

Over twenty years ago, the Indian Ocean tsunami struck on Boxing Day. A series of huge waves, triggered by an earthquake, killed more than 230,000 people in 14 countries. This is Edie's story...

"The sky was a brilliant blue the day death came to Thailand's beaches. It was a day that changed my life forever. It is a day I will never forget.

We were having the time of our lives, holidaying in Thailand over Christmas. There were four of us: Me, my mother Sally, my younger sister Alice and my boyfriend Matt. We had just set off on Boxing Day morning for a day of kayaking from Ao Nang beach.

After a few minutes paddling across the sea, we came to rest at a beautiful spot with limestone columns jutting out of the sea. I felt so happy at that moment: my heart bursting with joy. I wanted to take a picture of my mother and sister but when I lowered my camera, the air felt different somehow. It felt wrong. I looked out to sea and in the very distance I could see a ridge - a wave - moving towards us across the sea which was otherwise flat. I knew something wasn't quite right. The horizon looked 'wrong'.

I don't really remember when the wave hit me, but it knocked me straight into a solid cliff face; the force of it felt like an elephant on my chest. I was tumbling under the water and waves for what felt like minutes, but in reality was only seconds. I surfaced and saw my family. Relief flooded through me; they were all alive and safe!

However, just seconds later, another wave came and repeated it's attack. Once more, I was knocked against the rock face. Only this time, when I eventually re-surfaced, all my family had been swept away. They were nowhere to be seen!

Cut and bleeding, I managed to wait for the water levels to drop, then I crawled through a narrow gap in the rocks. I dragged myself away from the cliffs, not knowing where I was going, until I came to a beach.

I couldn't believe what I saw with my eyes. I thought I was dreaming. I had prepared myself on the rocks for the possibility that I was the only one who had survived. But it was incredible! Matt was there, also injured, but alive! It was one of the best moments of my life."

Edie's mother and sister died in the tsunami. Her mother's body was later recovered, but Alice's was never found. She remains one of the missing.



Matt, Alice, Edie and Sally in Thailand