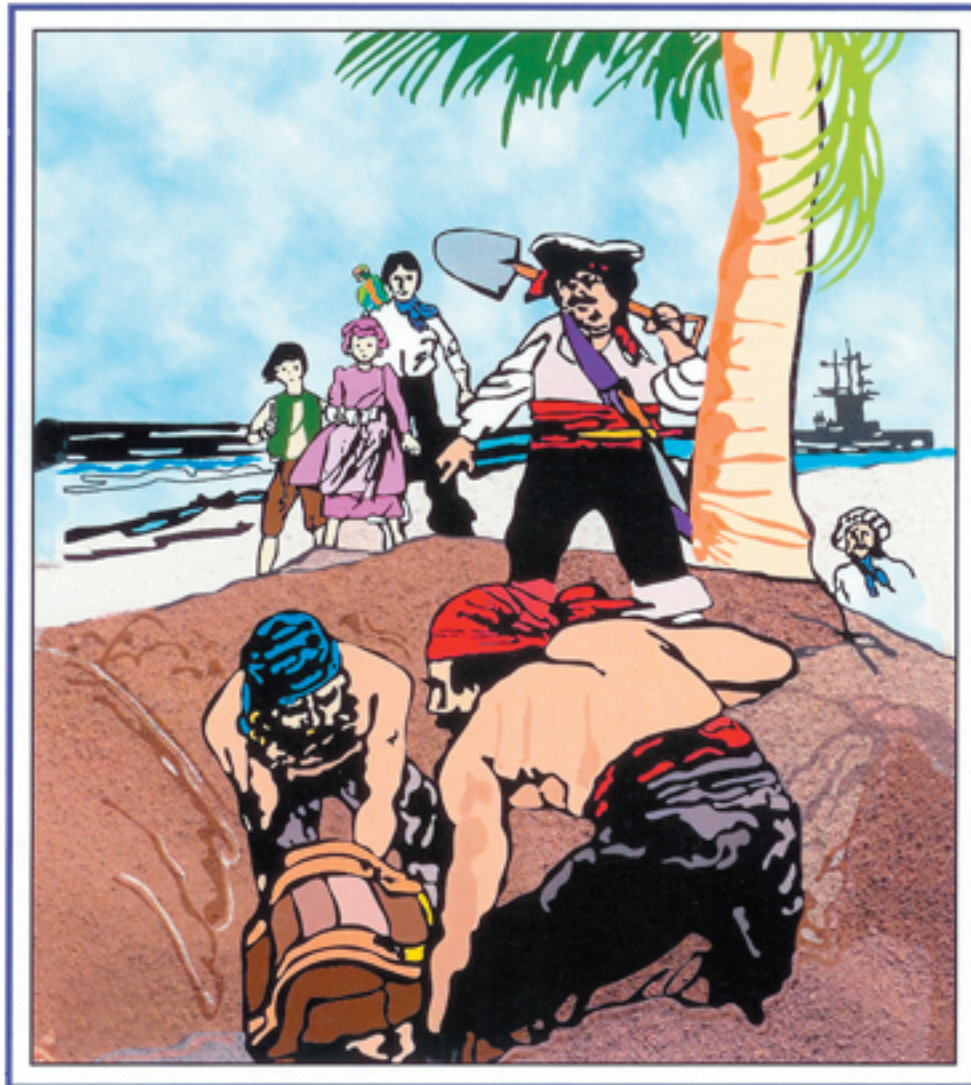
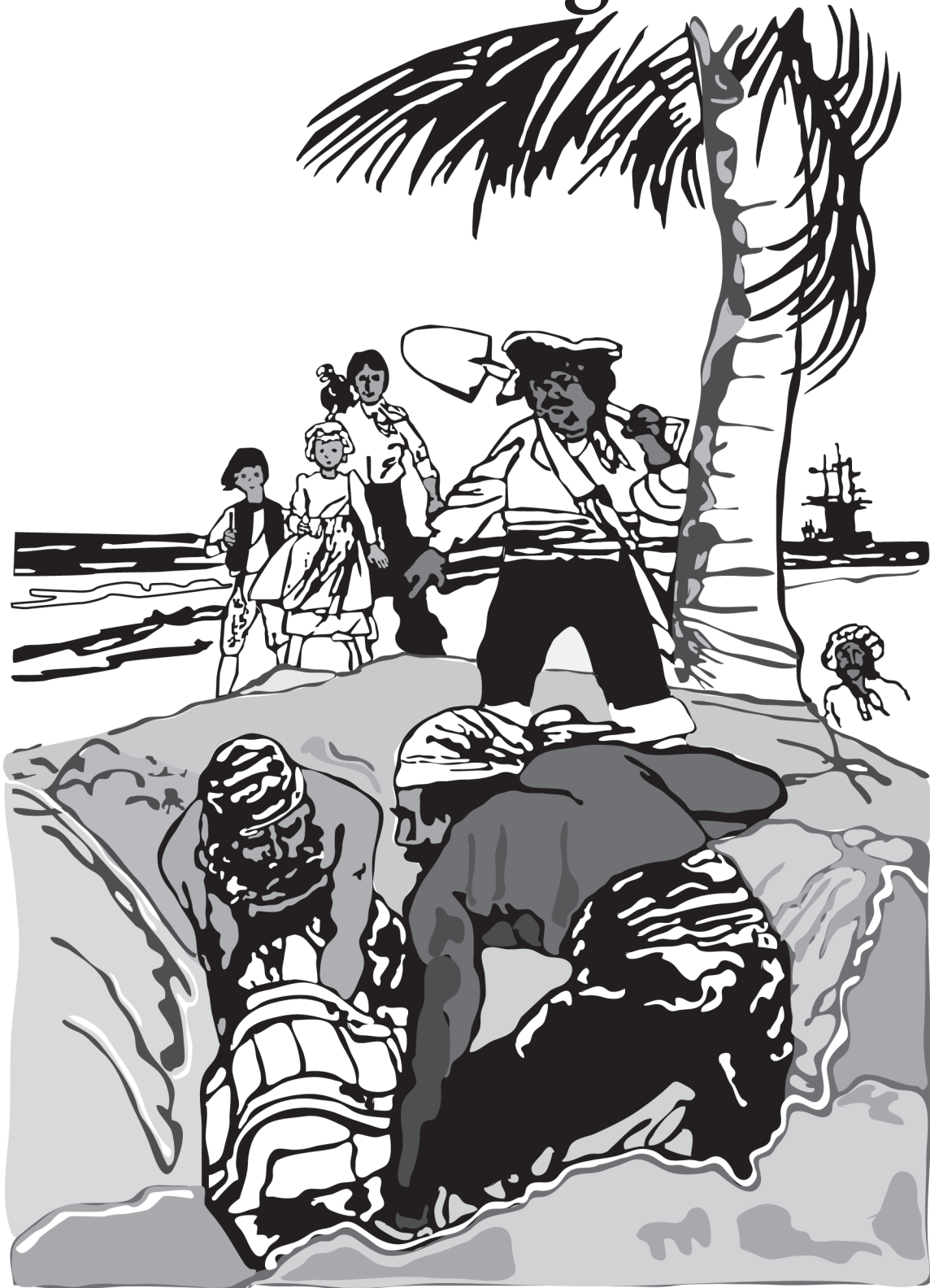


The Gold of Eagle Island



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Alan Hofmeister, author

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Chapter 1:

Spider's Landing

A young lad ran through the twisting streets of the town. Down Clover Street he raced, past the bakery and the fish market. Then he ran up Post Road. He slowed only long enough to let a man on horseback cross his path. Then, it was on to King's Alley, where the tailor, Mr. Pound, recognized him and shouted out his name.

"Ben! Ben Johnson! Where are you going in such a hurry?" he called.

"I'm bound for Spider's Landing!" Ben shouted as he shot past. "Rebecca and I are going to spend the day down there. We want to play on the dock."

"Be careful," called Mr. Pound. "Spider's Landing is a dangerous place. Don't get into any trouble there."

Ben turned back and waved to Mr. Pound. "We'll be all right," he shouted. "Rebecca and I can take care of ourselves."

Then he turned a corner and was gone.

Spider's Landing was crowded with dock workers and sailors. Some of them labored to take goods off the ships. Others could be seen carrying boxes onto ships. They were readying each ship for a long sea voyage.

Ben walked along the dock until he found Rebecca. She was sitting on a crate, talking to a man with a parrot on his shoulder.

"Hello," said Ben. "Have you been waiting a long time?"

"No," answered Rebecca. "I've been talking to this sailor and his parrot. He was telling me about ships."

"Hello, mate," said the sailor with a big smile. "My name's Chavez. My parrot's called Betsy. Say hello to our friend, Betsy."

"Hello, hello," said the parrot.

"Hello," said Ben. "My name's Ben."

"Well," said Chavez to Rebecca. "I'm off. My ship's ready to sail. There's a lot of work to do."

"Goodbye," said Rebecca.

"Smooth sailing," answered the parrot.



After the sailor had gone, Ben turned to Rebecca. "Well," he asked, "what game can we play today?"

"How about the game where I hide and you look for me?" said Rebecca. "There are so many places to hide on the dock, you'll never find me."

"Yes I will," said Ben. "Go ahead and hide. I'll shut my eyes and count to thirty. As soon as I finish counting, I'll look for you."

Ben began counting. Rebecca raced down the dock. Near a large ship, she found a pile of wooden crates and barrels. They held wares of all kinds. The top of one of the crates was open. She looked inside. To her surprise, it didn't contain a thing.

"Ben will never find me here," thought Rebecca, climbing in and pulling down the top. "I couldn't have picked a better hiding place."

While Rebecca was hiding, a large, burly man came by carrying another crate. He dropped it on top of Rebecca's crate. Then, he wrapped his big arms around both the crates, picked them up, and went aboard a nearby ship. As soon as Rebecca realized what was happening, she began to yell and scream. However, there was so much noise on the ship, her cries were drowned out.

At last, the crates were set down. Rebecca stopped yelling. She began pushing on the top. She pushed with all her might. Finally, she knocked off the top crate. It went thumping to the floor. When she climbed out of the crate, she discovered she was aboard the ship--trapped in the ship's hold.

Rebecca wanted to get off the ship as quickly as possible. When she got to the door, she made a terrible discovery. The door was locked! She pounded on it as hard as she could, but no one came.

"What will I do?" she cried. "No one knows I'm here."

Rebecca climbed up to a porthole. Through the hole, she could see people moving around on the dock. She saw Ben. He was bending over, looking inside a box.

"Ben!" she called. "Over here."

Ben looked up and saw Rebecca's face in the porthole.

"So that's where you're hiding," he said. "It's no wonder I couldn't find you."

"I'm not hiding," said Rebecca. "I'm trapped in the hold of this ship."

"How did that happen?" asked Ben.

"I can't explain now," said Rebecca. "Please hurry; open the door to the hold!"

"Don't worry," said Ben.

Soon, Rebecca heard a knock at the compartment door.

"Ben, is that you?" she asked.

"Yes," came the reply. "There's a big board across this door. It won't be easy to lift, but I'll try."

Rebecca could hear Ben working on the board. At last Ben freed the board and opened the door.

"Come," he said, grabbing Rebecca by the arm. "Let's leave this ship, now!"

When Rebecca and Ben were near the top of the ladder, they looked toward shore. Spider's Landing was nowhere in sight. While Ben had been trying to open the door, the ship had left the dock. Now, sails full and running before a strong wind, she was far out at sea.

"Oh, no," said Ben. "The ship has sailed with us aboard. We may be in for a long voyage."



Chapter 2:

The Map

"I hear voices. Someone's coming," said Ben. "We'd better hide."

"Hide?" asked Rebecca. "Why should we hide? We haven't done anything wrong."

"That may be true," said Ben, "but the people on this ship don't know that. They might think that we sneaked on board, hoping to get a free ride. Ship owners punish stowaways. That's why we should hide."

"Of course!" whispered Rebecca. "Hurry! They're coming closer!"

Ben looked for a handy place to hide. At the bottom of the ladder, a door stood open.

"That looks empty," he whispered. "Let's hide in there."

Rebecca followed Ben down the ladder and into a small, messy compartment. In one corner was a desk, piled high with rolled charts and important-looking papers. Alongside the desk was a small, metal safe. Except for a chair, the only other thing in the room was a pile of empty, wooden boxes.

Suddenly, they realized that the voices they had heard earlier were just outside the hatch.

"Quickly," said Rebecca. "Hide behind those boxes. The voices are becoming louder. They're heading this way."

Just as Rebecca and Ben ducked behind the pile of boxes, two men walked into the room.

"Dogface, come here," said a man with red hair and a bushy mustache. "I have a map to show you--a map that will make us rich!"

Through a crack in the boxes, Ben could see the man bending over the safe. The man unlocked the safe.

The red-haired man looked over his shoulder at a mean-looking man, who was smoking a big cigar.

"I bought this map from a friend by the name of Dusty Chips," he said. "Years ago, Dusty hid a chest of gold on an island. He's now too old to retrieve the gold. So he sold me his map."

"Where did Dusty get all of the gold?" asked the cigar smoker.

"It was taken from ships," said the red-haired man. "Dusty was a pirate, just as we are."



"Pirates!" said Rebecca softly. "We're in real trouble."

Once the safe was open, the red-haired man removed a folded map. He spread it on the desk.

"Dogface is not a good name for that man," said Ben in a low voice. "Dogs are loyal friends. That man is the meanest, scariest person I've ever seen!"

"The man with the red mustache doesn't look very friendly either," said Rebecca.

"No, he doesn't," said Ben. "I hope we don't get caught. What do you think they'll do to us if they find us on their ship?"

Dogface listened while the red-haired man explained what was on the map.

"This map shows some islands in the mouth of the Essequibo River," said the red-haired man. "The islands are all the same--except one. Only Eagle Island has gold hidden on it."

"Which one is Eagle Island?" asked Dogface.

"It's the one with the big 'X' on it," said the red-haired man. "Dusty said we'd find the gold by digging next to a tall tree, standing by itself, on the west end of the island."

"That sounds good," said Dogface. "We'll be rich as kings--that we will!"

The more Dogface thought about the gold, the harder he puffed on his cigar. Before long, the small room was thick with smoke. The red-haired man didn't seem to notice the smoke at all, but Ben did. It hurt his eyes and tickled his nose.

"Rebecca," he said. "This smoke is bothering me. I must sneeze."

"Hold your nose. Try not to sneeze," said Rebecca. "I think the men are about to leave."

Ben tried to delay his sneeze. Nothing worked. Finally, with an "achoo" that filled the room, Ben sneezed.

"Who's here?" said the red-haired man, wheeling around and looking at the boxes. "Who's spyin' on us?"

"We'll soon see," said Dogface, moving quickly toward the boxes.

Dogface reached behind the boxes and grabbed Rebecca and Ben. "Here are your spies," he said.

He held up Rebecca in one arm and Ben in the other. "Let's throw them overboard."

"Not yet," said the red-haired man. "I want to find out how they got on board."

"We were playing," said Ben, his voice shaking. "We were trapped on your ship when it sailed. Honestly, we didn't intend to be stowaways."

"That's a likely story," said Dogface. "We should throw them overboard, now! They heard us talking. Now, they know about the gold."

"Nay, we won't do that," said the red-haired man. "They may be of use later."

"Then let's stow them below," said Dogface, "but not in this compartment."

"Aye," said the red-haired man. "Lock them up."

"That'll be my pleasure," said Dogface, pushing Rebecca and Ben toward the compartment across the passageway. "It's my pleasure, indeed."



Chapter 3:

The Sea Witch and the Skeleton Queen

Dogface dragged Rebecca and Ben to the compartment that would be their new home. “Enjoy yourselves,” he said with a laugh. “You spies will find this most comfortable.”

“Ben told you that we aren’t spies,” said Rebecca. “Please, if you’ll leave us at the next town, we promise not to tell anyone about the gold.”

“Nay,” said Dogface. “You know too much. We can’t let you go.”

He stomped out of the compartment and slammed the hatch behind him.

The hold was dark and cold. A small leak somewhere in the hull kept the floor wet. Ben heard a mouse running across one of the walls. Rebecca and Ben tried to quiet their fears by talking. They talked about the fun they had enjoyed at home, but they were never able to forget where they were. Their conversations always ended in a pitiful silence.

The hours passed. Day turned into night. All they could hear was the creaking of the ship and the muffled voices of the crew, but they saw no one. “We haven’t seen any food,” said Ben. “Do you think Dogface is trying to starve us?”

Just then, they heard someone unlocking the hatch to their compartment. “Ben,” Rebecca said, “someone’s coming. Perhaps, it’s the cook with our food.”

The door opened slowly, and a man walked into the compartment. The light was so poor that it was hard to see who he was.

“Rebecca, Ben, are you well?” the man asked.

“Yes, but who are you?” asked Ben.

“Who are you? Who are you?” came a high-pitched voice out of the darkness.

“That sounds like Betsy, the parrot,” said Rebecca. “Is that you, Chavez?”

“Aye,” said Chavez. “I’ve come with bread for you and Ben. Are you hungry?”

“Hungry?” said Ben. “We’re starved. We haven’t had a thing to eat all day!”

“You’ll feel better after you’ve eaten,” said Chavez. “Then, we can work on a plan to free you.”



While Rebecca and Ben devoured their bread, Chavez talked about the ship.

"This ship is the *Sea Witch*," he said. "It's owned by the red-haired man with the bushy mustache. His name is Big Red. He's mean, but not as mean as Dogface, the first-mate."

"We know all about Dogface," said Ben. "He wants to throw us overboard."

"That sounds like something he'd say," said Chavez. "You should give him a wide berth."

"Why did you sign with Dogface and Big Red?" asked Ben. "You're not like them."

"It's a long story," said Chavez. "Are you sure you want to hear it?"

"Please tell us," said Rebecca. "We would like to hear it."

"My troubles started years ago, when I dropped out of school," began Chavez. "I thought I could learn more as a sailor than as a schoolboy. So, I packed my bags and left home. I do wish I'd stayed a schoolboy. I was in the town of Seawater, in a card game with Big Red. My card playing wasn't as good as Big Red's. Before I knew it, I owed him thirty gold coins. When we finished the game, I told him that I didn't have the money. He said that if I came to work on his ship he'd forgive the debt. He told me that if I didn't work for him, he'd have me tossed into the sea with a rock tied to my ankle. It wasn't a difficult choice to make. That's why I'm here today."

"Poor Chavez," they said "You're trapped on board too."

"I am," he said. "I don't like being a pirate, but I'm bound to pay Big Red the money I owe him."

Suddenly, they heard the clatter of feet on the deck above them. Through the open hatch they could hear a pirate shouting, "All hands hit the deck! The *Skeleton Queen* is off our starboard bow."

"Hold fast!" said Chavez. "There's trouble on deck. I must go man a gun."

"What's happening?" asked Ben. "Are they trying to steer clear of another ship?"

"Nay, it's a fight," said Chavez. "The *Skeleton Queen*'s a pirate ship. Her captain must think we have gold aboard."

Chavez stepped through the hatch. "I'll be back," he said. "Protect yourselves behind these sacks and boxes!"

The *Skeleton Queen* pulled along the starboard side of the *Sea Witch*. "Give us your gold, or we'll send you to Davy Jones' Locker," came a tough voice from the *Skeleton Queen*'s deck.

"We'll see who's going to the bottom," Big Red shouted.

Every cannon along one side of the *Sea Witch* fired at once. It was called a "broadside." It was used only in emergencies or for surprise, because it would "shiver" (shake loose) the "timbers" (masts) of the ship that was firing the broadside. Cannonballs shot through the air and slammed into the *Skeleton Queen*. The *Queen* was so badly damaged that she began to sink. Before the ship went under, her crew was able to shoot one cannonball through the hull of the *Sea Witch*. Rebecca and Ben were shielded by the boxes and bags in the compartment, but there was a hole in the ship's timbers, and water was rushing in!

On deck, Big Red looked over the side at the hole in his ship. "Curses," he bel-lowed. "We've been hit. Launch the longboat, lads! We're taking on too much water. We can't save the *Sea Witch*!"

Chapter 4:

Bad Days and Good Days

Chavez ran down the ladder and opened the hatch. Rebecca and Ben ran to meet him.

"Let's tell Big Red about the leak," Rebecca said. "If the crew works quickly, we may be able to save the ship."

"You'll be wasting your time by going up on deck," said Chavez. "Big Red has made up his mind--he's abandoned the *Sea Witch*."

"Abandoned," said Rebecca. "You mean he's left us on a sinking ship?"

"That's what he's done," said Chavez. "He's rowing toward the nearest harbor. You, Ben, and I must save the ship--if we can. There's no one else left to help."

Rebecca, Ben, and Chavez raced around the ship looking for something to plug the hole. Ben and Chavez couldn't find anything. Rebecca was luckier. In the galley she came across some empty potato sacks.

"Come quickly," she shouted. "I've found something that might work for a while."

"What did you find?" asked Ben and Chavez, as they ran to the galley.

"I found these potato sacks," said Rebecca. "We can pack them in the hole."



"It's worth a try," said Ben. "Hurry!" They grabbed as many of the sacks as they could carry and ran back to the hold.

Standing knee-deep in water, Rebecca, Ben, and Chavez packed the potato sacks into the hole. They squeezed them in very tightly. When they were finished, there was only a trickle of water coming through the patched hole.

"Well, I think we've done it," said Ben, inspecting the plugged hole. "I think we've saved the *Sea Witch*."

The first light of dawn found Big Red and his crew asleep in the crowded longboat. They had drifted back to within a half-mile of the *Sea Witch*. As the sun began its climb into the cloudless sky, Dogface woke up. He yawned and looked around. He was drifting back to sleep, when he thought he saw the *Sea Witch*.

"Big Red!" he shouted as he sat straight up. "Look, it's the *Sea Witch*! She's still afloat!"

Big Red sat up, rubbed his eyes, and looked in the direction Dogface was pointing.

"What a beautiful sight," he said. "I didn't think I'd be seeing the old *Sea Witch* again. This is my lucky day."

Then, Dogface woke up the rest of the crew. "Lads," he yelled, "man the oars. Row to the ship!"

The crew rowed to the *Sea Witch* and climbed back on board.

"Dogface, let's take a look at that hole," said Big Red. "It must not be as bad as I thought."

Big Red and Dogface made their way down the ladder, into the hold.

"It looks like someone's packed potato sacks into the hole," said Big Red. "I wonder who did that."

"Pardon me, Captain," came Ben's voice from the top of the ladder. "Chavez, Rebecca, and I plugged that hole."

Big Red turned around and looked up at Rebecca, Ben, and Chavez.

"Why, it's the lad and lass we stowed in the hold," said Big Red, as he frowned darkly. "I'd forgotten about them."

"Well, I hadn't forgotten them," said Dogface, as he scowled up at Ben and Rebecca. "You two, go back down in the hold. Stowaways don't belong on deck. Chavez, lend a hand stowing the longboat!"

Rebecca and Ben slowly started down the ladder leading to the hold.



“Wait!” said Big Red. “Anyone who saves my ship deserves to be free.” He cast an angry look at Dogface. “I run this ship. I say you kids deserve a reward. From now on, you’re free to go where you wish.”

“Thank you,” said Rebecca to Big Red. “We won’t be a nuisance.”

Within the next few days, the crew had bailed the water from the ship’s hold, and the ship’s carpenter had fixed the hole in her side. Once the repairs were complete, Big Red yelled, “Set the mainsail--carefully!”

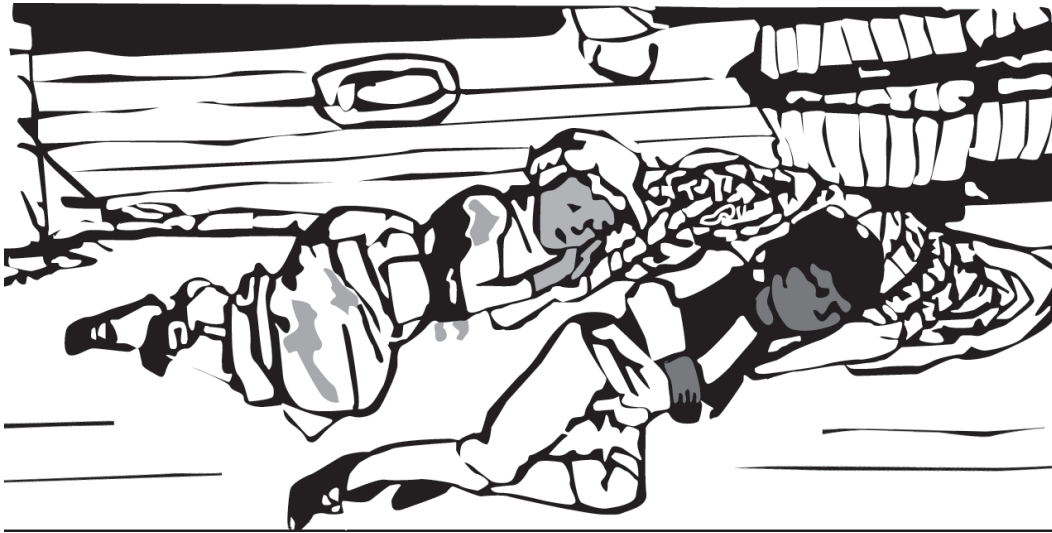
The ship was again under way! Now, Rebecca and Ben could move freely on deck. Whenever they could, they helped the crew. No matter whether the job was swabbing a deck or unfurling a sail, Rebecca and Ben were always willing to work. The crew noticed their hard work. They soon won the confidence of every pirate on the ship.

“You do a full day’s work,” said a pirate. “We’re glad to have you aboard.”

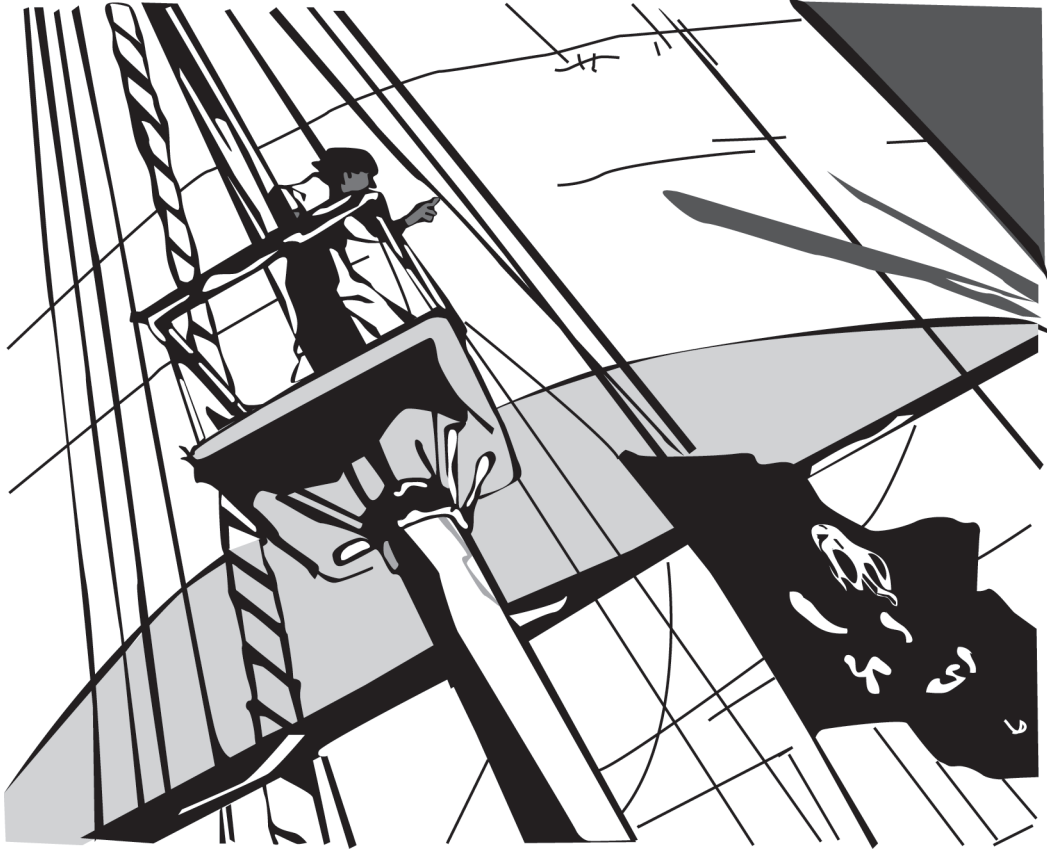
“We’re proud to be aboard,” answered Ben. “Rebecca and I are having so much fun being sailors.” The pirates laughed at the remark.

As the *Sea Witch* neared the mid-latitudes, the weather improved. The heat of the days carried into the nights. Rebecca and Ben began sleeping on the deck. It was very late one evening, and only the men on watch were awake. The two young sailors looked at the stars shining in the night sky and the reflection of the moon on the water.

“The sea is a beautiful place,” said Ben. “No wonder people become sailors. We could be sailors! However, Chavez is probably correct. It’s a hard life, and we should try to stay in school--if we ever see home again.” Then, dreaming of pirate ships and hidden gold, Rebecca and Ben fell asleep.



Chapter 5: The Missing Gold



On the third day of June, the *Sea Witch* was sailing off the east coast of South America--southeast of the Spanish Main. Ben was busy swabbing the deck when he heard Big Red call out, "Ben, be a good fellow. Climb up to the crow's nest. Tell me whether or not you can see land from there."

Ben jumped to his feet. He hurried up the rope ladder. From there he could see quite far. On all sides there were rolling waves.

"There's no land in sight," he shouted down.

"Watch carefully," said Big Red. "I've a feeling we're getting close to Eagle Island."

Within the hour Ben spotted some tiny dots. "Land!" he cried. "Land, ho! There are islands off the port bow!"

"That's good news," shouted Big Red happily. "We've found the mouth of the Essequibo River."

While the *Sea Witch* sailed toward the islands, Big Red took out the map.

"Head for the third island," Big Red said to the man at the helm. "Steer a course toward the lee shore. We'll spend the night there and go ashore in the morning."

"Big Red, may Ben and I go too?" asked Rebecca. "We've been on this ship a long time, and it would feel good to be on land again."

Big Red ran a hand through his bright red hair. "Aye, you may," he said. "I wouldn't think of leaving you on board."



"Thank you," said Rebecca, and she ran off to tell Ben the good news.

Early the next day, the entire crew climbed into a longboat for the short trip to one of the many islands in the mouth of the huge river.

"It's bad luck to let those kids go ashore," said Dogface, biting down on his cigar. "They shouldn't be there when we find the treasure."

"I want them on the island," said Big Red furiously. Then, dropping his voice, he said to Dogface, "I plan to maroon them there."

Rebecca and Ben were too far away to hear what Big Red was saying, but Chavez heard everything.

"The kids are in big trouble," he said to himself. "They shouldn't trust Big Red. I should tell them what he's planning."

The crew of the *Sea Witch* rowed to the beach and went ashore. Just beyond the long, white, sandy beach stood a thick, dark, green jungle.

"Must we cut our way through that jungle?" asked a man in the crew. "It looks impassable."

"Nay, the map says the gold is under a lone tree at the west end of the island," said Big Red. "There's no jungle on the windward side. It should be an easy walk along the beach as soon as we regain our 'land legs'."

The crew of the *Sea Witch* started down the beach. Each pirate carried a shovel or pick. They walked in silence, thinking of the gold that would soon be theirs.

When the crew reached the windward end of the island, they looked for the lone tree that guarded the treasure. They looked from one end of the beach to the other, but there was no tree. The beach was empty except for seashells and a few birds. Big Red was furious.

"We've been tricked!" he shouted. "Dusty Chips sold me a worthless map. If I ever get my hands on that dirty sea dog, he'll walk the plank."

"When we get back to Spider's Landing, I'll hunt him down," said Dogface. "He'll pay for this."

While the pirates were cursing Dusty Chips, Ben was quietly thinking. "Big Red, are you certain you have the right map?" he asked after a while. "You know, that could be the problem."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Dogface uneasily.

"I mean that someone may have changed Dusty's map so that you couldn't find the gold," said Ben. "From what you've said about Dusty, I can't believe he would sell a fake map to a friend."

"That is a good point," said Big Red. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to look at the map more closely."

"That sounds like a waste of time," said Dogface.

Big Red spread the map out on the sand. "That may be," he said, "but we must consider all possibilities."

Ben and Rebecca bent over the map. "What are you doing?" asked Big Red.

"We're looking for clues," said Rebecca. "Look! I think we may have found one."

"What did you find?" asked Dogface menacingly.



"I think this map has been changed," said Rebecca, "and I think the person who changed it is among us."

Everyone began looking around uneasily. "Who's Rebecca talking about?" they all wondered. "Who changed the map?"

Chapter 6: Rebecca Catches a Crook

Big Red knelt beside Rebecca and looked at the map.

"I don't see anything strange about this map," he said. "What makes you believe that it's been changed?"

“I see several things,” said Rebecca. “First, look carefully at the island adjacent to this one.”

“Aye--it looks like something’s been rubbed off of the map,” said Big Red, looking more closely. “I didn’t see that when Dusty sold me the map.”

“You didn’t notice it, because it wasn’t there,” said Rebecca. “I think someone rubbed the ‘X’ off of that island and put it on this one. Someone wanted you to go to the wrong island. That *someone* wanted all the gold.”

“Who would have done that?” asked Big Red.

"I'm coming to that," said Rebecca. "Listen, and I'll explain everything." Rebecca continued. "It's plain to me that someone besides you has had this map," she said.

“Nay, missy,” said Big Red. “That map has been locked in a safe. Only Dogface and I can open that safe,” he snarled, as he scowled at Rebecca.

“Then how do you explain this mark at the corner of the map?” said Rebecca.

“Was it there when you last looked at the map?”

"Nay," growled Big Red. "What sort of mark is it?"



"It's the kind of mark made by dropping a lighted cigar onto parchment," said Rebecca. "The man who changed your map is a cigar smoker."

Everyone turned to look at Dogface. Dogface was the only cigar smoker in the crew. For once, Dogface didn't say a thing. He puffed furiously on his cigar.



For a moment Dogface scowled down at Rebecca. Suddenly, he reached out and tried to grab her.

"Rebecca! Run!" screamed Ben.

Rebecca ducked under Dogface's arms and ran up a sandy slope. Dogface wheeled around and tried to run after her.

"If it hadn't been for you, I'd have all the gold." He panted heavily as he chased her up the slope. "All of it would be mine! You and your friend ruined my plans. Wait'll I catch you."

Dogface had almost caught up with Rebecca. Then, at the very top of the slope, he slipped on some loose sand and fell. He was exhausted! Before he could stand up, Rebecca had run back to Big Red.

"That was close," she gasped, trying to catch her breath. "I thought he would catch me."

"You're safe now," said Big Red. "We won't let that rascal near you again."

That afternoon, everyone returned to the *Sea Witch*--everyone, that is, except Dogface. He was left on the island.

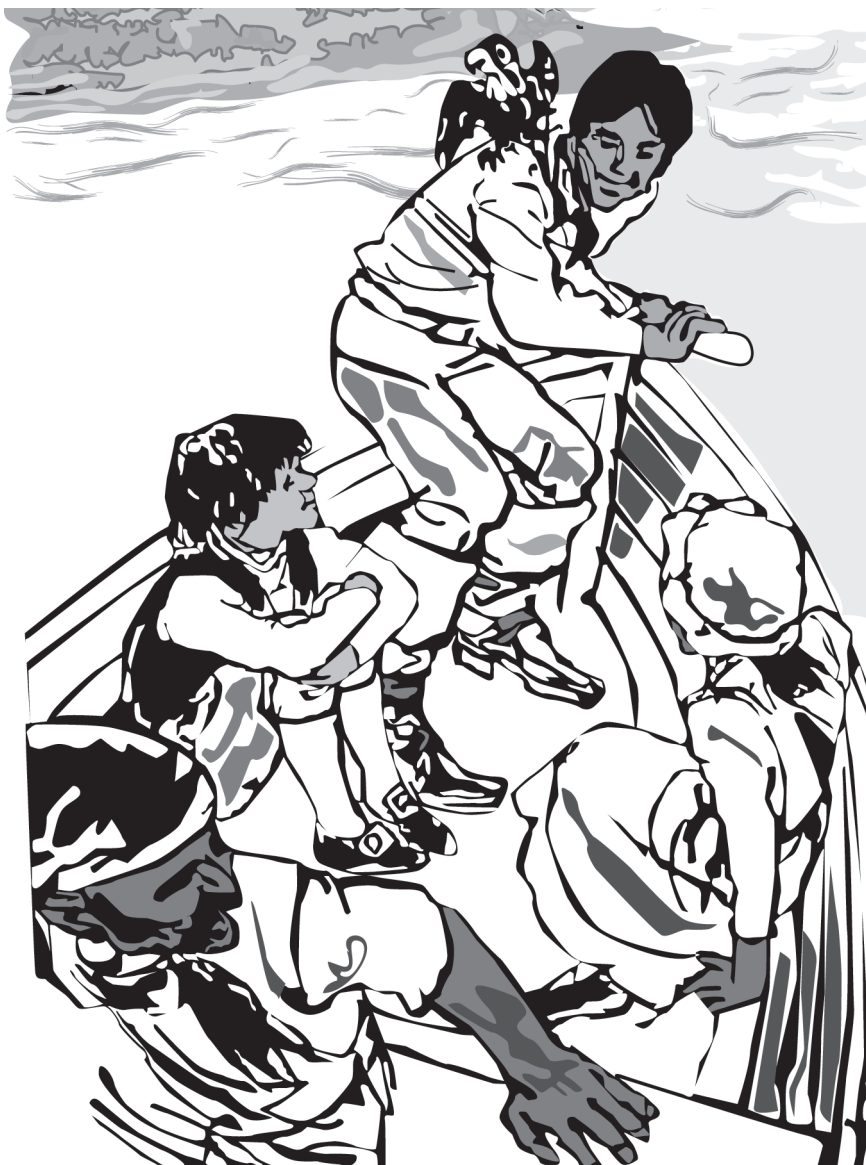
"Will Dogface be all right?" asked Ben.

"He'll be fine," said Big Red. "There are plenty of things to eat and plenty of water to drink. The weather's good. In a way he's lucky to be there. If I'd discovered what he'd done while we were at sea, I'd have keelhailed him."

"At times you seem very nice," said Rebecca, "but at other times you can be terribly mean. You would never leave Ben and me on an island, would you?"

"Don't worry about that," said Big Red with a sly smile. "I would never think of doing such an evil thing."

The next day, Big Red and his crew landed on the real Eagle Island. "This is where we want to be," said Big Red, jumping out of the boat.



"I hope this is it," moaned Crocodile Bill, a tall, thin pirate with a silver ring in his ear. "All this running around, from island to island, is wearing on me."

Once the boat was on the beach, the pirates headed for the west end of the island, where Dusty's map promised they would find gold.

As Rebecca and Ben walked along the beach, Chavez hurried to walk with them. Betsy, the parrot, was riding on his shoulder, as always.

"There's trouble," murmured Chavez. "I heard Big Red say that he's planning to leave you on this island. He plans to sail away without you."

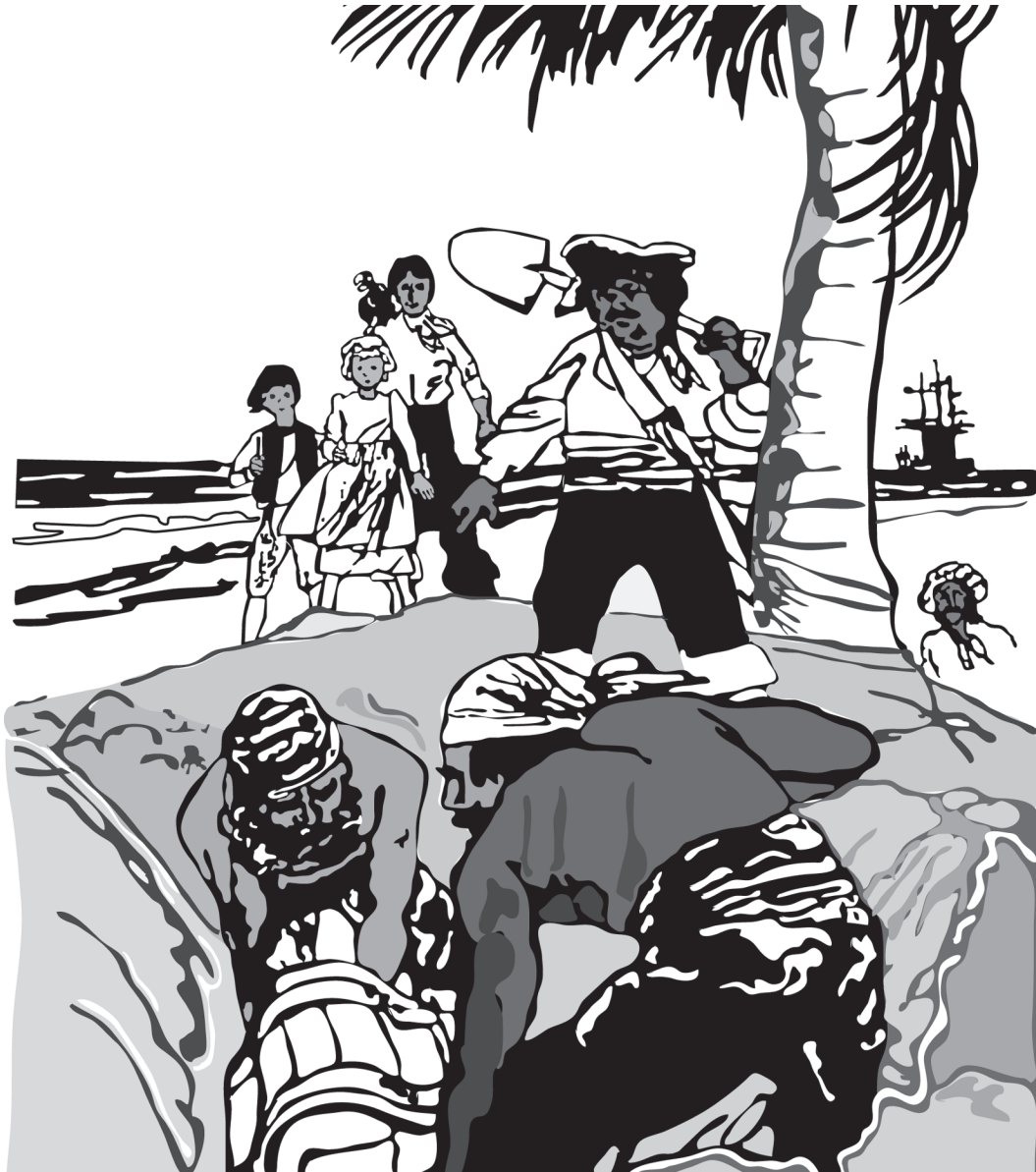
"Without you! Without you!" screeched the parrot.

"Betsy, hush!" said Chavez sharply. "We'll all be in trouble."

"It sounds as though we're already in trouble," said Ben, "and I don't think there's a way out."



Chapter 7: Gold!



On the windward side of the island, the pirates saw a lone palm tree. “There it is,” said Big Red. “That’s the spot where Dusty claims he hid the gold.”

The crew began to dig near the base of the palm tree. The pirates worked furiously. Sand flew everywhere. Less than an hour had passed when one of the shovels hit something hard.

“I’ve found something!” shouted a happy pirate.

"Aye, it's a sea chest!" shouted another pirate. "I can see some metal on its top!"

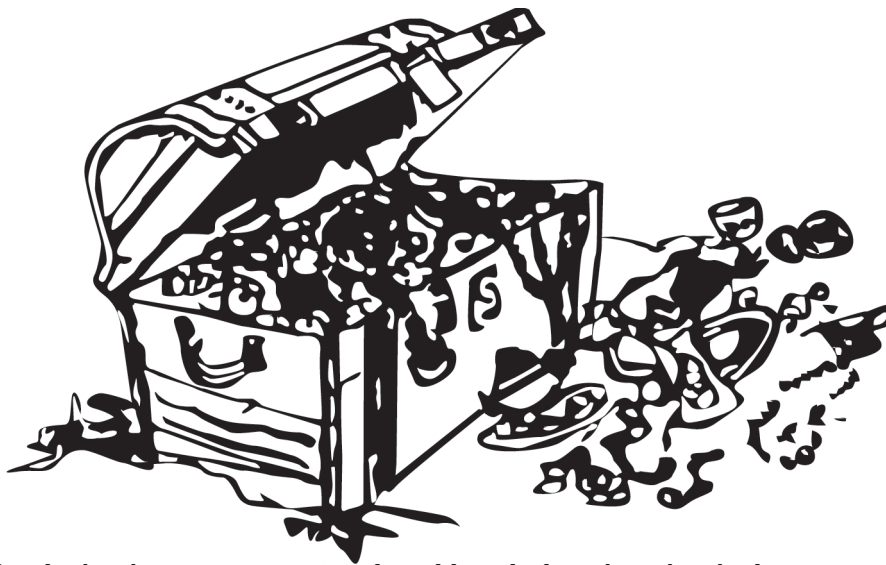
"Heave it up here!" said Big Red.

The chest was so heavy that it took five men to lift it out of the hole.

"There must be a lot of gold in here," said one of the pirates, as the old sea chest thudded onto the sand. "I've never lifted anything that weighed so much."

"Open the hatch!" said Big Red. "Let's see what old Dusty left for us."

Crocodile Bill bent down, broke the rusted lock, and slowly opened the heavy lid.



Inside the chest were more jewels, gold, and silver than they had ever seen. Shining up at them were piles of gold coins, diamonds, bracelets, and rings. It was truly a beautiful sight.

"We've found it!" shouted Big Red, dancing around the trunk. "It's all ours, lads! We're rich!"

"That's not quite true," said Rebecca. "That gold actually belongs to other people. It was stolen from them."

Big Red stopped dancing and wheeled around. "What did you say?" he bellowed.

"The gold doesn't truly belong to you," said Rebecca. "You should return it to its rightful owners."

Big Red's scowl slowly turned to a smile. Then he started to chuckle. Finally, he laughed out loud.

"Shiver my timbers!" he said, laughing even louder. "That may be the best joke I've heard!"

Soon, all the pirates were laughing along with Big Red.

"Aye, that's funny," chuckled Crocodile Bill. "That's a good joke!"

"The owners of this gold worked hard for it!" shouted Rebecca.

"We worked hard for it too," said Big Red. "Do you think that it was easy to dig that hole?"

"That's true," said Ben. "They have worked for this gold."

"They have?" said Rebecca, surprised to hear Ben agreeing with the pirates.



"They've worked very hard," said Ben, giving Rebecca a wink. "In fact, probably, most of them are too tired to attend the party we've been planning."

"Party?!" said Crocodile Bill, his eyes lighting up. "Did I hear you say we're going to have a party?"

"Yep, a shindig you'll never forget," promised Ben. "It'll start here, on the beach, as soon as it's dark."

"I think a shindig's a fine idea," said Big Red. "Let's start as soon as the gold's stowed on board the *Sea Witch*."

While the crew worked to load the gold on the ship, Rebecca and Ben prepared for the shindig.

"Are you joking?" said Rebecca, as soon as she and Ben were alone. "How can you think of putting on a party for this pirate crew? Have you forgotten that Chavez told us these men are planning to leave us here on the island?"

"I haven't forgotten," said Ben. "In fact, if all goes well, this party will allow us to leave the island."

"What do you mean?" asked Rebecca. "How can a party help us?"

"I'm hoping that the men will stay up late," said Ben. "If we can tire them with enough dancing, singing, and celebrating, they'll fall asleep on the beach. Then, with Chavez's help, we can board the *Sea Witch* and sail home."

"We must try it," said Rebecca, "but it seems like an awfully big risk to take."

"It is a big risk," said Ben, "but if we allow the pirates to sail away without us, we'll never see home again."

"That's true. We have no choice," said Rebecca. "We'll board the *Sea Witch* tonight."

That evening the sun set in a burst of yellow and red. The waves gently rolled along the sand. With the ship at anchor, its hold filled with treasure, the pirates were in jolly spirits.

"This is a fine ending to a fine day," said Big Red, looking out at the sky. "Aye, indeed, it is a fine ending."

"The day's not ended," said Rebecca. "You haven't forgotten the shindig for you and your crew, have you?"

"I haven't forgotten," said Big Red.

"If you'll call your crew, Ben and I will serve the food."

"Aye," said Big Red, climbing onto a nearby rock. "I'll call them. Mates of the *Sea Witch*," he shouted. "We have good reason to be happy. Let's laugh and dance and sing."

"Aye!" said Crocodile Bill, flipping one of his gold coins high into the air and laughing a long, deep laugh.

Chapter 8:

Farewell to Eagle Island

Around a roaring fire, the crew of the *Sea Witch* came together for a party. They ate, drank, and sang. Long after dark, One-Eyed Jack took out his fiddle and began to play. Soon all the pirates were whirling about the fire, dancing to the music of the fiddle, and singing all their favorite pirate songs.

"We'll keep this rigadoon going until we drop!" shouted Big Red, holding a glass above his head. "This shindig might go on for days."

It was certainly the biggest, loudest, and wildest shindig that had ever taken place on Eagle Island. As the night wore on, the pirates grew drowsy. It had been a long day, and they were tired. One by one, they lay back in the sand and drifted off to sleep.

Finally, the only people on the beach still awake were Ben, Rebecca, and Big Red.

"How do you like this island?" whispered Big Red, leaning toward Rebecca and Ben.

"It's very nice," answered Rebecca. "There is a lot to eat here. The weather's fine. The sea and the surf are very nice too."

"Good!" he roared. "I'm glad that you like it. I'm planning to leave you here for the rest of your days!"

Big Red laughed so loudly it seemed he would shake to pieces. Ben and Rebecca were very frightened.

"It's best if we just leave him," whispered Rebecca. "If we say anything, there's no way to know what he will do."

After a while, Big Red stopped laughing. He, too, became drowsy. He put his head down on the sand and fell asleep.



Rebecca and Ben listened for Big Red's snores before they woke Chavez.

"Chavez," said Rebecca softly. "Everyone else is asleep. We can launch our plan."

Chavez slowly sat up and looked around. The fire was down to nothing more than a soft, red glow. There was just enough light to see the sleeping pirates.

"Aye," he whispered. "I'm ready. Let's go."

Before they left the beach, Chavez dug 30 gold coins out of his pocket and set them on the sand.

"These are for Big Red," he told a curious Rebecca and Ben. "Now, I don't owe him anything from that card game."

Chavez, Rebecca, and Ben pushed the longboat into the water, jumped aboard, and silently rowed out to the empty *Sea Witch*.

"It will not be easy to sail this big ship without a crew," said Chavez, as he pulled himself up over the rail. "Perhaps with fair winds and some luck, we'll make it." Chavez ran to the forecastle.

Rebecca and Ben climbed up the rope ladder and moved carefully out onto a yard. They slowly unfurled one of the sails. Then they signaled to Chavez, who was standing near the steering wheel.

As quietly as he could, Chavez cut the anchor line, then ran to the helm. There was no wind, and for a time the *Sea Witch* was adrift. The dawn broke, and the breeze snapped open the sail. Chavez turned the ship's wheel, and the *Sea Witch* moved slowly out to sea.

On shore, Big Red woke up just in time to see his ship starting to move. "Come back!" he yelled, running down to the edge of the surf. "You can't take my ship."



"Look at Big Red," said Rebecca. "A pirate without a ship is like a fish out of water."

"He won't be without a ship for long," said Chavez. "Someone will sail near the island and rescue them. It's only a matter of time before Big Red will be sailing the seas again."

"Do you think he'll try to find us?" asked Rebecca, very concerned.

"Nay, I don't think he will," said Chavez, watching Big Red as the ship pulled away from Eagle Island. "He'll be too busy looking for other treasures. He won't chase us. I don't think we'll see Big Red again."

It was a fine, windy day. The tiny crew let out more sail, and the *Sea Witch* made good time. Soon Eagle Island was far behind them.

"It's good to be going home," said Ben, looking out to sea. "It seems as though we've been gone forever."

"I know how you feel," said Rebecca. "There have been times, these past few weeks, when I didn't think I'd see home again."

"You'll be seeing home soon enough," shouted Chavez from the wheel. "Now, I need your help to trim the sails."

"Aye, aye, Captain!" said Rebecca and Ben, hurrying to stand by one of the ship's lines. "We'll do anything that will help get us home."

"Home! Home!" echoed Betsy.

"Aye," said Chavez, "we're bound for home."

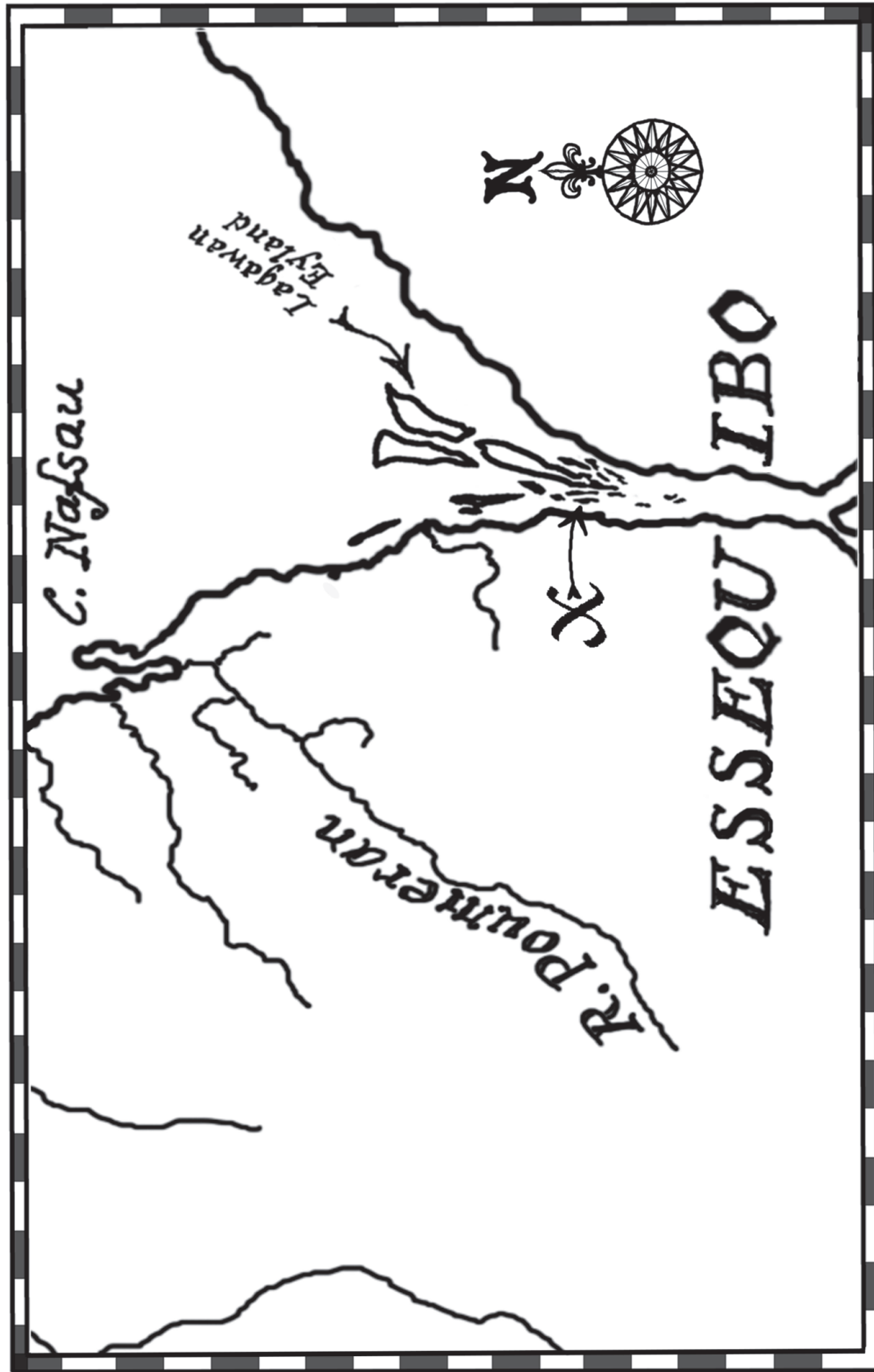
The *Sea Witch* picked up speed. As the ship ploughed through the waves, they came closer to Spider's Landing. Rebecca and Ben looked at each other and smiled. At last, after an adventure they would never forget, they were going home.





Reading for All Learners – Fluency Builders Series This map may be copied for non-profit purposes.

The Pirates' Map



(the mouth of the Essequibo River in modern-day Guyana)

“Fluency Builders”

Model Lesson Plan Summary: Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension

Step 1. Review of Vocabulary from the Previous Chapter (*approximately 2 minutes*). The instructor reviews the 10 most difficult words from the previous chapter. See Step 7 of this Lesson Plan for more information. Any very difficult words should be added to the Step 7 list for further review.

Step 2. Overview and Vocabulary Check for the Chapter (*approximately 5 minutes*). Students read the chapter and prepare their own written list of words they cannot pronounce, decode, or understand. The instructor discusses and explains these words. Students demonstrate their understanding of difficult words by using the word in a sentence in another context. Building on the discussion of the vocabulary, the teacher asks questions to elicit the main ideas of the chapter and generate a summary of the actions, major characters, or concepts. This discussion should serve as a brief, introductory overview of the chapter.

Step 3. Fluency Practice in Speed and Accuracy (*approximately 10 to 15 minutes*). The instructor should model the appropriate fluency skills by reading the first paragraph at an appropriate pace. That is, approximately 120 words per minute and with appropriate expression. The instructor should “randomly” select students to read a paragraph aloud. To ensure active participation by all students, the instructor should occasionally stop the student reading in mid-paragraph and ask another student to finish the paragraph.

Step 4. Comprehension Instruction (*approximately 5 minutes*). Assign each student to prepare a comprehension question for the group. Students should be assigned to prepare either a “how,” “what,” “why,” “when,” or “where” question. Each student should then pose a comprehension question to the group; the answer should be discussed by the group.

Step 5. Oral Comprehension Check (*approximately 5 minutes*). This is a discussion session that explicitly applies comprehension concepts to the chapter. The teacher should generate questions to elicit such issues as “What is the main idea?” “What was the motive?” “What was the sequence?” “What happened first? Last?” “Summarize the chapter.” The instructor should ensure that students have practice with literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension questions. The discussion for Step 5 should serve as a gentle, yet firm, reminder that students are accountable for reading with understanding.

Step 6. Reading with Expression (*approximately 5 minutes*). Students should practice reading individual paragraphs with expression. This should be a fun experience. Focus on expression, not on speed and accuracy. Students may practice using different voices for different characters, changing intonation to indicate a question, and reading with pauses to build interest and anticipation. Each student should be given an opportunity to read at least one paragraph to the group.

Step 7. Prepare a Vocabulary Review List for the Chapter (*approximately 3 minutes*). The teacher and group should prepare a list of the chapter’s most difficult words to decode and understand. This should be a 10-word list based on difficult words encountered in the lesson. Each student should be required to review this list of 10 words as a homework assignment and be prepared to read and use each word in a sentence to demonstrate understanding. This review will be done as Step 1 of the next lesson on the next chapter.

Step 8. Individual Rate and Accuracy Assessment (*approximately 5 minutes*). Using “Assessment Step Sample” for the chapter, assess students on rate and accuracy. Record data for each student for each chapter. Check to see that students continue to meet the assessment standards from chapter to chapter. Do the reteaching when needed for individuals or the group.

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