

'For anyone thinking of becoming a Scout, go for it, come and join the big adventure.' BEAR GRYLLS



## A large, stylized compass rose graphic is positioned behind the title. It features a central star-like design with eight points, surrounded by a circular scale with markings. The title "SURVIVAL SQUAD" is written in large, bold, yellow letters with a distressed, splattered texture, set against a dark background that blends with the compass rose. The word "SURVIVAL" is on the top line and "SQUAD" is on the bottom line. The number "100" is visible on the right side of the "SQUAD" letters.

**SEARCH & RESCUE**

**JONATHAN ROCK**

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Also by Jonathan Rock

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## **About the Book**

There's a reason they're known as the Survival Squad . . .

It's winter and the snow is falling thick and fast. The Tiger Patrol are learning to ski, building snow shelters, and igloos. They're even working with the local search and rescue team. Then they're caught in a snow blizzard and a young girl is missing in the snow . . .

Time is running out for the Survival Squad.

**A MESSAGE FROM  
BEAR GRYLLS,  
CHIEF SCOUT**



*Tiger Patrol is a team of intrepid Scouts who look out for each other no matter what challenge they face.*

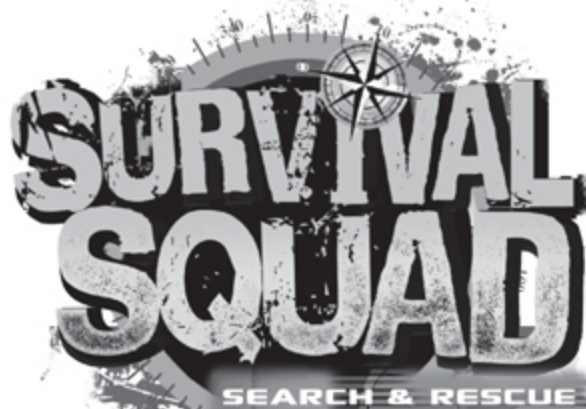
*They've made a promise to do their best and this means picking up skills like navigation, planning, fire lighting and first aid. From moors and woodlands to river rapids, Tiger Patrol is willing to give anything a go - as long as they stay safe.*

*Scouting is full of great adventures, but you'll only make the most of them if you give everything you've got. You'll need to be alert, committed, trust your friends and never be too proud to ask for help.*

*Maybe you're already a Scout. If so - be inspired by Tiger Patrol. If you're thinking about joining, then go for it. I did, and I've never looked back.*

*Are you up for the challenge?*

*Bear*

The logo features the words "SURVIVAL SQUAD" in a large, bold, distressed font. A compass rose is positioned behind the letter "V" in "SURVIVAL". Below "SQUAD", the words "SEARCH & RESCUE" are written in a smaller, clean font. The entire logo is surrounded by a splatter effect and a trail of footprints that curves around the right side.

**SURVIVAL  
SQUAD**  
SEARCH & RESCUE



**JONATHAN ROCK**

**RHCP DIGITAL**

## CHAPTER 1

*ABOVE ABBY'S HEAD, the helicopter hovered like an enormous orange insect, its powerful blades cutting noisily through the air. A short distance down the icy slope beyond her, the two paramedics finished strapping the casualty onto the stretcher and signalled to the winchman on the helicopter. With one of the paramedics fastened to the cable beside it, the stretcher began to rise slowly into the air, rotating as it went.*

*Abby lifted a hand and waved as the second paramedic walked towards her.*

*'Thank you so much, mademoiselle,' he said. 'And you too, monsieur—'*

What happened next was lost as the image on Andy's computer screen tilted suddenly, spinning past rows of dark pine trees clinging to near-vertical mountainsides. Andy hit a key and the video began to rewind.

*'Andy! What are you doing? We're ready to go.'*

Abby Taylor stood in the doorway of her best friend Andy's bedroom. He was bent over his computer, completely absorbed - he seemed to have totally forgotten that tonight was the first Scouts meeting after Christmas.

*'I'm editing the footage from the rescue,' he said. 'I won't be long. Look - this is where the paramedic congratulated us and—'*

Abby could see herself on the screen, sunglasses pushed back on her forehead, her long hair escaping from a red and white ski hat, caught in the downdraught from the

helicopter rotors. 'And you fell over,' she said. 'Obviously I remember. But I'm going to scream in a minute. We have to leave *now* - we're late!'

'The others will never believe we were part of a real helicopter rescue in the Alps,' said Andy, as if he hadn't heard Abby at all. 'I need the video to show them. I'll just edit this bit out and burn it onto a DVD.'

'Andy!' said Abby, exasperated. 'For once your dad is ready, and now *you're* making us late!'

'OK, OK,' said Andy, lifting his hands in surrender. 'I'll just have to show them the footage on the camera. It's lucky it's got such a good display. I'll be there in two minutes.'

Abby shook her head, sighing. 'You won't, you know. You haven't even got your uniform on.'

Andy looked down in surprise at his old jeans and T-shirt, and Abby burst out laughing. It was impossible to stay angry with him for long. 'Looks like we'll just have to be late again. No one will be surprised. Well, go on, then. Get changed. What are you waiting for?'

Three minutes later Andy opened the door, transformed into a rather untidy Scout. His new camcorder was in his hand and he was watching something on the screen. 'It looks fine. This display is incredibly sharp, and it's bright too. Look at this . . .'

'Looks just like any other camcorder to me.'

'You know it's not,' began Andy; then he stopped. 'You're winding me up, aren't you?'

Abby laughed. 'Winding you up is just too easy. Now, can we *please* go?'

She knew how special the camcorder was - of course she did. Andy loved filming and had received the Creative Challenge Award for the film he had made about Tiger Patrol on their last expedition. Abby didn't understand half of what Andy said about his new toy, but she knew he was

going to follow in the footsteps of his news cameraman father. Andy was very talented.

In the hallway Andy's mum tried to straighten his collar and tidy his hair, but Abby pushed him out of the door into the freezing January night. 'Sorry, Mrs Mackenzie,' she called over her shoulder. 'We're late!'

Andy's dad was standing by the car, gazing upwards. 'Look at that,' he said. 'What a sky!'

'Mr Mackenzie!' Abby began, but then she looked up and saw the stars. She'd never seen so many, despite the glare from the streetlights. 'Wow! There's the Milky Way!'

'That's our own galaxy,' Andy said. 'Awesome.'

'It's awesome all right,' said Abby, snapping back to reality, 'but not as awesome as Rick and Julie's faces will be when we walk in half an hour late. Can we go now please?'

But when they arrived at Scout HQ, the car park was full of Scouts, and they were standing just like Abby and Andy had ten minutes before, all gazing up at the sky.

Rick, the Scout Leader, and Julie, the Assistant Patrol Leader, waved to the pair and they quickly ran over to find the rest of Tiger Patrol. There was time for only the hastiest of greetings to Connor, the Tigers' athletic, fair-haired Patrol Leader, and to Jay and Priya, the patrol's two newest members. Toby, the dark-haired, wiry Assistant Patrol Leader, was pulling something out of a rucksack.

'Do you take that bag absolutely everywhere?' Priya asked him.

Abby couldn't help noticing that the Tigers' youngest member looked as sharp and cool in her uniform as Andy looked scruffy. 'He always has,' she told Priya. 'Ever since I've known him.'

'Yes!' exclaimed Toby. 'I knew they were here somewhere.' He pulled out a pair of binoculars triumphantly.

'OK,' Rick told them. 'This is a great chance to do some work for our Astronomers' Badges. Let's start with the



North Star. Can you all see the Plough? The proper name is *Ursa Major*, which means Great Bear – though some people call it the Saucepan. Right now, it's on its side with the handle pointing down, OK?'

'I can't work it out,' complained Priya. 'There are so many stars.'

'I'll show you.' Abby stood beside her and pointed upwards. 'Look – there's the handle, and that's the pan. See?' Priya nodded happily.

'Right,' continued Rick. 'Now find the two stars on the side of the pan that's furthest from the handle. Imagine a line going straight through them and pointing up from the bottom of the saucepan. Follow that line and you'll see a single star, all alone in its own bit of sky.'

'I can see it!' exclaimed Priya.

'That's Polaris,' said Rick, 'the North Star. If you can find the North Star, you'll always know where True North is.'

'Something's wrong with these binoculars,' muttered Toby. 'I was looking at Jupiter and I can't see it any more.' He lowered the binoculars and inspected the lenses.

'It's not your binoculars,' Connor told him. 'It's clouds. They're covering up the stars and planets.'

'Did you see the weather forecast?' Jay asked. 'They said it was going to snow.'

Everyone started talking at once. Abby looked up. Already the stars were fainter – a layer of thin cloud was spreading rapidly across the sky. To the west there were no stars at all any more. She shivered. Recent nights had been frosty, but now the wind was rising and it really was very cold.

'Everyone inside,' called Julie. 'Quick as you can. There's lots to do.'

Once they were indoors Andy was at last able to show the others his new camcorder. 'It's full HD,' he said, 'and it's got a 180-gigabyte hard drive, but the best thing is the zoom. It's twenty-five times optical, and it's really easy to

keep it steady even when you're zoomed right in.' He looked up from the camera. His face, suntanned like Abby's from their skiing holiday, was shining with excitement.

'I didn't understand a word of that,' Connor said, shaking his head. 'It looks great, though.'

'Stop going on about the camera,' interrupted Abby. 'Show them the movie. We just got back from the Alps yesterday,' she told the others. 'We went up on the ski lift and the fog came down, and this stupid man insisted on going off in totally the wrong direction—'

'He wouldn't listen to us,' Andy cut in. 'And because he was a grown-up and he sounded as if he knew what he was doing, my parents and Abby's mum did what he said.'

'It was nearly a disaster,' continued Abby. 'But we had a map and a compass and we got them to stop. Only the man just ignored us, and he kept on going and went over a cliff!'

'Not a very big cliff, luckily,' said Andy. 'Here - you can see.'

The Tigers crowded round to look at the small display screen. Scouts from the other patrols craned their necks to see.

'He didn't fall far,' Abby explained, 'and he landed in a snowdrift. But he broke his leg, and Mum called the Search and Rescue.'

'We gave them a grid reference,' Andy told the assembled Scouts proudly. 'They got to us really fast and took the man to hospital.'

'Didn't you go in the helicopter, then?' asked Kerry, the Kestrels' Patrol Leader.

'No - I wish I had, though,' Andy replied. 'Just think of the footage I could have shot.'

'We skied back,' said Abby. 'I wouldn't have gone in the helicopter anyway. I'd rather ski than do anything else in the world.'

'I guess this is why everyone's calling you Tigers the Survival Squad,' Julie interjected playfully. She and Rick

had been listening at the back of the group. 'Everywhere you go, you seem to find trouble!'

'But we don't!' protested Abby.

'I'm teasing,' said Julie. 'Well done for the map-reading, but now we really must get this meeting started.'

The Scouts sat down and Julie began. 'This term we're all going to work towards the Community Challenge Award. There are two parts to it. First, you have to investigate an aspect of your local community and report back about it. It could be learning about a theatre or a dance group - or almost anything where people get together.'

'My karate club,' called out Sajiv, the leader of Panther Patrol.

'My gran goes to bingo,' said Sharon from the Kestrels. 'Would that be OK?'

Everyone laughed, Rick and Julie included.

'Like I said, it could be almost anything,' continued Julie. 'Best to find out about something you don't know much about already, though, Sajiv. And more fun too. And to get the badge you also have to perform some kind of community service. It's best if that fits with the first part - so, for example, you might find out about local playgrounds and raise some money to buy a new piece of equipment. You might even be able to do some work with the police or the fire service . . . You get the idea. Now I'd like you to go off in your Patrols and talk about what you'd like to do. Think of at least three different ideas. Off you go.'

Connor headed towards the Tigers' den. Photographs of the Sixth Matfield Scout Troop lined the walls, going right back to their foundation in 1927. He knew that they were lucky to have such a big HQ. There was even a room that had been turned into a museum full of old camping stoves and billy-cans, uniforms and flags, and thousands of photographs and press cuttings.

'Hey, Connor,' said Jay as they turned to go upstairs. 'Those Sutcliffs on that board - are they anything to do with you?'

The Tigers halted and looked up at the old wooden board on the wall. At the top it said QUEEN'S SCOUTS, and underneath there was a list of names and dates, all picked out in the same gold lettering. 'Well, one of them's my dad,' said Connor.

They all knew Connor's dad. Dr Sutcliff was a parent helper and he never missed a meeting. 'That's him,' Connor told Jay, pointing at the board. 'Chris Sutcliff, 1988. And William Sutcliff's my grandpa. He became a Queen's Scout in 1964.'

Jay pointed to the empty space waiting for new Queen's Scouts. 'I suppose you want to have your name up there too?'

Connor looked at him suspiciously. When Jay first started Scouts he had hated every minute of it - and he'd hated Connor most of all. Just for a second Connor wondered if Jay was laughing at him. But then he realized that his new friend was serious. 'Yeah, it would be quite cool,' he admitted, 'but it's not that easy.'

'You can say that again,' put in Toby. 'Even if you have a Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, that's only part of it. You—'

'Hey, Tigers!' Connor's dad was coming down the corridor. 'What are you doing? You should have started by now.'

'It's OK, Dad,' Connor explained. 'Jay wanted to know about Queen's Scouts.'

'Oh, well,' said his dad. 'I'm glad you're interested, Jay. I'm sure Toby and Connor can tell you all you need to know. I think Toby knows *The Scout Handbook* by heart.'

'Only some of it.' It was Toby's turn to look embarrassed, and the others laughed. 'But you've actually done it, Chris. Can't you tell us about it?'

'I'd love to,' said Connor's dad, 'but not right now. Me and Connor's grandpa are hoping we'll soon have another Sutcliff up there, though. Right, Connor?'

'Maybe.' Connor gave his dad a meaningful look, hoping he would understand, but Dr Sutcliff didn't seem to notice. Connor sighed inwardly; he knew his friends all liked his dad - he could be a lot of fun - but he wished he would learn when to keep quiet.

He quickly led the way to the den. It was little more than a store cupboard really. There was an assortment of camping equipment squashed in by the small square window, but there was still just room for the six Tigers to sit on stools. Pinned to the notice board were photos of the Tigers at last year's camp, and of their adventure last term when they went orienteering on the moors. Andy was a terrific photographer. A huge black-and-white print showed the members of Tiger Patrol walking up a hillside and melting into grey mist as they tried to find their way back to the checkpoint. For a moment Connor felt as if he was there again.

'It was scary,' said Priya, looking at the photograph of Connor and Toby helping Abby to climb down a cliff beside a waterfall. 'But I'd do it again like a shot. It's the most exciting thing I've ever done.'

'You were a natural on the rocks,' Connor said with a smile. 'Maybe we'll do some more climbing this summer. But right now we'd better get started.'

He took a notepad from a cupboard on the wall. A picture on the cupboard door (drawn by Andy) showed a savage tiger and a death's head. Under the picture was written:

TIGER PATROL  
DANGER - KEEP OUT!

'Right, has anyone got any ideas for this Community Challenge badge?'

No one replied. They were all staring out of the window. Big flakes of snow were floating down. 'Do you think it's going to settle?' asked Abby.

Andy stood up and pushed some tent poles out of the way so he could see better. 'Looks like it,' he reported. 'The car park's turning white already.'

'We still have to do this,' insisted Connor, although he was just as excited as the rest of them. 'We have to think of something to find out about.'

'There's the skate park,' Jay suggested. 'The one at the end of my road. It's a real mess.'

'We'd have to talk to skateboarders,' said Abby. 'It might be fun.'

'I'll write it down,' said Connor. 'Rick said we should have three ideas. Anyone else?'

Andy stopped fiddling with his camcorder for a moment and looked up. 'How about the police? I saw a thing on the TV about some Scouts helping them catch speeding drivers. The drivers could either pay a fine or have a safety talk from a Scout. That might be cool.'

The others agreed, and Connor noted the idea down.

'Couldn't we find out about Search and Rescue?' suggested Priya. 'Like the people Abby and Andy saw in the Alps?'

'Do they have Search and Rescue here?' asked Abby doubtfully. 'It's not as if there are mountains.'

'They must do,' Andy said. 'There are the moors, after all. They would have called them out if we hadn't found our way home.'

The Tigers began to talk excitedly. 'Maybe they'll take us up in a helicopter,' Andy said. 'I really wanted to go with them, you know. Just think of the aerial shots I would have got.'

'Excellent,' said Connor. 'That's three great ideas. Brilliant, Priya!'

'It was, wasn't it?' she replied with a grin.

The door opened and Dr Sutcliff's head appeared. 'How's it going?' he asked. 'Any brilliant ideas?'

'They're all brilliant, of course,' replied Abby. 'But Priya's is the best. We want to try and find out about the people who do Search and Rescue.'

'Very good,' said Connor's dad approvingly. 'You know what? I might just be able to help you with that.'

'What did he mean?' Abby said, when Dr Sutcliff had gone.

'No idea,' replied Connor. 'You know my dad. He loves surprises.'

'Hey, listen,' interrupted Andy. 'What's that noise?'

They were all silent for a moment. Outside, the wind was howling around the eaves of the old building and rattling the windows. Large snowflakes pattered against the glass.

'It's a blizzard,' said Toby.

Andy climbed onto a stool and wiped the condensation off the window. 'I can't see a thing,' he said. 'It's a total whiteout.'

The door opened and Rick put his head into the den. 'Everyone in the hall. We're calling your parents. They're going to come and get you now. If they don't, we'll probably be stuck here all night.'