

It's a Wonderful Life



*M*y name is Zulu, and, I live on a beautiful ocean-going yacht named *Kamaloa*. My mom, dad, and I, have sailed all the way around the world. What a great life.

Mom and dad even sailed around the world three other times before I was born. However, right now, I am sitting in jail in a land called "Down Under"! The real name is Australia, but I must say, right now, I certainly do feel "Down".

My neighbor tells me he has lived here for a long time and that it is called "Quarantine". Every morning a guard comes along, and without speaking, leaves a tiny portion of food in front of my cell. What are these people thinking? Don't they know that I am used to gourmet food! Maybe this is happening because I stole my mom's best beef filet from the galley countertop months ago. I just couldn't help myself.

My punishment was half portions of dinner for 15 long days and nights while sailing to the Marquesas Islands from Panama. Even my home-baked "good-night cookies", vanished into thin air.

The minute I smelled French Polynesia, though, I knew my suffering would soon be over. It wasn't long before beautiful islands came into view. Tropical bays surrounded by lush green hills, offered calm water to drop our anchor. My dad and I always have a great time together hunting crabs on tropical beaches. And, mom and I love to watch seagulls rise from the sea clutching glistening fish beneath them. Hungry frigate birds always follow them hot in pursuit. The acrobatics of their aerial battle are fascinating to watch. It was paradise for months as we visited famous islands, like Tahiti, Moorea, and, Bora Bora.



Five days after leaving Bora Bora, the Cook Island atoll of Suvarrow appeared on the horizon. Mom and dad love to stop at this little gem.

And, it is one of my favorites too, as I had a great time on our last visit. But, then, I was just a little kid, and got away with a lot of mischief.

Of course, now I am a full-fledged crew member on *Kamaloa*, and am expected to act like one ashore, even if there are a lot of temptations in the lagoon and on the beaches. You see, there are no villages, no cars, and only a few people to keep watch over this paradise in the sea.

I remember the gentle sound of the surf on the reef lulling me to sleep at night when last we were here. I was a bit disappointed this time, though, that my friend, Bekka, the gentle giant, was nowhere to be seen. I was hoping he would again greet me with the finest coconut meat on the planet.

We arrived early in the season and a few other yachts were at anchor. Our small community became one big family. Our adventures together each day became the talk of the evenings spent together. Caretaker John and his family loved me to death. Early each morning I would go ashore in our dinghy and jump in their beds, making sure they awakened to another wonderful day. The wonderful days somehow passed by too quickly, though, and then it was back out to sea for another long ocean passage. I sure hope my friends on Suvarrow miss me because I sure do miss them.

What a passage we had then. Shocking white lines zig-zaged from the sky right into the ocean. Each was followed by a loud grumbling noise.

I jumped into mom's bed being a little afraid of what was happening out there. It was very dark all around us. Big waves and lots of white foaming water followed our boat trying to catch us. Each time I heard the loud, dull noise, my heart missed a beat.





Mom held me very close and told me all was fine. Her heart beat felt so good that I fell asleep in no time. The minute I woke up the sun was shining into our cabin. All that noisy stuff from the night before was gone and we were surrounded by beautiful Islands. Dad and I were sitting by the bow and he told me that Fiji is one of his favorite places in the world. Of course, I had to remind him that I may have been just a kid when we last sailed into Fiji, but I certainly remembered all of it. Dad was pleased to hear that it is one of my favorite places as well. Like father, like son, he always says.

Well, Max, an ugly Bulldog from another boat, left me an e-mail a few weeks ago on

my favorite bush in Fiji. Apparently they eat dogs and humans in these islands. Dad promised that this happened many years ago. Max may have an unfortunate face, but, I must admit, he has been right more times than he has been wrong. I am determined to check things out for myself



before I roam around too much.

Oh yes. I met my cousin Ted again, as he lives here in Fiji. You know how it goes with relatives, we had a few heated disagreements. He constantly stole my delicious ostrich sticks. Gee, this guy could use some mouth-wash. I am thinking of having a dinner aboard *Kamaloa* and inviting Max and Ted over. With luck, they will become best-buddies, and I will be free to meet some

new folks in the area.

So much for reminiscences. Reality set in "Down Under", and a miracle finally happened. Mom and Dad showed up outside quarantine early one morning to bail me out. I was so deliriously happy that I couldn't stop showing my love for my parents.



When mom gave me my favorite cranberry, walnut and blue cheese biscuit, that she baked especially for me, I knew that jail-time was over. My taste buds were in heaven, and, all was right with the world.

P.S. I am seriously considering going to law school when I grow up. I think someone has to stand up for the human rights of people like me when it comes to good chow and good walks while in quarantine. Or, better yet, no quarantine at all for any honest-to-goodness, sea-going folk, like me. I'd like to hear from you what you think of this idea. Just e-mail me at Zulu@Kamaloa.woof.