

**SIX SENTENCES FROM THE TEXT BELOW HAVE BEEN REMOVED. YOU WILL FIND THEM BELOW THE ARTICLE. COMPLETE THE TEXT WITH SENTENCES A-G SO THAT IT'S LOGICAL. THERE IS ONE SENTENCE EXTRA.**

### **“Sea Race”**

I've never been frightened of the sea. To me, getting in a boat is like coming home. I grew up 500 metres from the ocean in Australia and spent all my time on it or in it. For years I convinced myself I was invincible, that I knew so much about the ocean it couldn't hurt me. In 1998, I was the first to windsurf across Bass Strait. With a team, I'd set a speed record in the Whitbread Round the World Race on the American boat Toshiba in 1997-8. (1).....

The Mini-Transat is a tiny sailboat, 21 ft long, and dark and claustrophobic inside. My biggest mistake was, I didn't look after myself properly. The boat was fast, but I was hopeless. I got into a state of fatigue that I just couldn't come back from. (2).....I had stayed awake most of the first night trying to catch up – incredibly stupid, as I was heading into a storm and was too tired to deal with what was ahead.

This storm had been building all day and, by evening, waves of around 45 ft were breaking over me. In a Mini-Transat, that feels like going over Niagara falls in a barrel. In sailing you don't wait for events to happen: you are always working on prevention. It's pretty frightening to think you can't sail your way out of trouble, but the wind was so strong, I began to feel the conditions were beating me.

After four days I was starting to hallucinate. I had no radio contact. (3) ..... I was soaking wet and covered in sores from salt-water seepage. I veered between rage and the blackest despair. I lost it, slamming my fists on the deck and yelling to the sky: "Just give me a break here!" Then, on the fourth day, a wave damaged a mast support, and I went to the low side of the boat to attempt to mend it - just as another huge wave crashed in, washing my legs from under me. The force broke my forearm. In a split second I went over the side, into the water, and the boat started to drag me alongside by my safety harness. (4) ..... Shocked, I paused for one second, and in that time another wave hit the boat and drove it over me. Suddenly I was underneath, not able to grab anything to pull myself to the surface. My eyes were open the whole time, so I knew I was trapped, with my safety harness tangled round my neck.

I was so tired and in so much pain, there wasn't even an adrenaline surge. I died that day. (5)..... Mentally I'd lost the will to live, and that's a terrible place to be. I was so desperate to breathe, I felt my chest was caving in. The strange thing was that once I'd taken in a lungful of water, the pain went and I felt

almost calm. I remember saying to myself: "This is it. I'm drowning." And it actually felt okay. What saved me was my survival suit, which was very buoyant. At some point the boat must have rocked, I slipped from underneath and popped to the surface. (6)..... I swear I didn't take in any air until I'd scrambled on board, then I vomited and the chest pain came back. I was choking, getting tiny gasps of air, and when I finally managed to breathe again, I lay on the deck thinking: "What am I doing here?" I've never felt so alone in my life.

*A The sense of isolation was total.*

*B. One minute I was thinking, "It's over," and the next I was looking at the sky and this terrific will to survive took hold.*

*C I couldn't believe I was off the boat-the thing sailors strive against at all times.*

*D A collision at the start of the race had left me five hours behind the fleet.*

*E I was terribly afraid I'd fall off the boat again.*

*F I completely gave up the struggle.*

*G. But I'd never sailed solo before the Mni-Transat race, and had no idea I'd struggle so much with being alone.*