

Solo Sailor Operates on Himself—via E-mail



1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 87.
What is the story about?

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA ¹Viktor Yazykov was on **the first leg** of a sailboat race around the world. The Russian was alone in the Atlantic Ocean, 1,000 miles from shore. He **was in his element**.

²But he **was concerned about** his elbow, which he had injured earlier. Every day it was getting redder and larger. He sent an e-mail message to race headquarters. "RIGHT ELBOW DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. IT FEELS DEAD." ³Dr. Dan Carlin in Boston was in charge of providing emergency care for the sailors via computer. "YOU HAVE GOT TO OPERATE ON YOUR ELBOW," he typed. He carefully **laid out** the steps of the surgery. "IT WILL BE PAINFUL," he warned.

⁴**In the middle of** a violent storm, Yazykov began cutting his arm. He **kept a stiff upper lip**, following the doctor's instructions **to the letter**. ⁵Then something **went wrong**. Blood was all over the place, forming a large pool on the floor, rolling with the motion of the boat. ⁶Yazykov knew that if he **passed out**, he'd die. Using his good arm and his teeth, he tied two cords around his arm. The bleeding stopped, but his arm became cold and white, like a piece of rubber. "PLEASE, WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE?" he wrote to Dr. Carlin.

⁷Carlin knew that Yazykov was killing his arm. "TAKE THE CORDS OFF IMMEDIATELY," he wrote back. But the doctor was confused. **Why in the world** was there so much blood? Suddenly, he **put two and two together**. Aspirin! Yazykov had been taking aspirin for weeks and it had made his blood thin. "STOP ALL ASPIRIN," he ordered. ⁸After an anxious ten hours, Dr. Carlin finally heard from Yazykov. He **was out of the woods**. "I AM OK. GETTING STRONGER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP."

Victor Yazykov returns after his misadventure on the high seas.

New idioms and expressions

the first leg	the first part of a trip
be in one's element	be in a happy and comfortable situation
be concerned about someone or something	worry about someone or something
lay something out*	arrange or organize something
in the middle of something	while something is happening; during something
keep a stiff upper lip	be brave and calm in a difficult situation
to the letter	exactly as written or instructed; perfectly
go wrong	fail; not happen as planned
pass out*	lose consciousness; faint
why in the world?	why really? why in fact?
put two and two together	figure something out; reason from the facts
be out of the woods	be out of danger after an illness, injury, or difficult situation

recycled idioms: be in charge of, have got to, all over the place, take something off, hear from

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon and Appendix D)

2. Listen

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story two or three times.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

4. Listen and Complete

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Match

Complete the idioms using the words in the box. Then write the number of the matching definition.

woods	out	element	wrong
upper lip	world	leg	

_____ a. pass _____	1. be brave and calm
_____ b. be out of the _____	2. be in a happy and comfortable situation
_____ c. keep a stiff _____	3. the first part of a trip
_____ d. why in the _____	4. be out of danger
_____ e. be in one's _____	5. fail; not happen as planned
_____ f. go _____	6. why really
_____ g. the first _____	7. lose consciousness

6. Tell the Story

Look only at the pictures and the New Idioms box on page 87. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

7. Answer the Questions

About the story

- Where was Viktor when he became concerned about his elbow?
- What did the doctor tell him?
- What did he lay out in his e-mail message?
- When did Viktor begin the surgery?
- How did he react while he was cutting his arm?
- Was he able to follow the doctor's instructions?
- What went wrong?
- What would happen if Viktor passed out?
- What did the doctor tell Viktor to do with the cords on his arm?
- When did the doctor finally hear from Viktor? How was he?
- Would you enjoy sailing alone around the world? Why/why not?

About you

- Tell about a dangerous situation when you kept a stiff upper lip.
- Have you ever passed out? What happened?
- When are you in your element?
- What are you concerned about these days?
- When you take a trip (by car, by plane, by boat), what kinds of things can go wrong?

8. Take a Dictation

Listen to the tape or your teacher and write the dictation in your notebook.

9. Complete the Idioms



- a. Herve loves playing the drums. When he's in the _____ a concert, he's really in his _____.

- b. Everyone was very concerned _____ Katia after her accident, but now she's out of _____.



- c. Agim followed the cake recipe to the _____, but everything went _____. The cake burned and had a funny shape.

10. Look at Grammar

be concerned

be concerned about someone

be concerned about something

I haven't heard from Bill in a long time, and I'm concerned.

I haven't heard from Bill in a long time, and I'm concerned about him.

I haven't heard from Bill in a long time, and I'm concerned about his well-being.

go wrong

go wrong with something

Everything went wrong today at work!

A lot of things went wrong with our new project.

Something also went wrong with my computer and fax.

Luckily, nothing went wrong with my phone.

Note: The subject used with this expression is usually an indefinite pronoun, such as *everything*, *something*, *nothing*, *many things*, *several things*, etc.

lay out something

lay something out

I laid out my ideas carefully, but no one liked them.

I laid my ideas out carefully, but no one liked them.

Note: In the above examples, *lay out* means organize and present. You can lay out *plans*, *ideas*, *the steps of a process*, and *your thoughts about something*. *Lay out* also means *spread out*, as in *I laid out the map on the floor*. It is a transitive, separable phrasal verb. For more information on phrasal verbs, see Appendix D.

Complete the sentences with help from the grammar box above. Make sure they are true for you.

- My last vacation/trip was _____ ;
_____ went wrong.
- The first time I tried _____ ,
_____ went wrong.
- There are many problems in the world. I'm particularly concerned _____ .
_____ .
- I'm concerned _____
because he/she _____ .
- I laid out _____ .

11. Write a Dialogue

Work with a partner. Write a dialogue using at least four idioms from the unit. Act it out for the class.

12. Complete the Story

- a. Fill in the blanks in this true story with idioms from the box. Put the verbs in the correct form and tense.

- keep a stiff upper lip (v)
- in the middle of
- why in the world
- lay out (v)
- out of the woods
- go wrong (v)
- be very concerned about (v)

Internet Angels

Ürümqi, China Yongxin Deng, 31,
(1) _____ his three-year-old son. The boy, Shao-Shao (whose name means "laughter"), had a very serious and rare heart disease. Deng wanted his son to have surgery, but doctors in China disagreed.
(2) _____ should they operate? The boy was too ill and could not live through an operation.



But Deng was determined. He **turned to** the Internet for help*. He posted a notice: "Seeking Help to Save My Son." He (3) _____ his problem and asked for "any help or information." He received many replies. Strangers from California, whom Deng calls his "Internet Angels," helped to find more than \$110,000 for Shao-Shao's surgery.

Deng, who was (4) _____ his graduate studies, quit everything and took his wife and child to Los Angeles. Doctors there told the Dengs that the heart surgery was dangerous. Something could (5) _____. Little Shao-Shao (6) _____ during his three operations. Everything **went well****, and the boy is now (7) _____.

The Dengs were amazed by all the people who helped them out. "How can we thank people whose names we'll never know?" Deng asked. "Now our son is really a 'laughing' boy!"

* turn to someone or something for help: look for help from someone or something
** go well: be successful (the opposite of go wrong)
recycled idioms: live through, help out

- b. Read or tell the story to a partner.