

THE
Storms
Gift





Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

PARAMETERS FORM

TEAM DETAILS

STATE: WA

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: Melville Senior High School (MELVILLE)

TEAM NAME: Year 8A

TEAM ID: 77

PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

Parameters

Primary character 1 .. Stablehand

Primary character 2 .. Ship captain

Non-human character .. Clock

Setting .. Lake

Issue .. An unwanted gift

Random words

Whistle

Light

Gold

Hungry

Bubbly

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at 8am
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
 - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
 - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
 - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every page** counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm.**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- Complete the Declaration
- Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

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Published by Year 8A, Melville Seniors High school. 18 Potts Street W.A

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Chapter 1

Fiona

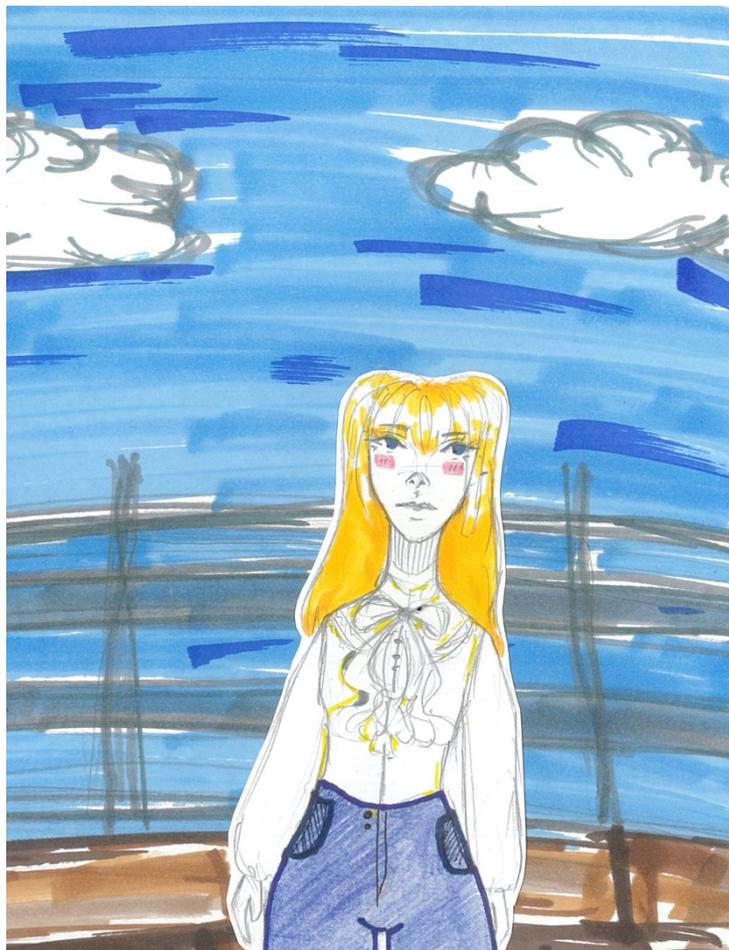
It was a normal shipment day on the coast near lake Macleod. The coast was in our sights and the journey from Perth had been unentertaining. I was on my boat where my crew was on duty as they usually are. That was when the sky became the darkest, most dull colour of blue I have ever seen. I had been warned multiple times by my crew that we should stop and anchor the ship before the weather turns against us in the most brutal way. What do they know? I have been at sea for more than 2 years and never once was I stopped by weather.

My authority is clearly on a higher level than theirs. I **am** the ship's **captain**.
Meena yelled at me from the lower deck.

“REEF UP AHEAD. CAPTAIN FIONA, CHANGE THE COURSE NOW!”

“SHUTUP Meena! I am tired of your constant, unnecessary blabbering, and your pathetic imagination! There aren't any reefs in this area!”

I peered off the top deck of the ship only to realise I couldn't have been more wrong. In front of the ship was one of the most widespread coral reefs I had ever come across in the two years of my sailing. I raged at the crew to change the ships course. I regretted not listening to Meena, but I didn't dare let anyone know about my shameful mistake. There was no time though. That was when the wind picked up and the ship jolted in the direction of the reef. Before anyone could comprehend what had just happened, the ship sank on an angle and everyone, besides myself, on the top deck was thrown overboard very abruptly.

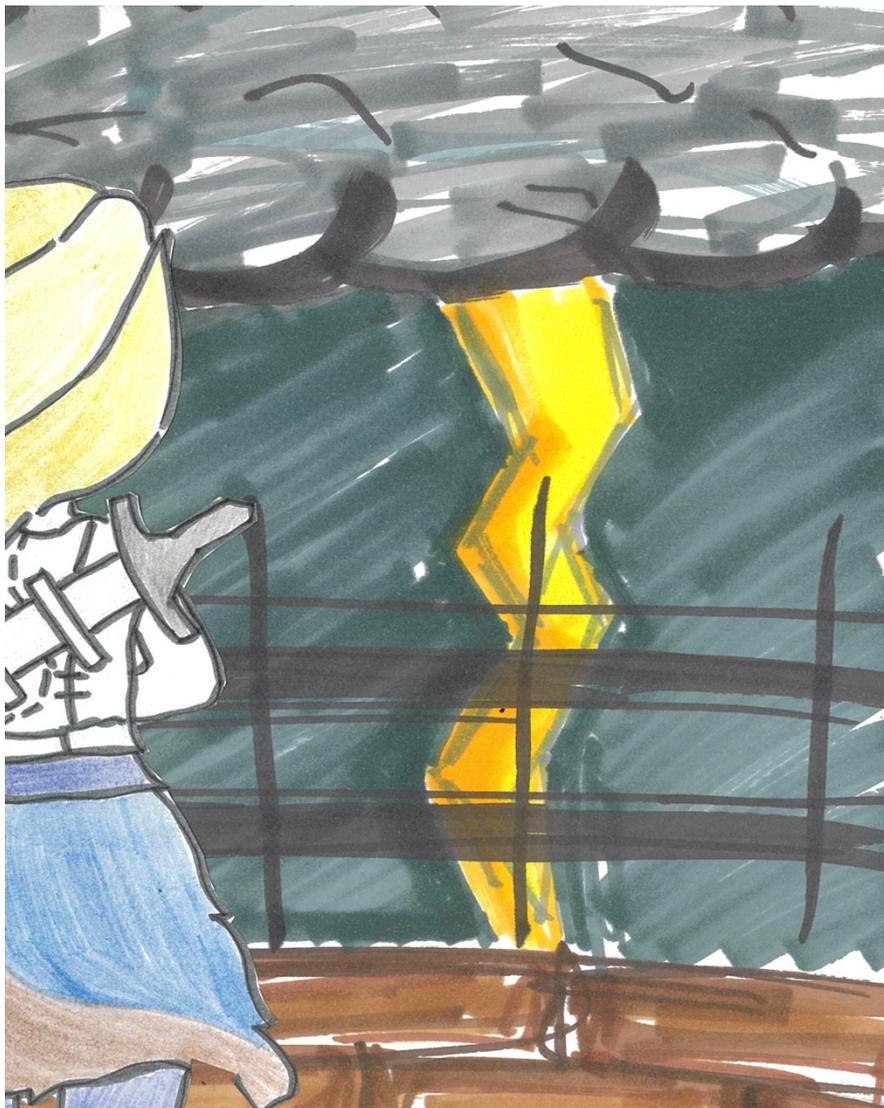


I looked around desperately and saw the horrific view of my crew lying unconscious. Most of them had been thrown overboard and had no choice but to swim safely to the shore. The rest of the crew that was below deck had been knocked unconscious. I grabbed them and lifted them up to the top deck taking a few return trips for each of my crew. By the time I was able to get the five unconscious crew members up to the top deck, it started raining bullets. I could barely make out the lake anymore and the coast was far from sight. The ship had somehow managed to engulf itself in the heart of the coral reef and the hull of the ship was converged with the coral. I looked around hastily for any way of transport to get the rest of my crew to safety. They were finally waking up and gaining conscious. That's when I noticed a distinct figure near the front of the

That's when I heard her voice.

“DO YOU NEED ANY HELP”

That's when I saw her. It was an indigenous girl on a ginger, hazelnut stallion who had dirty curly hair that extended to her elbow. She was wearing a faded raggedy green gown that went all the way down to her ankles with dark muddy brown boots.



Chapter 2

Jackie

It was a lively day by the lake. Streets were busy as usual, traders unloading off the docks and the stench of cattle engulfed the air. I ran off again, the stable house bored me out and I had already finished my chores. The sun was covered by the bright, blinding clouds, reflecting off of the clear, cerulean water. I was out on the street again, getting those glares as per usual. But Marlee and I still continued on. Whatever anyways, since when did anyone else's opinions matter to me? I was proud to be an aborigine.

We came by the mouth of the lake and noticed a change in weather. The clouds were gray and the temperature dropped. And that's when I noticed the grey clouds were inching closer and closer to the coast. The tide rose.

I noticed a ship nearing coast, with an *extremely* attractive ship captain.

Aside from that, I could make out that they were clearly in distress, the panicked screams rebounding to my ears from across the water alerted me immediately.

I rushed over, urging Marlee to sprint harder. Hearing her hooves thunder onto the wooden dock gave me an urge of adrenaline. I genuinely missed this feeling. I neared the end of the pier, closing in by the bow of the ship.

"DO YOU NEED ANY HELP?!" I yelled across, although I realised that the ship was rapidly drifting away. The ocean's roar filled my ears and lightning struck before my eyes.

"**NO!** We can *manage!*" The ship captain yelled, struggling to hold on to the ropes.

"No, **YOU SERIOUSLY NEED HELP!**"

"No! I-I mean we n-need help, but **NOT FROM YOU!**" The captain stuttered, whilst trying to get a hold of her belongings.

"The ship is getting near the reef! You'd better move and change course!"



“The ship is getting near the reef! You’d better move and change course!”

“Woah, so *you* think we can steer out of this damning hell hole?? What kind of experience do you have with ships? Know it all.”

“You’re so annoying, it’s kinda cute.”

“WHAT??”

The winds were whistling even louder than before, rain heavily poured onto the pier.

I ran off to find the nearest rope, snatching the rough threads of the rope into my work-ridden hands. I took the rope and tied it firmly onto a pole. I got onto Marlee, rode her into the water, chasing after the boat within the raging waters, grasping onto her and the rope with all my life. My green dress soaked in the saltwater along with the dampness of my dark hair made me feel anew. I glanced up impulsively and saw the horror on the ship captain’s face as she heard a large thud and several screams from her crew.

“Cap, the ship’s hit the reef!”

“WHAT? I THOUGHT Y’ALL STEERED AWAY?!”

“But cap it was practically IMPOS-”

CRASH!

This time it was louder than the last.

The yells and screams were echoing in my ears.

I need to do something.

I frantically swam around the ship, with the rope still firmly in my hands. I left Marlee by the side of the boat. I swam and found one crew member, floating unconscious and I immediately grabbed her, tied her to the rope and swam to Marlee. What I didn’t realise was that the ship captain was still standing.

“Hey! HELP ME OUT! IT’S **YOUR** CREW.”

“I DIDN’T ASK FOR YOUR HELP. I CAN MANAGE!”

“No, you CAN’T. Just accept my HELP!”



Chapter 3

Fiona

I gazed at my ship, which plunged and rose at the whim of the storm. The sight caused me to grit my teeth. The people on board were trying to save the vessel, but I already knew it and its cargo was beyond saving. My crew, however, was not.

“All right. I need your assistance, even if you are one person. My crew are in danger of losing their lives, and I cannot allow them to die.” I glared at horse-girl, who seemed to be staring at me as well. I glimpsed the surprise that lit her eyes and I almost rolled my own.

“Yes, my crew. Now go help them.”

“That is a very bold statement coming from someone who *asked* for help.” This girl was really starting to irritate me. Who was she to judge my words?

“My people are DYING.” This finally got the mildly amused smile off her face, replaced by an expression that might’ve been made of cast iron. Finally, she moved to reach for some rope that rested on the pier. I sighed with relief, almost taking a great gulp of seawater. Spluttering, I lost sight of the shore for a moment as I slid along the wood of the deck. Eventually I managed to scramble upright. A strange, wild sound, much like a **whistle**, pierced the air. It seemed to have come from where I had last seen horse-girl. Another sound, slightly deeper but no less loud, echoed out across the churning water.

Unconsciously, my hand reached into my pocket, searching for something to steady me. I was confused when it met void, until I remembered. Oh. No. No no no no *no*. I almost slipped again, but I clambered up the railing with shaking limbs, hand slipping out of my pocket to brace myself. My teeth chattered and wet hair that felt like seaweed smacked me in the face multiple times, but I barely noticed.

How could I forget the pocket watch?

I could conjure it up in my mind anytime, after years of studying and examining it in the space of my family’s private library, as well as on long sea journeys. Its burnished metal case opening to reveal the golden interior gleaming with the sun’s glorious **light**, the crystal sparkling like all the stars gathered into one. I treasured it above all else, but not for its wealth.

The history of this pocket watch, not the shining **gold** and glittering crystal, was what made it special. The deep, clear blue of his eyes and his bright smile. His entire face seemed to glow, which made me like him, even though I had never actually met the man.



I knew he was my great grandfather. His image was hung in my grandfather's house. He was the one who had brought wealth to my family, starting the trading company that travelled across the world. No one knew he had done it. Others gave that honour to his son. No one seemed to care for his possessions as much as I did. And yet, this one held a charm I could not deny.

It carried his essence, his spirit. As long as I kept this part of his with me, he could never really die in my mind. And if I lost it now, then he would be gone forever.

I needed to get that pocket watch back, but my crew needed me. I weighed the options and rushed to the edge and grabbed the arm of the first person I came across. I helped him up and he dashed for higher ground. Then I reached for the next. And the next.

The pocket watch could wait. These people couldn't.

Chapter 4

Jackie

Every inch of my aching body is making me more eager to do this. I know I'm meant to do this; I know I'm born to do this; this is my purpose that I have been dying for. My purpose is to help people in need even if it means sacrificing my own life. Marlee's hazelnut eyes giving off the same fear and ambition that I feel right now. The pouring rain continues thundering on top of the rickety wooden stable roof. I can feel Marlee's velvety body tensing up as I pull my body weight onto her. My sweaty hands clenching hard onto the reigns of the saddle as I look onto the raging storm ahead. I'm ready for this!

Every stride, every gallop we make, no matter how hard the rain is coming down, I get more courage to do this. The salty, dry taste of the sea breeze blowing into my already knotty, puffy hair makes me realise how close I am. I can see a faint silhouette of the hulk of the ship as it slowly, but surely sinks down. I



need to get there faster! My hands stinging from the burn of the saddles in my hand, I can feel Marlee's feeling the strain as well she is becoming weak and **hungry**. The crunching of the sand below makes it more evident in how close I am, to sea. I can hear the struggling cries of the crew on the ship and I can see Fiona struggling to keep afloat. The **bubbly**, frothy water gets deeper as Marlee hesitates. But I cannot stop now! I leave Marlee in semi shallow water as I even though I can sense she wants to continue; I cannot risk her life anymore. However, Marlee would not give up. She still came with me no matter how much I try to stop her. We finally reach the capsized ship and I can tell the aching burn in our body is worth it.

The crew is struggling, with most of them being passed out. However, I came to do a job and I will never quit! Along with Marlee, I pull the crew out to safety lying on Marlee's back. There is only five or so crew members that I can see, but Marlee can only carry a few at a time.

"Let me help!"

With my blurred vision, I can see the captain coming to help the remaining passengers. I can see her very fatigued face and her flesh badly bruised. I direct the captain to go with Marlee back to the shore to safety as I try to reach the remaining few passengers left behind. However, she just would not leave. As soon as I checked that all the passengers were on their way to safety, I realise my job is done and it's time to head bad. However, I could not find her anywhere.

"Captain! Where are you!"

I start to fear for the worst until I hear a faint shrill of a whisper.

"Just go, I'll get there."

I go to check on her as I see her frantically look for something. I sense the worry in her eyes.

"Captain! All the crew are on the shore safely, what are you still doing?"

"Let's go now!"

"No horse girl, this is really important I need to find something."

"Leave! What could be more important than your life?"

"This is important horse girl, I'm looking for a pocketwatch, it's the only thing that I have to remember my family, I know this may sound weird, but I can actually talk to my lost ancestors through it."

I think about this for a while, I know that human life is only important, but I see the captain has a really deep connection with this pocket watch. It's the only thing she has. However, our life is more important than this worthless object. After a lot of deciding, I came with a decision on what to do.

"How can I help finding your watch?"

Chapter 5

Fiona

Waves were crashing down onto my shoulders, the continuous beat of thunder boomed loudly in the sky with the occasional burst of lightning. I was searching frantically, a golden watch, *gold, gold*, I repeated in my head over and over again. I couldn't let her down, not when they already thought so lowly of me! I am tipping and pushing the excess cargo away. It was still no where it be found. Come on!

The lightning spread across the sky, illuminating the sullen sky. My heavy calls of help were drowned out by the waves and the screaming audience along the shore, but I couldn't stop, not when I was so close. Then in the distance, I spotted the gleam of the gold watch, floating just a few metres away. 'Got you,' I thought. It was so close yet so far. Marlee was slowing down. I could feel her strong heartbeat weaken under my weight. Carefully climbing off her, I brought her head to meet mine. 'Go back to your master' I gasped. The saltwater stung my eyes as tears rolled down my face. Pushing Marlee away in the direction of the shore, I watched her glance back at me for a moment, before swimming away. Keeping the clock in sight, I swam over to it. Soon it was in arm's reach. I felt the tug of the ocean swell pull me away. I was swimming frantically against the tide but felt as if I was making little progress.



The sensation of flying took over me as a wave came behind pushing me forward. For a moment I felt complete. The waves of the ocean behind me and the boom of thunder ahead of me. The lightning was blinding as I reached for the clock. Finally, I grasped it in my hand, holding it tightly to my chest. Only a bit further now, swimming closer to the shore, my breath labourer. My shoulders stung from the sudden movements of the waves. Push, pull, push, pull. The waves were pulling me out to the ocean, but I had to get to shore, my legs started to give way and my arms could barely move. A few meters ahead I saw people at shore. With the little bit of energy, I pushed on. I felt my eyes slowly closing. People started diving into the water to grab my almost drowned body as my head barely stayed above the water, my hand still clutching onto the pocket watch. With zero energy left, I felt a pair of hands pick me up. That was when I blacked out.

When I came to, I was surrounded by many of what I thought was the crew. I looked around and saw the same attractive ship captain that I saved earlier. Feeling my cheeks heat up, I sat up. It took less than a minute for me to wrap my head around where I was and what I was doing. That was when I realised that I was on the pier, dripping wet. My golden hair streaming down my face, and that's when I saw the brown skinned girl leaning in front of me.

"Are you ok?"

A crowd surrounded her, but then I grew to realise that most of them were my crew mates.

"I-I uh, yes?" I stammered.

"That was kind of wild,ahaha."

I did not respond.

“You offered your hand, a gift of help. You didn’t even know who I was or what had happened and yet, without hesitating, you still stayed behind to help my crew even after I turned you down. It is because of your bravery that no one had to lose their life today. We are in your debt and hopefully you can forgive my disrespectful behaviour from earlier.”

The horse girl replied,

“It doesn’t matter. What matters is that we were able to put aside our differences for the sake of others. Maybe other people can learn that our different personalities and nationality didn’t get in the way of saving each other’s lives.”



Epilogue

Days after the storm, Fiona managed to find some supplies washed up. Her crew collected all the important remains and waited for the next ship to arrive, which exhausted them all quickly and they left to find other things to last the time. Weeks passed before it docked, weeks that allowed for the crew to mingle with the locals. By the end of their stay, when the other ship's captain agreed to take a message back to Fiona's family company and they sent another to take them home, half the crew didn't even want to leave. The few that did want to go leapt aboard, but Fiona trailed behind.

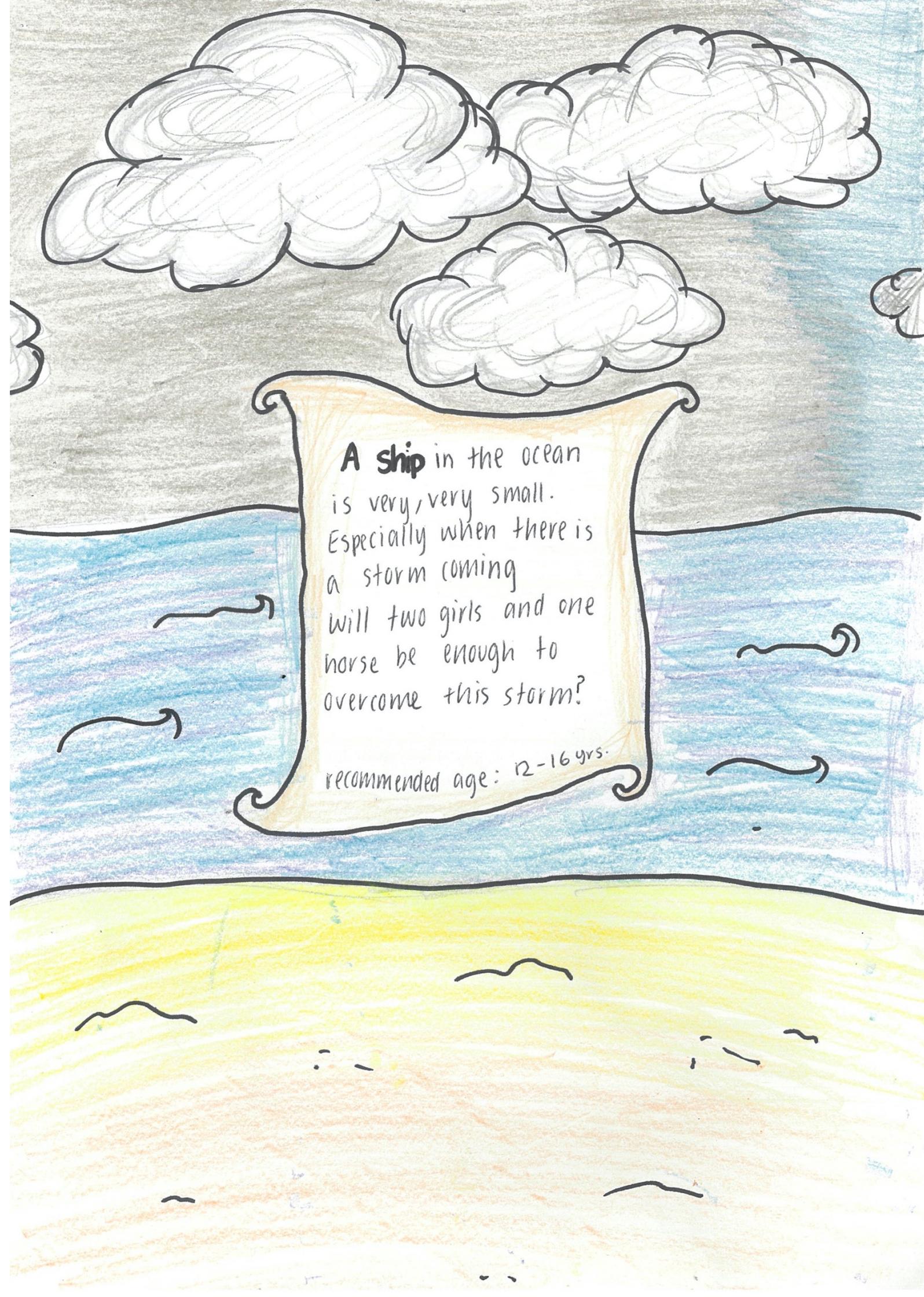
Her stay had been definitely enjoyable and possibly even better than any other place she had been, but she knew she couldn't stay. It was why she had been sailing before. Fiona never felt comfortable in one spot, even if there was someone, she actually liked spending time with there.

At first, she begged Jackie to come. That did not turn out well, and it ended with Jackie slamming the door. Her horse Marlee meant too much to her. The second time around, they agreed on a compromise, one that they both liked. Or at least okay with. It still didn't sit well with Fiona, no matter what Jackie said.

A few months later, Fiona returned to that pier off the coast near Lake Macleod on board a new ship, with a fresh crew and a full cargo of grain. As the sailors carried the loads off of the ship, Fiona stepped off and smiled at the girl-no, woman- that stood in front of her, leaning slightly on a post. "Well, hello Horse-girl. It has been a little while, hasn't it?" Jackie grinned back and walked forward to embrace Fiona.

"Huh. Has anything changed since I left?" Fiona arched an eyebrow and Jackie shook her head, still with a grin on her face. "May as well check, just in case." Together they strode towards the shore.

They met again and again over the years, with both refusing to leave for the other and then parting ways, over and over. But while they were at odds, they could both agree that although it had been a disaster, the storm had been a gift. The chance to meet each other, to know and to talk and to laugh... it was all a gift.



A ship in the ocean
is very, very small.
Especially when there is
a storm coming
Will two girls and one
horse be enough to
overcome this storm?

recommended age: 12-16 yrs.