

A dramatic seascape featuring a sailboat's deck and mast in the foreground. The sea is a vibrant turquoise color with white-capped waves. In the background, a dark, stormy sky is punctuated by bright, jagged lightning bolts. The overall mood is intense and adventurous.

SAIL

T H E H E I G H T S

Chapter 1



Antonio and Lilia were alone. They just got home from school. The phone rang. Antonio ran to get it. But Lilia ran past him. She answered the phone.

“Hey, Dad!” Lilia said.

“Hi, Lilia,” said Rafael. “What’s going on?”

“Not much. Antonio and I just got home,” said Lilia. “When will your

work be done?”

“It’s a big job. I’ll be gone a while,” said Rafael.

Antonio took the phone from Lilia.

“Dad! Wassup?” asked Antonio.

“Hi, Antonio. Remind me. Is school finished next week?” Rafael asked.

“Yes. Six days and counting,” said Antonio.

“Great,” Rafael said. “I want to take you all on a trip.”

“Cool. Where?” Antonio asked.

“We’re going to sail around the Bahamas. I rented a sail boat in Miami,” said Rafael.

Lilia and Antonio were excited. They had all been sailing before. They talked about the plan for a

few more minutes. Rafael had to get back to work.

“Do you think Mom will come?”
Lilia asked Antonio.

“Doubt it,” Antonio said. “She doesn’t like to travel.”

“Yeah,” said Lilia. “She stays in the Heights.”

Rafael said that they would leave from Miami. Then sail for two weeks.

That night he booked three plane tickets. Ana was staying in the Heights. But Rafael loved taking his kids on vacation.

Ana Silva drove her kids to the airport. She hugged them good-bye. Then she told them to have a great time.

“And give your dad a big hug from me,” Ana said. “I miss him when he works on these big jobs. Maybe I’ll surprise you at the end of the trip.”

Rafael was in Miami. He met his kids at the airport. The Silva kids got off the plane. They went to get their bags. Rafael waved to them. Lilia saw him first. She ran up to him.

“Hi, Daddy!” Lilia yelled.

Rafael smiled. He gave her a big hug. Antonio and Franco hugged him too.

“This is going to be sweet,” said Antonio.

“Yes, it is,” Rafael said. “We’re sailing all over the Bahamas. We’ll swim, fish, and sail. Franco, I hope you remember how to sail. I’m going

to need your help. Our boat is 42 feet!”

“No problem, Dad. I remember,” Franco said.

“Great! Let’s get your bags,” Rafael said. “Then we’ll go to the boat.”

The boat was called the *Sea Mist*. It was blue and white. She looked sleek and fast. Lilia looked up and up. She couldn’t believe how tall the mast was.

“Wow, Dad! The boat is huge! It’s like 100 feet tall,” said Lilia.

Rafael laughed. “Well, it’s not that big! But it’s tall,” Rafael said. “Let’s go on board. I’ll show you around.”

They all boarded the *Sea Mist*.

Rafael pointed. “This is where we steer the boat,” he said. “That wheel controls the rudder.”

Next, they went into a small room. It was the wheelhouse. A table was covered with maps.

Then they went below. It was cramped. There were three little cabins where they would sleep. A kitchen was there too.

“Franco and Lilia, put everything away,” Rafael said. “Antonio and I will go to the store. Any requests?”

“Peanut butter,” Lilia said. “Don’t forget the peanut butter.”

“And frozen pizza,” said Franco.

“Do you ever eat good food?” Rafael asked.

“Only when Mom makes us,” said Franco.

Rafael laughed. “Forget it. I’ll pick out the food. We’re going to be

working hard. You'll get hungry," he said.

At the store, Rafael filled two carts with food. They would be at sea for 12 days. And there were a lot of mouths to feed. Antonio put frozen pizza, cookies, and candy in the cart.

"That's enough junk food," Rafael said.

"Dad, we're on vacation," said Antonio. "You sound like Mom."

They got back to the boat before dark. And they put the food away.

Rafael checked his list:

Food ✓

Fresh water—160 gallons ✓

Gas—100 gallons ✓

Fishing gear ✓

Diving gear ✓

Sleeping gear ✓

Flashlight ✓

Radio ✓

“There’s one rule, kids,” Rafael said. “Everyone has to wear a life jacket on deck. Got that? Okay! Now we’re ready. We ship out tomorrow morning.”