

Pirate Family Smith

Chapter 2

Have you ever had to run across a shelf of rocks, carrying a heavy treasure chest, with cannonballs crashing all around you? I didn't think so! But I can tell you now that it's pretty terrifying.



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“SPEED UP!” roared Pirate Smith as a cannonball flew just over the top of their heads and made a huge crater up ahead of them. They swerved past the hole and started hurrying down the stone steps carved into the side of the chalky cliff.

Smash! A cannonball whacked into the cliff just above them and covered them in chalk dust.

Kaboom! Another one missed Bo's foot by a few inches.

Down and down they hurried and as they rounded a corner they saw where the cannonballs were coming from. *The Dusty Brig* was moored in the harbour but approaching it fast was Purple Beard's boat, *The Evil Whisper*. Its cannon holes were open and it was pumping out its black orbs of danger.

“Why can't he keep his nose out of this?” shouted Pirate Smith. “We found this chest. We keep it!”

They finally made it down to the beach and zigzagged along the sand with cannonballs smacking all around them.

“PULL UP THE ANCHOR!” shouted Vera. “WE NEED TO GET MOVING.”

The Dusty Brig's First Mate, Ears, short, stocky and with huge ears, threw a rope ladder over the side of the boat. A cannonball smashed into the side of *The Dusty Brig*, splintering some wood but luckily not making a hole.

The Second Mate, Toe-rag, tall and thin, with windswept hair, started yanking up the huge iron anchor.

The Third Mate, Vile, huge and hairy, took to the wheel of the ship.

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“Come on!” shouted Pirate Smith. He started climbing upwards, one hand on the rope ladder, the other on the chest. Vera climbed below him, holding the other end of the chest. When they were near the top, Vera lost her grip for a moment and it seemed like the chest would come crashing down onto Bo’s head. Luckily though, she regained her hold and a few seconds later the three panting Smiths boarded the ship and plonked the treasure chest down on the deck.

Vile began steering *The Dusty Brig* away from the shore. More cannonballs arched through the air, landing in the water around them. *The Evil Whisper* gave chase but when Pirate Smith grabbed the wheel and took charge, it was clear that *The Whisper* was no match for *The Brig’s* speed. The cannonballs started hitting the water further and further away. Ten minutes later *The Brig* was powering ahead and *The Evil Whisper* had disappeared from view.

“FETCH ME MY TOOLS!” thundered Pirate Smith, handing the wheel back to Vile. “We got away with this treasure from right under Purple Beard’s nose and he will not like it one little bit.” He let out a great roar of laughter, which the three Mates joined in with.

Ears disappeared and returned a minute later with a rusting metal box. Pirate Smith opened it and pulled out a short length of iron. He

knelt down and placed this under the clasp that was keeping the chest shut.

Everyone drew in a deep breath.

His first three tries were in vain but on his fourth go, he managed to prise open the clasp and the lid of the chest flew open.

Everyone peered inside.

“Oh dear,” said Toe-rag, his wild hair dancing on top of his head.

“Oh dear indeed,” groaned Pirate Smith.

The chest was almost totally empty. No diamonds. No rubies. No pearls.

There was one thing, however, tucked into a corner at the bottom of the chest: a single brown egg with a small crack on its smooth, shiny surface. Vera picked it up. It was no bigger than the palm of her hand.

“That's it?” gasped Bo. “All of that trouble to get a tiny measly egg!”

“That's no ordinary egg,” declared a voice.

Everyone spun round and saw a girl about Bo's age, wearing trousers and a shirt that looked like they'd been made from an old sack. She was standing with her hands on her hips and looking at the others as if they were on *her* ship, not the other way round.

“And who are you?” demanded Pirate Smith.

“My name is Hope and I'm a stowaway,” she said defiantly. “I joined your boat on Gladwell Beach.”

“But we were at Gladwell Beach *five days ago*,” replied Bo. “Where have you been hiding?”

“Inside your rope box,” she grinned. “It's cold but quite comfortable in there.”

“But why are you here?” asked Bo.

“I ran away from home,” said Hope. “They wanted me to do knitting and stitching lessons but a life of adventure on the high seas is the life for me!”



“So that explains why some of our food has been going missing!” snapped Ears.

“A girl’s got to eat,” said Hope, “now let me tell you about that egg.”

Everyone was so shocked that no one said anything.

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She strolled over and took the egg out of Vera's hands. As she did so, a few more cracks appeared on its surface and, a few seconds later, a hole opened and a tiny creature popped out, blinking in the sunlight and coughing out smoke.

The girl looked at the crew with a twinkle in her eye. "You've just got yourselves a baby dragon," she grinned.

