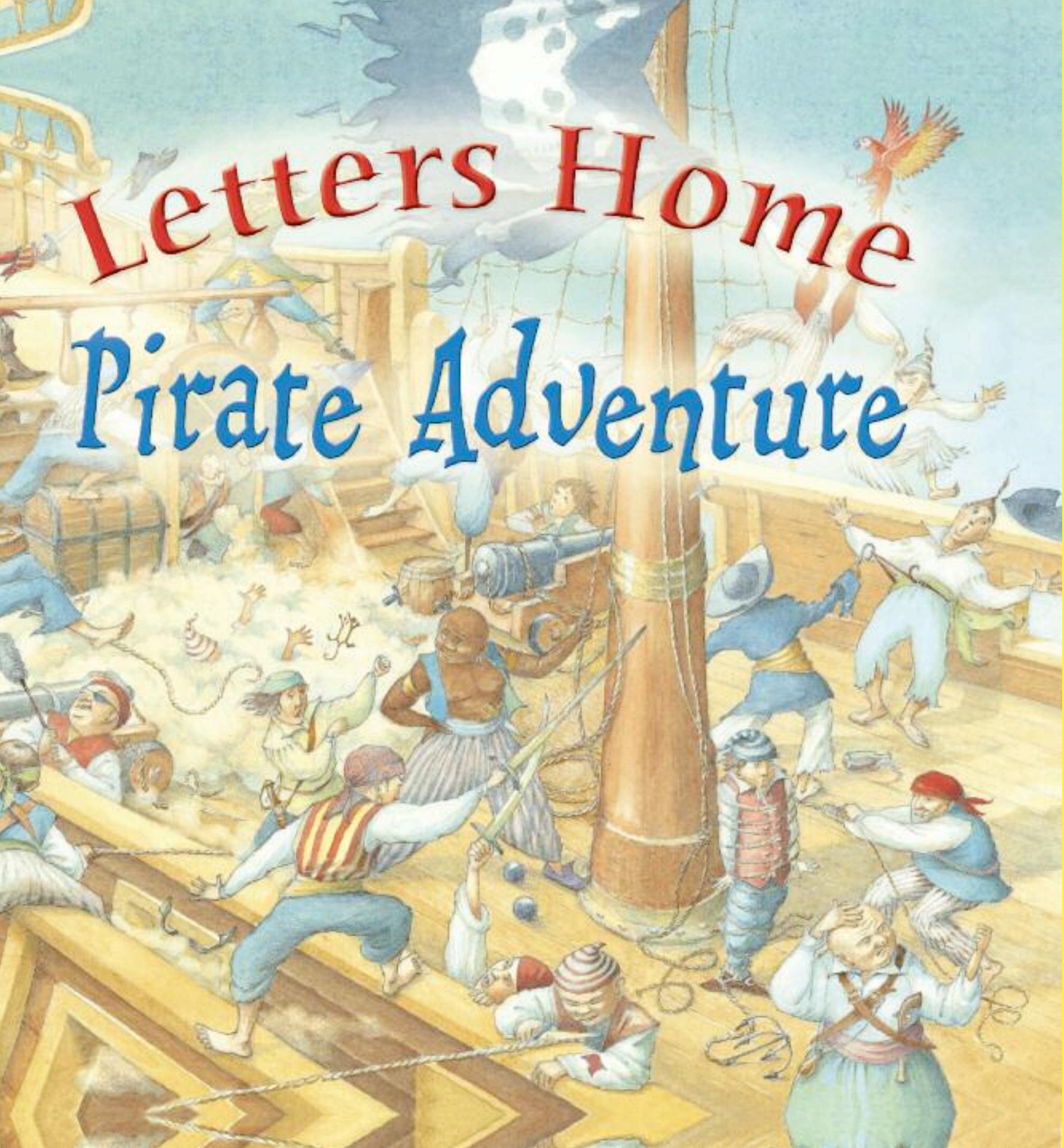


Letters Home Pirate Adventure



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Illustrated by Susanna Lockheart

Text by Nicholas Harris



Orpheus



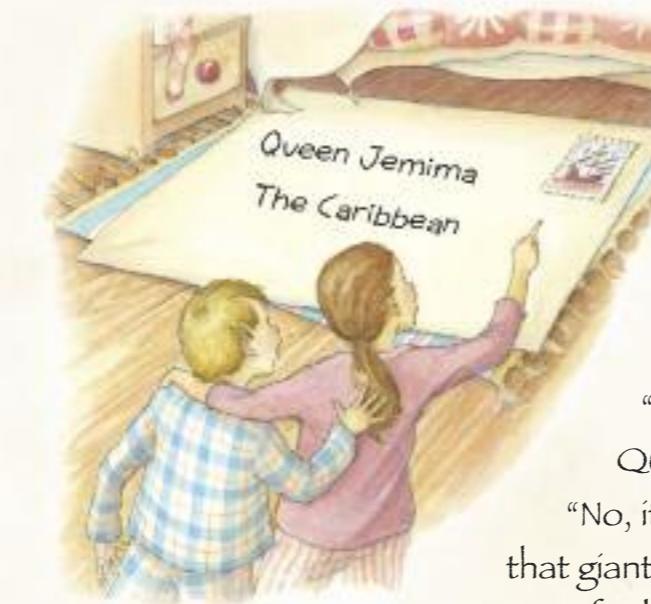
"I can't sleep," moaned Max.

"Me neither." Max's big sister Charlie knelt on the bed. "It's way too light outside."

Just then, there was a sudden gust of air and a huge envelope sailed into the room.

Max leapt out of bed.

"Hey! What's this?"



The envelope came gently to rest on the bedroom rug.

"Wow! I've never seen such a **HUGE** letter," said Charlie. "I wonder who sent it?"

"It's not addressed to us," said Max.

"Look, it's supposed to go to ...

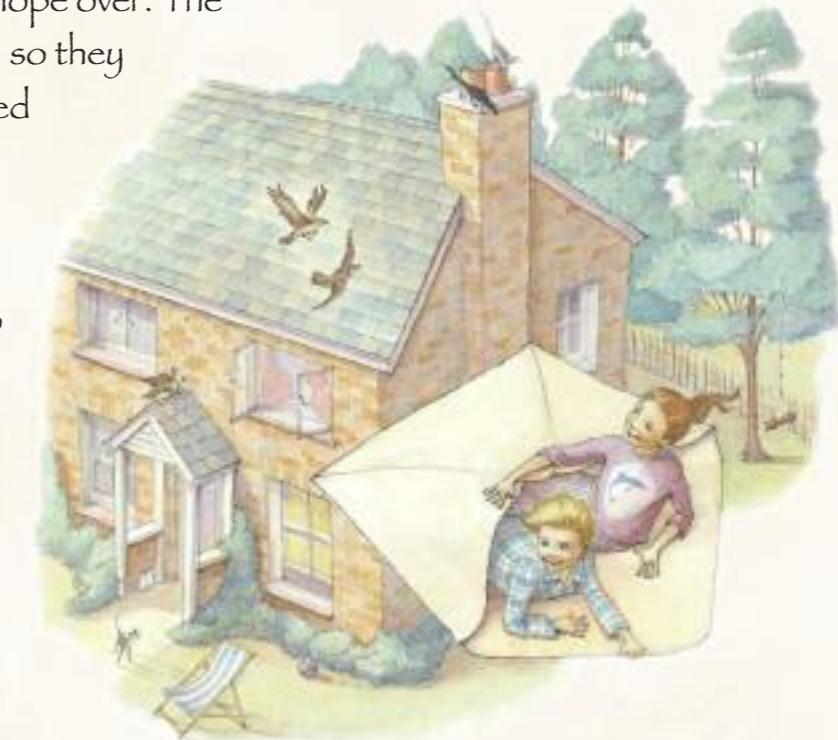
QUEEN JEMIMA. Jeepers ... a queen!".

"No, it must be the name of a ship. Look at that giant stamp. But I wonder how the postman is meant to find her at *that* address."

The children turned the envelope over. The flap had not been stuck down, so they carefully opened it. They hoped they would find a letter inside, but there wasn't one. But they couldn't resist climbing inside.

"Hey, maybe it'll deliver us to Queen Jemima!" laughed Max.

In a flash, the envelope lifted itself off the floor, and, with the children still inside it, flew out of the window and up above the rooftops.





Up and up flew the Magic Envelope. The two excited children shrieked with laughter. Soon they were gliding over the sea, the great blue sheet of water beneath them sparkling in the evening sunshine.

Gulls screeched and whirled around them.

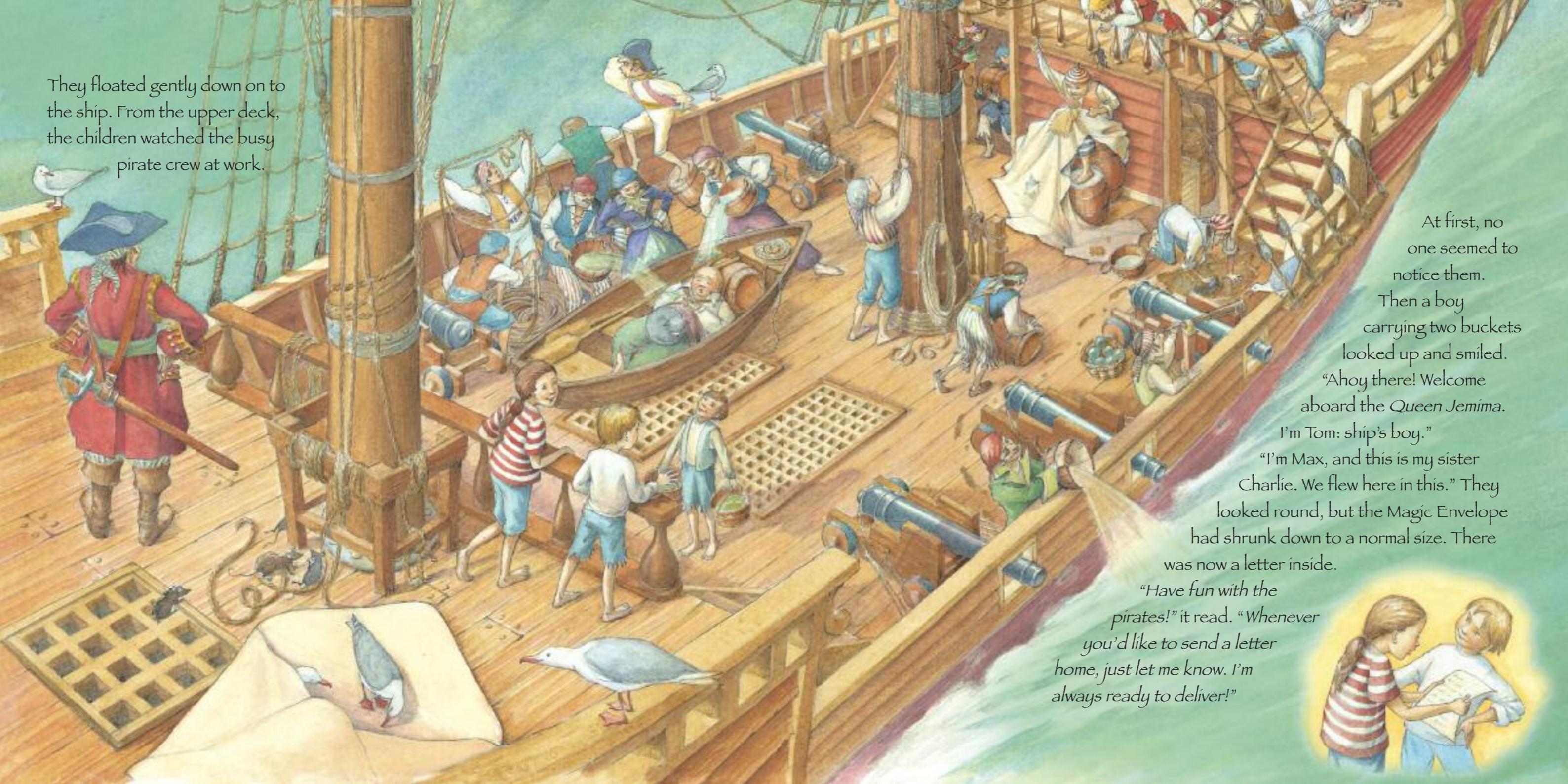
How surprised the birds must have been to see two children flying over the sea in a giant envelope!



"There's our ship!" shouted Charlie. "It must be the *Queen Jemima*. Isn't she incredible?"

"Wow! A three-master! A frigate!!" cried Max (who was very knowledgeable about ships). "And I'll tell you another thing. Look at her flag; the Jolly Roger. She's a *pirate* ship." They both gulped.





They floated gently down on to the ship. From the upper deck, the children watched the busy pirate crew at work.

At first, no one seemed to notice them.

Then a boy carrying two buckets looked up and smiled.

"Ahoy there! Welcome aboard the *Queen Jemima*.

I'm Tom: ship's boy."

"I'm Max, and this is my sister Charlie. We flew here in this." They looked round, but the Magic Envelope had shrunk down to a normal size. There was now a letter inside.

"Have fun with the pirates!" it read. "Whenever you'd like to send a letter home, just let me know. I'm always ready to deliver!"





"Well, shiver me timbers," beamed Captain Casper. "Two new bright young'uns for me crew!"

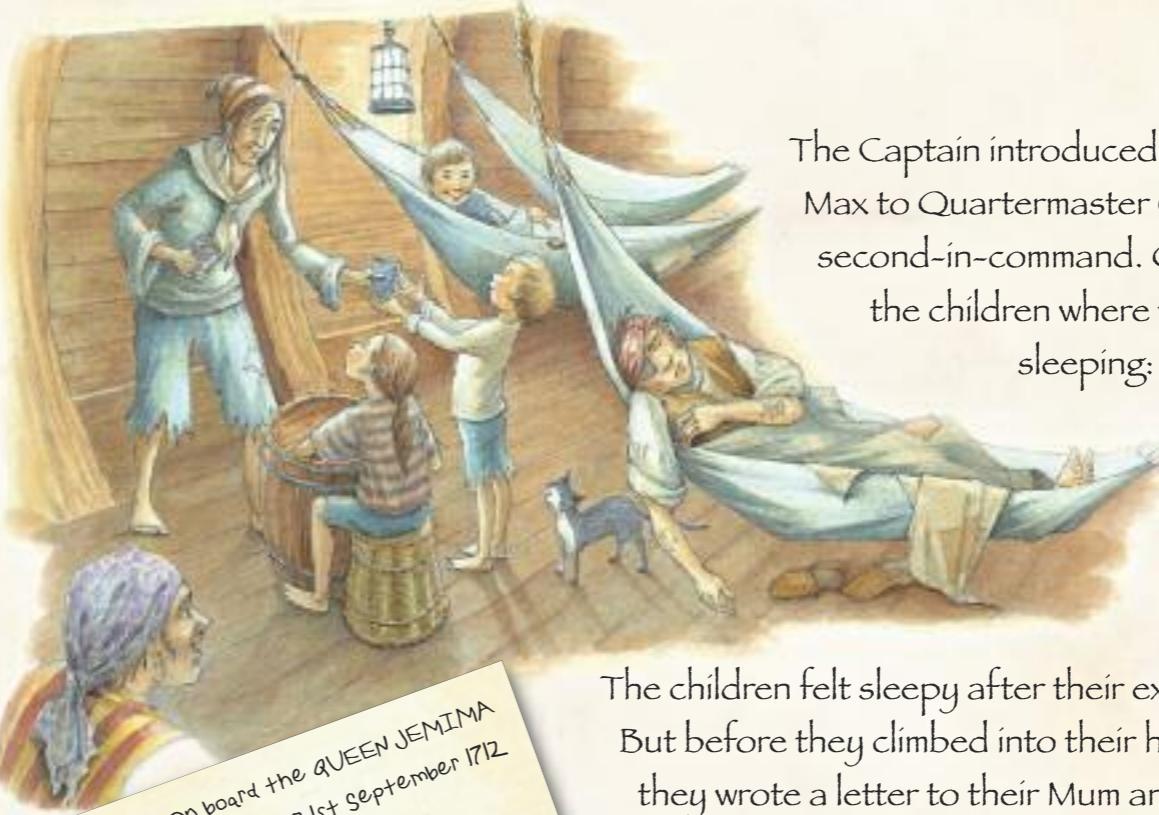
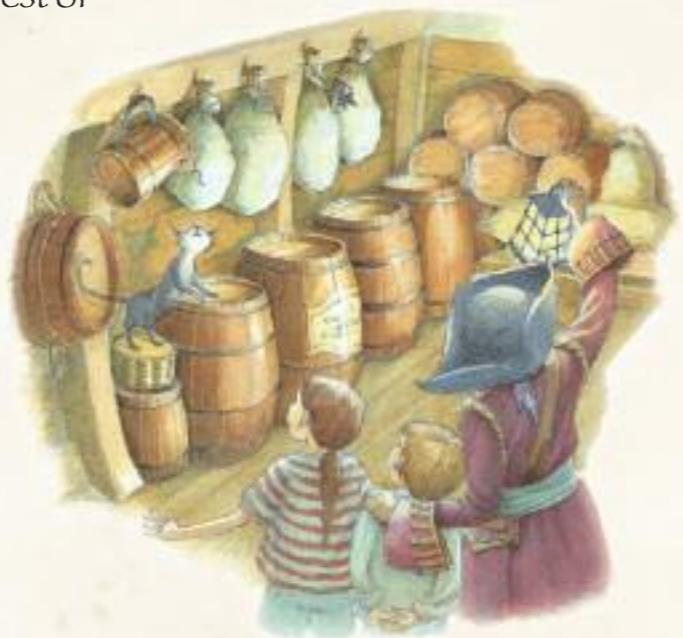
The pirate captain showed Charlie and Max into the Great Cabin.

"This be where I does me work. 'Tis me job to navigate our vessel across the wide ocean blue."

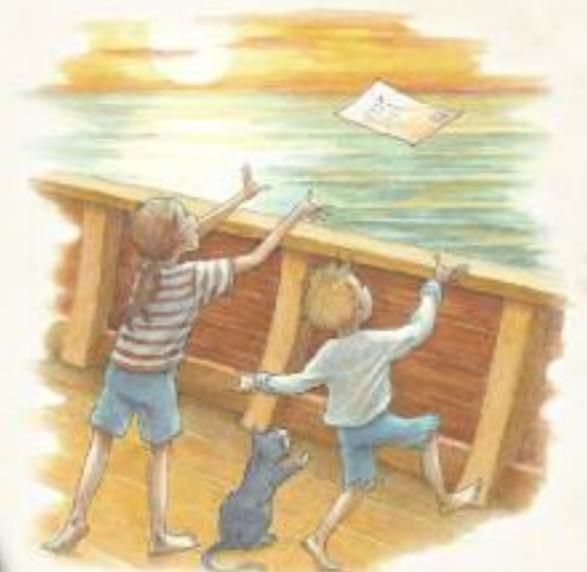
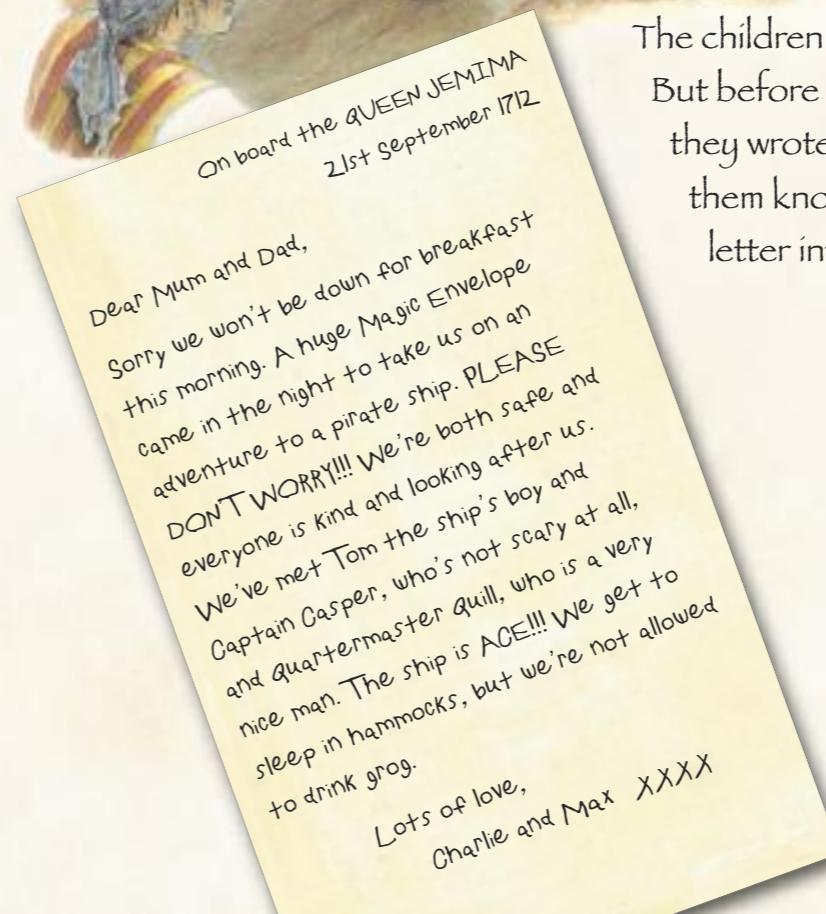
He pointed to the map laid out on the desk. "I uses me chart, me telescope, me compass to tell which way be north ... and – well, a bit o' luck, if I be honest..."

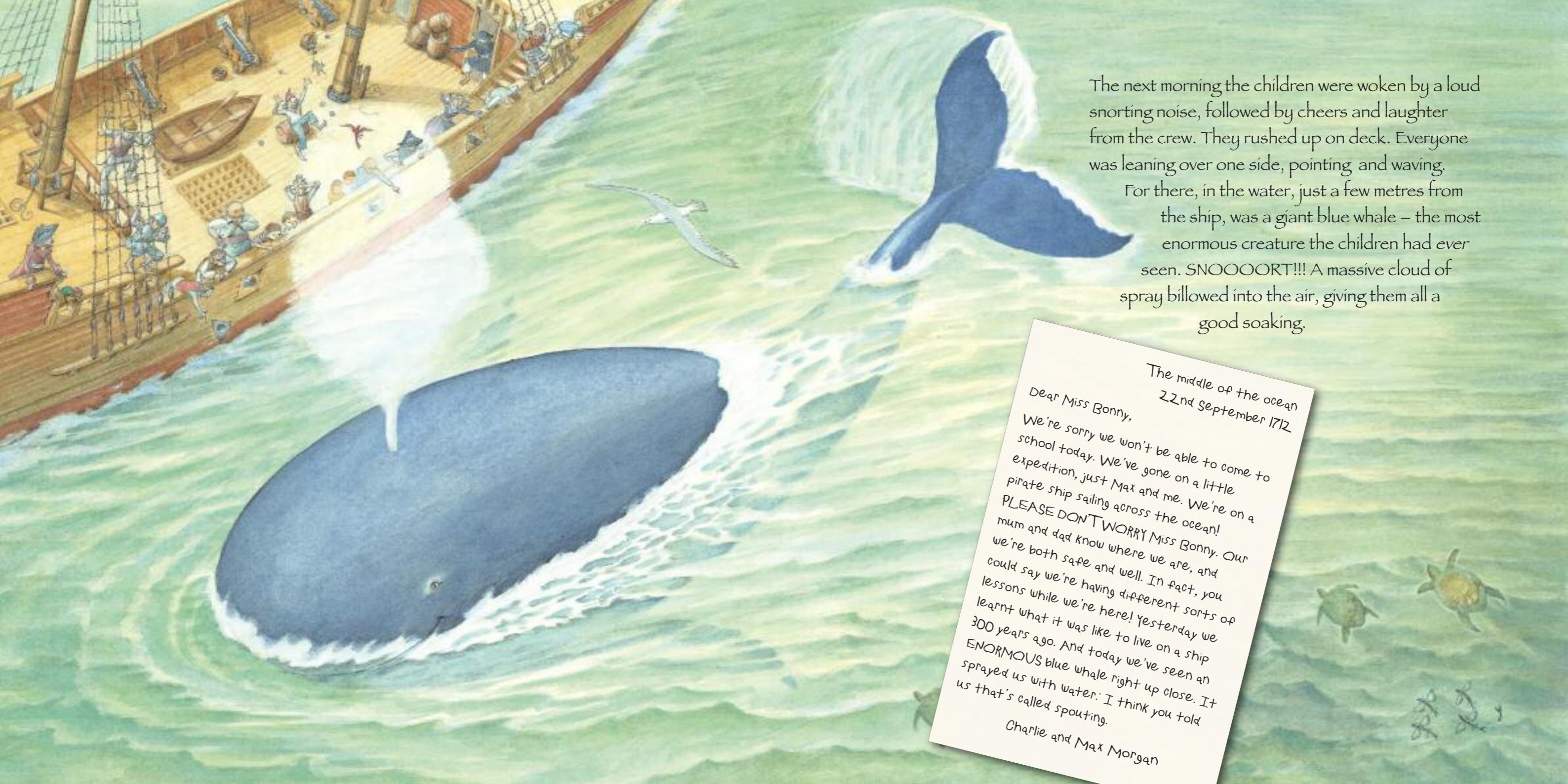
"Follow me, me hearties. I'll show 'ee the rest of our ship." Captain Casper took the children down to the lower decks. The deeper they went, the gloomier and wetter and smellier it became.

"Here be the ship's stores," he whispered, holding up a lantern. "Salted pork, ship's biscuit and plenty o' rum for me crew. Or grog as we calls it. There be lemon water for you young 'uns, mind."



The Captain introduced Charlie and Max to Quartermaster Quill, his second-in-command. Quill showed the children where they would be sleeping; in hammocks along with the crew.





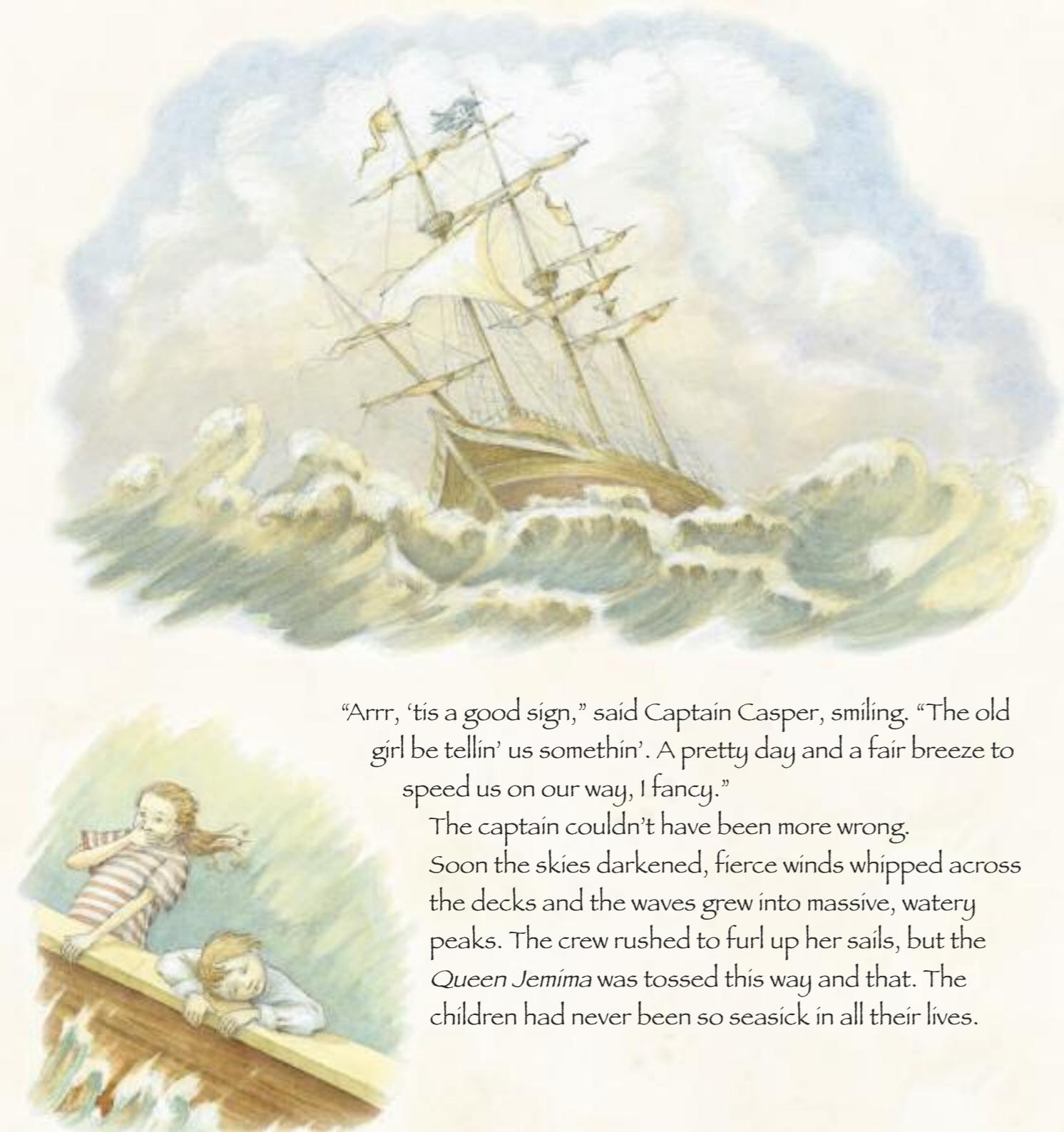
The next morning the children were woken by a loud snorting noise, followed by cheers and laughter from the crew. They rushed up on deck. Everyone was leaning over one side, pointing and waving.

For there, in the water, just a few metres from the ship, was a giant blue whale – the most enormous creature the children had ever seen. SNOOOORT!!! A massive cloud of spray billowed into the air, giving them all a good soaking.

The middle of the ocean
22nd September 1712

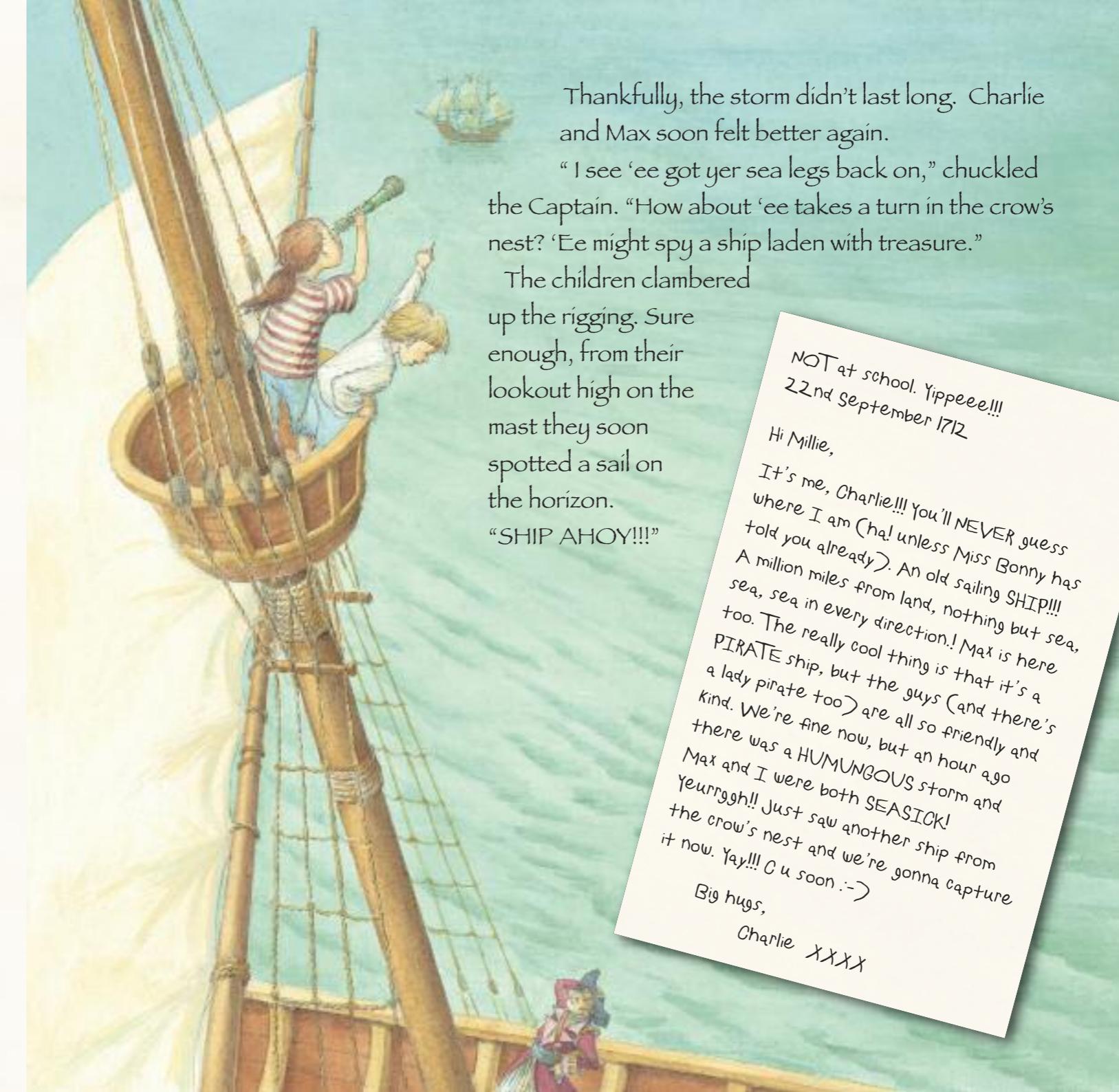
Dear Miss Bonny,
We're sorry we won't be able to come to school today. We've gone on a little expedition, just Max and me. We're on a pirate ship sailing across the ocean!
PLEASE DON'T WORRY Miss Bonny. Our mum and dad know where we are, and we're both safe and well. In fact, you could say we're having different sorts of lessons while we're here! Yesterday we learnt what it was like to live on a ship 300 years ago. And today we've seen an ENORMOUS blue whale right up close. It sprayed us with water. I think you told us that's called spouting.

Charlie and Max Morgan



"Arrr, 'tis a good sign," said Captain Casper, smiling. "The old girl be tellin' us somethin'. A pretty day and a fair breeze to speed us on our way, I fancy."

The captain couldn't have been more wrong. Soon the skies darkened, fierce winds whipped across the decks and the waves grew into massive, watery peaks. The crew rushed to furl up her sails, but the Queen Jemima was tossed this way and that. The children had never been so seasick in all their lives.



Thankfully, the storm didn't last long. Charlie and Max soon felt better again.

"I see 'ee got yer sea legs back on," chuckled the Captain. "How about 'ee takes a turn in the crow's nest? 'Ee might spy a ship laden with treasure."

The children clambered up the rigging. Sure enough, from their lookout high on the mast they soon spotted a sail on the horizon.

"SHIP AHOY!!!"

NOT at school. Yippee!!!
22nd September 1712

Hi Millie,

It's me, Charlie!!! You'll NEVER guess where I am (hal unless Miss Bonny has told you already). An old sailing SHIP!!! A million miles from land, nothing but sea, sea, sea in every direction! Max is here too. The really cool thing is that it's a PIRATE ship, but the guys (and there's a lady pirate too) are all so friendly and kind. We're fine now, but an hour ago there was a HUMONGOUS storm and Yeurrgh!! Just saw another ship from the crow's nest and we're gonna capture it now. Yay!!! C u soon :~)

Big hugs,

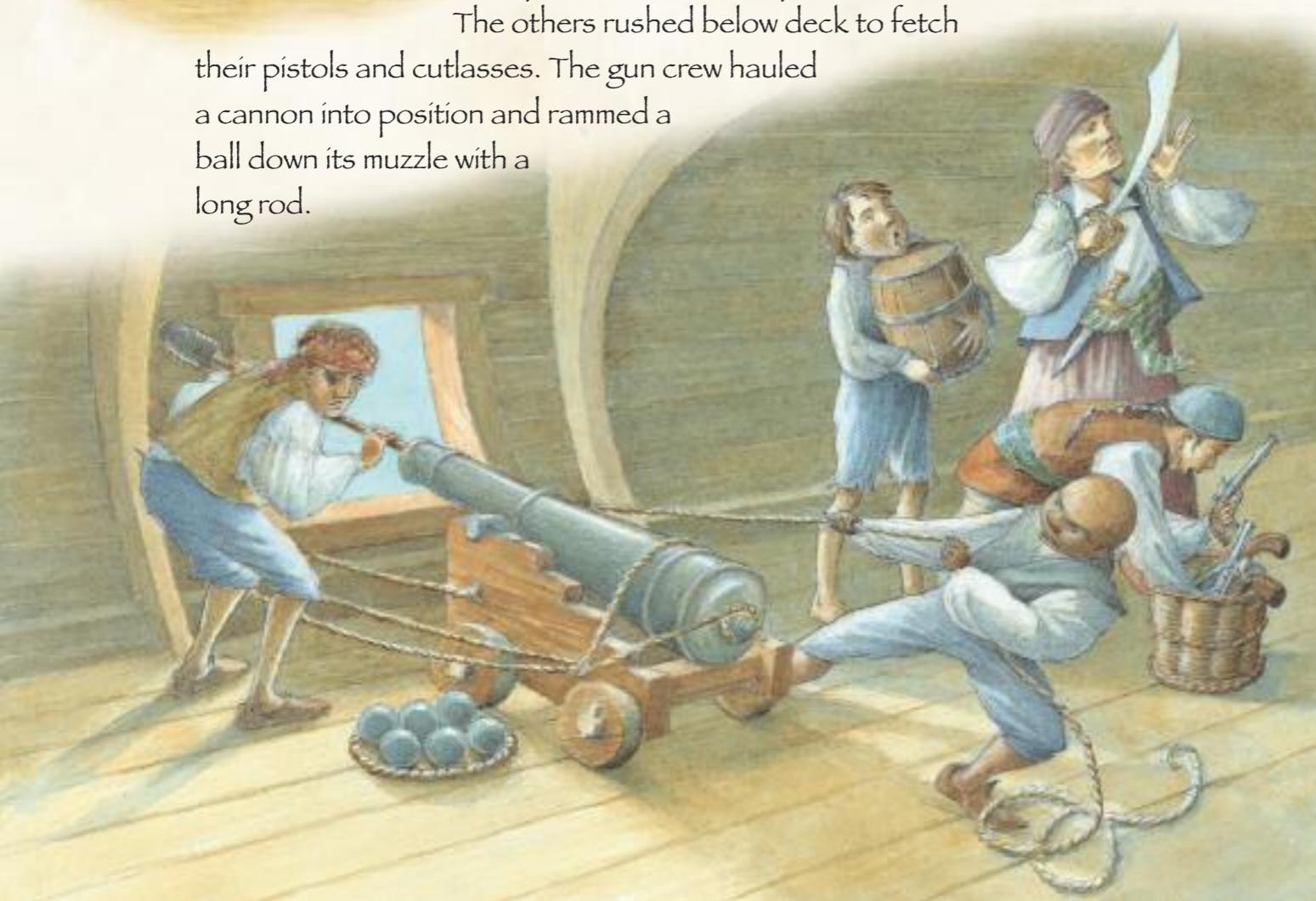
Charlie xxxx



Everyone cheered wildly. It was the moment the crew had been waiting for. Action at last!

"Raise the flag, me hearties!" bellowed Captain Casper. Charlie unfurled the Jolly Roger and Max heaved on the rope. Up and up the mast climbed the flag until it fluttered proudly from the top.

The others rushed below deck to fetch their pistols and cutlasses. The gun crew hauled a cannon into position and rammed a ball down its muzzle with a long rod.



Some of the crew tried out their swords before the real fight began ...

"We should get ready ourselves," said Charlie. "After all, we're pirates too."

"So we should look like pirates!" laughed Max.

Quartermaster Quill found them some piratey clothes to try on.

"Hmm ... a little on the large side, maybe," giggled Charlie. "But we look *really* scary now, don't we?"



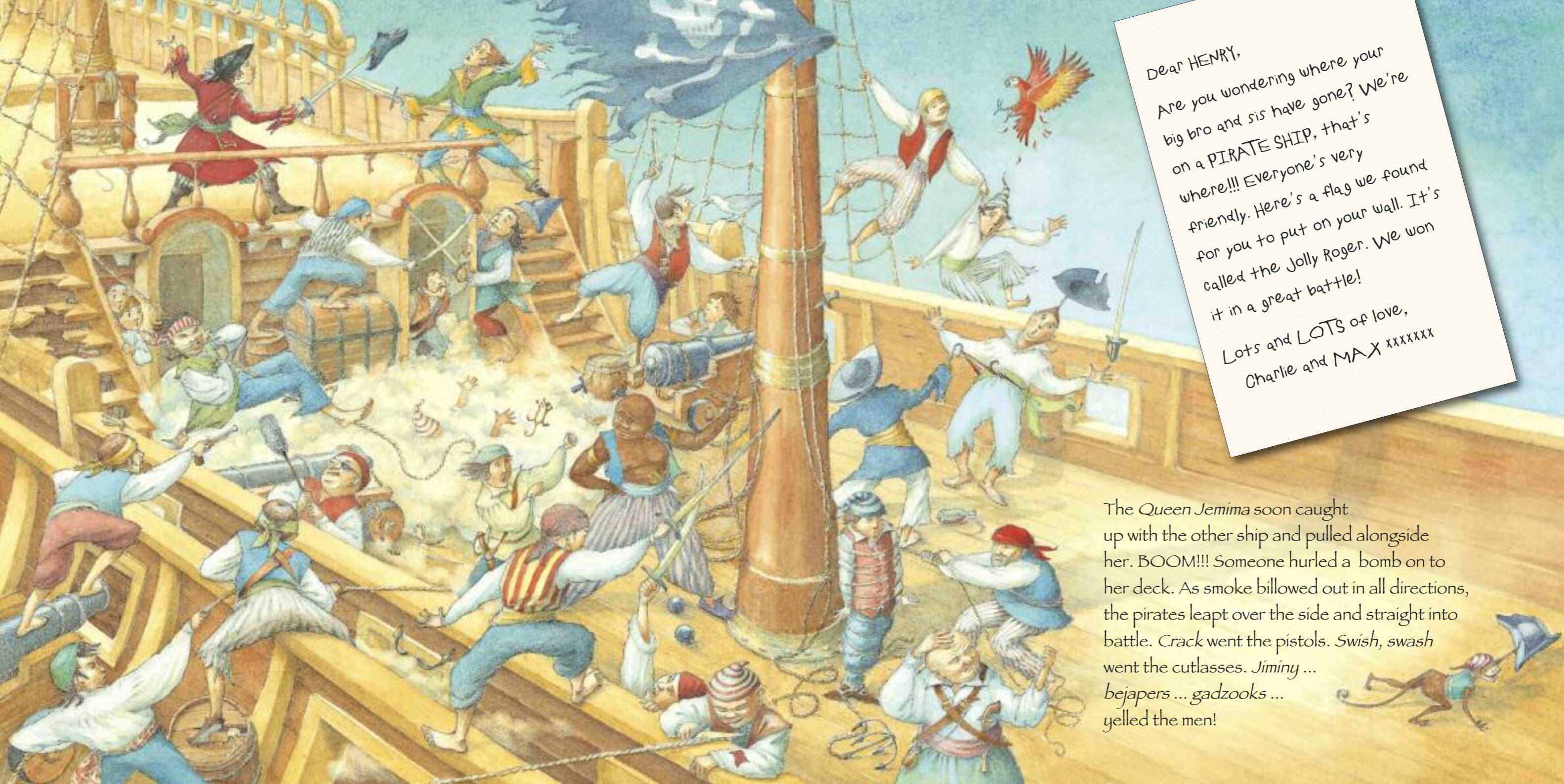
The Spanish Main
22nd September 1712

Dear Josh,

AVAST there, ye landlubber!!! We're writing this letter from our ship. Not just any old ship, but a PIRATE SHIP!!! Yeah, just like one in the Pirates of the Caribbean! It's a long story how we got here, but we'll explain later.:-) Here are some pirate coins for you. They're called pieces of eight.

Anyway, so we're on this AWESOME ship and we're gonna fight another ship TO THE DEATH and steal all its treasure!! Arr!!! Please tell Miss Bonny we're not in any danger, 'cos we're gonna WIN!!!!

Feed the FISH, ye SWABS!!
Charlie and MAX



Dear HENRY,

Are you wondering where your
big bro and sis have gone? We're
on a PIRATE SHIP, that's
where!!! Everyone's very
friendly. Here's a flag we found
for you to put on your wall. It's
called the Jolly Roger. We won
it in a great battle!

Lots and LOTS of love,
Charlie and MAX xxxxxxx

The Queen Jemima soon caught up with the other ship and pulled alongside her. BOOM!!! Someone hurled a bomb on to her deck. As smoke billowed out in all directions, the pirates leapt over the side and straight into battle. Crack went the pistols. Swish, swash went the cutlasses. Jiminy ... bejapers ... gadzooks ... yelled the men!

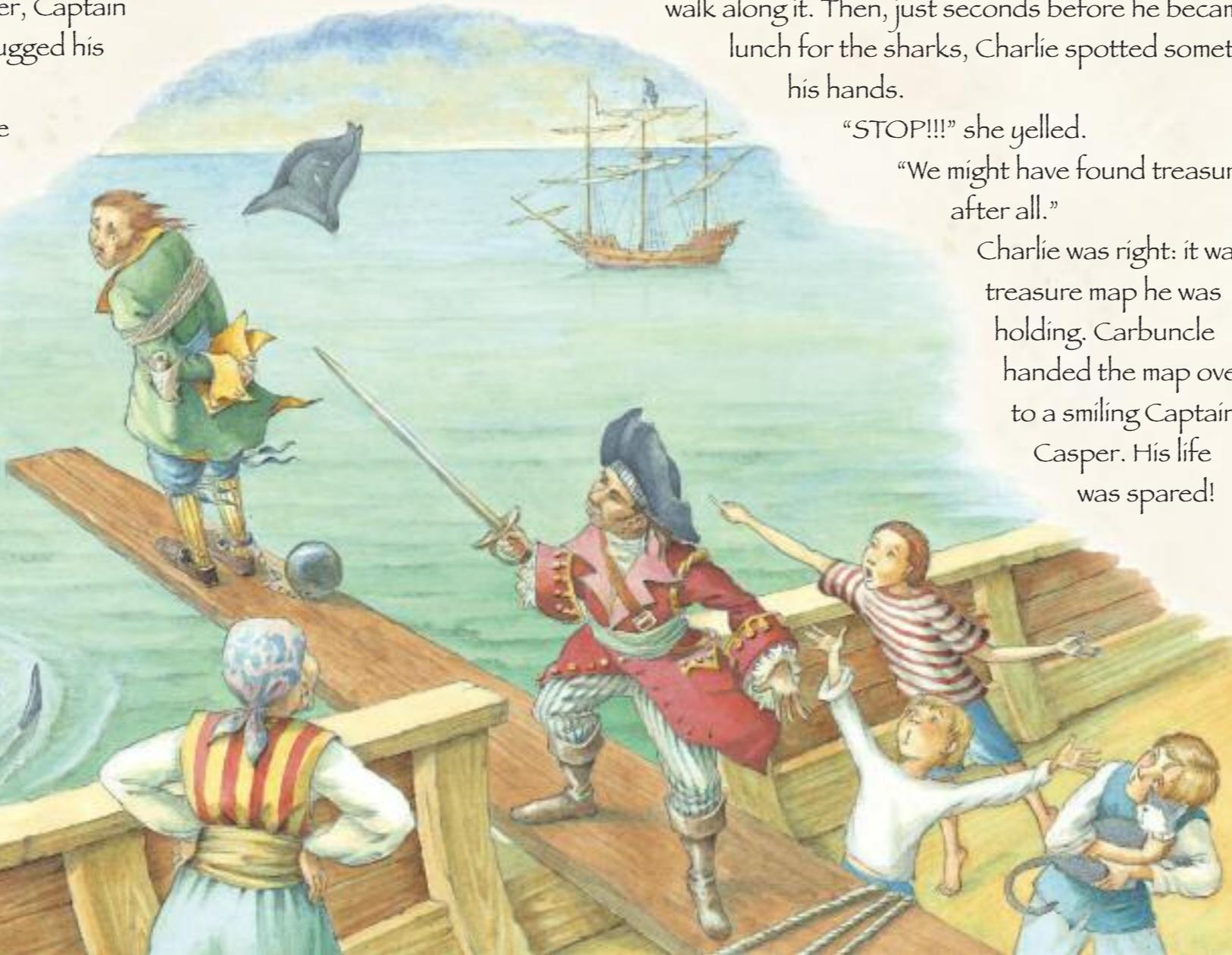


The crew of the *Sea Dragon* fought hard, but, in the end, victory went to the *Queen Jemima*. But where was the treasure? The *Sea Dragon's* skipper, Captain Carbuncle, shrugged his shoulders.

"We be humble pirates, just like 'ee!" he muttered.

Captain Casper was furious. "SEA

DOGS!" he roared. "No treasure, eh?? Tie 'em up, me hearties. Some fellow's goin' to walk the plank for this!!!"



"Aye aye, Cap'n!" said Quill. The men quickly fixed a plank into position. Casper ordered poor Captain Carbuncle, a lead weight clamped around his ankle, to walk along it. Then, just seconds before he became lunch for the sharks, Charlie spotted something in his hands.

"STOP!!!" she yelled.

"We might have found treasure after all."

Charlie was right: it was a treasure map he was holding. Carbuncle handed the map over to a smiling Captain Casper. His life was spared!



Aboard an ENEMY ship
22nd September 1712

Dear Granny and Granddad,

We hope Mum and Dad have told you about our great pirate adventure, and that you're NOT TO WORRY about us!!! We're having the most AMAZING time! Our captain was just about to make another pirate captain WALK THE PLANK when Max and I saw he had a TREASURE MAP rolled up in his pocket! We shouted out in the nick of time, so he didn't drown after all, thank goodness. And we've got the map - HERE IT IS!!!

All the pirates are best buddies now so we're going to have a big PARTY to celebrate! Being pirates is really FUN!!

Lots and lots of love
Charlie and Max XXXXX



Below deck on the SEA DRAGON
22nd September 1712

Dear Mrs Hawkins,
We're sorry but we won't be able to have
lunch at school today. You don't have to
worry about us going hungry, no! Today we're
having a massive FEAST aboard a pirate ship!
Ooh-arr!!

We thought you might like to have some
ideas for some pirate food you can cook for
everybody at school. How about this:

Bone soup with sea biscuits
Salted beef and boiled cabbage
Turtle stew

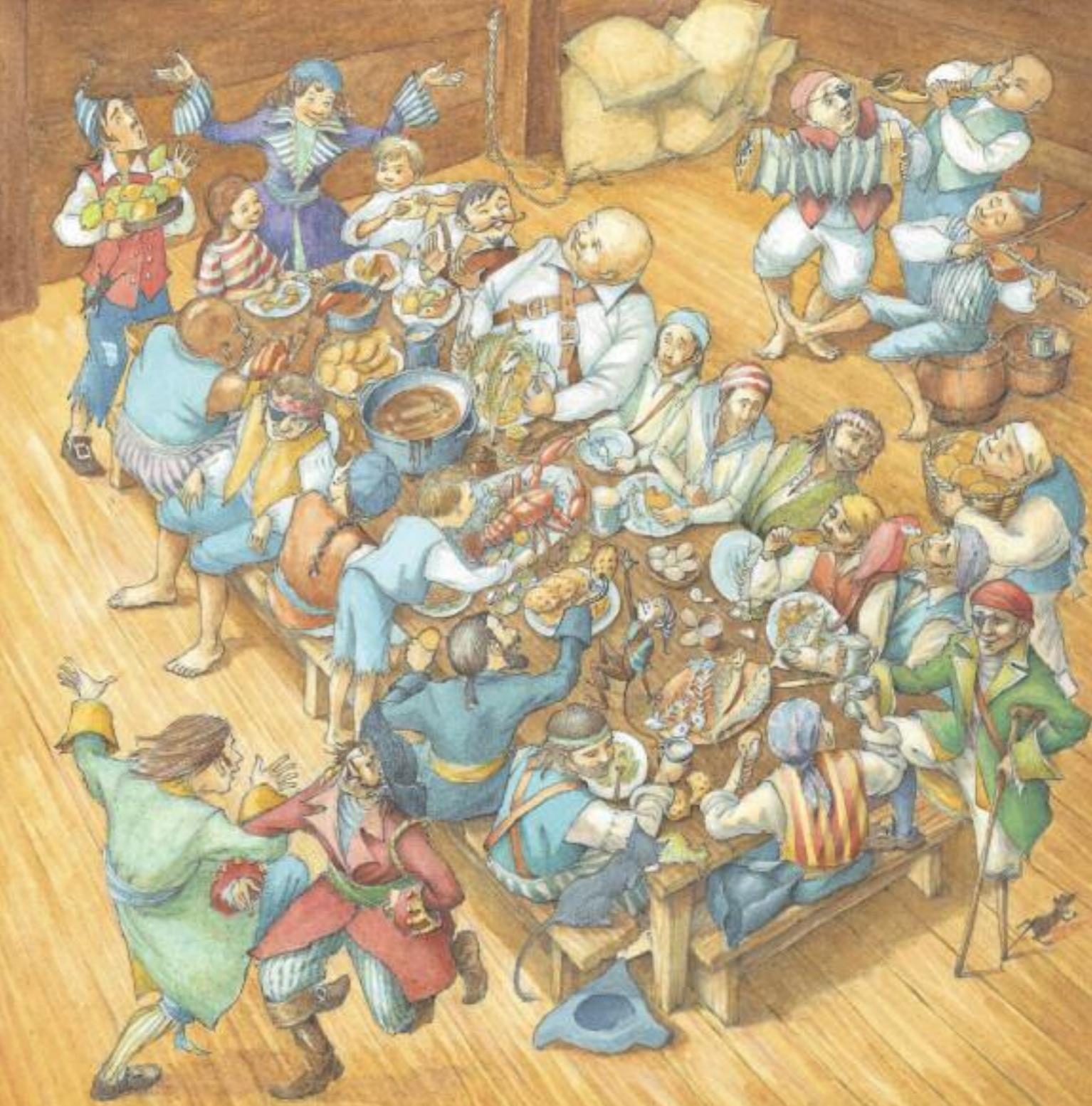
Yeurrggh!! Your school lunches are SOOO
much nicer! Luckily for us, we've got fish,
lobster and fresh eggs today. Yum!!!

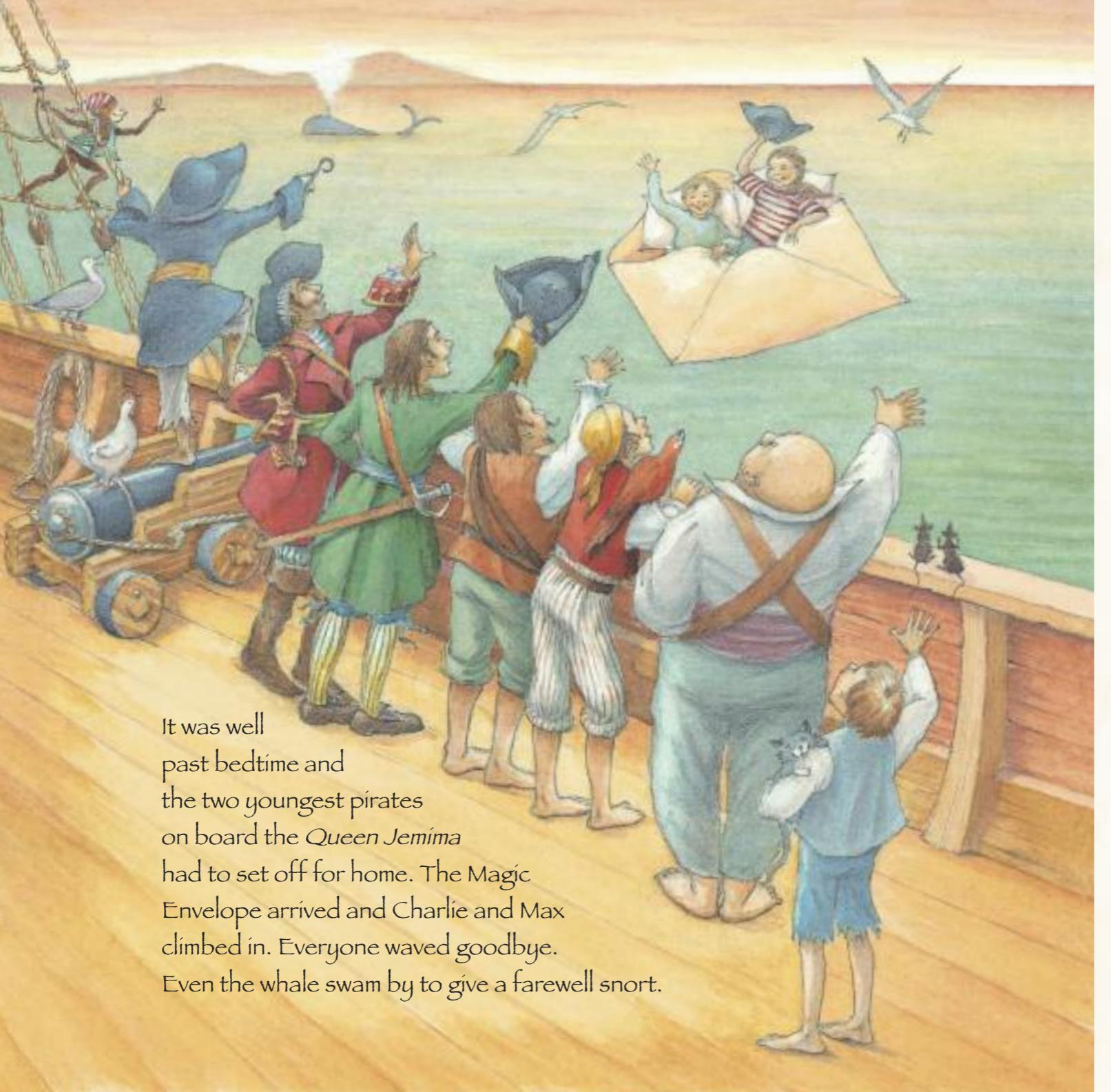
Best wishes from
Charlie and Max Morgan

Now was the time to party! And if anyone could throw a better party than a pirate crew, it was two pirate crews. From that moment, everyone became firm friends. Let the feast begin!

Luckily, there was plenty of fresh food on board the *Sea Dragon*. Charlie and Max found some chickens clucking away below deck, so they collected some eggs. There was also fish, lobster and a gigantic stew that the cook was making in the galley. All washed down with grog!

As they feasted, the pirates compared tales of their adventures. There was music and singing. The two captains even danced together!







The next thing the children knew they
were waking up in their own snuggly beds
in the morning. Mum and Dad came into
their bedroom holding a letter.

"We've just received this. The funny
thing is – it's from you two!" Mum said.

"So how come it was sent from a pirate
ship, when you've been tucked up in bed
all night, hmm?" asked Dad.

Charlie and Max looked at each other
... and winked!