

We found our beach once again and set off round the island, keeping wherever possible to the edge of the forest, to the shade. Still we found no stream. Again, I saw plenty of fruit, but always too high, and the trees were always too smooth, too sheer to climb. I found plenty of coconuts on the ground, but always cracked open and empty inside.

When the beach petered out, we had to strike off into the forest itself. Here too I found a narrow track to follow. The forest became impenetrable at this point, dark and menacing. There was no howling any more, but something infinitely more sinister: the shiver of leaves, the cracking of twigs, sudden surreptitious rustlings, and they were near me, all around me. I knew, I was quite sure now, that eyes were watching us. We were being followed.

I hurried on, swallowing my fear as best I could. I thought of the monkeys I had seen back in the zoo and tried to persuade myself how harmless they had looked. They'd leave us alone, they'd never attack us. They weren't maneaters. But as the rustlings came ever closer, ever more threatening, I found it harder and harder to convince myself. I began to run, and I kept running until the track brought us out on to rocks, into the blessed light of day, and there was the sea again.

*From Kensuke's Kingdom, by Michael Morpurgo*