

Mackerel and Chips by Michael Morpurgo

A month ago we were on the Isles of Scilly again for our holidays.

'Make a wish, Leah,' said Mrs Pender, who keeps the bed and breakfast where we stay. My birthday. Ten years old. I blew out the candles on the cake and cut it slowly, gazing out at the lifeboat in St Mary's Bay, the same lifeboat I could see from my bedroom window every morning, every evening. I wish, I said inside my head, I wish I could go out in the lifeboat, just once.

'Tell, tell,' cried Eloise, my little sister, pulling at me. But I told no one.

My present from Mum was a morning of mackerel fishing on Nemo, Mr Pender's launch. Mr Pender would take me all on my own.

Like lots of visitors, I'd been out in Nemo before. She's one of the open blue and white boats that take you to look at seals off the Eastern Islands, or puffins off Annet. Her engine purred and throbbed as we cleared St Mary's harbour and turned towards St Martin's.

'We'll find mackerel off Great Arthur,' said Mr Pender, pushing back his sailor's cap. 'Be a bit of a swell, out there. You don't get seasick, do you?'

I shook my head and hoped.



Name:	Class:	Date:
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1 Which words in paragraph 2 tell you this was not Leah’s first visit to the Isles of Scilly?

2g

1 mark

2 “My birthday. Ten years old” (paragraph 2). Why did the author use such short sentences here?

2f

1 mark

3 Do you think Leah would be happy if her wish really came true?
Yes No

Explain your answer.

2d

1 mark

4 Mr Pender asks Leah if she gets seasick at the end of the passage. What do you think her response tells us about her?

2d

1 mark

5 Choose the best summary of this passage.

Leah is on holiday with her family, staying in Mrs Pender’s B&B. It’s her birthday.

Leah is going out with Mr Pender in his mackerel boat. Mr Pender warns her that the sea may be choppy but she says she doesn’t get seasick.

Leah’s birthday wish is to go in the lifeboat, but her birthday treat is to go mackerel fishing with Mr Pender.

Leah’s birthday present was a trip in Mr Pender’s mackerel boat without Eloise.

2c

1 mark

6 Based on what you have read so far, choose the statement that is the best prediction of what will happen in the rest of this story.

Leah will catch lots of mackerel and Mrs Pender will cook them for Leah’s birthday tea.

Leah will be seasick and Mr Pender will have to bring her home without catching any fish.

There will be a storm at sea and Leah will be very brave.

Something will go wrong and Leah will be rescued by the lifeboat.

2e

1 mark