

SLANK

ASTER has placed an amulet around his neck and a matching amulet around MOLLY'S neck.

Aster: . . . and don't ever take this off or let anyone else touch it. You know what's in this amulet, Molly. And you know how to use it if you're ever in trouble.

Molly: But what if something happens to you? You need me on the Wasp.

Aster: Too dangerous — I won't have it.

Molly: I want to be part of the mission!

Aster: If you can't be British, you can go straight home and back to school, young lady. Mrs. Bumbrake —

Molly: NO! Don't send me home, please. I'll be good, I promise.

Mrs. Bumbrake: Shut the faucet, Molly — blubberin' like a whale when the world's your oyster! Be a woman!

Molly: Yes, Nana.

Aster: Soon as I'm done in Rundoon, we'll take a few weeks in the Antipodes — scare up some rare bird eggs, hmm? I might even teach you to speak Porpoise.

Molly: Yes, Daddy.

Aster: There's my little Starcatcher.

Molly: Just an apprentice. If I were a Starcatcher, I'd be on the Wasp with you!

Across the deck, SLANK twitches.

Narrator Slank: Slank hears that word, "Starcatcher" —

Narrator Greggors: — but a cannon is fired from the deck of the Wasp!

We hear a cannon's BOOM!

Aster: Patience, daughter. Keep a keen eye, Mrs. Bumbrake!

ASTER signs an autograph for one of the SAILORS.

Mrs. Bumbrake: Don't you worry, my Lord! We'll be British to the bone!

Aster: We'll meet again in Rundoon. God's speed!

Slank: Off ye go, Yer Lordship. TTFN. *(waves cordially as the SEAMEN march ASTER away to the Wasp, then to MRS. BUMBRAKE)* Comfy, are we? That's nice. Now — *(suddenly and terribly evil)* Alf, where are ye, ye good-for-nothing bucket o' scum!

Alf: Here.

Slank: Lock these two in their cabin for safekeeping. I'm takin' no chances.

Mrs. Bumbrake: Wait just a —

Slank: I don't fancy no dainty daughters roamin' my deck. Now, hop it!

Mrs. Bumbrake: With pleasure. The cabin could smell no worse than you.

Molly: Can we have kitty with us?

MOLLY picks up the sweet cat, which now screeches, as terribly evil as SLANK. MOLLY, startled, drops the beast, which scurries down into the bowels of the ship.

Slank: Steer clear o'the pussy, pet — rip yer hand clean off. *(pulls MRS. BUMBRAKE by the elbow)* Say the word, madam — I might let y'out later for a promenade. Maybe do some petting of our own, eh?

Mrs. Bumbrake: Don't trouble yourself, I'm sure. Come along, my girl.

ALF steps in. MRS. BUMBRAKE likes what she sees.

Alf: It's all right, ma'am. Alf'll see you safely stowed.

Mrs. Bumbrake: Thank you, kind sir.

Alf: No, thank you, kind lady. Yer eyes're green as the sea . . . and yer hair's almost as wavy.

START

Mrs. Bumbrake: *(a girlish toss of her head)* Take me below, sir.

MRS. BUMBRAKE sniffs spitefully at SLANK. ALF leads her off with MOLLY in tow.

Slank: Lock the silly cow in the Junior Suite! *(The SAILORS snigger.)* What're you sniggerin' at, y'picaroons?!? Put that trunk in my cabin! *(cracks his whip)* Furrow the jib an' let fly the frammistan, or you'll curse the day you were born! *(The Neverland casts off from the dockside.)* On to Rundoon, y'fungus! There's profitable trade to be made in Rundoon!

SLANK laughs meanly. The SAILORS moan.