the sea could possibly have known what I was doing, and there were no eyes out there to see me.

It took several days of hard labour to build my secret beacon. I had almost finished when someone did indeed discover what I was up to, but it wasn’t the old man.

I was heaving a massive branch on to the pile when I felt a sudden shadow come over me. An orang-utan was looking down at me from the rock above – I could not be sure it was the same one as before. He was on all fours, his great shoulders hunched, his head lowered, eyeing me slightly sideways. I dared not move. It was a stand-off, just as it had been before down on the beach.

He sat back and looked at me with mild interest for a while. Then he looked away, scratched his face nonchalantly and sloped off, stopping once to glance back at me over his shoulder before moving on into the shadow of the trees and away. It occurred to me as I watched him go that maybe he had been sent to spy on me, that he might go back and tell the old man what he had seen me doing. It was a ridiculous thought, I know, but I do remember thinking it.

A storm broke over the island that night, such a fearsome storm, such a thunderous crashing of lightning overhead, such a din of rain and wind that sleep was quite impossible. Great waves roared in from the ocean, pounding the beach, and shaking the ground beneath me. I spread out my sleeping mat at the very back of the cave. Stella lay down beside me and huddled close. How I welcomed that.

It was fully four days before the storm blew itself out, but even during the worst of it, I would find my fish and fruit breakfast waiting for me every morning under my tin, which he had now wedged tight in under the same shelf of rock. Stella and I kept to the shelter of our cave. All we could do was watch as the rain came lashing down outside. I looked on awestruck at the power of the vast waves rolling in from the open sea, curling, tumbling, and exploding as they broke on to the beach, as if they were trying to batter the island into pieces and then suck us all out to sea. I thought often of my mother and father and the Peggy Sue, and wondered where they were. I just hoped the typhoon – for that was