

Caught in a Tempest

Timothy, an old man, and Phillip, a young boy who is blind, have been marooned on a deserted island since their ship sank.

They are preparing for a hurricane that is approaching the island. They are sheltering in a hut, but, as a back-up plan, Timothy has lashed a tin box and a water keg to a palm tree that is on higher ground.

inset, with the
eavy and hot,
othly described
ky to me. He
it was flaming
und that there were



veils of high clouds. It
so still over our cay that
ould hear nothing but
rustling of the lizards.
ust before dark. Timothy

“Twon’t be long now,
-eep.”

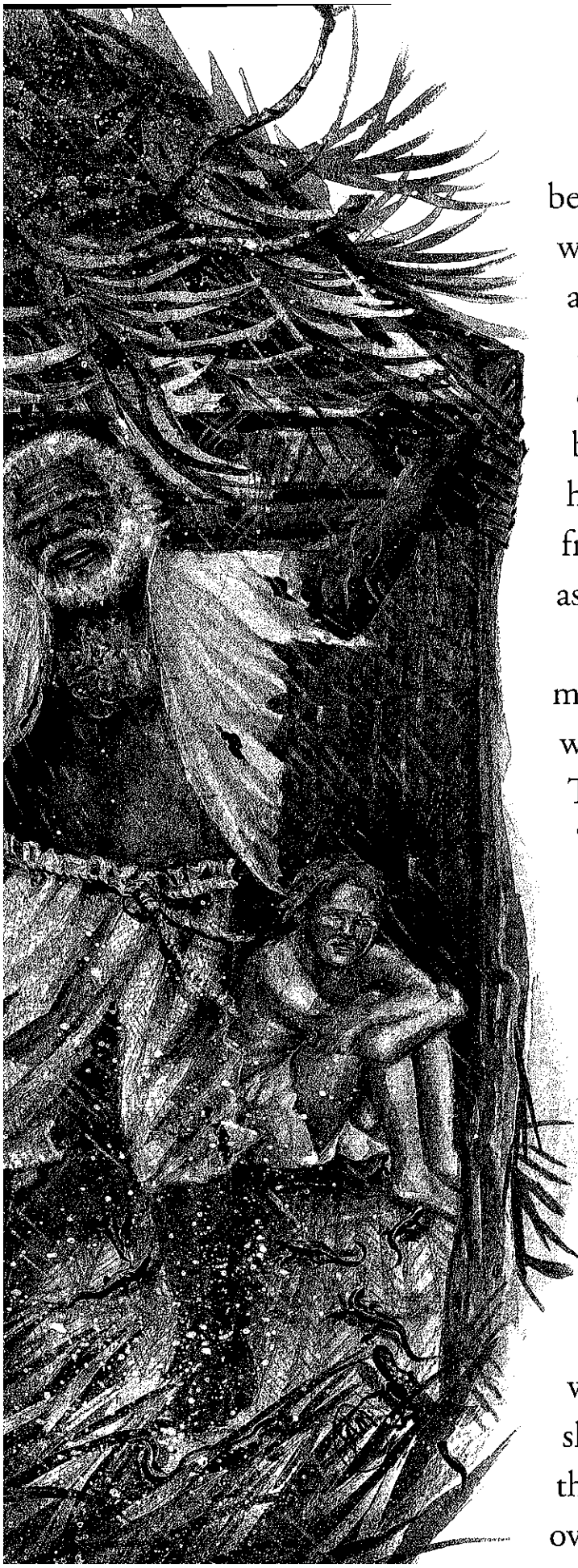
We felt a light breeze that
n to ripple the smooth sea.
othy said he saw an arc of

They looked as if
they were beginning
to join the higher
clouds.

It was well after
dark when the first

drops of rain spattered the hut,
and with them, the wind turned
cool. When it gusted, the rain
hit the hut like handfuls of
gravel.

Then the wind began to blow
steadily, and Timothy went out
of the hut to look up at the sky.
He shouted, “Dey boilin’ ovah
now, Phill-eep. ’Tis hurrican’, to



We could hear the surf beginning to crash as the wind drove waves before it, and Timothy ducked back inside to stand in the opening of the hut, his big body stretched so he could hang on to the overhead frame, keeping the hut erect as long as possible.

I felt movement around my legs and feet. Things were slithering. I screamed to Timothy who shouted back, "B'nothin' but d'lil' lizard, comin' high ground."

Rain was now slashing into the hut, and the wind was reaching a steady howl. The crash of the surf sounded closer; I wondered if it was already beginning to push up towards our hill.

The rain was icy, and I was wet, head to foot. I was shivering, but more from the thought of the sea rolling over us than from the

In a moment, there was a
crashing sound, and Timothy
fell down beside me, cover-
ing my body with his. Our hut
was blown away.



There was no sound now
except the roar of the storm.
Even the sound of the wind
was being beaten down by the
wildness of the sea. The rain was
hitting my back like thousands
of hard berries blown from air
guns.

We stayed flat on the ground
for almost two hours, taking
the storm's punishment,
barely able to breathe in
the driving rain. Then
Timothy shouted hoarsely,
"To d'palm."



The sea was beginning
to reach for our hilltop,
climbing the forty feet
with raging whitecaps.
Timothy dragged me
towards the palm.

Standing with his
back to the storm,
Timothy put my arms
through the loops of
rope, and then roped
himself, behind me, to



Soon, I felt water around ankles. Then it washed to knees. It would go back then crash against us again. Timothy was taking the full brunt of the storm, sheltering me with his body. When the water receded, it would tug at me and Timothy's strength would hold me against it. I could feel the water in his arms as the water tried to suck us away.



We must have been against the palm for almost an hour when suddenly the wind died down and the rain became gentle. Timothy panted, "D'eye! We can relax a bit till d'odder side o' d' tempis' hit us."

from *The Cay*
by Theodore Taylor

