

One night, a storm blew up that no one had seen the like of before. A ship was blown onto Bonuit rocks, and the Bonuit maroons were sounded.

All that could come out to peer through the rain that beat on their faces. Waves of great height fell upon the shoreline, overturning and smashing all that they touched. Beyond the sounds of the waves the heartbreaking cries of men and women clinging to the wreckage of the ship could be heard.

"It's hopeless. No one can get to them in this weather," said one Jerseyman.

"Help me launch the boat; it's not too late," shouted a determined voice behind them. Joseph Rolande came running down the beach. He had run all the way from his house behind the mountain, dressed in his fisherman's clothes.

The people watched with dread as his boat disappeared behind the mountains of waves that crashed around. Lightning lit up the scene and sent fear through all who stood helpless on dry land. Suddenly a gasp went up from an old fisherman watching from the bay. "Look!" he called. "Joseph – out there – and look, do you see the gigantic fish that follows him? No – it's a woman!"

"You called me with my comb, my friend and I have come to you," called the mermaid.

Her voice was as music to Joseph. "Help me save these people," he shouted to her.

And she did. With tender care, she lifted each one and carried them to Joseph's boat, planting them safely inside.

The sailors and passengers, deranged with fear, could hardly remember how it was they had escaped death. But later, many spoke of a woman's silky soft arms and tender care, and of a man both laughing and crying as he helped them on board.

As the boat carried the people to shore, the mermaid swam alongside. "I thought you had forgotten me, Joseph," she cried.

"I thought your kind were evil. I was wrong. Thank you for helping me," Joseph replied through his tears.

He helped the people onto the shore; then began to turn the boat around. Had he seen another soul to rescue?

"Don't go back; you've done enough. You will be taken by the wind and the tide," warned those on land.

But Joseph did put out to sea. And he never returned. Someone was waiting for him beyond the third wave, someone with the key to a kingdom way below the sea.

