detail your experiences.

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**3. What Would You Do?** How do you think you would react if a giant sea monster was attacking you?

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**4. Your Questions:** What unanswered questions do you have about the story? What would you like to know?

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**5. Making Predictions:** What do you think will happen next to Guff and Bess in the story?

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