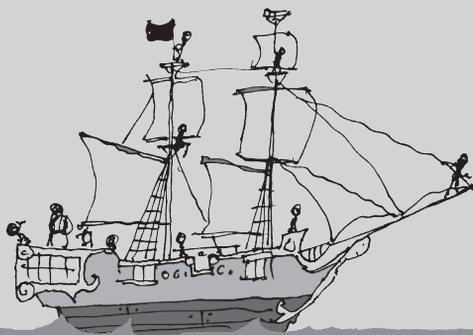


# Atticus Van Tasticus

## THE MAP OF HALF MAPS



For Bibi – my first mate in *piratin'* writin'. AD  
For Pirate Andrew – thanks for inviting  
me aboard. Arrr! SMK





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Tasticus

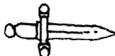
THE MAP OF HALF MAPS



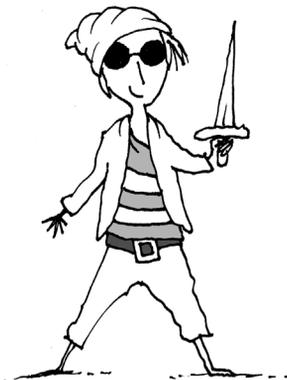
Andrew Daddo



Stephen Michael King



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**Magic Harry**



**Silent Type**



**Princess**

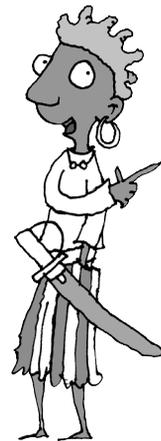
# THE CREW



**Muscles**



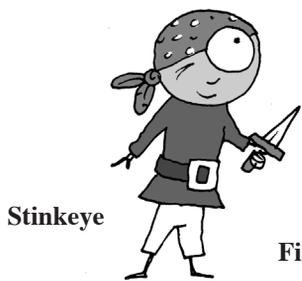
**First Mate**



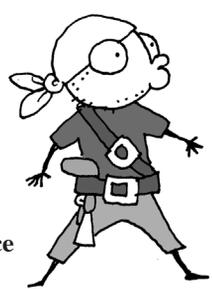
**Wrong Way Warren!**



**Two Times**



**Stinkeye**



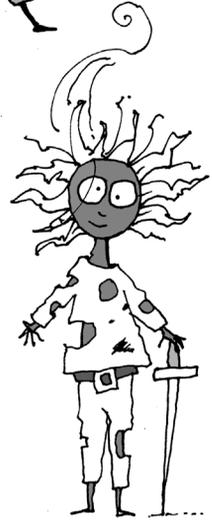
**Fishface**



**Buttface**



**Mullet**



**Rod (Lightning Rod)**



**Atticus**

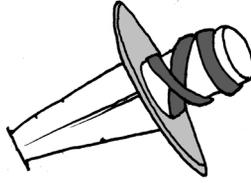


**Slapfoot**



**Hogbreath**





~~An AMAZINGLY true story  
carefully plucked from the  
TRUTH TREE of history.~~

~~A TRUE re-telling from a time  
when memories could not be trusted.~~

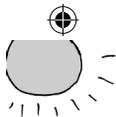
~~This STORY is as TRUE as the  
memories of those who were there.~~

Shiver me timbers!



A TRUE STORY-

from the memories of made-up people.



# Once upon a pirate time...

Long before Atticus Van Tasticus was a Pirate Captain...

He was a boy

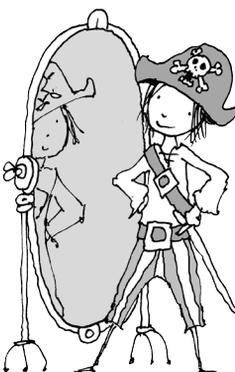
who was given a ship.

Up and down dale, he went until the ship got to the water.

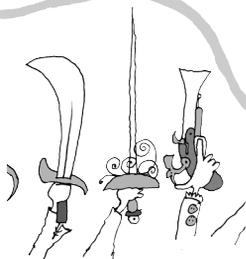
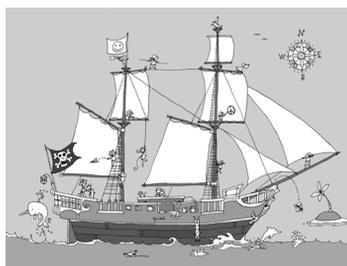
Atticus found a first mate



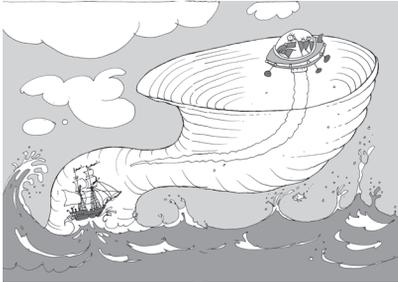
then some others -



and set off to become pirates - because piratin' was cool.



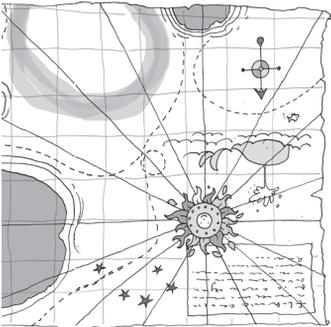
Waged war on a famous captain,



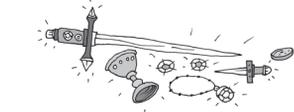
and survived an alien attack – lucky to come out alive.



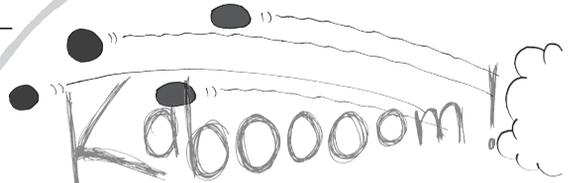
fought a storm



They found a map,



took some treasure,



blasted all their cannons – at once,

and had a proper battle with a proper vixen . . .



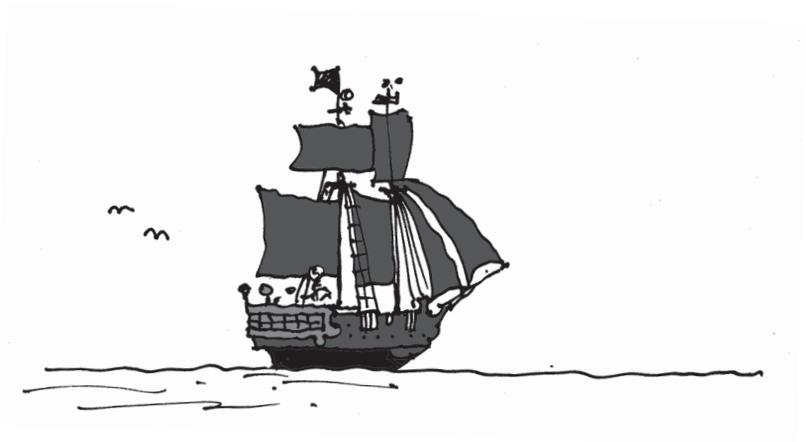
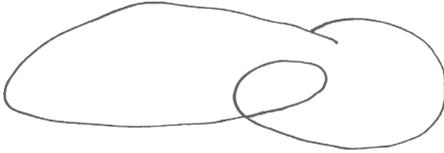
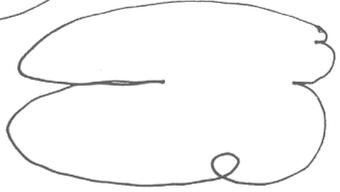
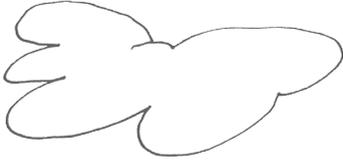
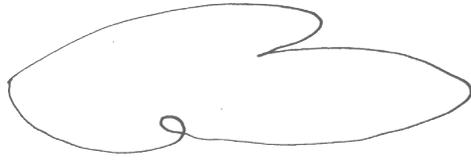
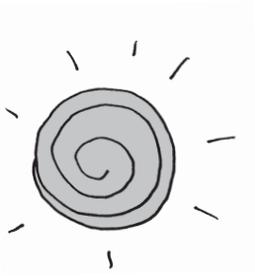
called Peg –

with two good legs and a very nasty attitude.

Luckily, Atticus and his crew escaped

with a new map and a new plan

and the feeling that anything that could go wrong, already had . . .



# Chapter 1

## The Devil in the Detail



Atticus Van Tasticus sank deep into his hammock chair as the rhythmic creak and groan of *The Grandnan* rocked him somewhere near sleep. The sun was up, the wind was down and things were pretty near perfect.

*How good is piratin'?! the ship seemed to sing. It was the ropes and sails pulling against the timbers of his very own ship. 'How good is Piratin'?!' whispered Atticus.*

Gulls squawked as they wheeled in the sky, and there was the occasional piggish grunt coming from somewhere. Atticus liked the idea it was a flying pig, but guessed it was a puffin looking for love.





Oink!

## 'Ship ahoy, Captain! Ship ahoy!'

Two Times belted it out from the crow's nest. 'Tell me that's not the galleon *Pegasis*, Captain. Please, tell me that's not *Pegasis*.'



Atticus spun the hammock chair around and searched for Two Times. It was

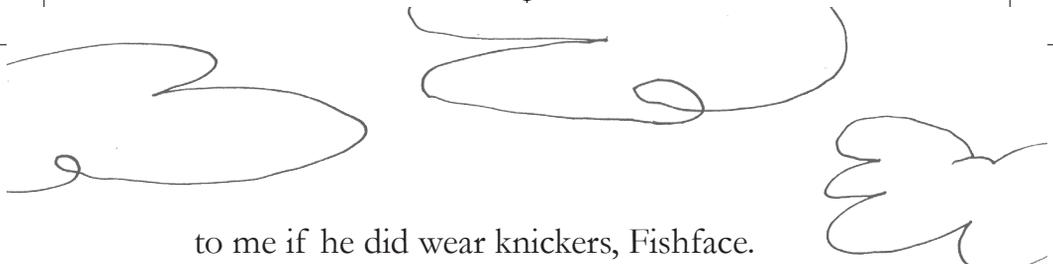
hard to see him in the crow's nest with the sun where it was. He looked a bit like an angel with a really long, straight nose.

'At ease, Two Times. Now what's got your knickers in a knot?'

'Don't wear knickers, Captain. Definitely do not wear knickers,' he yelled back.

'He does,' said Fishface, fully pouting but still not able to hide the smile.

Atticus rolled his eyes. 'It wouldn't matter



to me if he did wear knickers, Fishface.  
And I wasn't saying Two Times does wear  
knickers.'

Two Times pulled his face out of the  
spyglass and rolled his eyes. 'But I absolutely  
don't wear knickers, Captain. I don't!'

'I wear knickers.' Muscles poked her head  
up from down below, her frown like a scar  
across her forehead. 'Anyone got a problem  
with that?'

'No, no, no, no, no!' came the  
chorus from all over the ship.

'Up ahead, Captain, up ahead!' Two Times  
sounded very uptight. 'It surely looks like a  
ship, but what kind of ship is that?'

Atticus squinted in the general direction  
Two Times was pointing but  
couldn't see much of anything.  
They were on a rolling ocean,  
and he didn't have the extra  
height or benefit of the spyglass





to see further into the distance. As far as he could tell, there wasn't much on the sea at all.

**'Ship ahoy, Captain! Ship ahoy!'**

Two Times squealed. 'It's most *definitely* a ship. Only, it looks meaner than *Pegasus*. *Much* meaner!'

Atticus wasn't sure that was possible. *Pegasus* was a brute – worse than mean.

He was out of his chair and heading forward when First Mate sang out.

'I see it, Captain!' she called from halfway up the mast, using her legs to hang on while her hands tuned the focus on her spyglass.

'He's right, Captain. It's nothing like

*Pegasus*. If I's not mistaken, that there is a –' She lowered her spyglass, took a breath, then put it back to her eye. 'Oh, my goodness, Cap'n. That there is a Devil Ship!'





‘A Devil Ship?’ Atticus could just make out something on the horizon, but it kept disappearing on the rise and fall of the swell. ‘Surely there’s no such thing as a Devil Ship.’

He shimmied up the rope ladder to the crow’s nest. The entire crew were on deck now, craning their necks looking to the east.

‘There’s nasty horns on the mainsail, Cap’n. And it looks like all the sailors have horns coming out of their heads. The only thing I can think of with horns comin’ out of its head is the Devil, that’s who. And there’s

a whole ship of 'em headed this way.'

'Cows have horns coming out their heads,' yelled Stinke. 'What if it's a cow ship?'

'Deer have horns,' went Muscles. 'Or if it's a single horn, it might be a Narwhal – a horned whale. Wow. Or a unicorn. Wowsie wow wow!'

'So do sheep. And bison and antelope.

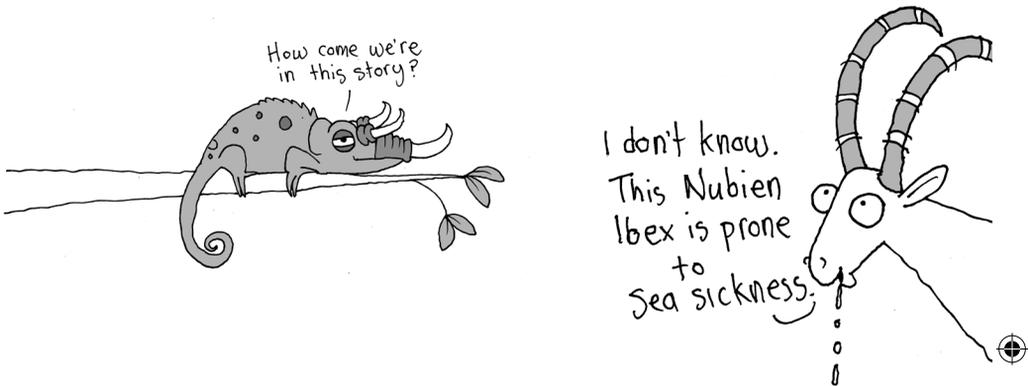


There's the great kudu, famous for its big horns, and buffalo have horns, too. Don't forget the bongo? They've got lovely horns,' Slapfoot said, tapping his toes and counting the animals off on his fingers. 'Imagine if it were a bongo ship, we'd be able to eat 'em. Yummy!' That made him chuckle.

Two Times wasn't having any of it. 'Nope,



didn't forget any of them, or the Nubien Ibex. Or the Jackson's Chamelion. But it ain't any of them, it ain't. It's a Devil Ship, alright. And that can't be good. Not good at all.'



As Atticus climbed the rope ladder, he tried not to panic. The thought of a Devil Ship was too much. It seemed ridiculous. Even if there was such a thing as a Devil Ship, there couldn't be a whole ship full of Devils, could there?

He tried to sound cool while his imagination ran hot. 'We might have to blast our way out of here.

**Prepare the cannons!**

When Atticus got to the crow's nest, Two Times made room and handed him the spyglass.

'See for yerself what's got me knickers in a knot, Captain,' Two Times said as he scrambled down the rope ladder, heading for the cannons at the back of *The Grandman*. 'The Devil's what did it, Captain. The Devil!

Haaaaarrrrr!!!'

Before putting the spyglass to his eye, Atticus took a deep breath. 'Please don't be a Devil Ship,' he whispered. 'A cow ship, or a Nubien IbeX ship or a bongo ship – anything but a Devil Ship.'



Once he got the ship in focus, Atticus let out a little yelp. He took the spyglass from his eye, wiped the lens with his shirt and looked again.

*Could it be?* He'd heard of such things, but thought them extinct. 'Good news, my crew. It's not a Devil Ship,' he yelled to the expectant faces below.

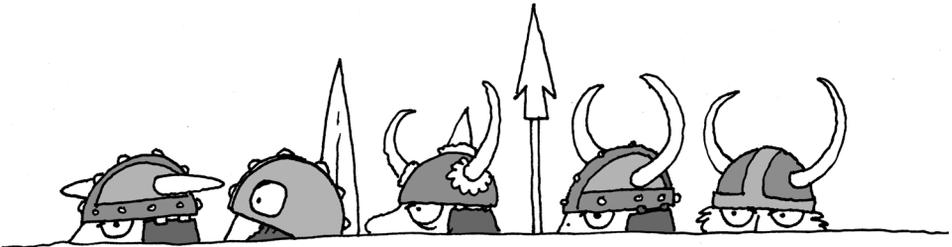
A roar went up. Princess gave Two Times a little shuck on the shoulder and said, 'Told you there was no such thing as a Devil Ship.'

'It's WORSE!'

yelled Atticus. 'I think we're about to be attacked by

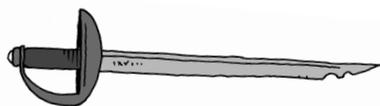
VIKINGS!'



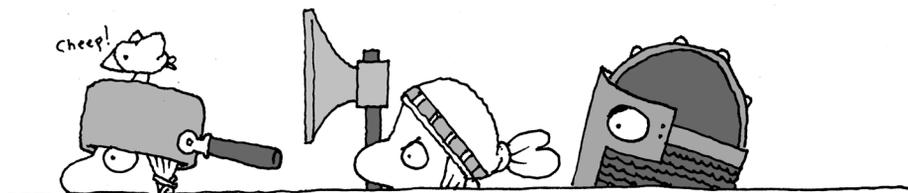


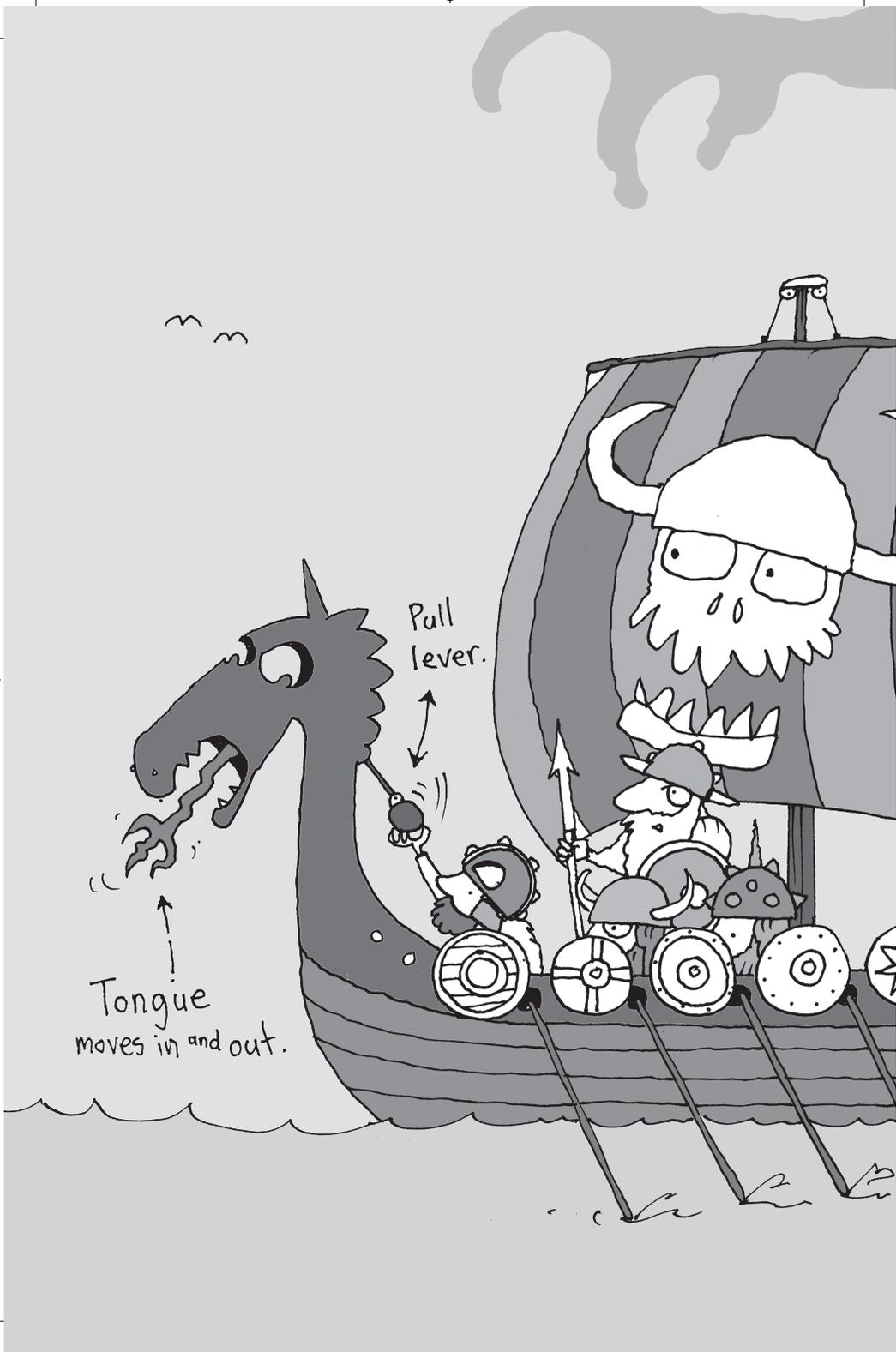
# Chapter 2

## Beware the Viking Raiders



While most of the crew on the deck started running in circles and screaming, Atticus took a long look at what was coming for them. That ship was built for battle, no question. There was just one huge sail, and the horned head painted on it was definitely frightening. Coloured shields were lined up along the side of the ship and oars pumped in perfect unison. It was like watching a dance.







Glen!  
Are you  
rowin'?

*A dance of death, thought Atticus. We're really going to cop it now.*

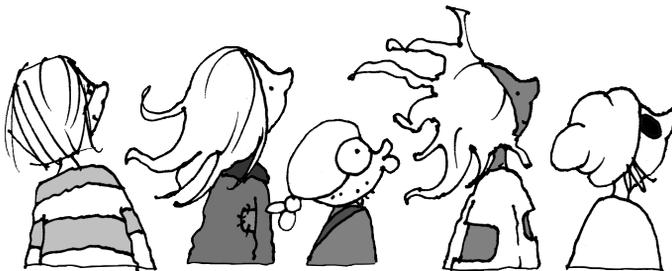
*'Stop screeeeeamng!'*

screamed First Mate. 'Everyone stop. It's not helping and it's really, really annoying!'

Amazingly, everyone stopped.

Everyone except Wrong Way Warren, who kept running in tight little circles with his hands in the air. Muscles tackled him and held him down. 'Warren. Stop. It's going to be okay, Captain Atticus will think of something. He always does.'

And with that, all eyes looked towards the crow's nest. First Mate, Princess, Fishface, Lightning Rod, Magic Harry, Muscles, Two Times, Mullet, Silent Type and Stinkeye.

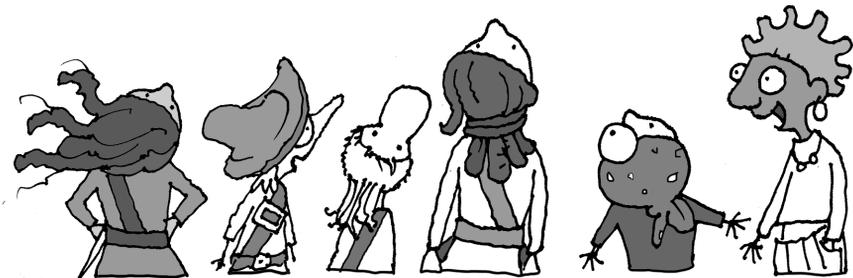
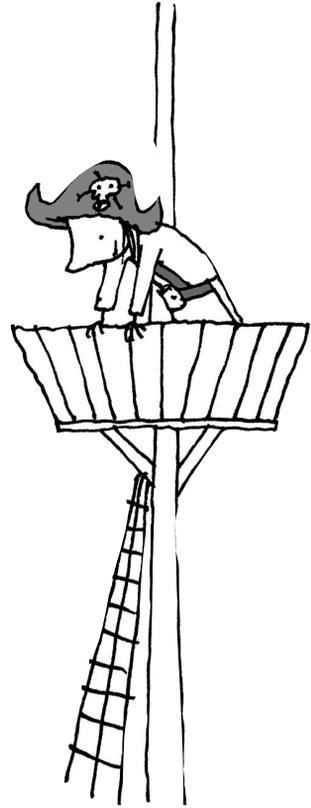


Only Wrong Way Warren didn't look up. He was staring at Muscles in the funniest way.

'Oh, Captain, our Captain,' said First Mate. 'Any thoughts on a plan?'

Atticus looked to the crew below and his heart swelled. *My crew*, he thought. *My very own, fantasticus crew.*

He looked back to the Viking ship, which really was approaching quite quickly – it seemed twice as big as it had been only moments ago. It was the rowing that did it, since there was barely enough wind to fill the sail.



As fast as he could, Atticus went through all the options he could think of.

1. We stay and fight.
2. We cover our eyes and hope they don't see us.
3. → **RUN** → and fast.
4. Pretend we're not pirates, we have no treasure maps and we are fishers who are a little lost.
5. \* ~~We pretend we're just a bunch of kids in Grandnan's boat playing dress-ups.~~
6. We **BLAST** our way **OUT.**
7. We beat them at their own game.

‘Get the oars,’ said Atticus. ‘We’re going to outrun them, and we’re going to go that way.’ He pointed towards the back of the boat, to the direction they’d just come from. ‘Spin this bad boy around!’

‘That’s the wrong way,’ said Warren. ‘Even I know that. That’ll put us straight into the hands of Pirate Peg and *Pegasis*.’

‘Pirate Peg,’ scoffed First Mate. ‘Bah!’ She put the spyglass to her eye and looked towards the sea behind the ship. A small *Doh!* escaped her throat. ‘She’s coming. Peg’s actually coming! How does she always do that?’

The entire crew looked to the west, and, sure enough, on the wrong side of the horizon were the three masts of *Pegasis*.

This was enough to get the entire crew running in circles and screaming again.

Had Atticus been on deck, he probably would have joined in. He wasn’t sure what



else he could do. ‘Pirate Peg to the left of me, Vikings to the right,’ he kind of sang to himself. ‘And here I am, stuck in the middle with youse.’



Stuck in the middle with youse.  
Stuck in the middle with youse.

He looked down at the mayhem and hollered.

‘Stop. Please,  
everyone stop.’

Hearing their captain yell like that was enough to calm the mayhem.

‘Magic Harry, get to the wheel and turn us to the north. We’re going that way.’

We are going to outrun  
them and we are going  
to do it NOW.

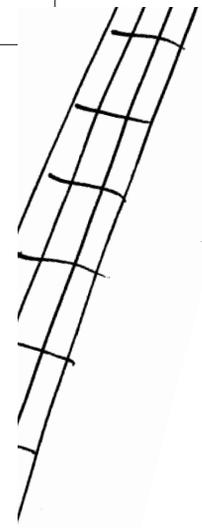
Go below, get the oars. We'll beat the Vikings at their own game and out-row them!

The whole crew, except for Harry, disappeared below deck. He ran for the bridge and started whipping the wheel towards the north. *The Grandnan* groaned as she slowly



started to turn, listing to one side as the rudder took hold.

Everyone was thrown sideways as the big ship swung around.



‘Whoopsie!’ said Atticus, almost falling out of the crow’s nest. He ripped his belt from his pants, slung it over one of the down riggers and used it to slide down the rope to the deck. ‘I’s flyin’ like a fox,’ he whooped on the way down.

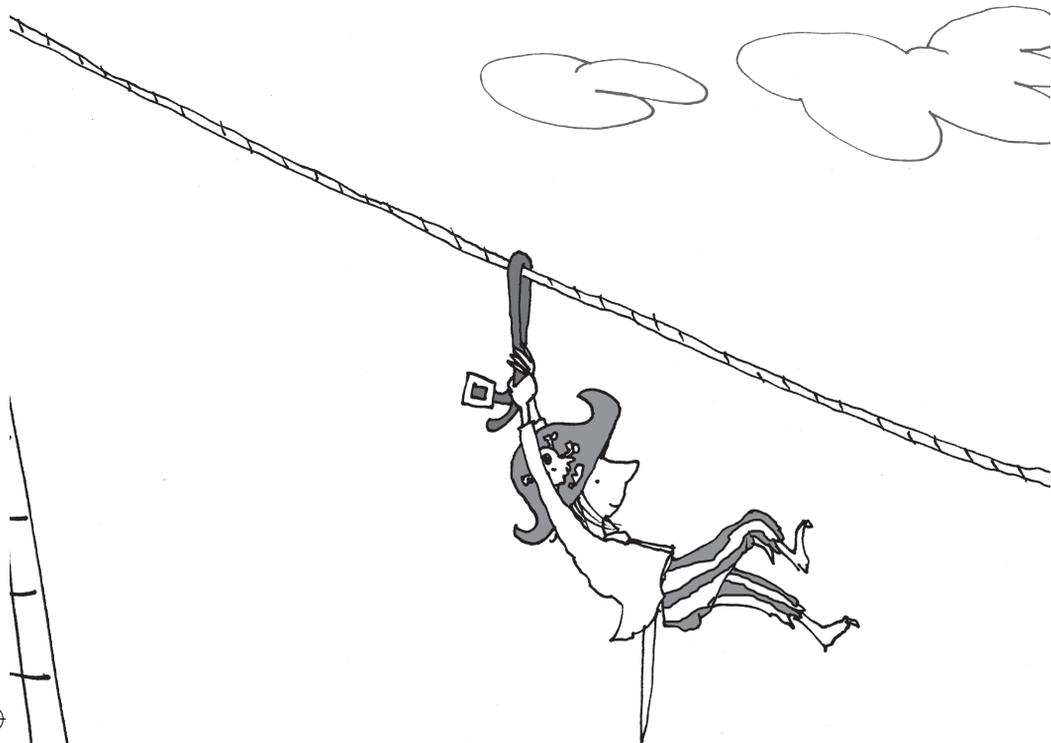
Magic Harry had already started to turn the wheel back to port and righted *The Grandnan*. ‘Captain,’ he said slowly. ‘I know it’s not actually my place to tell you what we should do . . . ?’

What’s meaner than a Pegasus?

Two Pegasises!

‘Not at all, Harry,’ said Atticus, taking hold of the wheel. ‘Do go on.’

‘Well, it’s just that –’ Harry pointed to the Viking ship with his right hand, and to *Pegasus* with his left. ‘It’s not like I’ve measured it to the inch yet, Captain, but if we use a fairly basic algorithm for wind, tide and wave action and then apply the Pythagoras Theorem to these two attacking ships, and let’s say the Viking ship is the



A axiom and Pirate Peg is on the B axiom, there's some chance that we'll all end up colliding at sea, Captain. And thus, at C, sir. Captain.'

Atticus could feel his eyes literally rolling around in his head. 'What on earth are you saying, Magic Harry? Tell me in words I can understand.'



‘Why don’t we go the other way and hide in that **fog** that seems to have come out of nowhere?’

Atticus saw it the moment Harry uttered the word fog. ‘You’re a genius, Harry. No wonder your nickname’s Magic.’ But before Harry could answer, Atticus yelled. ‘Coming about. We’re coming about. Hurry with those oars, we’ve got a low, fat cloud to catch!’ He spun the wheel hard and *The Grandnan* groaned as she was forced into another, tight circle.

Below deck, everyone was thrown the other sideways.

First Mate was back on her feet quickly and bolted up the stairs. Barely clear of the cabin she yelled, ‘There’s no oars, Captain. We’s not the rowing kind of ship.’

There were lots of things Atticus wanted to say, but all that came was, ‘**Aaaaaarrrr!**’ and then, ‘**Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarrrrrr!**’



‘AAAAA AAR’ ‘Aaaaaarrr!’

First Mate let one go, too.

Then Harry joined in.

Soon enough, the entire crew was back on deck. All of them together in a great big piratey,

AAAAAARRR!!!

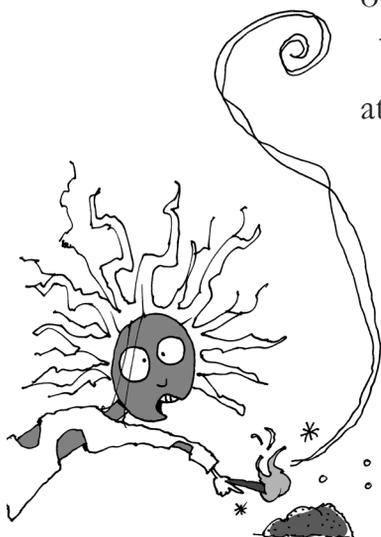
And whilst it didn't make *The Grandnan* go any faster, it did seem to make everyone feel the littlest bit better.

Unfortunately, it didn't stop the progress of the Vikings, who were most definitely on the charge.

‘What about the cannons? Let's blast

ourselves clear, like we've done before. Are all them cannons still at the back of the ship, Rod?’

‘Captain?’ said Lightning Rod, looking a little fiery. He'd made a little mound of gun powder and was about to light it just to make sure it still worked.



‘We put all but two cannons back in their rightful spots, just like you asked, Captain.’

‘Dang it. I thought we might be able to blast our way into the cloud.’



Magic Harry squinted. ‘Excellent idea, Captain, but technically it’s not actually a cloud. More of a fog, you know? Think of

it as a visible mist of water droplets formed when colder air meets air that's warmer.'

'How about you think of *The Grandman* moving into it as fast as possible so we can hide from the Vikings and Pirate Peg? How about you think of that?'

He hadn't meant to snap at Harry, it's just that he could see everything turning to poop.

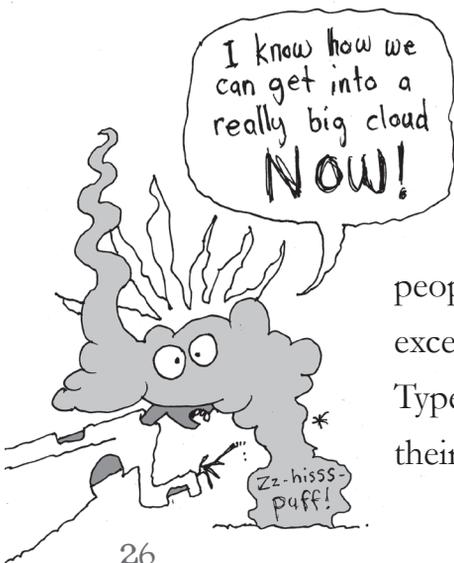
'Muscles. The cannons. Can you move them aft? Lightning Rod can help you double load them, and tell him to stop wasting gunpowder.'

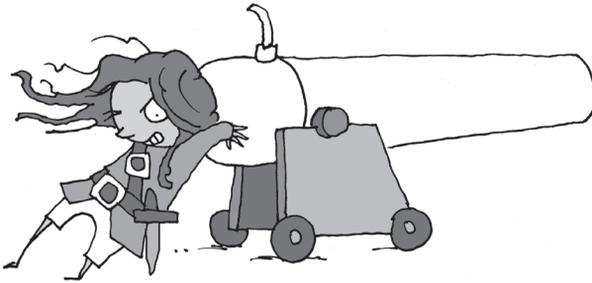
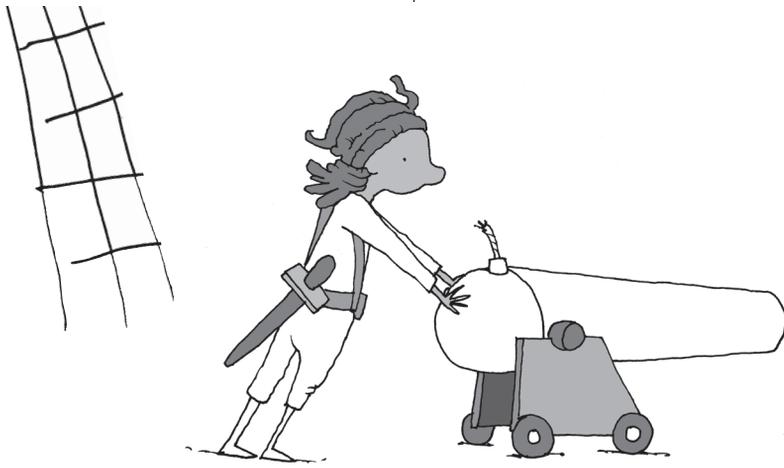
'Aye aye, Captain,' she said, flexing her

massive bicep in some kind of salute. 'Let's move them cannons!'

All hands got busy.

It took two or three people to move each cannon, except for Muscles and Silent Type, who could roll them on their own.



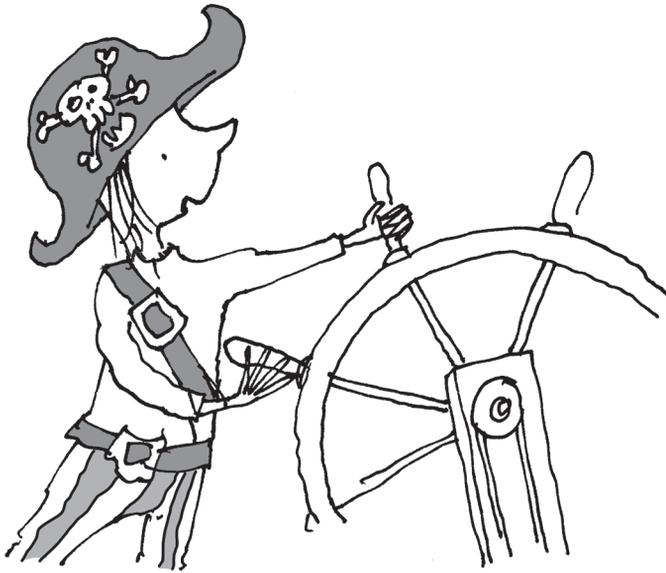


‘Silent Type, you’re so strong,’ Muscles grunted.

Silent Type shrugged, then pointed to the cannon then the swell.

‘Ah,’ said Muscles. ‘Clever. You wait for a wave and push the cannon when the deck’s sloping downhill, not uphill. Interesting.’

First Mate tugged on Atticus’s elbow and whispered in a hurried way. ‘Oh, Captain, my Captain. What if we left some of the cannons



where they were? If we get into a fight, we'll surely need them on our sides. Maybe we could sucker the other boats into surrounding us, Vikings to port, *Pegasus* to starboard. We bait them into battle, but not engage. And we wait. Maybe we wait some more. Then, at the perfect moment, *BANG*, we blast off with our back cannons at the exact moment they blast us with their side cannons. We shoot forwards and disappear to safety, while their cannonballs hit each other instead of us. They'll sink their ships and we'll be in

the clear. What about that, Captain?’

It was a nifty plan, Atticus could see it as clear as the trouble that chased them.

‘Leave some of the cannons,’ he bellowed.

‘First Mate has a plan!’

‘Aaaaarrr!’ went First Mate.

‘Baaaaarrr!’ went Muscles, turning the cannon she was moving and dragging it back to where she’d got it.

There was a *Maaaaaaah!* from the bow, followed by a proper, middle-of-the-night type scream. It was Wrong Way Warren, not looking at the danger behind, but the horror ahead.

‘Captain, lookooooooooout!’

Everyone spun around.

‘Captain Atticuuuuuuus! We’re going to crash into heaven, and I’m not ready for that yet!’

*Maaaaaaah! Maaaaaaah!*

If heaven was the soupiest fog anyone had  
ever seen, Wrong Way Warren was right.

