# Grandpa and the Sea

The summer I was seven was a very happy time for me. That summer Grandpa showed me how to row a boat. "I want you to make friends with the sea," he said.

Grandpa's house was right by the sea in Maine. Winds often pushed the sea into big waves. The waves came up almost to the rocks in front of the house.

At those times, Grandpa said, "Come along, Davy. Let's go meet the sea!" We climbed down over the big rocks together. At times we went too near the water. Then a wave would knock us down.

I cried the first time this happened, "I'm afraid!" I said. But Grandpa said, "Come along now! You must learn not to be afraid." How brave Grandpa seemed to me. I wanted to be just like him.

Most men in the town were fishermen. They set out lobster traps in the sea. An old fisherman named Al let us use his boat. Al's strong, heavy boat rode the waves well. Al was very poor. But he would not take money for the boat from Grandpa.

Grandpa found another way to pay him. He knew that Al had to make his lobster traps from old wood. These traps always came to pieces in a storm. So Grandpa made Al some fine lobster traps from new wood.

One day, there was a very big storm. Grandpa and I went down to the sea. The men were standing around, talking. But Al was not with them.

"Where is Al?" Grandpa asked.

"Out there in his boat," one man said. He pointed to the sea. "He's trying to get those traps you made for him. But he lost an oar. He can't get back.”

"We must go and tow him in," Grandpa said. "Who will go with me?"

No one answered. Who wanted to go to sea in such bad weather? Grandpa walked to a boat. "I'll go with you, Grandpa!" I said. I jumped into the boat beside him.

Grandpa started to tell me not to come. Then he picked up the heavy oars. He pushed us out into the deep water. Grandpa was standing in the boat. He had lost his hat. His white hair was blowing in the wind. He turned and smiled at me. At that very minute, I stopped being afraid.

Grandpa pulled on the oars. The waves were high. With each wave, the boat went up in the air. Then it banged down on the water. Up, down, up, down we went. From the top of a wave, we saw Al. He was trying to use his one oar. But water was filling his boat. Could we get to him in time?

Yes! Soon Grandpa pulled near enough for Al to throw us a tow rope. We tied the rope to our boat. Then Grandpa began rowing back to land. Big waves followed us in. One of them made Al's heavy boat hit our lighter one. I thought both boats would sink.

Then Grandpa turned our boat around. Were we going back to sea?

"We'll have to back in, Davy," Grandpa said. "Then Al's boat will be in front of us. It can't hit us."

The waves still came at us, pushing us to land. But now they pushed Al's heavy boat away from us. Al got to land first.

At last we climbed out onto the rocks. One fisherman put a coat around Grandpa. The rest stood there shaking their heads over the chance Grandpa had taken.

Al came over to shake Grandpa's hand. He knew how brave Grandpa had been. So did I. But Grandpa just said, "Come on, Davy. Let's go home!"

**Discuss:**

1) Davy stopped being afraid when Grandpa smiled. Why?

2) When were you ever afraid? 3) What gave you courage?