

AUF

Aster: Molly! Careful!

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

The cat mew's sweetly in MOLLY'S arms.

Mrs. Bumbraque: 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'monkey!

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 annulet in his hand, ad libs*) Cwah cheep wtrp 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 Slank: They're speaking in Dodo, a language known only to, well —~~

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

~~Narrator Slank: Dodo: a fat, clumsy bird, hence the Latin name, Didus ineptus.~~

~~All: 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.~~

END

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