

CHAPTER 1

Into the storm

In November 1996, sixteen competitors were ready to begin the world's most difficult and dangerous yacht race. The *Vendée Globe* is a round-the-world race that takes about four months. It starts and ends in north-west France. Competitors sail alone and without stopping. Yachtsmen and women have to sail through the Southern Ocean, the waters around Antarctica. Strong winds, cold seas and sudden storms make this the most dangerous ocean in the world. In the 1992 race, only half the competitors finished and two people died.



Two of the competitors in the 1996 race were Pete Goss, an English yachtsman, and Raphael Dinelli from France. In 1988, Pete came third in another round-the-world yacht race, but it was 28-year-old Raphael's first big race.

Both men started well. The yachts were in two groups and Raphael was at the front of the second group with Pete behind him. They were both a long way ahead of the others in the group. Raphael, however,

was having a difficult race. There were a lot of problems with his boat. Too much water was getting into the boat and he had to repair the sails. He worked day and night and was very tired.

Just before Christmas, Pete and Raphael reached the dangerous Southern Ocean. At first both men enjoyed sailing fast on the big waves and Pete's boat moved ahead of Raphael's. But soon it started snowing and the waves became a lot bigger. 'There's going to be a big storm,' thought Pete. He was right.



Raphael was soon in trouble. Fifteen-metre waves were hitting the side of his boat. The yacht was going too fast so he took the sails down. It didn't work. A big wave hit the boat and it turned over with Raphael inside. Raphael knew that he couldn't continue the race. There was only one thing to do. He sent a call for help by radio. His message reached the Air-Sea Rescue Centre in Fremantle, Western Australia. They saw that Raphael was thirty-four hours away from the nearest ship. Raphael needed help quickly. The closest person to him was Pete Goss.

Pete was out of the storm when he got a message about Raphael on his radio. He knew that he had to go back. Another yachtsman was in trouble and he had to try and rescue him. He sailed back into the storm.

After three hours, Raphael's boat turned back over, but it was sinking fast. He opened his life-raft and put food, water and other supplies inside. He used a line to tie the life-raft to the boat. But a wave hit the life-raft and the line broke. Raphael could do nothing as all his supplies disappeared into the storm. Without a life-raft, Raphael could die.

Pete was not having an easy time either. Waves as big as houses were crashing against his boat. He tied himself inside the boat and waited. He knew that he couldn't stop now.

An Australian Air Force plane was also on its way to find Raphael. The plane took seven hours to reach the search area. The men on the plane looked for Raphael. Suddenly, they saw him. He was waving at them from the sinking boat. The plane dropped supplies to him, but it did not have enough fuel to stay in the area.



Raphael was able to get the most important supplies. They included a life-raft, food, water and a radio. He got into the life-raft. He was only just in time. As he opened the rest of the supplies, his boat sank into the sea. There was a note inside the box of supplies. The note said: PETE GOSS TEN HOURS SOUTH. Raphael was happy at first. But ten hours meant another night at sea. He was very cold and tired.



The pilot found Pete and spoke to him on the radio. Pete was happy to hear a voice after so many nights alone at sea. The pilot gave Raphael's exact position to Pete.

'Thanks,' Pete said. 'And Happy Christmas!'

'The same to you,' the pilot answered.

That night was very bad for Raphael. He was very cold and he couldn't move. He lay against the side of the raft and hoped to live through the night.



By now Pete was close to Raphael's life-raft. He used the light from flares to look for him in the dark. But he couldn't see him. Was Raphael dead? He just didn't know. Morning came and Pete was very tired. He got another position for Raphael on the radio. He looked for the position on his map. He was 100 kilometres away. 'That can't be right,' Pete thought. He washed his face in some very cold seawater and tried to wake up. It worked. He looked again at the map and saw that he and Raphael were now very close. But he still couldn't see him. The waves were too high.

At that point, another Australian plane arrived. It saw Raphael, flew over him and turned its lights on. Pete followed the lights. Pete was about fifteen metres away when Raphael finally saw him. He sailed his boat next to the life-raft and pulled Raphael inside.

'I'll never forget the look in his eyes,' Pete said later.

But Raphael was not safe yet. He was very weak. Pete made Raphael some hot, sweet tea. Raphael drank it slowly and began to feel better.



News of Raphael's rescue went around the world. After leaving Raphael in Hobart, Australia, Pete went back into the race. He arrived back in France two months later. As he sailed in, 150,000 people were

waiting for him. There were large signs on many of the buildings. One of them said, 'Pete the Great is back.'

Pete and Raphael have become very good friends. They share a love of adventure and have raced together in the Atlantic Ocean.

'I went on a round-the-world race alone and I made a very, very special friend,' says Pete. 'Life can be very strange!'



Now watch Clips 2 and 3 and answer the questions on pages 14–15.