

Plot summary of The Sea Runners

The one who dies is--I hope contrary to all expectations--
Melander.

Some thirty or forty pages from where this manuscript sample leaves off, and after the four escapees survive a storm at sea north of the Queen Charlotte Islands, a chance shot from Indians they encounter at Aristazabal Island claims him.

This loss of the leader of course turns the book. Karlsson, who is deliberately underplayed here in the early portion of the manuscript, has to take over. Against his preference, against the animosity of Wennberg, but he has to do it, and his efforts to cope and contrive become a main theme.

Braaf meanwhile becomes the balancing weight between the other two as they continue their increasingly precarious canoe journey southward. About two-thirds of the way through the manuscript, the trio comes into the coastal territory of dangerous canoe-skilled tribes, the Makahs, Quinaults and Quillayutes. After watching from hiding as the Makahs, in canoes greatly more powerful and swift than their own, go out to hunt whales, the Swedes begin to travel only by night.

The next plot turn is the death of Braaf. He drowns in a tidal trough as they are hunting a seal for food. This of course leaves Karlsson and Wennberg, antagonists, forced to rely on one another for survival. The journey worsens as their food and strength wanes. But, as Melander would have said, aye. They live.

I intend the novel to be no more than 75,000 words; closer to 60,000, if I can manage it.

As to what the book will be "like," I might suggest Joseph Conrad's Typhoon; that is, a continuous action story keyed to one powerful element--the impossible escape--as Conrad's was keyed to the colossal storm at sea.

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