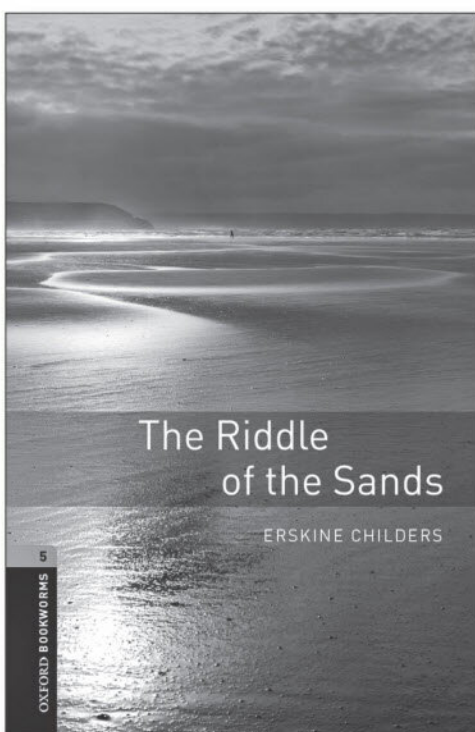


## 2.5 Reading for pleasure

### The Riddle of the Sands

- 1 Look at the book cover, the title and the description of the book.
  - 1 What can you see on the book cover?
  - 2 Where do you think the story is set?
- 2 Read an extract from the first chapter of *The Riddle of the Sands*. Answer the questions.
  - 1 Why did Caruthers have doubts about joining Davies on the yacht?
  - 2 Why were the two men cautious about each other when they met?
  - 3 What do you think might happen in the story? Why do you think the letter was a turning point in Caruthers' life? Why do you think Davies asked for a gun?



Erskine Childers' novel, published in 1903, was the first great modern spy story.

#### The story so far

It is September 1902, and Caruthers, a young man who works for the British government, has just received a letter from Arthur Davies, a university friend, inviting him to join him on his yacht in the Baltic Sea, as the friend who was on the yacht with Arthur has left unexpectedly.

The letter was a turning point in my life, though I did not know it at the time. During my lonely dinner that evening I was undecided. Yachting in the Baltic in October! I must be mad even to think of it. I was used to the kind of yachting party that took place in warm summer weather, on comfortable, luxurious yachts with servants to bring meals and drinks. But what kind of yacht was the *Dulcibella*? Davies, I remember, was not rich. We had been at Oxford University together and had been quite friendly, but I'd not seen him in the three years since then. On the few occasions we had met I found him rather dull.

His letter too seemed rather unpromising. His friend had left him – why? The Baltic was beautiful, yes – but what about October storms? Did I really want to spend my holidays freezing in the Baltic, with a man who was sure to bore me to death?

Two days later I was on the night ferry to Holland, with a huge pile of luggage and a ticket for Flensburg in my pocket. I'd had to go all round London to find the things that Davies wanted for the yacht, and I felt I was being generous and unselfish. Davies had said that he needed a friend so I was doing a friend's duty and answering his call. It was just possible of course, that I might enjoy myself as well.

The train took me east, then north through Germany and by ten o'clock the next evening I was standing on the station platform at Flensburg, and Davies was greeting me.

'It's awfully good of you to come.'

'Not at all. It's very good of you to ask me.'

We watched each other cautiously. Davies, in ordinary old clothes, did not look like my idea of a yachtsman. Where were the fashionable white trousers and the dark blue jacket, like the ones lying neatly in my big suitcase?

'You've brought a lot of things,' said Davies, looking anxiously at my luggage.

'You asked me to get most of them,' I replied. 'I've brought the hammer, the rope and rubber boots you wanted. Oh and the gun you were having repaired.'

'Oh yes! Thank you. I didn't mean those. It's that large case. You couldn't manage with just the small bag?'

'No, of course not.' I answered, puzzled.

'Well never mind. It's not far to the dinghy,' and he bent down to pick up my luggage.

'But where are your men?' I asked.

'Oh, I never have paid men on the *Dulcibella*,' said Davies cheerfully. 'The whole fun is doing it yourself. It's quite a small yacht you know.'

I looked at Davies in silent horror. Then I picked up my bag frowning. 'Come on, then,' I said.

Text extract from *Oxford Bookworms Library Stage 5: The Riddle of the Sands*



# Review: Units 1 and 2

## Vocabulary

- 1 Complete the text with words from the box.

adapt ~~awkward~~ comfort coped cross ease  
encounters remotest roughing satisfied small tougher



People often ask how travel has changed me. Travelling has made me a better person, and here's why:

**I'm more sociable.** When you're travelling alone, you're forced to make new friends. I used to feel <sup>1</sup> awkward talking to strangers. Now, I'm perfectly at <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ talking to people I don't know, and better at making <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ talk and knowing the right questions to ask.

**I'm more easy-going.** I've <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ with missed flights, slow buses, bad street food and much worse. I've learnt to <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to changing situations. There's no point in getting <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ or stressed. You just go with the flow.

**I'm more confident.** I've climbed Mount Everest and dived the Great Barrier Reef. I've had <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ with dangerous animals. I've been to some of the <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ places on Earth. I feel I can achieve whatever I set my mind to.

**I'm <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and more adventurous.** Last week in Austin, Texas, despite not liking spicy food, I ate the world's hottest chilli pepper. Why? Because I wanted to. What's the purpose of life if not to break out of your <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ zone?

**I'm less materialistic.** After <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ it for years, I've learnt just how little stuff you actually need. I've learnt to be <sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ with the few possessions I've got.

Adapted from a blog post by travel blogger, Nomadic Matt

## Grammar

- 2 Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

1 password / do / know / you / what / is / the ?

Do you know what the password is?

2 to / you / are / who / writing ?

3 do / later / to / rain / you / is / think / it / going ?

4 tell / could / word / means / you / me / what / this ?

5 they / were / what / about / complaining ?

6 sitting / were / next / to / who / you ?

- 3 Complete the sentences with the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

1 I haven't seen (not see) Kate this week.

2 He \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) tired lately.

3 I \_\_\_\_\_ (borrow) Simon's car for the weekend.

4 We \_\_\_\_\_ (have) a lot of homework this week.

5 How long \_\_\_\_\_ (you/learn) English?

- 4 Find and correct the three wrong sentences.

1 They were having a row when I walked into the room.

2 How long had you waited before they let you onto the ferry? How long had you been waiting before they let you onto the ferry?

3 When the post arrived this morning, I already left the house.

4 Why weren't you copying me in to that email?

5 We had to go home because it was getting dark.

## Speaking

- 5 Add a word from the box to sentences 1-4.

have long you with

1 Could you bear me a moment?

2 To cut a story short, I missed the plane.

3 I'll let get on.

4 You must been so frustrated!