Storm on the Island

The blizzard grew during the night. Miranda had no trouble waking up to check the lamps. Her cold was worse, and the booming waves and wind made it almost impossible to sleep.

By morning, huge waves began to wash onto the island. Miranda heard water slapping against the house. She looked out the kitchen window.

“My hens!” she cried. When the sea fell back for a moment, she raced out to the coop, with icy water swirling around her knees.

“Hurry!” Mother shouted.

Miranda caught all four chickens quickly and thrust them into her basket. Then she ran back to the house. Mother slammed the door behind Miranda just before the next wave broke.

Miranda dumped the squawking hens in a little storeroom behind the kitchen, then rushed back to the window. The chicken coop was tumbling in the waves. She pulled off her wet shoes and stockings and warmed her legs by the wood stove.

Giant breakers began to surge right across the island. And water was coming in beneath the kitchen door.

“Help me!” Mother called. They both knelt on the floor and jammed strips of cloth into the crack. Then they pushed heavy wooden boxes against it to hold the cloth in place.

All day long the blizzard howled around the cottage. Huge boulders were washed from one side of the lighthouse rock to the other, cracking and crashing as they went. The booming surf was deafening.

Miranda kept the lamps burning all day. And each time she climbed the lighthouse steps, her cold seemed worse. By evening, she felt weak and her fever was high.