

# TRUE SURVIVAL STORIES

One of the reasons for the success of *Lost* is that it is a story about survival. We all find hope when people manage to live through terrible experiences. Here are two true stories of survival.

## PLANE CRASH IN THE AMAZON

Juliane Koepke was a German teenager living in Lima, Peru. On 24 December 1971, she was on a flight to Pucallpa with her mother. They were going there to meet her father.

Suddenly, the plane flew into a terrible storm. Juliane looked out of the window. The plane's right wing was on fire. "This is the end of everything," her mother said. After that, all Juliane could remember was falling through cold air.

Three hours later, she woke up in the Amazon forest. She was still in her seat but there was no sign of her mother. Of the 92 people on the plane, Juliane was the only survivor. Then she remembered something her father had told her. "If you're lost in a forest, go downhill. It always leads to water. And water leads to people."

For ten days, Juliane walked through the forest. Worms got into her skin and she felt very weak and sick. Finally she came to an empty camp. In the camp, she found a can of petrol and some salt. She

used these to kill the worms and clean her skin. The next day, a group of hunters arrived and rescued her.

The German film-maker, Werner Herzog, was about to travel on this same flight, but the flight was full. In 2000, he made a film about Juliane and the crash. It was called *Wings of Hope*.



Koepke returns to the crash scene

## THE REAL ROBINSON CRUSOE



Selkirk's island



Alexander Selkirk was from Fife in Scotland. In 1703, Selkirk was working on a boat heading for South America. The boat became very badly damaged in a storm. Dampier, the captain, wanted to continue to attack Spanish boats for their gold. Selkirk thought this was too dangerous. When they reached an island 400 miles from the coast of Chile, he told Dampier to leave him there.

Selkirk didn't think he'd be on the island very long. He was wrong. It was years before a friendly ship arrived!

There were animals and fresh water on the island. Selkirk built a home from the trees and made friends with the cats that lived there. Sometimes more than a hundred

cats would sleep in the house with him. He made clothes from goat skins.

After a couple of years, he moved from his tree home to a cave. He began to enjoy living alone. In 1709, an English ship finally arrived. Its captain saw a wild man running away from them along the beach. In the end, Selkirk came to them and he was rescued. His biggest surprise was when he met one of the men from the ship. It was Dampier, his old captain.

Selkirk died aged 45, but his story was not forgotten. His amazing story of survival gave the writer, Daniel Defoe, the idea for his famous book, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Would you like to live alone on an island? Why? / Why not?  
Do you think you could survive?

What do these words mean?  
You can use a dictionary.  
experience downhill worm  
damaged captain goat