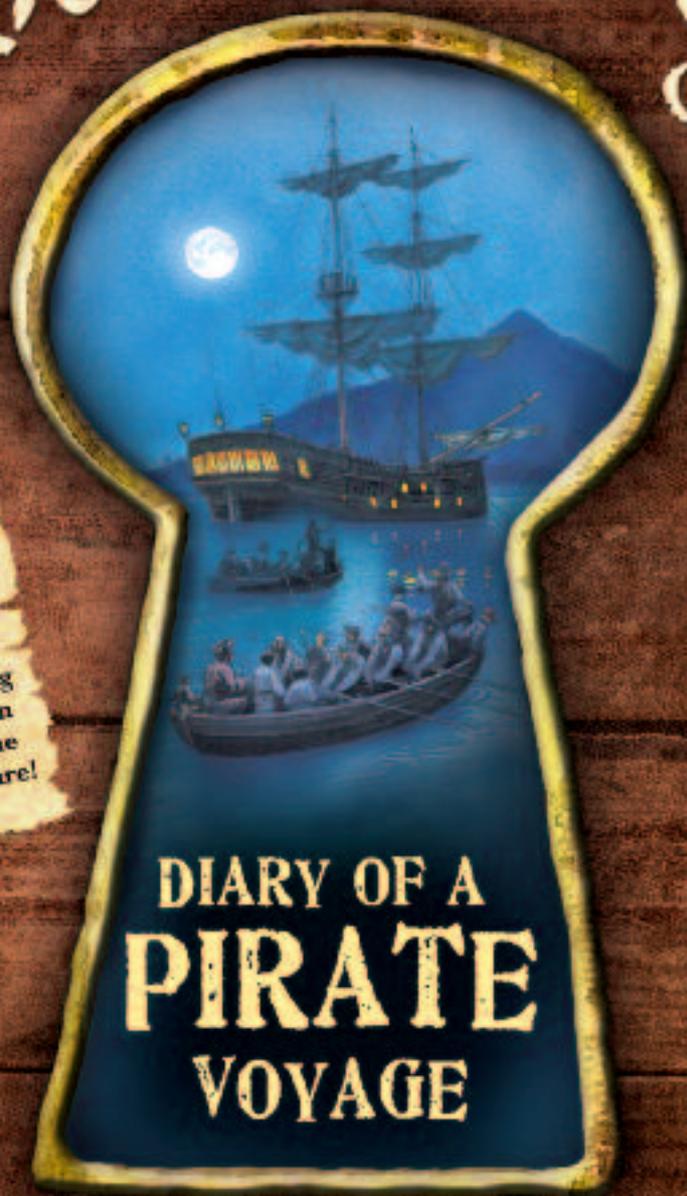


The Time Key



Take an exciting
journey back in
time to find the
pirates' treasure!

DIARY OF A
PIRATE
VOYAGE

The Time Key

DIARY OF A
PIRATE
VOYAGE



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The Time Key

DIARY OF A PIRATE VOYAGE

Dear Reader,

We wrote this diary very soon after we had the MOST AMAZING adventure EVER! No one—our parents, our grandfather, not even our friends at school—believed us. They said it was all a dream, or that we had made it all up. But this WASN'T a dream, otherwise how come BOTH OF US remember IN EVERY DETAIL what had happened? And how could we make it up, when we had NO IDEA what it was like to live amongst PIRATES all those years ago?

So we decided to note down everything that took place and keep all the things we found on our adventure in this diary. You can now decide for yourselves whether we are telling the truth—and discover what it was REALLY like to find yourself aboard a PIRATE SHIP!

Josh and Maisie



 Orpheus

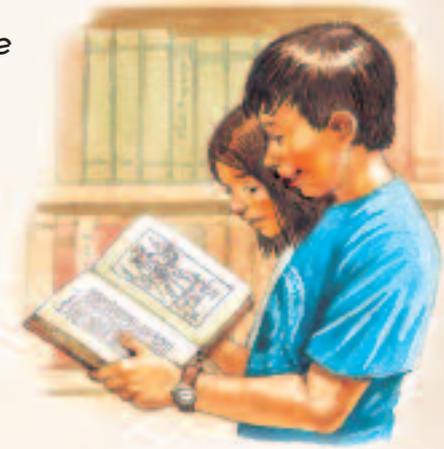


“So, where is the Spanish Main?”

Granddad said my sister Maisie and I should go and look it up on the globe in his study. He said it was the name given to the lands around the Caribbean Sea many years ago.



As we were reading it, we could feel a draught coming from the space in the bookcase where the book had been. We took away some other books and discovered a small door at the back of the bookcase. Straight away, Maisie turned the key and pulled it open.



“There’s a room in there. It’s a bit dark.”

We looked at each other, knowing exactly what we were going to do next. I was the first one through.



We looked around in silence. It was a bit like Granddad’s study, but instead of a computer, there was a pen and inkpot on the table. There were so many old things around it was like we were in a museum. The room started to rock gently from side to side. It was then we realised we were on a ship...

While we were looking at the globe, one of Granddad’s books fell out of the bookcase on to the floor. “That’s funny,” said Maisie. “I didn’t even touch it”.

It was a really old book about piracy in the Caribbean—just what we were really interested in! A page had come loose in the fall. It was about a vast hoard of treasure that had been buried but never found.



A GALLEON belonging to the Spanish fleet, called the *Almiranta*, was reported to have gone down off the southern coast of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea during a terrible storm in the year 1714. All hands were lost. She was known to have been carrying an unusually valuable cargo of gold and silver coins, emeralds and pearls. Yet, when a salvage of the stricken vessel was attempted just three months later (an operation considered without great difficulty in the shallow waters close to shore), no sign of the treasure was found. It was strongly suspected that pirates active in the area were the culprits. It was further rumoured that a chest containing some of the treasure trove was buried on a nearby island, and that it remains there to this day.

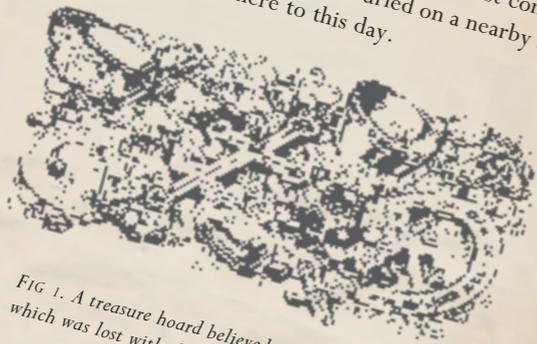
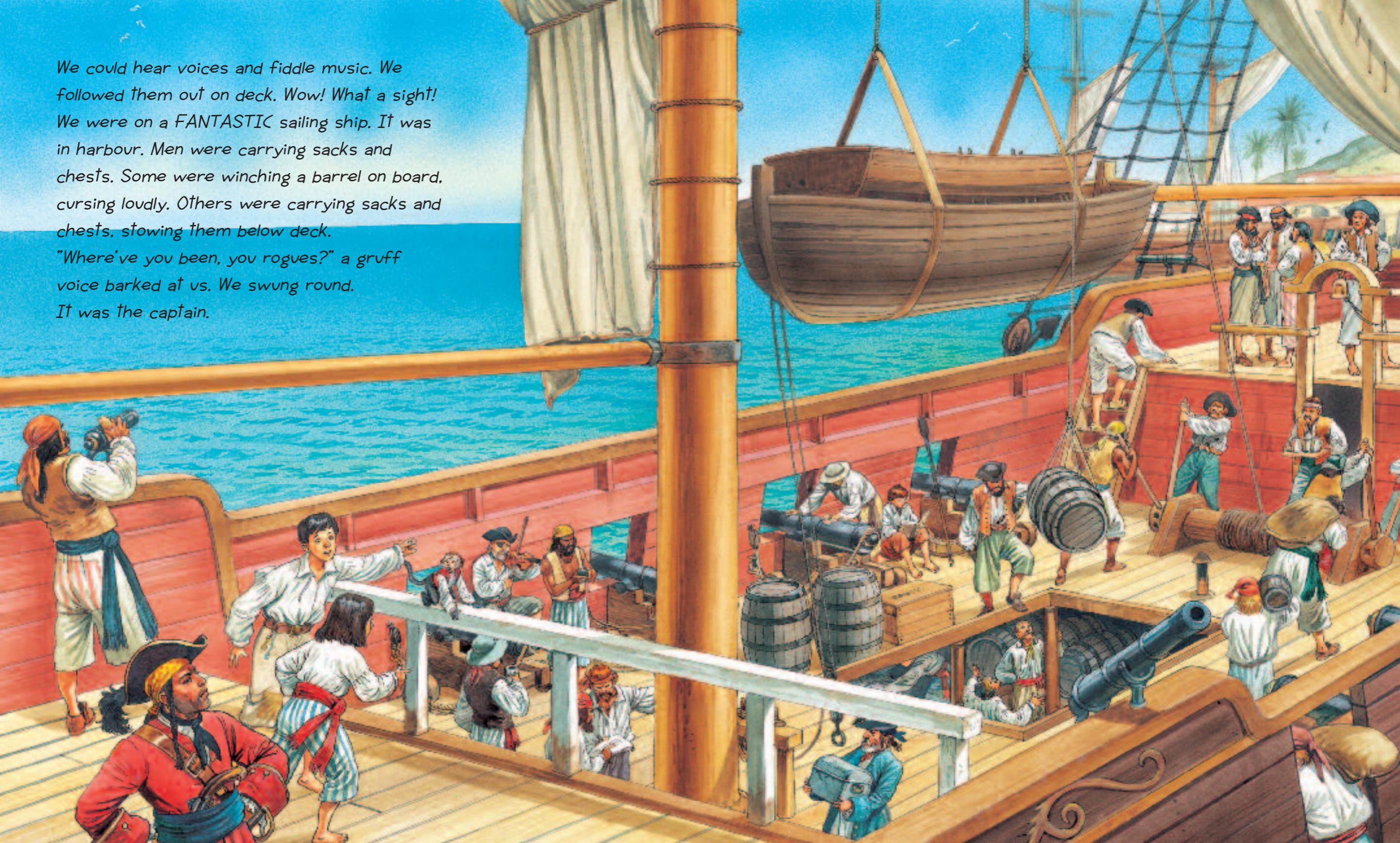


FIG 1. A treasure hoard believed to be similar to that which was lost with the sinking of the *Almiranta*.

We could hear voices and fiddle music. We followed them out on deck. Wow! What a sight! We were on a FANTASTIC sailing ship. It was in harbour. Men were carrying sacks and chests. Some were winching a barrel on board, cursing loudly. Others were carrying sacks and chests, stowing them below deck. "Where've you been, you rogues?" a gruff voice barked at us. We swung round. It was the captain.

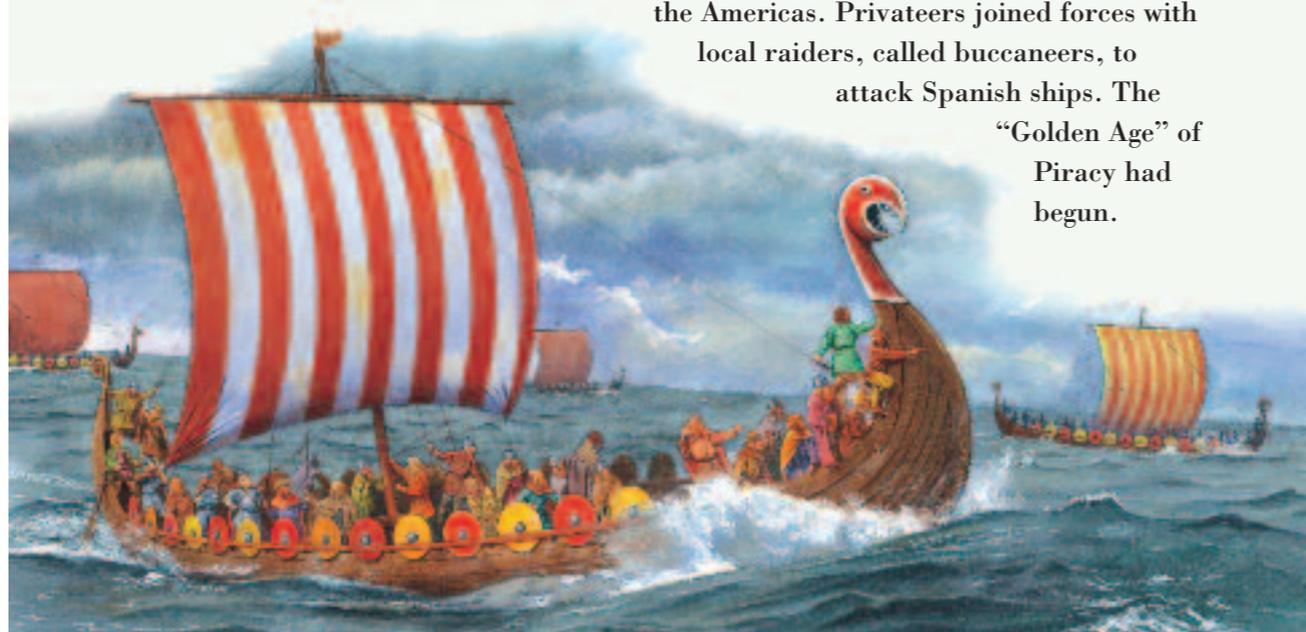


A History of PIRACY

THE FIRST PIRATES

AS LONG AS people have sailed the oceans, there have been pirates, or sea robbers. Pirates terrorized cargo ships in the Mediterranean Sea more than 2500 years ago. Roman ships were also constantly threatened.

Between the 9th and 11th centuries, Viking raiders (*below*) sailed from their Scandinavian homeland in narrow wooden longships. They attacked towns around the coasts of Europe from Ireland to Russia, stealing anything of value.



In the Middle Ages, corsairs (*above*) sailed from Muslim cities on the Barbary Coast in North Africa. They plundered Christian ships and coastal towns, carrying off captives to be sold as slaves.

Monarchs once permitted merchant ships to attack their enemies on their behalf during time of war. These vessels were called privateers. The captain and the king shared the spoils. In the 16th century, the Spanish started to transport gold and silver back from their conquered lands in the Americas. Privateers joined forces with local raiders, called buccaneers, to attack Spanish ships. The

“Golden Age” of
Piracy had
begun.

THE “GOLDEN AGE” OF PIRACY

From about 1700 to 1730, the pirates of the Caribbean were at their most successful. Large Spanish treasure ships, called galleons, sailed from the Spanish Main, the Caribbean coast of Central and South America, laden with gold and silver. These huge warships were sometimes more than 35 metres long and 10 metres wide. They had up to 30 cannon on either side and a crew of more than 200 men.



Despite their great size and weaponry, the galleons were often out-manoeuvred by the smaller, faster pirate ships. Pirates would take a galleon by surprise, swapping a friendly flag for the Jolly Roger (*above right*) only moments before their attack



When a pirate ship threatened a galleon, it would normally meet with little resistance. Pirate crews often vastly

outnumbered the crew of a merchant vessel. Faced with the challenge, few crews would dare to put up a fight. The captain would

often surrender before a shot had been fired in order to save lives. But sometimes, especially if there were trained guards aboard, battle was joined. Following an initial bombardment by cannon fire, the pirate ship would draw alongside the



galleon, using a grappling iron (*above left*) to hold the ships together. The pirates were well-prepared for battle: they leapt aboard, brandishing swords, pistols and daggers.

Some pirates achieved great notoriety. Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard (*below*), terrified crews by tying burning fuses

into his hair and beard. Huge rewards were offered for his capture. He was eventually killed in 1718, but only after being shot five times and receiving 20 blows from a sword.





Somehow, we had travelled back through time 300 years! We were on board an 18th century ship. Now we were about to go to sea. As two ship's boys (Maisie was dressed for the part), we would have to work for our supper. Captain Jack wasn't too angry with us. He sent us below deck to find Will, the second mate. He would show us what to do. This gave us a chance to have a good look round.

The ship was called the Esmeralda. The captain's quarters—where we had “arrived”—were at the back, or stern. The crew, including us, had to share living space with the stores: food, water, ale, gunpowder and spare sails. There was a galley where all the cooking was done. At the very bottom of the ship was a dank, smelly place known as the bilges (why was it full of rocks, I wondered?)



There was another ship, quite like ours, in harbour. She was called the Medusa. We saw one of our crew talking with men from the Medusa. They gave him what looked like a bag of money. Strange...

Later that day, at high tide, we watched as the Medusa unfurled her sails and slipped out of the harbour. We waited a while, then did the same,

following at a distance. One of the other lads explained that our captain suspected that the Medusa was on the trail of some buried treasure. It rightfully belonged to us, so we were going to try and get it back. The captain had a plan. But where did this treasure come from? Then it dawned on me. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck. This was the Spanish Main. Both the Medusa and the Esmeralda were pirate ships! We were surrounded by REAL PIRATES!



The crew of the Esmeralda were kind to us. They told us that they used to work on merchant ships, but they had been treated very badly by the senior officers. They had been forced to eat

rotten food full of maggots (yurrrh!) and had often been flogged for no good reason.

Life was hard on a pirate ship, too, but at least the men were better treated. They had elected their officers by a show of hands. Captain Jack was a brave man and they all respected him. They were proud of their ship and everyone followed the rules.

So now it was down to work for Maisie and me. We helped scrub the decks, using blocks of stone to scrape off the grime. This made our hands raw. Later we were told to go down to the stores and hunt the rats that were eating the food and nibbling through ropes. I got seven of them!



On being a PIRATE

Life at sea was tough. Below deck, it was dark, damp and dirty. The men lived in cramped conditions, sleeping amongst rats and eating a poor diet. There were no doctors, so their battle wounds went untreated.



Much of the time, in the weeks between attacks, life was extremely boring. But the pirates were certainly better treated, and had more freedoms and rights, than “normal” sailors. Both the captain and the quartermaster (the person in charge of food and living conditions on board) were elected by the crew. The captain was often the fiercest fighter, a man the crew would trust rather than a hated figure of authority.

Many pirate crews followed rules (called articles) that were agreed amongst themselves. They divided up what they seized. If a pirate took more of his share of the booty, was found guilty of stealing, or was judged a coward in battle, he was marooned (left on his own) on a remote island with only a little water and food.

ARTICLES OF THIS SHIP

- 1 Every man shall obey orders on this ship.
- 2 The Captain shall have one full share and a half in all prizes. The first mate, carpenter, boatswain and gunner shall have one share and a quarter. All others shall have one share.
- 3 If any man shall attempt to run away, or keep any secret from the ship's company, he shall be marooned with one bottle of powder, one bottle of water, one small firearm and some lead shot.
- 4 If any man shall steal anything to the value of a piece of eight or more, he shall be marooned or shot.
- 5 If any man shall sign the articles of another pirate ship without the consent of our ship's company, he shall suffer such punishment as the ship's company shall think fit.
- 6 If any man shall strike another, he shall receive 39 lashes on his bare back.
- 7 If any man shall fire his gun, or smoke tobacco, or carry a lighted candle below deck, he shall suffer the same punishment as in the previous article.
- 8 If any man shall not keep his firearms clean or fit for an engagement, or otherwise neglect his business, he shall be cut off from his share, and suffer such other punishment as the ship's company shall think fit.
- 9 If any man shall lose an arm or a leg during an engagement, he shall have 800 pieces of eight, or 400 if a lesser part.
- 10 No woman is allowed on this ship.

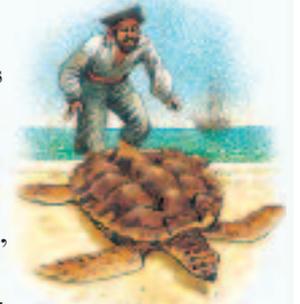
Signed

Food and drink

Two staple foods on pirate ships were salted pork and tough, long-lasting biscuits called hard tack (*below*). These



Many ships carried chickens (*left*) on board. These provided eggs and meat, On long voyages,



often became infested with weevils. When food ran out, the crew had to eat soups made from boiled bones (*above*). On some ships, the only food was old leather! Water became undrinkable just days into a voyage, so pirates drank beer (*right*) or rum instead.



poor diet resulted in diseases. Scurvy, caused by a lack of vitamin C, could be prevented by eating fruit. The sea itself provided fresh food in the form of fish or dolphins. Sea turtles (*above*) were a good source of fresh meat. They were slow on land and easy prey for pirates. They could even be kept alive on board ship until needed. Turtle eggs were also a popular delicacy.

Weaponry

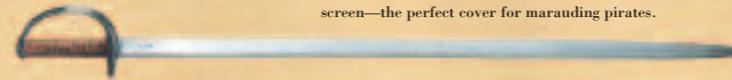
Easy to carry on a belt, a dagger (*above*) was a useful weapon to use on lower decks where there was little space to swing a cutlass.



When about to board an enemy ship, the pirates might throw hand-made bombs (*right*) on to the deck.

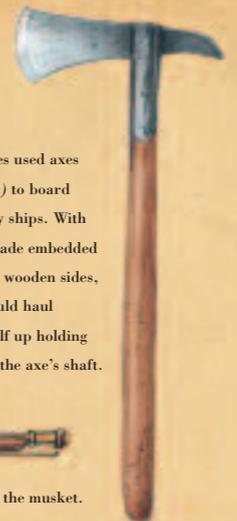


The smouldering mixture of rags and tar created a smoke screen—the perfect cover for marauding pirates.



The cutlass (*above*) was the pirate's preferred weapon. Its short blade made it ideal for use in tight spaces on board ship. A sword with a longer blade might have got caught up in the rigging.

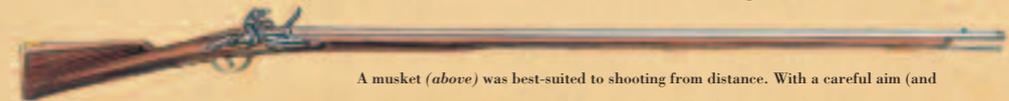
Pirates used axes (*right*) to board enemy ships. With the blade embedded in the wooden sides, he could haul himself up holding on to the axe's shaft.



A flintlock pistol (*above*) worked when a spark, caused by flint striking steel, ignited gunpowder. This fired a ball from the barrel. Damp sea air often caused it to misfire, and reloading was slow.



The musketoon (*above*) was a short-barrelled version of the musket. It was less accurate, but easier to fire at close quarters.



A musket (*above*) was best-suited to shooting from distance. With a careful aim (and a calm sea), a marksman could fire a musket ball at his target with great accuracy.



The next day, Captain Jack told the crew that a storm was brewing.

We needed to prepare the ship urgently. Maisie and I looked at each other.

Uh-oh, we were REALLY in trouble now! Abe, the

boatswain (this word is pronounced "bosun"),

ordered us to climb up the

rigging to help furl the sails. I gulped

and Maisie said, "Does that mean what I

think it means?" We're both great at

climbing trees, but this was something

else! The mast swayed and creaked, and

already the waves were getting bigger and

bigger. TERRIFIED, we gripped tightly on to

the rope ladders (called ratlines) as we climbed

slowly to the top. "Don't look down, Josh!"

Maisie shouted. As the breeze gusted around us,

we leant over the yard-arm

and heaved the heavy sail up

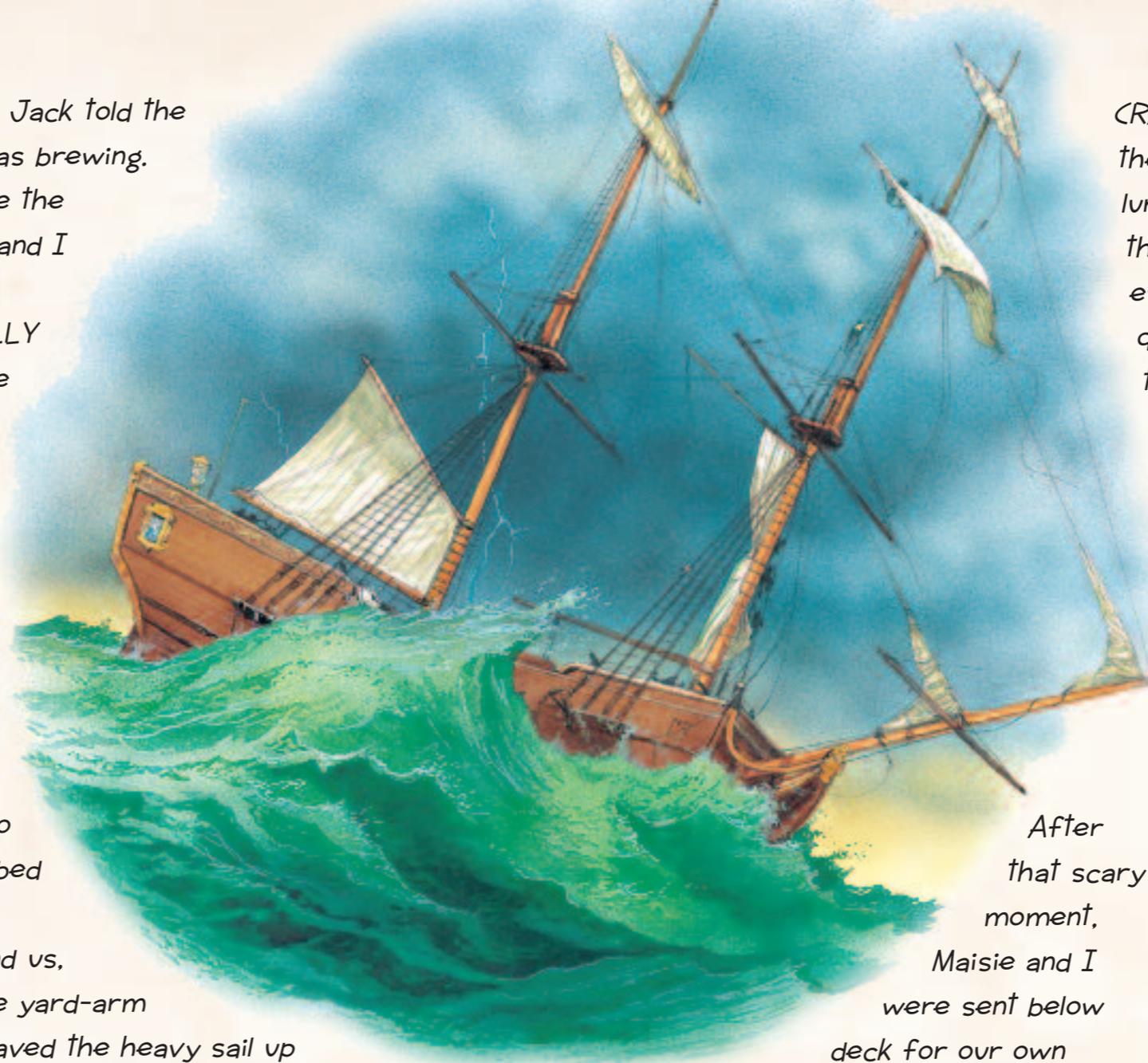
towards us. The men told

us that if we left the

sails up, the wind

would tear them

to shreds.



CRACK! With a clap of thunder,

the storm hit us. The ship

lurched this way and that in

the churning seas, making

everyone on board feel very

queasy. Waves crashed over

the sides, sweeping us off

our feet. All of a sudden, I

was hanging over the side

by my fingertips with

seawater up to my waist.

Luckily, Captain Jack

pulled me back on board

before the water could

drag me down.

After that scary moment,

Maisie and I were sent below deck for our own

safety. Both of us were shivering with cold and fright. Now we desperately wanted to go home. But I started to wonder secretly whether we would ever get back alive...



The Spanish MAIN

The Spanish Main was the mainland coast of the lands around the Caribbean Sea: part of the Spanish Empire in the Americas from the 16th century onwards. It included present-day Central America and the north coast of South America. From here, a fabulous amount of goods were shipped back to Spain by the galleons of the Treasure Fleet. They included gold, silver, gemstones, jewellery, spices, hardwoods, hides and other treasures. Silver was brought to the Spanish Main by the llama trains from Potosi in Bolivia, once part of the Inca Empire, to the Pacific coast and then by ship. The Spanish Main was a magnets for pirates and privateers. Because of this threat, Spain guarded the Fleet with war galleons. The Spanish Main was a constant battleground.





Almost as suddenly as it had started, the storm died down. Water washed over the deck. Some ragged pieces of sail were flapping in the wind. A few ropes had come loose—but the *Esmeralda* had come through it. The bilges were full of water so Will showed us how to work the pumps. It took all our strength to lever the heavy arm up and down. (Now we knew why the bilges were full of rocks. They had helped keep the ship upright during the storm.)

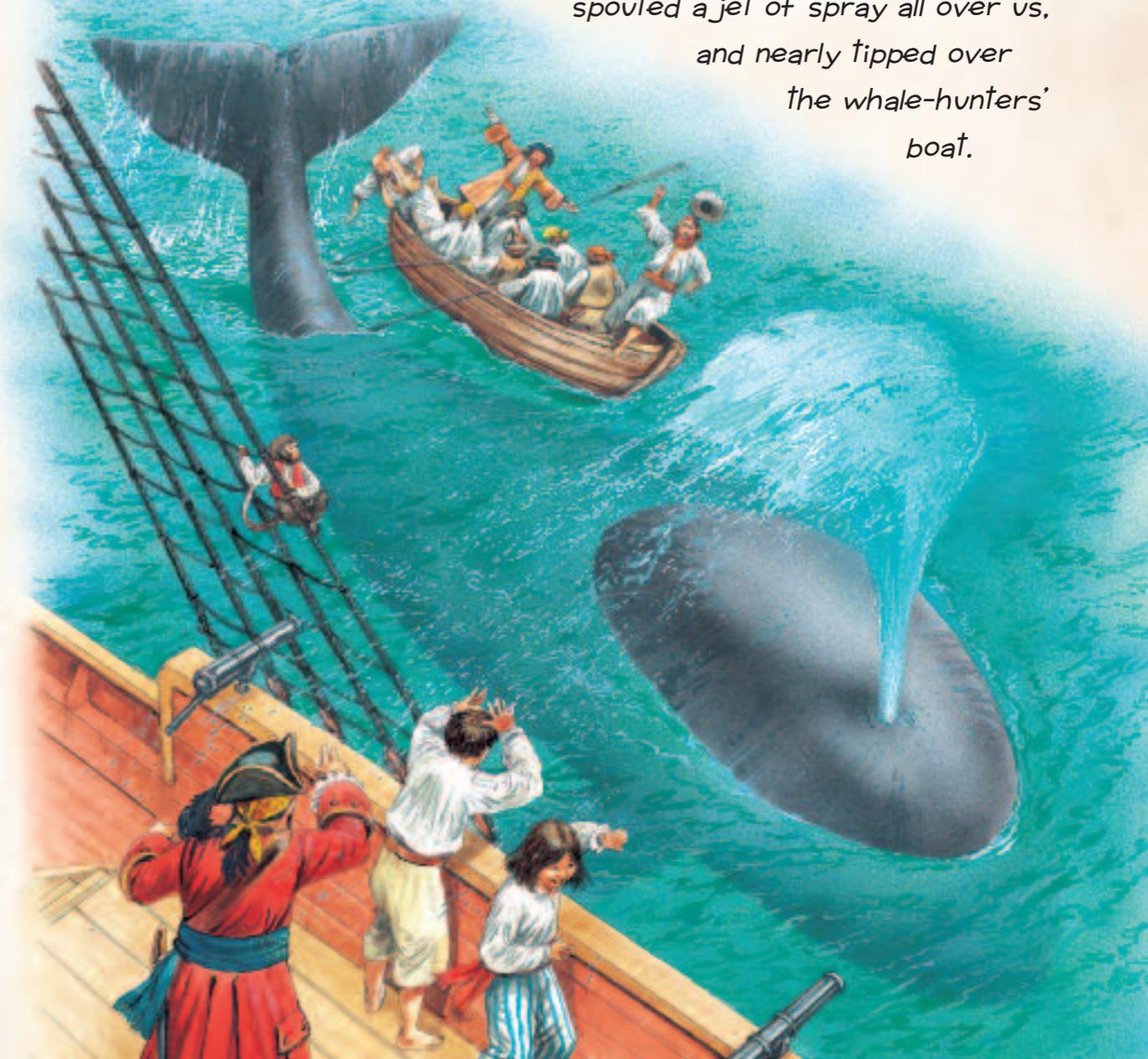
Before the storm, the captain had ordered Sam the cook to put out the fire in the galley. If the hot embers had shaken out of the brick furnace on to the ship's timbers, we'd have had fire as well as floods to deal with. Now the hearth was alight once more and Sam was heating up

a stew. All of us were **STARVING** after our ordeal. Maisie was so hungry she didn't look to see what was in it. I wasn't so sure: it was a dull, grey liquid with beans and other strange bits floating around. Oh well, it was much better than nothing!



Later that day, a huge flat tail the height of two men flipped out of the water. Was that a sea monster or what? Captain Jack laughed and told us it was only a whale. A group of whale-hunters had gone out that morning to try spear one for food—you can also use the blubber for

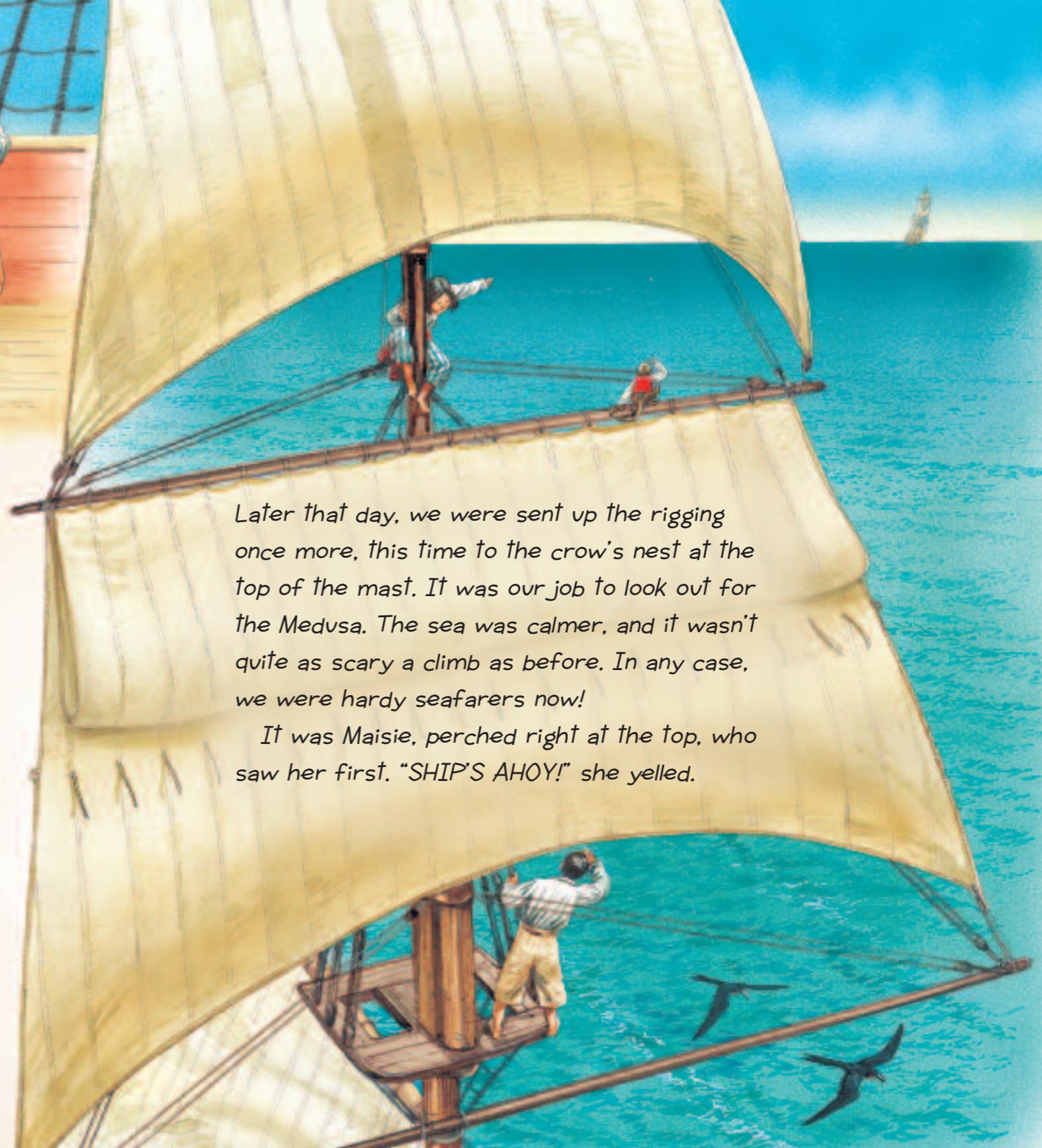
lamp fuel, he told us. They must have thought it was their lucky day. But just then, it spouted a jet of spray all over us, and nearly tipped over the whale-hunters' boat.





After the storm, we found we had lost sight of the Medusa. Not only that, but the storm's violent winds had blown us completely off course. Looking out across the flat expanse of calm sea in all directions, we wondered if anyone on board knew where we were.

"It's easy to find out," laughed Captain Jack. "We know which way we're headed by looking at this compass here. We know how fast we're sailing because some fellows counted off the knots on our log line this morning. Will can tell us how far north or south we are from measuring how high the sun is above the horizon at noon. See the pilot there? He's taking that measurement now with an instrument called a cross-staff. With all of this, we can pinpoint our position on our chart and get ourselves back on course in no time, can't we lads?" Jack turned to two of the crew. They scratched their heads and looked blank. We took our turns helping the helmsman—the one who steers the ship—on the tiller.



Later that day, we were sent up the rigging once more, this time to the crow's nest at the top of the mast. It was our job to look out for the Medusa. The sea was calmer, and it wasn't quite as scary a climb as before. In any case, we were hardy seafarers now!

It was Maisie, perched right at the top, who saw her first. "SHIP'S AHOY!" she yelled.

NAVIGATION FOR BEGINNERS

CHARTS AND OBSERVATION

The captain plotted the course of the ship on a chart (a map of the sea and coastlines). The Spanish had made detailed charts of the Caribbean Sea. Each had a



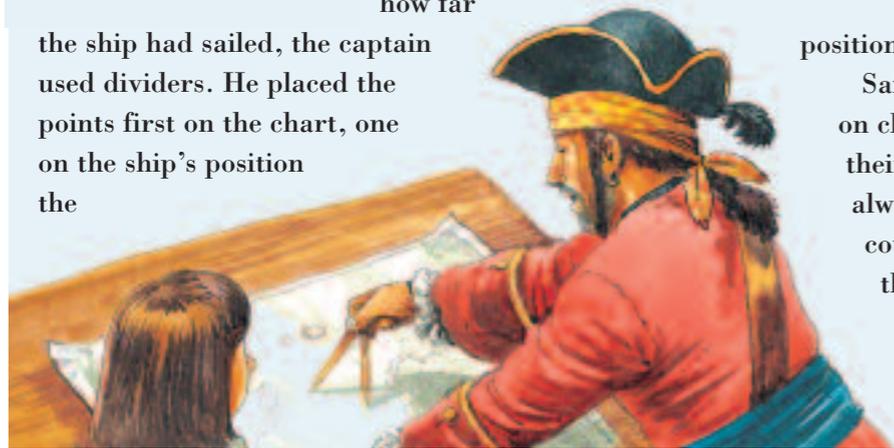
COMPASS

The compass was the navigator's most valuable tool. The magnetic needle always pointed north. From this, he could work out the ship's direction of travel: her bearing.

compass rose, showing north, south, east and west, and a scale bar. This showed how far a distance on the map—a few centimetres, say—was in the real world—several hundred kilometres, perhaps.

To measure how far

the ship had sailed, the captain used dividers. He placed the points first on the chart, one on the ship's position



previous day, the other on her current position. Then he held them carefully against the scale bar, giving that same distance in kilometres.

A very useful aid to navigation was the telescope. Using lenses inside a long, hollow



tube, it brought anything seen through it closer to the viewer. A sailor could make out landmarks on the coast or islands to help

plot the ship's position on the chart.

Sailors also used the stars on cloudless nights to find their way. The Pole Star always sat in the north. It could be found by using the two "end" stars of the Plough, a familiar constellation, as pointers.



LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE

To work out a ship's latitude—how far north or south it had travelled—sailors calculated the position of the sun at noon, when it was at its highest. To do this, he used an instrument called a backstaff. He stood with his back to the sun and looked through what was called a sighting vane. Lining up the shadow cast by a part of the backstaff called the shadow vane with the horizon, he could then measure off the angle of the sun above the horizon.

The higher the sun at noon, the closer they were to the Equator.

To work out longitude—how far east or west the ship had sailed—was more difficult.

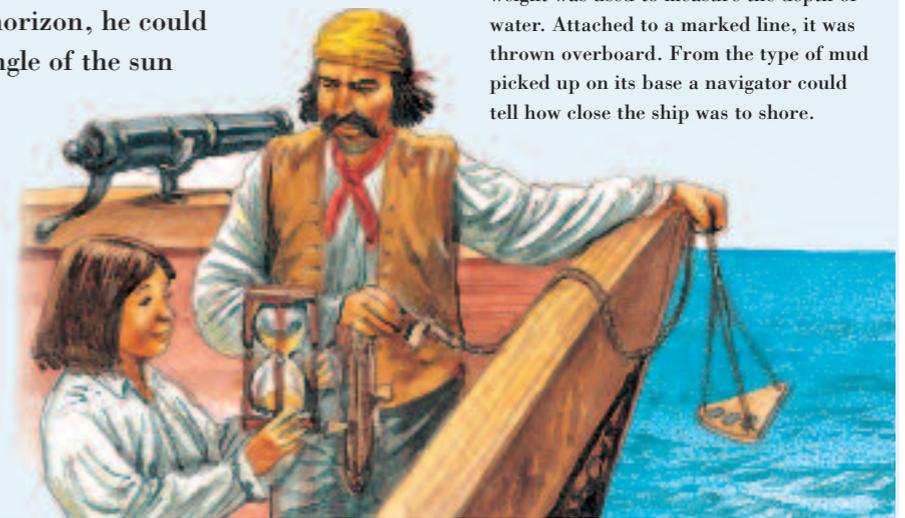
The best way was to keep detailed records of speed and direction. To find out the ship's speed, a log line, with a weight attached to the end, was thrown from her stern. The line, which had equally-spaced knots tied in it, was allowed to reel out as the ship moved forward. Using a sand

glass, a sailor could then time the number of knots that were reeled out in one minute. Multiplying this by 60 gave the speed in knots per hour—still the unit of speed ships use today.



LEAD WEIGHT

To prevent a ship running aground, a lead weight was used to measure the depth of water. Attached to a marked line, it was thrown overboard. From the type of mud picked up on its base a navigator could tell how close the ship was to shore.





Captain Jack trained his telescope on the horizon. There she was, the Medusa, in full sail. A wry smile crept over his lips. "Let's get ready lads. But we'll keep our distance for now. I'll fancy she'll be an easier prize for us after nightfall." Everyone cheered wildly. It was the moment the crew had been waiting

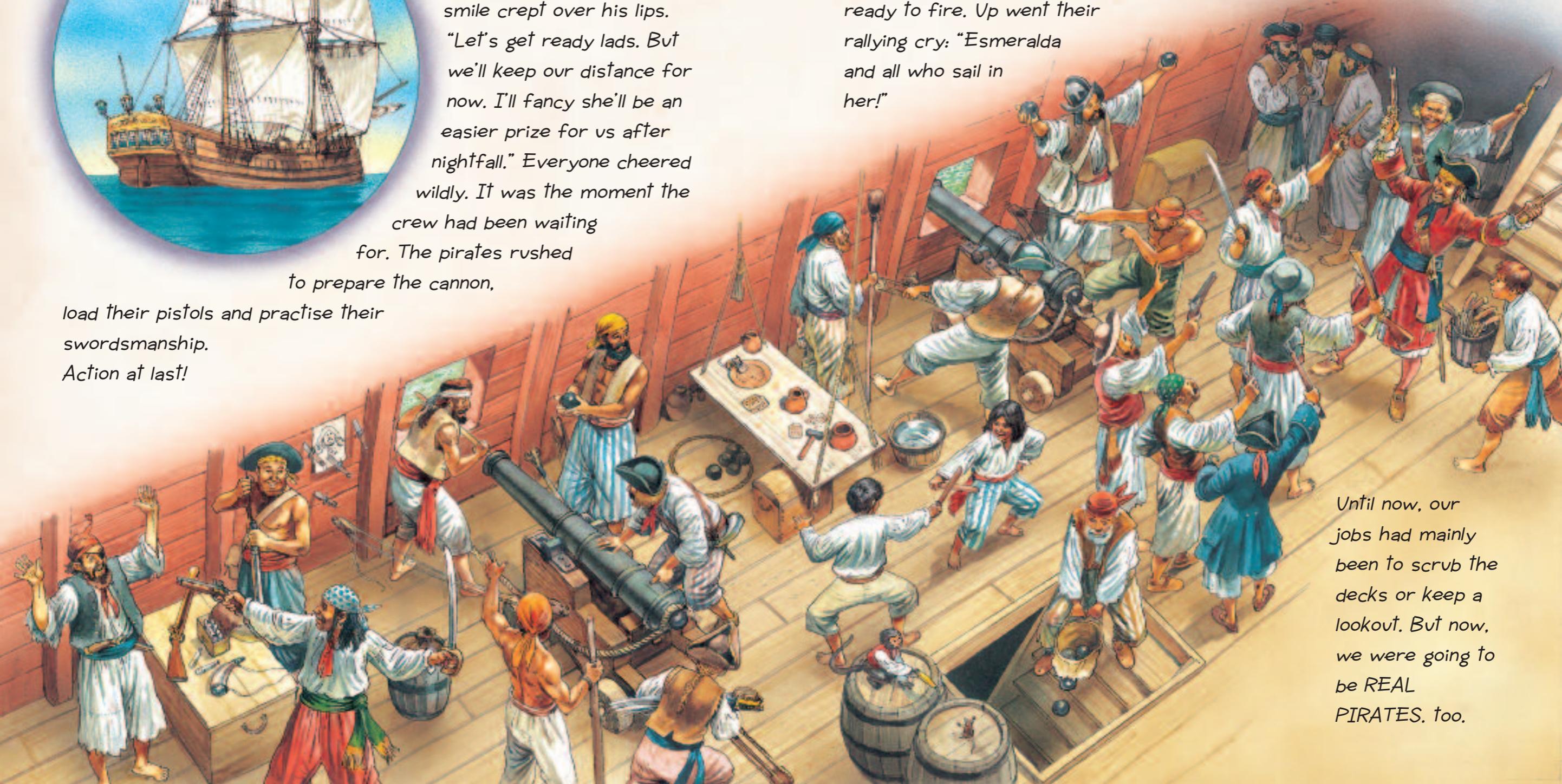
for. The pirates rushed

to prepare the cannon,

load their pistols and practise their swordsmanship.

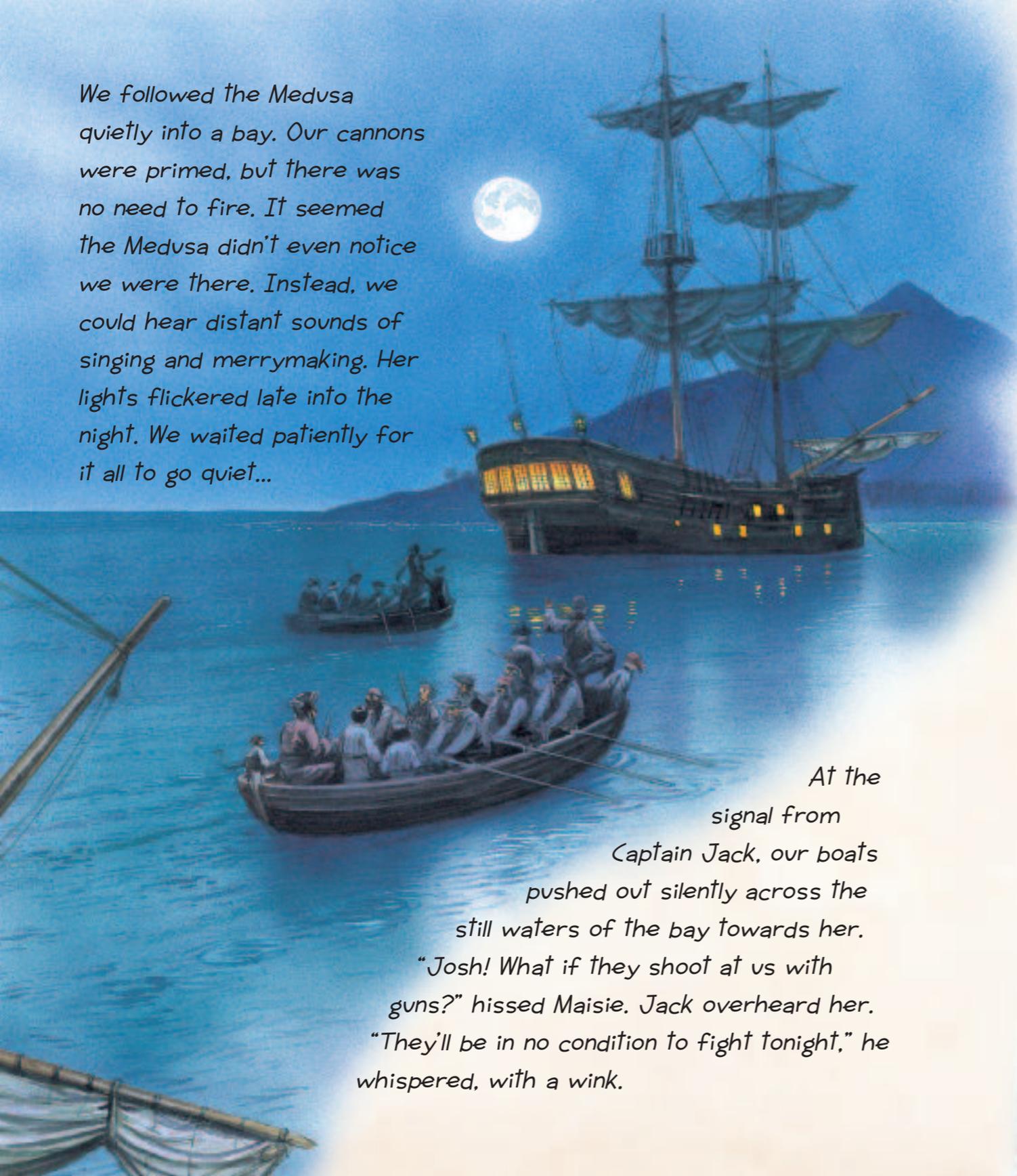
Action at last!

Loaders used a long stick to ram gunpowder and a ball into the barrel of each cannon. The gun crew then hauled the heavy gun up to the port, ready to fire. Up went their rallying cry: "Esmeralda and all who sail in her!"



Until now, our jobs had mainly been to scrub the decks or keep a lookout. But now, we were going to be REAL PIRATES. too.

We followed the Medusa quietly into a bay. Our cannons were primed, but there was no need to fire. It seemed the Medusa didn't even notice we were there. Instead, we could hear distant sounds of singing and merrymaking. Her lights flickered late into the night. We waited patiently for it all to go quiet...



At the signal from Captain Jack, our boats pushed out silently across the still waters of the bay towards her. "Josh! What if they shoot at us with guns?" hissed Maisie. Jack overheard her. "They'll be in no condition to fight tonight," he whispered, with a wink.

When we reached the Medusa, we threw our grappling irons over her side and, pulling on the ropes, shimmied up her side. One of our men quietly muzzled the sleepy lookout. There was no one else about. All we could hear were the sounds of loud snoring coming from below deck. We crept down the companionway, the steps leading down to the crew's quarters. Captain Jack had his pistols at the ready, but the entire crew of the Medusa were sound asleep. Drunk and drowsy, our opponents surrendered with



barely a murmur. I have to say I was a bit disappointed that we didn't get to see any pirate

FIGHTING ACTION! But taking control of the Medusa was only the first part of this mission. We still had to find the captain and make him surrender. And Maisie and I did find some cool pirate souvenirs.



ATTACK!



Fighting could go on both on the deck and in the rigging. The defenders of the galleon could gain an advantage by firing down on the pirate attackers from positions high on the ratlines. A successful shot from the pirate ship's cannons could, however, blast through the mast, bringing it crashing down, along with the rigging. Boarding pirates armed with axes could also chop through the galleon's ropes, bringing the mainsail tumbling on to the deck and causing great confusion.

Boom! There is a deafening explosion as the pirates fire their cannon at the galleon. Then, with blood-curdling yells, they leap aboard. The crew bravely fight back. Some hurl barrels towards the pirates as they clamber aboard. Punches are thrown, pistols and muskets fired, swords drawn, but they are no match for their battle-hardened enemy. The pirates charge below decks in search of treasure and supplies, including weapons, food and drink.



We helped to disarm the crew, while Jack went in search of the Medusa's captain.

Captain Crow was shocked to see Jack. Later, someone told us the story. Years ago, Jack had found treasure on a wrecked galleon. In return for helping him recover the

booty from the sea bed, Jack had promised Crow a half share. But once the treasure was safely recovered, Crow had Jack marooned—cast adrift alone on an island—and sailed off with all the booty. He had it buried, intending to return one day to dig it up. But Jack had survived and was determined to claim his treasure.

“You know what I’m after, Crow”, he growled, pointing a pistol at him. Crow spluttered that he was innocent, but Jack forced him to hand over the map showing where the treasure was buried.



But before we went off on a treasure hunt, something had to be done with the Medusa's crew. Maisie and I helped tie the poor men up. Luckily for them, our crew took pity on them: they were just ordinary lads like them, after all. So they decided to put them ashore on the nearest island. They would survive, but they would have to fend for themselves with only a few supplies and a little ammunition. We herded them into rowing boats and sent them off. Captain Crow would be coming with us—in case he tried any funny business.



This is the treasure map that Jack took from Crow. X marks the spot!

We heard some of the crew talking about all the treasure they would find and how much their share would be. They spoke of the strange and wonderful birds and beasts that might live on the island. "Turtle eggs!" shouted one growly voice. "They be what I'M after. Hang the rest of ye!" Turtle eggs, Abe the boatswain explained, are a pirate's favourite food, and usually extremely difficult to find...



I really hoped there wouldn't ACTUALLY be dragons, like on the map.

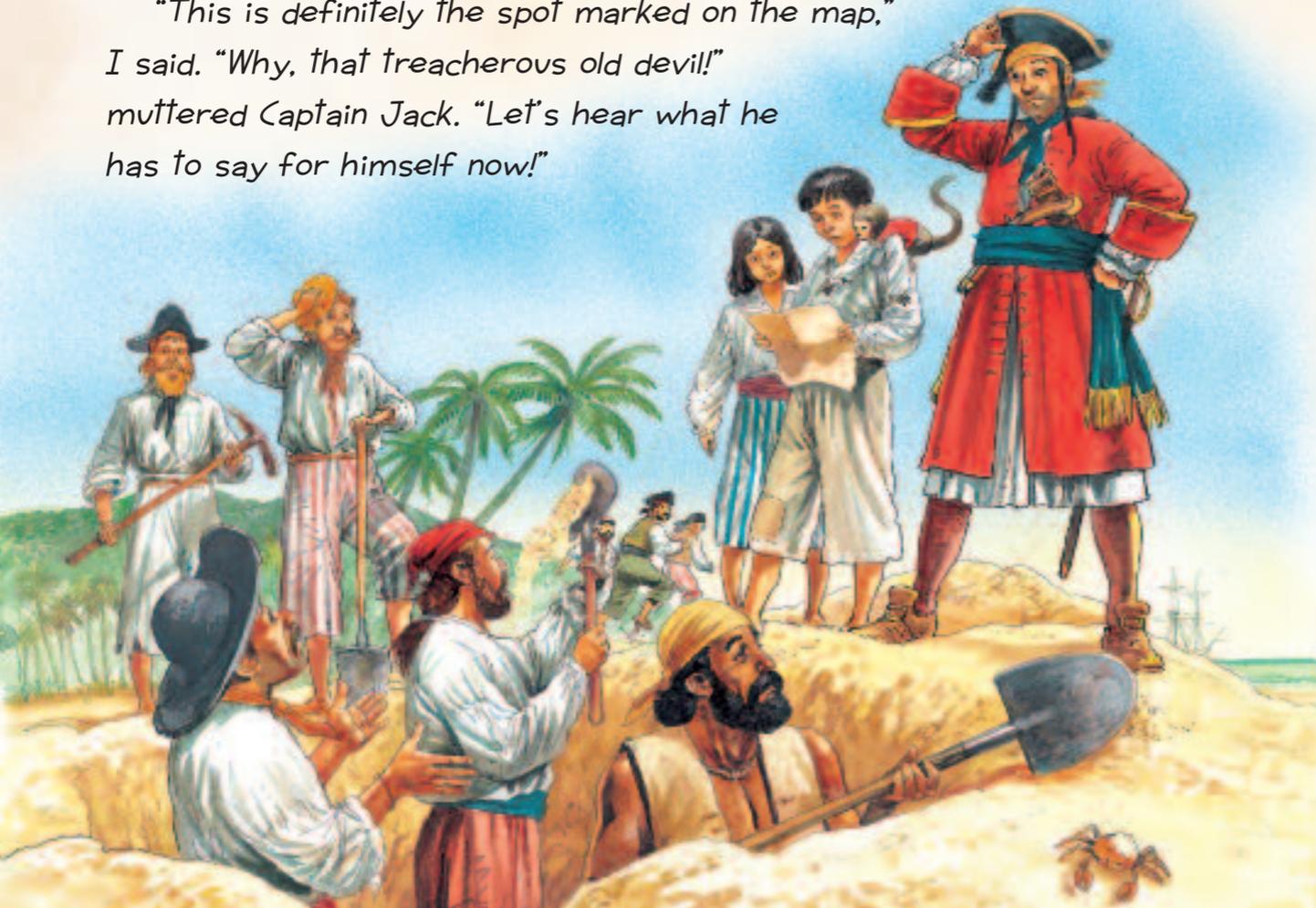


We set sail for Mermaid Island where, according to the map, the treasure was buried. The Medusa, manned by some of our men, followed behind. Captain Crow was securely tied up below deck. Jack didn't trust him one

bit. If the map turned out to be false, he threatened, Crow would become closely acquainted with the sharp tip of his cutlass...

We arrived at the island, and rowed ashore, leaving Crow under guard on the Medusa. Our men dug for hours but found nothing.

"This is definitely the spot marked on the map," I said. "Why, that treacherous old devil!" muttered Captain Jack. "Let's hear what he has to say for himself now!"

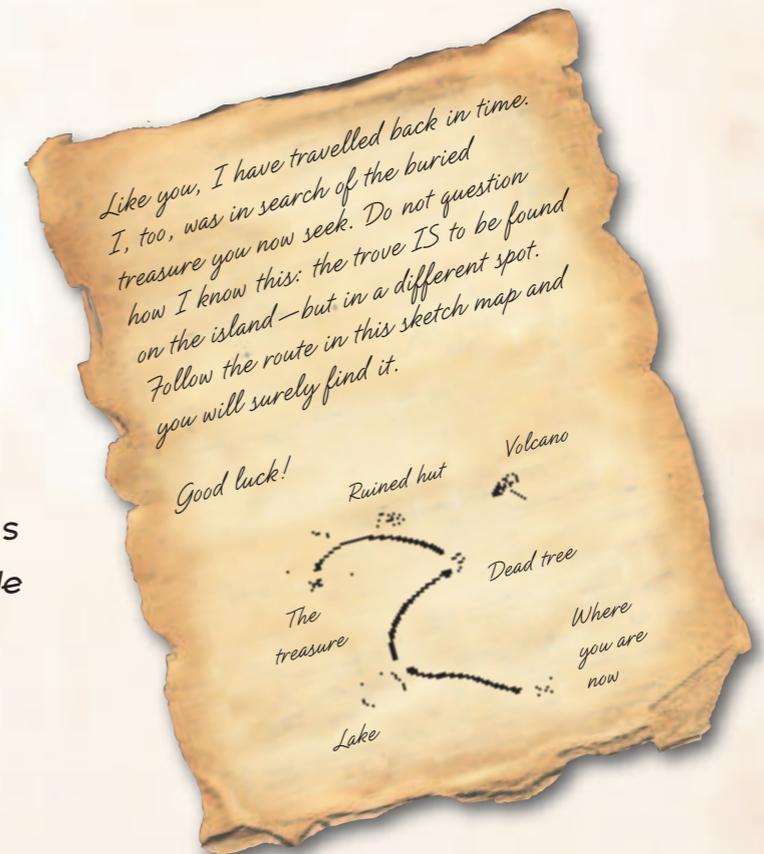


We rushed back to the beach. But it was too late. We looked on in astonishment

as we saw the Medusa sailing away. "Curse that rogue," roared Captain Jack. "How did he escape?" Maisie and I looked at each other. The man who took that bag of money from the Medusa men on the quay. Of course! Jack had left HIM to guard Crow. We had been TRICKED! Crow had buried the treasure somewhere else and our crew mate was in on the plot the whole time. We all knew we had to act quickly if we were to recover the treasure.



While the crew awaited Jack's orders, Maisie spotted a bottle washed up on the shore. "What's that Josh? Hey ... it looks like there's a piece of paper inside it."



Armed with our sketch map, we slipped off on our own. We didn't dare tell Captain Jack where we were going. He would have said it was another one of Crow's dirty tricks and ordered us back to the

Esmeralda. But

we KNEW we

were on the right

track. We would find the treasure, then rush back to tell the crew.

What an adventure!!

We trekked across the island, following the map's directions, then ... We stopped dead in our tracks. We heard voices and the sound of digging. We clambered over the rocks. Crow!

He and his henchmen,

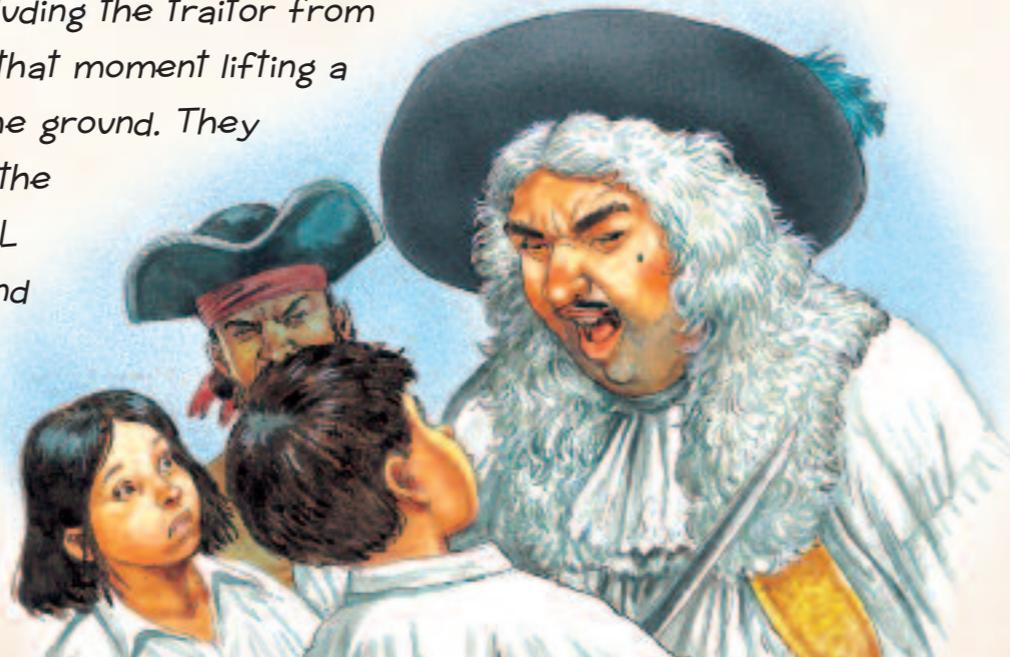
including the traitor from

our own crew, were at that moment lifting a treasure chest out of the ground. They must have sailed round the island to get to the REAL spot. Crow wheeled round and saw us. "What's this?" he snarled. "Why, you interfering little brats!"



Our hearts were in our mouths. He could have run us through with his sword and no one would ever know what had happened to us. Gulp!

"Leave them," came a quiet, familiar voice. We looked up. Captain Jack and the crew of the Esmeralda surrounded us. "No more tricks from you, Crow. Thanks to our brave young friends, we have found what is rightfully ours. And thanks to your men for doing all the digging work for us."





Phew—that was close! Luckily, one of the crew had spotted us heading off from the beach and told the Captain.

Otherwise ... I shuddered to think what might have been. As it was, we were on our way back to the *Esmeralda* as heroes! The treasure was won back and Crow and his men were marooned on Mermaid Island. Hah! We'll not have any trouble from him again. Now was the time to party!

Sam cooked a massive feast: fresh chicken, fish, fruit and vegetables and, best of all, turtles' eggs, all washed down with ale.

The pirates certainly knew how to enjoy themselves! The fiddler struck up a jig and soon they were all on their feet dancing...

Then we remembered that Granddad would be very worried about us. I whispered to Maisie that we should go and look for the secret door. She agreed. But when I felt for the key on my belt IT WASN'T THERE! Now what were we going to do? Would we be trapped on this ship forever, 300 years in the past?

Just then, I noticed a glint of gold in the fish's jaws on the plate. It was the key! I must have lost it over the side during the storm, but a fish had grabbed it in its mouth. By an amazing coincidence, someone had later caught that very same fish for our feast!





Maisie plucked the key from the fish's mouth and we dashed off to find the door. We crept inside Captain Jack's cabin. We were normally forbidden from entering, but Jack was busy eating and dancing at the feast. There was the door! Maisie pushed the key into the lock. It swung open and we climbed through.

Now this was VERY strange. Our pirate clothes had gone and instantly we were back in our tee shirts and jeans. Granddad came into the study.

"I see you found my book on pirates."

"We're sorry we were gone for so long,"

Maisie blurted out. "You see, we've been on this amazing adventure ..."

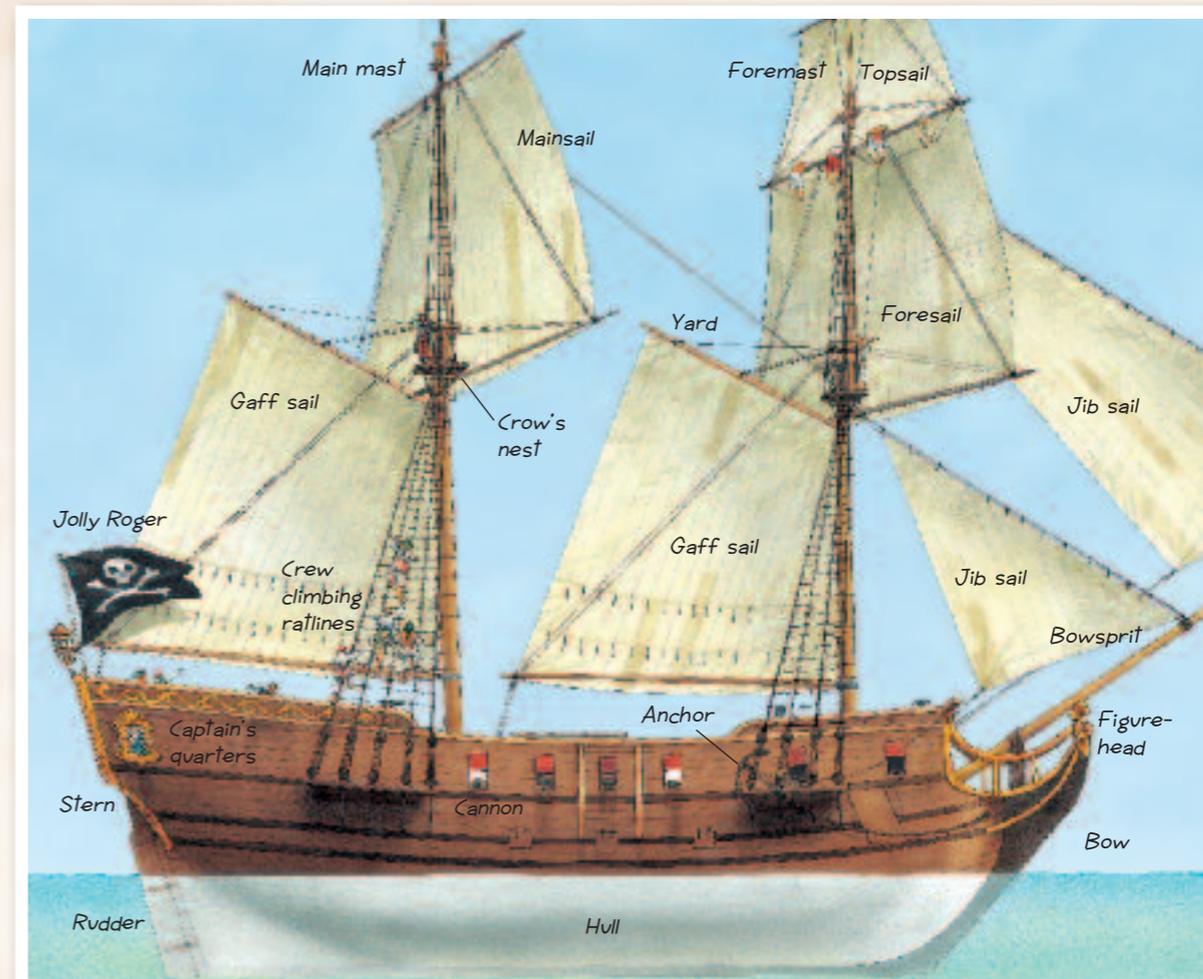
Granddad looked quizzical, but said: "That's funny.

You couldn't

have been gone very long at all.

I'm sure it was only a minute ago that you went off to take a look at that globe."

We told him all that had happened. He smiled. "Bad men, those pirates. You were lucky to make it back in one piece!"



We found out later in another one of Granddad's books that our ship was a brigantine, a medium-sized type of vessel with two masts. Brigantines were favoured by pirates because they were very fast and easy to control. They could also sail in shallow waters where heavier warships could not follow. Grand Spanish galleons were no match for pirates aboard a brigantine, especially when weighed down by the many guns needed to defend the ship, and of course a pirate's favourite thing: **TREASURE!**

GLOSSARY

Backstaff A tool that measures the sun's height in the sky, and shows how far north or south the ship has travelled.

Ballast Stones packed into the bottom of the ship (the bilges) that keep the ship upright, particularly in rough weather.

Bilges The lowest part of the ship. The bilges tend to fill up with smelly, stagnant water and have to be pumped regularly.

Crow's nest A look-out point high up a ship's mast.

Galleon A large, three-masted cargo ship used mainly by the Spanish to transport treasure from the Americas back to Spain.

Grappling iron A rope with a many-pronged iron hook on the end used to secure two ships together, usually during an attack.



Jolly Roger The flag flown by pirate ships.

Maroon The punishment in which a sailor is abandoned alone on an island with only basic supplies.

Merchant ship A ship that carries cargo that is for sale.

Mutiny When a group of sailors are in open rebellion against their captain.

Pieces of eight The pirate name for Spanish silver coins.



Privateer Someone given permission by the government of one country to attack ships belonging to another.

Ratlines Rope ladders used to climb up into the rigging of a ship.

Rigging The ship's sails and the ropes used to control them.

Spanish Main The Caribbean coast of South America, under Spanish rule.

