

ASTER/MOLLY

Aster: Molly! Careful!

Molly: It's all right, Daddy. Him's a sweet little puss, isn't him . . .

The cat mews sweetly in MOLLY's arms.

Mrs. Bumbrake: Our Molly loves all God's little creatures.

MRS. BUMBRAKE hands the purring cat to a passing SAILOR.

Molly: *(ever so bravely)* Daddy . . . I know you don't need my help in Rundoon, but I've got to start pulling my weight sometime.

Aster: You're all grown up, aren't you.

Molly: I am, Daddy. Courage now, promise?

Aster: Promise.

Molly: *(giving in to tears)* Oh dear.

Two SAILORS topple a crate very near to Molly's head.

Narrator Slank: Just then, the crate of boys bursts open!

Narrator Boy: One of the boys almost falls out!

Narrator Molly: Hanging upside down just over Molly's head!

Narrator Boy: He stares at her.

Narrator Molly: She stares at him.

Narrator Boy: He has an air about him.

Narrator Molly: The look of a boy who doesn't miss much, or say much about it.

Slank: *(lifting the BOY back into the crate and slamming it shut)* Back in the box, y monkeys!

Narrator Molly: ~~Something about the boy makes Molly feel like she just grew up a little.~~

Aster: *(confidentially)* Daughter. *(MOLLY can't take her eyes off the BOY, fascinated.)* A word. *(His stern tone snaps MOLLY to attention.)* There isn't any treasure in the Queen's trunk, and what is in it has to be destroyed, by order of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

Molly: God Save Her.

All: GOD SAVE HER.

Aster: I'll have to move quickly before the King of Rundoon even knows I'm there.

Molly: But how are you going to destroy it?

Aster: Can you keep it a secret?

Molly: I can.

EVERYONE ELSE on the ship crowds around them to eavesdrop.

All: WE CAN.

To avoid being overheard, ASTER speaks in Dodo.

Aster: *(holding an amulet in his hand, ad libs)* Cwah cheep wirp reet reet burp.

Molly: *(speaking with great difficulty)* Click . . . bleep . . . cwaaaah!

Aster: Sorry?

Molly: *(being brave about messing it up)* Click bleep cwaaaah?

~~Aster: I think you mean —~~

Narrator Stache: They're speaking in Dodo, a language known only to, well —

Narrator Scott: — dodos — and a handful of very special humans.

Narrator Aster: Dodo: a fat, clumsy bird, hence the Latin name, *Didus ineptus*.

Narrator Alf: Known for its greedy appetite, slothful pace, and sense of entitlement, the dodo was fearless of people and faced no real competition — an eerie mirror of the British Empire at its colonial zenith. Of course, those same traits were responsible for the dodo's extinction — an eerie mirror of the British Empire after its colonial zenith — but thereby hangs another tale.

cont. →

START →

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 fauceet, Molly — blubberin' like a whale when the world's your oyster! Do 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! **END**

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.