



French holiday

Tom had never been to France before so he was quite excited when the family left the caravan and rushed down to the beach on the very first day of the holiday. If only he had his friends with him, he thought. Or, if only he had a brother to spend time with or even a sister.

Dad spread out the blanket on the soft sand and Mum started hammering in the poles of the wind-break. Tom knew he should be helping but he couldn't resist tearing off his clothes then struggling into his swim-shorts under his big red beach towel.

'See you later!' he called, and ran down the beach to splash into the sea. The cold of the water came as a shock to him after the feeling of the hot sand under his feet. He quickly ran back out of the water and stood staring at the sea. He might pluck up courage to go in properly in a minute, he decided.

He looked in both directions along the beach: to his left, the cliffs curved round towards the sea and there were large boulders where the sand ended. To his right, the sand stretched for a long way until meeting rocks and cliffs, which were illuminated by the bright sunlight. At that end of the beach there was a small island on top of which, a small building that could be a castle was set amongst pine trees.

Tom thought that the castle island could be worth exploring later. Perhaps the tide would go out far enough for him to be able to walk to the island. Or maybe he would just have to swim a short distance. That water was cold though!

For now, Tom turned in the other direction and ran along the sand. It was much easier to run here than further up the beach because the sand was damp and firm. Occasionally he allowed himself to run through the shallowest water where small waves were making their final approach to dry land. Tom had not felt so happy for a very long time.