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The Cruise of Disaster

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Chapter One

The romantic cruise drove through the rough sea waves. Katie Pearson was on that cruise; her parents were celebrating their 13th wedding anniversary and were unloading their bags and suitcases. Katie looked around her cabin. It was small. There was just a bed with firm pillows, covered with a yellow blanket, and a wardrobe that housed a few old hangers. There was no television or even a window. The only light came from a small lamp in the corner of the room. Katie frowned. All the joy and excitement she had felt was gone. It was not going to be fun.

Katie went to find her parents in the cabin next door and the captain arrived to introduce himself. He was an older man with a white uniform that had gold embroidery on the shoulders. He had black shoes and his grey moustache twitched every time he spoke.

“Hello!” he said. His voice was croaky like he had a sore throat. Katie stared at him and then looked at her mum who was smiling. “I see you’re celebrating your 13th anniversary on board,” he said trying to smile but pulling an odd expression.

“Well...yes!” said Katie’s mum, whose smile had disappeared.

“Congratulations!” said the captain. The conversation continued for a while and Katie started to get a weird feeling about him. His facial expressions seemed strange.

When the captain left, Katie ran to her cabin. Her mum followed her and found her sat on the uncomfortable bed.

“How are you, Kate?” asked her mum. Katie did not answer. “Look I know you’re disappointed,” said her mum sitting on the bed next to her, “and I know why!” Katie’s mum looked around the tired room.

“It’s not just the room, Mum. The captain is really weird,” moaned Katie.

“I know the captain seemed a little unusual, but that doesn’t mean we should be unkind!” exclaimed her mum. Katie could not help but feel ashamed that she had been judgemental. Then her mum came closer and wrapped her arms around her. Her soft blonde locks stroked Katie’s head.

When Katie's mum left, Katie glared around her cabin with disgust. It was not just small and dingy but grubby. Katie decided to see if she could make it look any better; it was going to be her bedroom for a week after all. But no matter how hard she cleaned, it just would not get any cleaner. Finally, she gave up, worrying her mum would be annoyed at her for using one of her t-shirts as a duster.

Chapter 2

Katie was awfully hot in her cabin. The ship had not moved far, and it was boring. Apart from watching the grand performance her dad made about feeling seasick, there was nothing to do. Katie sat in her cabin, reading. As the evening arrived, Katie's mum knocked and came into her cabin, carrying with her an eyeshadow palette. Her mum was not in the orange flowery top and grey jeans she had been wearing earlier, but a salmon pink dress and silver shoes.

"Which eye shadow do you like best, the pink or the orange?" asked Katie's mum, holding up the palette so Katie could see the exotic colours inside. Katie raised her head from the page in her comic. She would much rather

have continued reading about how the superheroes defeated the villains than discuss eyeshadow colours.

“I think the pink. It matches your dress,” Katie answered.

“Wait why are you—” Katie continued before being interrupted.

“Your father and I are going out for a fancy dinner,” her mum said flicking her sleek blonde hair to one side. “We think it’s a beautiful night out here on the cruise.” Her tone was eager. “We’re leaving you alone to explore. We trust you to be careful.” Finally, Katie thought, a chance to get out of her cabin and explore!

Katie’s dad appeared behind her mum. “Are you ready to go?” he asked.

“Yes dear, I’m just finishing my eyeshadow,” Katie’s mum answered while finishing her makeup. Katie went back to

her comic enjoying the funny ending where the villains were caught. She felt her mum and dad kiss her on the top of the head and they headed towards the door of her cabin. Her dad looked back at her over his shoulder.

“Why don’t you visit the people staying in the cabin next to us? They have an eleven-year-old girl just like you,” Her dad suggested before shutting the door behind him.

The room was quiet. Katie thought for a minute and then got up from her bed, opened her door and walked down the hall to the door next to her parents’ cabin. She knocked quietly, listening for any noise behind the door. A girl with short black hair and a purple dress opened it.

“Hello, I’m Katie. I’ve come to say hello. My parents have gone out to dinner and suggested I came to introduce

myself to you.” A lady who looked identical to the girl came up behind her.

“Hello Katie, this is Lila,” said the tall lady. “Why don’t you two go and have a little explore of the ship together?” suggested the girl’s mum. Lila smiled and stepped out of the cabin.

Chapter 3

“Where shall we go?” asked Lila.

“I’m not sure,” answered Katie. “I haven’t looked around yet, have you?”

“I’ve been on deck. Shall we go there and look around?” suggested Lila.

“Sounds like a good start,” answered Katie as she began to follow her new friend. “So, what do you think of this cruise?” asked Katie.

“Well, my cabin certainly needs a makeover, and the captain is very strange. Have you met him yet?” Lila asked looking at Katie with a worried expression.

“Yes, I have,” Katie answered quickly, “and I agree, he is very odd. What is it about him that you thought was strange?”

“His voice didn’t sound right, and his facial expressions seemed funny. I can’t quite work out what it is about him, but there is definitely something odd,” Lila answered enthusiastically.

“I’m glad you feel the same as me. I told my mum, but she didn’t think there was anything to worry about,” moaned Katie. They arrived on the deck and looked out through the darkness. The girls silently stood looking out at the murky, sea.

“What’s that?” asked Lila pointing to a flashing light in the distance.

“It looks like a lighthouse” Katie answered.

“But, shouldn’t the ship be trying to steer away from the light? Doesn’t a lighthouse mean that there is something dangerous to avoid?” asked Lila with a worried tone.

“Yes,” Katie answered, quickly running and looking up to the bridge to see who was steering the ship. She could clearly see the captain with his hands on the wheel.

“STOP!!” yelled Katie waving her arms to get his attention.

“Maybe he can’t see the light,” offered Lila as she joined Katie and started to shout and wave her hands too.

The captain looked at them, his red eyes burning into them.

“He has seen us,” reassured Lila sounding a little bit out of breath. The girls watched as the captain left the bridge and started to climb down the decks towards them.

“Sorry, Captain. We saw that light in the distance and it looks like you were heading towards it,” said Katie.

“We were worried you hadn’t seen it,” added Lila still breathing heavily.

“Oh, I saw it,” said the captain. “In fact, that’s exactly where I’m heading!” A chilling laugh followed his frightening confession.

“But, but won’t we hit rocks if we head towards the lighthouse?” asked Katie, panicking about what the answer to her question would be.

All that came from the captain’s mouth was an awful cackle. He grabbed the girls by their wrists and they did not have time to struggle as he quickly opened the closest door to him and threw them in. They heard the door lock from the outside.

Chapter 4

The room was pitch black and both girls lay frozen on the floor not quite sure what had just happened.

Katie stood up first and felt her way to the door trying to turn the handle, but it was pointless, of course it was locked. She then felt along the walls feeling for a light switch. Her hand made contact with the plastic switch and Katie sighed with relief as she flipped it and the room illuminated. She quickly turned to face Lila, who was still on the floor hugging her knees.

“What are we going to do and how are we going to get out?” asked Lila as she started to sob. Katie looked around the room. It was windowless like her cabin and full

of random things; just a storeroom. Katie picked up a piece of metal pipe lying close to her and started banging it on the metal door. The noise vibrated around the room, loudly.

“HELP!” shouted Katie at the top of her voice.

“Shush!” cried Lila coming to join Katie by the door. “What if he hears us and comes back to hurt us.” Katie stopped banging instantly and the room sounded deathly quiet again. They both stood silently staring at each other and then started looking around the room for anyway to escape.

“Look!” cried Katie pointing to a vent on the ceiling. “It looks like there could be a passage that runs above this room. Do you think we could get up there?” Lila looked

where Katie was pointing and then started frantically searching around the room.

“There’s a small ladder here,” called Lila from over by a pile of junk. She pulled it out and moved it to line up under the vent. She put her foot on the first rung of the ladder and it broke. “Great!” she moaned noticing that most of the rungs were cracked so would not take their weight.

“That’s given me an idea though,” said Katie enthusiastically. “There is surely enough junk in this room to create a ladder or basically a pile of junk that we could climb up!” Lila smiled and they both set about piling what they could on top of each other to reach the vent in the ceiling.

“It’s not very safe,” moaned Lila looking at the mangled pile of junk heaped towards the ceiling vent.

“No,” sighed Katie. “I’ll go first if you like?” she offered. Not waiting for an answer Katie started to climb carefully up the broken chairs, tables and other items that they had managed to pile on top of each other. At the top, Katie carefully reached up to dislodge the vent cover, which to her relief moved easily. She gripped the edge of the opening and used all her strength to pull herself inside. “It’s okay Lila, it’s big enough up here to crawl through but we will need to be careful of the cables.” Lila started to follow the same path that Katie had taken.

“I’m worried Katie. I’m not as strong as you. I don’t think I can pull myself up like you did,” Lila worried as she stumbled to the top of the junk pile.

“I can help pull you up,” reassured Katie holding out her hands through the hole in the ceiling. Lila reached up,

grabbing the edge of the vent opening, struggling to pull herself up. With Katie’s help, she managed to get inside.

“What now?” asked Lila as she panted to get her breath back and rubbed her aching arms.

“We need to find my parents. They must be in the restaurant. They will know what to do,” said Katie confidently. The girls started crawling through the passage. Each time they came to a vent, they peered down to see where they were. “I don’t even know where the restaurant is!” cried Katie.

“This way,” called Lila turning direction and picking up speed. After what felt like ages, the girls looked through the vents and saw people sitting at tables. “Here we are, we just need to find them now,” said Lila. Katie took over

leading the way, looking through each vent until directly below her, were her parents.

“Here they are,” Katie called as she lifted off the vent and poked her head down towards her parents sitting below.

“Mum, Dad!” she called. Her parents started to look around before finally looking above their heads.

“Katie, what are you doing? Why are you up there?” her mum’s shocked voice spoke to her.

Chapter 5

“It’s a long story but we need your help!” shouted Katie.

“I think you need to explain what’s going on Katie. How did you get up there?” asked Katie’s dad in an angry tone.

“Lila and I went to explore the ship and while we were on deck, we noticed the ship was heading towards the lighthouse. We called to the captain to warn him, but he said he was aiming for the rocks and threw us in a storeroom and locked the door. We managed to escape through a vent in the room and crawled all the way to get you.” Katie took a massive breath after she finally got the whole story out. Her parents looked shocked and just stared at each other.

“That’s quite a story Katie,” Katie’s mum shook her head in disbelief.

“It is the truth,” called Lila as she appeared at the vent opening. “Go and look out at the window, we must be really close to the rocks now!”

After a short hesitation, both Katie’s parents arose from the table and went toward the window.

“OH NO!” shouted Katie’s mum. The sound of her cries encouraged other passengers to gather around to look out of the windows. One of the waiters sounded an alarm and people started to scream. Katie’s dad ran off in the chaos. A waiter stood on the table to help the girls climb down and they were passed a life jacket to put on by another waiter.

“Quick girls, we need to follow your dad, Katie,” shouted her mum above the noise. “Get your life jackets on.” The girls grappled with the jackets and put them on as quickly as possible. They followed Katie’s mum, who started to head towards the bridge. Out on deck, screams could still be heard and passengers were stumbling around trying to put life jackets on.

Katie, her mum and Lila pushed through the crowds of people to get to the bridge. They could see Katie’s dad entering the bridge and wrestling with the captain. The ship started to sway strongly in the water, as no one had hold of the wheel. Katie’s mum climbed up to the bridge and took hold of the wheel, attempting to steer the ship away from the rocks which were now so close they were visible and the light of the lighthouse was blinding.

“Quick Katie, I need you to call for help on the radio,” shouted Katie’s dad from the floor as he was trying to hold the captain down. Katie panicked, trying to remember how to make an emergency call on a radio. She had been shown once when she had been on a school trip to the Coastguard.

“Don’t touch the radio little girl,” called the captain with a scary voice.

“Don’t listen to him,” cried Lila. “Do you know what to do Katie?”

“I think I remember,” Katie answered as she lifted the radio and listened for the beeps. “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday,” called Katie, surprised at how calm her voice was. She waited for what felt like ages before a voice could be heard at the other end of the radio. Katie was able to

explain to the Coastguard that they were heading for the rocks just as there was a massive bang below them. The ship had hit the rocks. The screams on board got louder and a chilling chuckle came from the captain.

“It’s all over now,” called the captain, but his words were drowned out by the sound of a helicopter, followed by the Coastguard boat. Before Katie knew it, there were people on board helping passengers to safety and the Coastguard burst onto the bridge where the captain was arrested and dragged off.

Katie stood next to Lila on the shore looking at the marooned ship on the rocks.

“Well done girls,” said the Coastguard, “you did well.”

“Not that well,” corrected Katie. “We didn’t manage to stop the ship hitting the rocks.”

“Without you, girls, many of the passengers onboard could have been injured or worse. As it turns out, the ship hit the rocks gently, so the damage is repairable. We were here instantly, so everyone got off uninjured. You did a great job,” smiled the Coastguard.

“Why did he do it?” asked Lila.

“We don’t know,” said the Coastguard, “but without you this would have been a cruise of disaster.”

The End

We hope that you, your family and friends enjoy the book you have created. This project was co-ordinated and facilitated by author Nikki Young for members of her Storymakers writing club.

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When Katie Pearson meets the captain of the cruise ship she is on, something is not quite right.

But can he be that bad?

Will this trip end up being a cruise of disaster?