

## Level 3 Fiction – Happy New Year

“There it is,” says Mum. “There’s Great Barrier.”

Cathy can hardly believe they’re almost there. She looks to where Mum is pointing and sees a thin blue smudge. It hovers in the distance like a *mirage*. Cathy would like to draw her first view of the island, but the water’s too choppy.

Chris pours a bucket of seawater over his head and shakes the drips from his hair. He’s too distracted by the heat – and the evening’s plans – to bother looking. “What time does the party start?”

Dad yawns a giant yawn. “After nine hours’ sailing, we’ll be lucky to stay awake till midnight.”

“Not me,” says Chris. “There’s no way I’m missing it.”

The wind freshens as they near the island. Cathy watches the shoreline take shape. What was once blue is now green. Bush cloaks the island, which is bordered by grey rock. They seem to be heading for a wall of that rock until it suddenly parts to let them through.

Mum wipes the sweat from her brow. “Radio Uncle Pat,” she says, checking the chart. “Confirm that we’re about to anchor for the night.” A few keelers and launches have already chosen a spot in the middle of the long, sheltered bay – but with the centreboard wound up, they’ll take their trailer yacht closer in.