What was exceptional about the two men's stay on the desert island?

Most of us have formed an unrealistic picture of life on a desert island.

We sometimes imagine a desert island to be a sort of paradise where the sun always shines.

Life there is simple and good.

Ripe fruit falls from the trees and you never have to work.

The other side of the picture is quite the opposite.

Life on a desert island is wretched.

You either starve to death or live like Robinson Crusoe, waiting for a boat which never comes.

Perhaps there is an element of truth in both these pictures, but few of us have had the opportunity to find out.

Two men who recently spent five days on a coral island wished they had stayed there longer.

They were taking a badly damaged boat from the Virgin Islands to Miami to have it repaired.

During the journey, their boat began to sink.

They quickly loaded a small rubber dinghy with food, matches, and cans of beer and rowed for a few miles across the Caribbean until they arrived at a tiny coral island.

There were hardly any trees on the island and there was no water, but this did not prove to be a problem.

The men collected rainwater in the rubber dinghy.

As they had brought a spear gun with them, they had plenty to eat.

They caught lobster and fish every day, and, as one of them put it 'ate like kings'.

When a passing tanker rescued them five days later, both men were genuinely sorry that they had to leave.

As the two men's boat was damaged, they were taking it to Miami when on the way it began to sink.

After loading a rubber dinghy with food, matches, and beer, the two men rowed a few miles across the Caribbean until they arrived at a tiny coral island.

There, they collected rainwater in the dinghy and caught fish and lobster with a spear gun.

For five days, they 'ate like kings' until they were rescued by a passing tanker.

The ship went down and everyone was drowned.

I was the only one who managed to jump into the sea.

I clung to a plank in the water for several hours till I was washed up on a desert island.

I slept on the beach for a very long time - I can't remember how long.

When I woke up, I was hungry and thirsty, so I decided to explore the island.

It was uninhabited, but I found plenty of fruit which had fallen from the trees.

I lived on coconuts and pineapples, and there was plenty of fresh spring water.

I tried to hunt wild animals with my bare hands (small pigs and other creatures), but I failed to catch anything.

So, I spent my days swimming in the warm, clear water and lying in the sun.

One afternoon, while I was lying on the beach as usual, I saw a boat on the horizon.

I signaled with my white shirt and shouted as loudly as I could.

Fortunately, someone on the boat saw me and I was rescued.

Of course, I was pleased to get back to civilization, but I was very sorry to leave this island paradise.

If you had told me earlier, I would have telephoned you.

If I were you, I wouldn't do that.

You will be disappointed if it rains tomorrow.

You would change your mind if you could speak to him.

I wish you would do as you are told.

If only the weather would change.

I wish she could see me now.

I wish I had more time to spare.

If only you would try a little harder!

I wish I hadn't said anything about it.

If only we could have gone to the party!

I wish you hadn't spent so much money.

It was silly of me not to buy that dress.

I wish I had.

You are making a lot of noise.

I wish you wouldn't.

It's a pity John's away.

If only he weren't.

He plays the piano so well.

I wish I did.

I never studied at all when I was at school.

I wish I had.

I'm sorry I mentioned it to him.

I wish I hadn't.

In what way are the pictures we form of life on a desert island unreal? They are either unduly optimistic or unduly pessimistic.

What was the equipment the men had brought that proved essential to their survival? A spear gun and a rubber dinghy.

What made the men wish to stay on the desert island? Discovering how pleasant life can be fending for oneself.

We sometimes think of a desert island as being a sort of paradise.

But not many have had the opportunity to find out.

After rowing a few miles across the Caribbean, they arrived at a small coral island.

Trees were scarce there and there was no water.

Both men genuinely regretted having to leave.

A desert island is an uninhabited place.

The other side of the picture is entirely different.

But this was not found to be a problem.

And, as one of them expressed it, they 'ate like kings'.