

11 YEARS AT SEA

by Anas Abubaker 8B

My name is Caspian. It was my eighth day on the *HMS Glory*. I was on a voyage to find my brother Jack who disappeared around two months previously on the *HMS Eclipse*, the King's flagship. They suspected that he was attacked by pirates. He was in the middle of Black Beard's territory. He was making an inspection that he performs monthly on Nassau just to make sure that everything was in order since. It was running rampant with pirates and there was news of a new ruthless pirate sailing Spanish seas, his ship was called *The Sparrow*.

"Captain," called out my first mate from above.

"What is it boy? It had better be important," I called out while I rolled out of bed slowly.

"We've arrived in Nassau and Captain Jack's fleet is here just outside the bay, but the *HMS Eclipse* is nowhere to be seen."

"What!" I screamed while I jumped up and onto the quarter deck and to my shock I saw exactly what Arno had said. "What are you waiting for? Signal them now!"

We approached the ships but as we got closer we noticed something weird, the crew were all in the water lying face down and not moving. As we got even closer we noticed that all the ships were unattended and deserted. We decided to check aboard for survivors but as soon as we got on we smelt a damp stench almost like burning meat. We went down to the crew's quarters and we saw charred bodies. We tried searching the

bodies to try to identify the crew but the bodies were so badly burnt that we couldn't tell who they were. We checked the other ships and they were all the same.

"Who or whatever did this is a monster," said Arno. "It's completely terrible, we must find out what happened and prevent it from happening again."

In a way I was actually relieved that my brother's ship wasn't among these. We decided to go to Nassau to ask about the ships but the people there didn't cooperate either because everyone around there was drunk and couldn't even let out a word and even if they did we wouldn't understand a word. Or perhaps it was because I look like my brother and everyone was terrified of him because before he was a privateer for the King's navy he was one of the most well-known pirates around the West Indies.

After about an hour we got tired so we started towards our ship but were interrupted by a crowd in a big circle. My men dispersed the people but as soon as I saw what was in the middle I immediately knew what had happened and so did my men. All we saw was a charred body that was unrecognisable, but this time the murderer wasn't that organised because he left behind the man's identification. It read John Parker. I recognised that name almost instantly. We worked together in the navy under captain Edward Teach who I believe now is the most notorious pirate in the West Indies, Blackbeard.

"Captain, what do we do with the body?"

"We have to bury them. Yes, that's the right thing to do. Bring in those ships and get all the bodies and burn them."

"Aye, aye, captain."

As Arno walked towards the dingy he was attacked by a hooded man, dressed in red and black robes. He fought like a devil dressed in man's clothes. As he took down his sixth soldier he ran towards Arno but I intervened. I put my sword right in front of Arno's face hoping to deflect the attack, and I did but just barely. As the hooded man slashed Arno's left eye, blood gushed out and Arno let out a cry. The rest of my men gathered and pointed their guns at him. I ordered them to fire but the man was too quick and ran off towards the bay. He lunged into a brig or at least that's what I saw. It had Crimson sails and an emblem of a skull and cross bones on the sides. It had around twenty broadside cannons and from the flag I already recognised the ship belonged to a pirate, we ran to our ship to continue our pursuit on the sea. Unfortunately we weren't fast enough, but just as it was leaving the bay I saw just a glimpse of the name, Cardinal.

The next morning we decided to go to a local tavern to ask about the ship and its captain but no one said anything they all just ran, but this time it wasn't because of my brothers infamous identity but something else, after about an hour or so a harbour master finally told us about the ship, he said that it was a ghost ship and anyone who saw it would be cursed and also the people around him.

After a long chat we discovered that the harbour masters grandfather had designed the ship especially for its captain, he had told us that the captain of the ship was spouting out ludicrous things about ships getting lost at sea and never seen again and about giant beasts that devour sailors and destroy ships, and that what he needs the ship to save

people, so he designed it to be the fastest ship that ever sailed the West Indies and it was originally called the cutter but the owner of the ship died while engaged in combat with a Spanish galleon and his ship was apparently destroyed and sunk to the bottom of the ocean until it had chosen a new captain, worthy to sail it to battle and to take revenge on the Spanish and to guide sailors away from the forbidden sea,

At around two o'clock noon we continued with our search for my brother and to uncover the true secrets about the Cardinal,

"How's your eye?" I called out to Arno.

"The doctor at Nassau was half drunk and ripped out my whole eye by accident. I killed him and rapped it up myself," he said with a chuckle.

"How about your sight? Can you shoot a pistol?"

"All I know is that I can shoot better than you captain."

"We'll see. How about we take on that small pirate rig over there then we'll see how good you shooting is."

"Shouldn't we be searching for you brother, captain?"

"We'll ask about his ship and about the Cardinal. Since they are all pirates, they must know about each other's whereabouts."

As we continued towards the ship, we noticed another ship which looked like a frigate but was slightly smaller. It bade black leather sails and a flag that had the same

dark emblem as on the Cardinal. It was a triangle but the bottom of it was protruding and made kind of a semi-circle with a skull in the middle. We abandoned the pirate brig and went towards the other ship. As we were heading towards it, they noticed us and had their cannons pointed towards us. Around twenty six broadside cannons were pointed at us. "BRACE!" I screamed as we held on to the nearest thing.

I saw two crew members fly off the side, but this didn't faze me as my man'o'war had 50 cannons on each side with a devastating force. We put our sights on it and fired but the ship evaded our shots completely and fired their next hailstorm of cannon balls. We were hit pretty badly but we didn't give up. We fired all of our cannons but yet again we missed our target. This time the shot that they hit us with was catastrophic. It hit our gunpowder reserves and before we knew it there was an explosion that left a huge gaping hole in our hull. The ship was going down, then out of nowhere a huge chunk of wood hit me and everything went black.

"Aargh!" I woke up to the sound of Arno screaming in pain.

We floated on some drift wood to the shore of a small island smaller than our ship. As I looked over I saw that a shaft of the mast was embedded in his chest. It looked like it had just missed any arteries. Blood stained the sand, making it a dark red viscous substance. I tried to get up and help him but I couldn't move. As I looked down to my horror, my leg was twisted completely the wrong way and there was a huge gaping wound on my calf. I screamed, not out of pain but because I was so shocked. Eventually I started screaming out of pain because something was on my leg, a huge leach on my wound. As

I looked at Arno, I saw that he had passed out from blood loss. I decided I had to act quickly or we'd both die. I flipped myself over and painfully ripped off the leach and crawled toward a rock. I managed to get my mangled leg under the huge rock and let it drop on my leg. I twisted my body the other way while screaming uncontrollably. After around two minutes my leg was twisted the right way. I crawled over to a bottle of alcohol and picked it up. Then I crawled to Arno. I ripped off my shirt and part of my pants. I covered the small cloth on my pants with some alcohol and got my shirt ready. I ripped out the shaft of wood out of Arno's chest. That immediately woke him. I rubbed the cloth that had alcohol around the wounded area and quickly wrapped it up with part of my shirt. He fainted from the shock when I ripped out the shaft from his chest. I did the same with my leg with the left over rum. Before I knew it, I was exhausted and fell asleep.

I woke up just after the sun had set. In the distance I saw my ship burning and illuminating the sky and giving a reddish orange glow. I stared at it for about ten minutes then noticed some of my crew on an island not far from ours. I started crawling to gather some sticks to make a fire, to get warm and to try and signal the crew on the other island. After what seemed like an age, I had gathered enough wood. I used my knife and a rock to create sparks to light the fire.

After I lit the fire I decided to look for food. I searched for something edible but the only thing I found were some baby birds that died from falling off their nests. I said, 'It's better than nothing.' As I searched for other animals, I encountered a cave. I saw a fresh carcass of a small boar. As I crawled towards it, I heard rustling coming from the bushes behind me. I ignored it and continued. The noise followed. When I looked behind me I

saw some eyes peering through the bushes directly at me and before I knew it a jaguar had me pinned down, trying to bite my face off. Instinctively, I reached for my flintlock and I was just able to reach it in time. BAM!

"Arno, how you doing?"

"Better thanks to you captain, although I still can't move."

I struggled to talk but managed to whisper, "What's on the fire?"

"Oh it's just something I put together."

"Where did you get the meat?"

"Hunting," he motioned his finger towards the dark lifeless forest.

He handed me a cup of water and a plate of food. "You lost a lot of blood. You must be weak. Eat. That'll help you regain your strength."

"What happened to your arm captain?"

"I had a little accident with a wild cat."

"If you don't dress that wound it'll get infected."

"I know but there isn't any rum or clean cloth left to dress it."

After around three hours of staring into the distance I saw a ship a British ship. It was as if the life had sprung back into my body. I jumped up and gathered as much dry

wood as I could and threw it into the fire to make it bigger and not far off I saw some other survivors on the other island doing the same. The British ship saw our signals and headed towards us.

"How's the captain?"

I ran towards the doctor on the British ship.

"I'm afraid he won't make it," he said as I fell backwards. "He has a severe infection on his arm and a minor infection on his leg," he said calmly. "The only way we can save him is if we amputate his right arm and his right leg, but he refused and said he'd rather die."

I chuckled quietly as I knew that would be his answer.

"But you should be worried about yourself. If we don't treat that wound you'll share the same fate as your captain."

I quietly followed him. He deliberately put me in the bed next to the captain.

"You got any rum?" the captain asked the doctor.

"It's not good for you to drink rum in your current state."

"Shut up. I'm already gonna die! Now get me my rum," the captain yelled furiously.

"They think I don't know that I'm gonna die" he chuckled under his breath. "Now Arno I need to ask of something from you"

"Yes, what is it?"

"I need you to find my brother, and to kill the bastards that took my ship away from me."

"As a captain's last request to his first mate."

"I will, I give you my word."

Since that promise I made to the late captain it's been ten years I'm reaching my fifties and have a lead that will hopefully lead me to the *Cardinal* and that ship that caused us to go through such hardships. They're hit men that are supposedly trying to do the right thing and kill the corrupt King and take down all of his advisors, my informant tells me that they may have kidnapped and tortured Captain Jack for information about the whereabouts of the King's advisors, family and etcetera. He also told me that their main hideout is unknown but there's one on Nassau. I got on my brand new ship and crew that I had been assembling for the past 10 years.

As I was heading to Nassau, I noticed a huge storm forming from the East. Just before the storm's clothes closed my view, I saw two ships resembling the ones that I saw before. They were the *Cardinal* and the *Sparrow*. I immediately turned the ship towards them at full speed. My crew members immediately recognised the ships and loaded the cannons ready to fire once we got close to them. I ordered my men to fire the chain shot to slow them down. I slowed down *The Sparrow*. What fortune. It was the fastest ship out of the two and could dodge our attacks very effectively. I ordered my men to fire their mortar at the *Cardinal* then to hit them with our broadside cannons, then circle around and hit the *Sparrow* with our next barrage of metal balls but they both went off in different directions. At first I was confused, but then I realised that they wanted to attack from both

sides and I was right in the middle but I had a new ship, faster than *The Glory*, and had more guns than both of them combined.

"Fire the mortars and broadside cannons!"

Then I heard a huge thundering noise. All of our ships fired at the exact same moment and it was as if everything was going as slowly as in a dream. I could see the cannon balls colliding, but of course our guns were more powerful and superior than theirs and after one hit from our cannons both ships were incapacitated. We boarded the sparrow first and sure enough there was the infamous pirate Edward Teach. He had grown old and could barely run but he was still the best pirate captain alive to this day.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he said in a confused voice.

"I want you dead."

"Why, do I even know you?"

"Of course you wouldn't. You never take the time to know who you kill, and now you try to run away from your past but it will always come after you, even in death."

"I guess you are right, but it was never my intention to kill. All I ever wanted was to make some money and return to my wife and children, to live a great long life full of riches."

"As was my dream but I cannot return now. I've come this far to kill you. You took something away from me and my captain and for that I cannot forgive you."

"Then kill me now! Strike me down!"

"So long, great captain," I said as I impaled him through the chest.

After I killed him, I left him on his ship and let it sink to the bottom of the sea. I proceeded to boarding the next ship, *The Cardinal*. As I approached *The Cardinal's* captain, he took off his hood and smiled. It was Captain Jack. I was shocked at first but then it made sense: a new captain emerging the exact same time as his disappearance and not even one person saw him or his ship.

"You did all this. You're the pirate captain I've been chasing this whole time?"

"Yes, surprisingly I am," he said as he chuckled to himself.

"And you're the one who cut my eye!"

"Yes, I am."

"But why?"

"Because our stupid King doesn't even know how to run a country, so I must kill him and all of his pawns, even if his pawns are my own brothers."

"I was meant to find you and save you but now I'm having second thoughts."

"Captain Arno, there's a huge water spout. It'll suck us up whole."

"Everyone brace!"

We were hit by the water spout, and in all the confusion I saw Jack falling into the water spout, and then so did I. Right now I don't know where I am. I floated across the ocean

then I fainted out of exhaustion. Now I'm on an island but I don't recognise it or any islands surrounding it. I can only pray that someone finds this.