

1. He had a funny look, and this meant he was winding up for a big story. And this is how it went.

2.

But how he'd talk. Some days it was a rant against the rain, or maybe a particular storm, even the concept of rain in general. Other times it was a detailed list with descriptions of the prettiest lassies he'd ever laid peepers on. We all listened - you couldn't help it if you were going to drink there at all. Everyone listened. But never a word about himself; never a personal history until one day.

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"We couldn't tell how old he was, or where he'd come from."



Introduction

Late nights at Old Pete's you'd see him. Gray old muzzle dunked in a tankard, wiping the foam off his lips, old "Cappy" Dick, as he called himself. We couldn't tell how old he was, or where he'd come from. No trace of foreign accent in that whiny squeak of his, no distinguishing marks save the faded tattoo of an anchor on his upper left arm. The same one Poppy had, he'd cackle, and we wondered if maybe he'd put it there himself just to be like the cartoon sailor.

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Chapter Two: Rotten Luck

Dame Fortune is not only fickle, my friends, but she may be blind and stupid as well. Never have I heard a man tell a tale, but that the Goddess O' Fate hasn't blundered in and made the wrong decisions for everyone involved. Don't be looking for any "happily ever after" in the stories Old Cappy Dick has in store for you.

But we had just left me, a mere lad, sitting in the boats, tending the nets whilst Galen smiles on, all proud and young and strong, ready to take on the world, or at least what women abound - of such virtue that for Galen alone might those structures be loosened, and a sampling taken. And you, fair one, expecting the next step, you might hear the call of the sea as did I, and expect me to sail right off into the horizon, ready to meet Adventure?

Aye, but were it that easy, ever? No, our Lord in Heaven, sure as he has wound the mechanism of the Celestial Clock, had other plans in mind. And it was His will though I'd die a man unable to understand why, that my fair brother Galen, the finest bloom our family tree was to produce, should be stricken with infirmity.

At first he didn't even notice the tiny pox - no bigger than the head of a pin! And not so numerous as to mar his handsome face. He seemed in health and good spirits, even when the pox spread, and his face and chest were covered with them. We all thought he would recover, and that it was a matter of weeks before he would be up and about. But such powers of prescience were not meant for mortal man, and Galen continued his moribund crawl. And I, an envious lad, rejoiced at first that his countenance been so compromised; that he should find his lady suitors becoming fewer and fewer. At first I laughed a great deal at him, back when I thought the pox would eventually go.



"Always looking for Galen..."

3.

Chapter One: I Am Born.

You always wondered about Old Cappy Dick, didn't you? You always guessed what Cappy had done, and how he'd come to be here, in this place, telling you this story. Well, we need to go back quite a ways, I'd say. How many years, maybe even I don't know. Back to a little fishing village in Dorchester. That's across the pond, if you remember your geography.

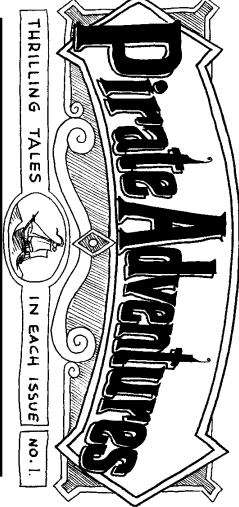
When my mother gave birth, you should have seen this child. Golden locks of hair, a strong, lean jaw, healthy as an ox, and skin so soft... that was my brother, all right. And never a prettier babe had you laid eyes on, so help me Jesus. Least that's what they told me. And told me and told me, because when I was born a year later the whole village was disappointed that my parents hadn't worked a second miracle.

Yes, it was noticeable enough. So much so that either my true parentage - or my brother's - was a subject often discussed when my father wasn't around to take offense.

Bless their hearts, my parents tried. But when one child is so fair, and the other so plain - well, let's just say I didn't exactly get my share of anything from the moment I took in air. No one made a conscious effort to leave me the scraps while my brother feasted, but that's what happened all right. He was a happy child, loved and doted on by everyone in the village. Word of his arrival had even spread to other villages, and occasionally he'd get a visitor from somewhere else up the coast, looking for Galen, for that was his name, always looking for Galen.

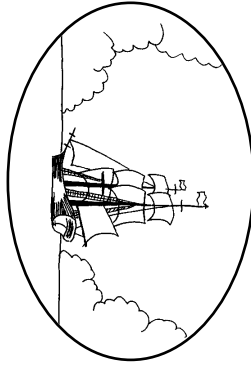
IN THIS NUMBER

"CAPTAIN DICK'S PIRATE STORY"



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This number contains part one of "Captain Dick's Pirate Story," a serial tale of Spirited Adventure on the High Seas for All to Enjoy.

mere fact that I was living in their house was eating them up a constant reminder of the cruel trick God had played.

They wanted me to leave. Now.

What would you have done, reader fair? To be turned upon by your own flesh and blood, by the parents that raised you? Can you imagine how I felt that day, cursed and spat upon by my progenitors, asked to leave - banished from the village which was my only home? I should have been elated, I tell you, and as luck would have it, it is the best thing that can happen in this tale.

But my eyes were not dry that day, nor was my stomach or legs so strong when I took a last look at our village and, on foot, and carrying no possessions, as I had ought but the clothes on my back, said goodbye to everything I had ever known.



"Goodbye to everything I had ever known..."

TO BE CONTINUED IN "PIRATE ADVENTURES" NO.2

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