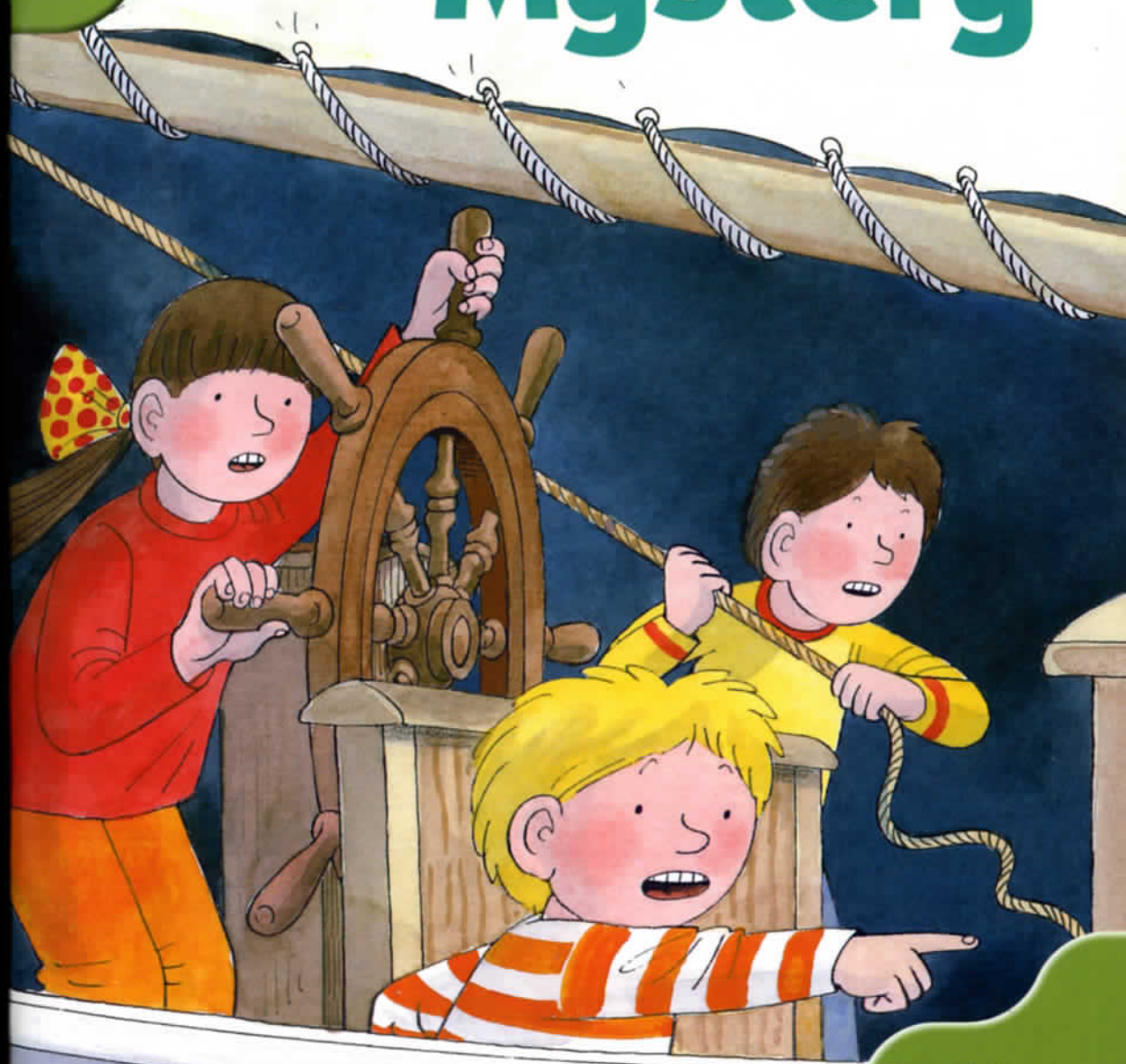




Oxford  
Reading  
Tree

# A Sea Mystery



David Hunt  
Alex Brychta

Story written by David Hunt based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt  
Illustrations by Alex Brychta



### **What's this story about?**

Kipper wants to buy a model of a boat. It isn't for sale, but the owner gives him a rowing boat from the model. Then a magic adventure begins where the children help some sailors in danger.

### **Talk together**

Look at the seaside picture at the beginning of the book, and the rough seas on pages 24–25. Ask, "What do you think the story is about?"

### **Read the story**

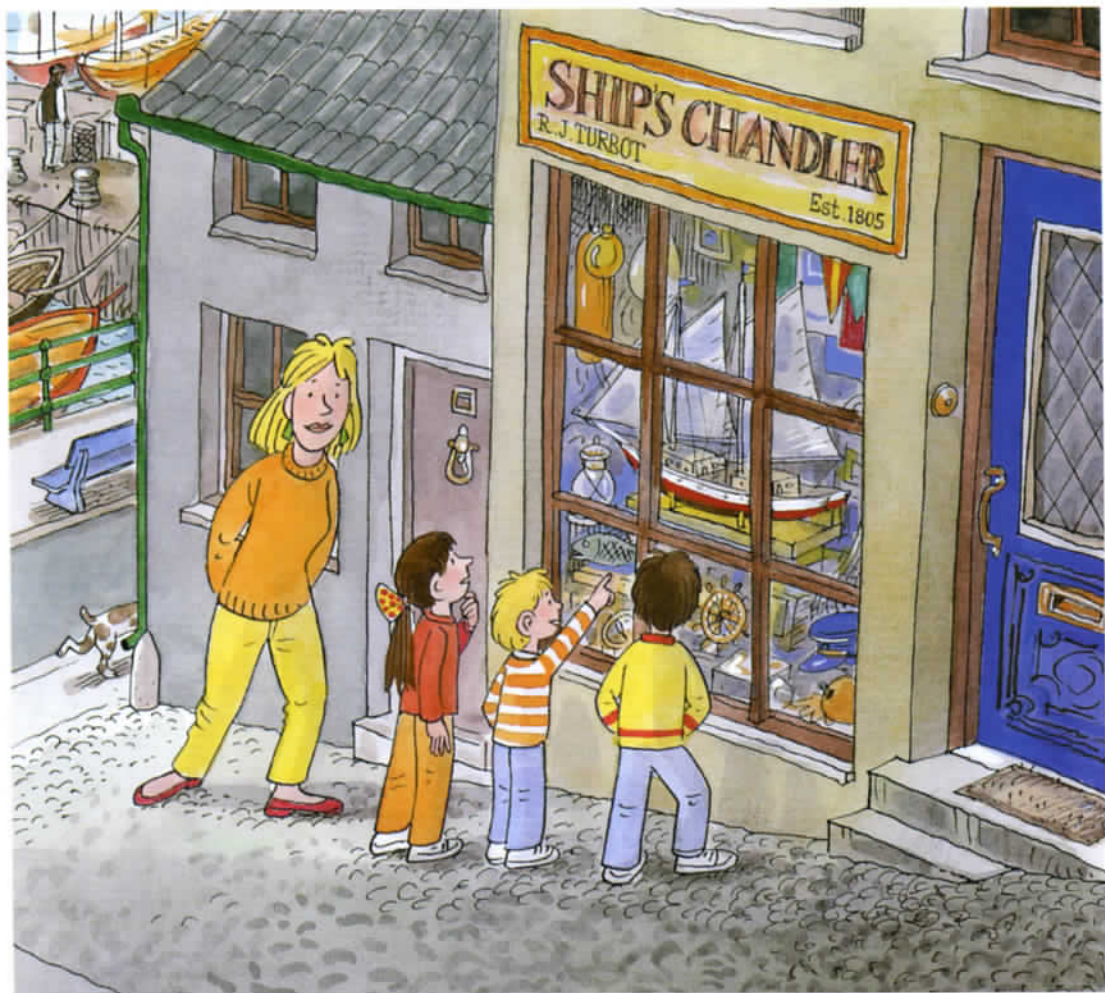
**W** = Word recognition    **C** = Language comprehension

- Listen as the children read aloud. Praise them for reading with expression.
- W** Page 7, find the words 'suddenly' and 'nervously'. Talk about the sound the letter pattern -ly makes.
- C** Page 14, ask, "Why was it a good idea to hold onto the oar?"
- W** Page 24, find the word 'quickly'. Cover the -ly and ask the children to read the word that remains.
- C** At the end, ask them to explain why there was no-one on the boat.



“It’s the last day of the holiday,” said Kipper. “I’ve seen something I want to buy before we go home.”





Kipper took Biff and Chip to an old shop. Inside, it looked dark and dusty. In the window was a model of a fishing boat. "I want to buy that boat," said Kipper.



The shop was full of things for boats.  
An old man sat in the corner.

“Excuse me,” said Chip. “We’d like to  
buy the model boat. How much is it?”





“It’s not for sale,” said the old man.  
“That boat is a model of my great  
grandfather’s fishing boat. It was made  
after he was lost at sea.”

“What happened to him?” asked Biff.



“No one knows,” said the old man.  
“One day he went to sea in his boat and  
he never came back.”

The old man began to cough.

“Now go away. I want to shut the  
shop,” he said.



Kipper was upset. "He wasn't a very nice man," he said.

"Never mind, Kipper," said Mum. "I'll buy you an ice lolly to cheer you up."





The children sat on the sea wall eating their lollies. Suddenly, they heard a cough. It was the old man. He was holding a little model rowing boat.

“What do you want?” asked Biff nervously.



“I am sorry I was rude,” said the old man. “I’ve bought you a present.” He gave Kipper the little boat.

“It’s from the model you liked,” he said.



The little boat was made of wood. It looked very real. It even had a little pair of oars.

“Oh, thank you,” said Kipper. He looked up, but the old man had gone.





"It's time to go home I'm afraid," said Dad.

"Did you see where the old man went?" asked Chip.

"What old man?" asked Dad.



When they got home, the children went to Biff's room. They wanted to play with the model boat.

"Oh!" said Chip. "I've broken off an oar!" Just then the key began to glow.



The children landed in water. The magic had taken them out to sea.

“Where are we?” yelled Biff.

“I’m scared!” said Kipper. “I’m not a very good swimmer.”





Suddenly, the oar splashed into the sea next to them.

“Hold on to the oar!” said Biff. “It will keep us afloat.”



The children held on to the oar. They floated for a long time.

“There’s nothing but sea,” said Biff.

“I don’t like this adventure,” said Chip.



It began to get foggy. Then they saw a strange shape through the fog. It was getting bigger and bigger.

“Now I’m scared!” said Biff.



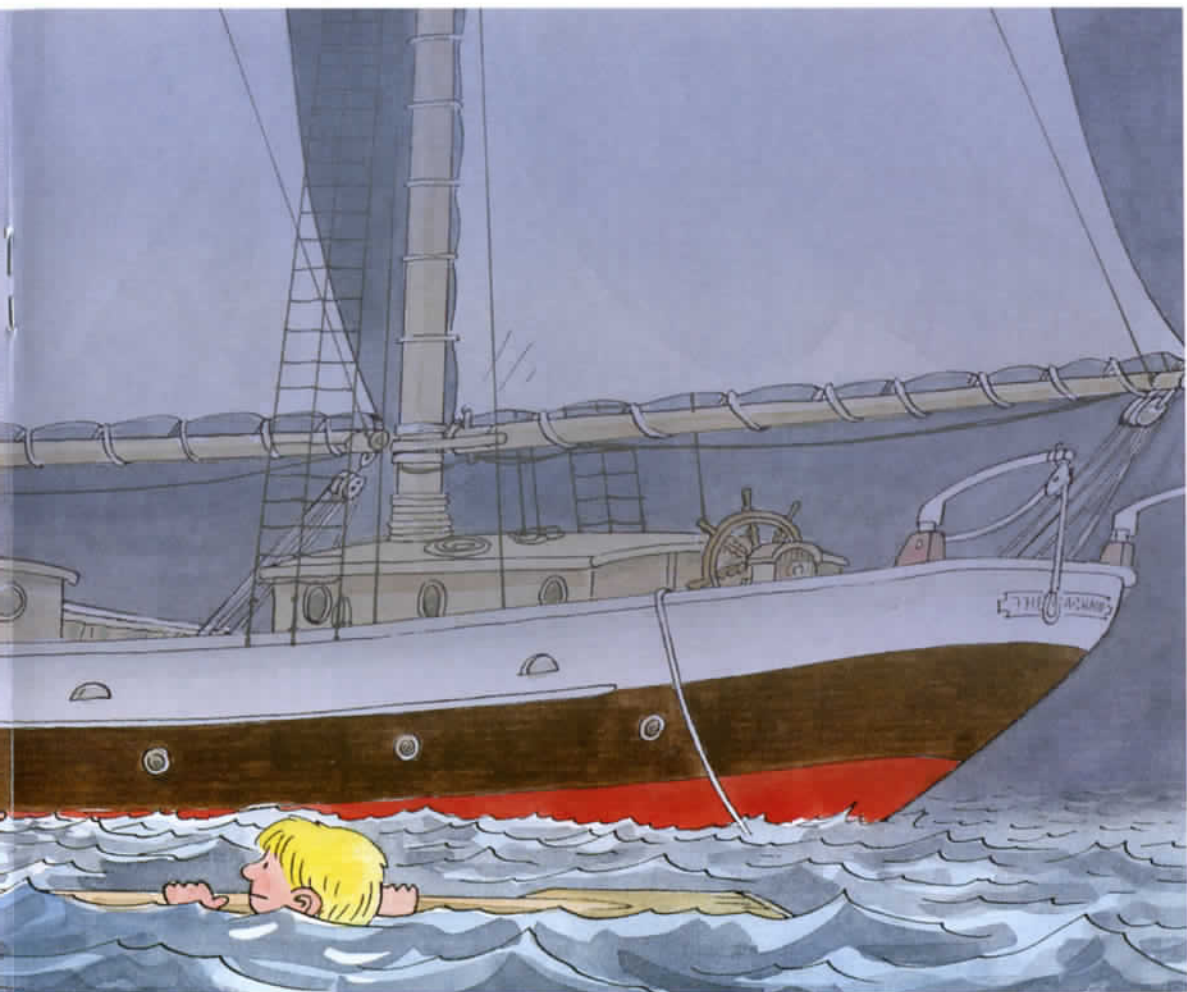


A sailing boat came out of the fog.  
It drifted towards the children.

“Over here!” shouted Chip.

“Help!” yelled Kipper.

“I can’t see anyone,” said Biff.



As the boat got near, Chip saw a rope hanging into the water.

“Tie the rope to the oar, then we can climb on board,” said Chip.

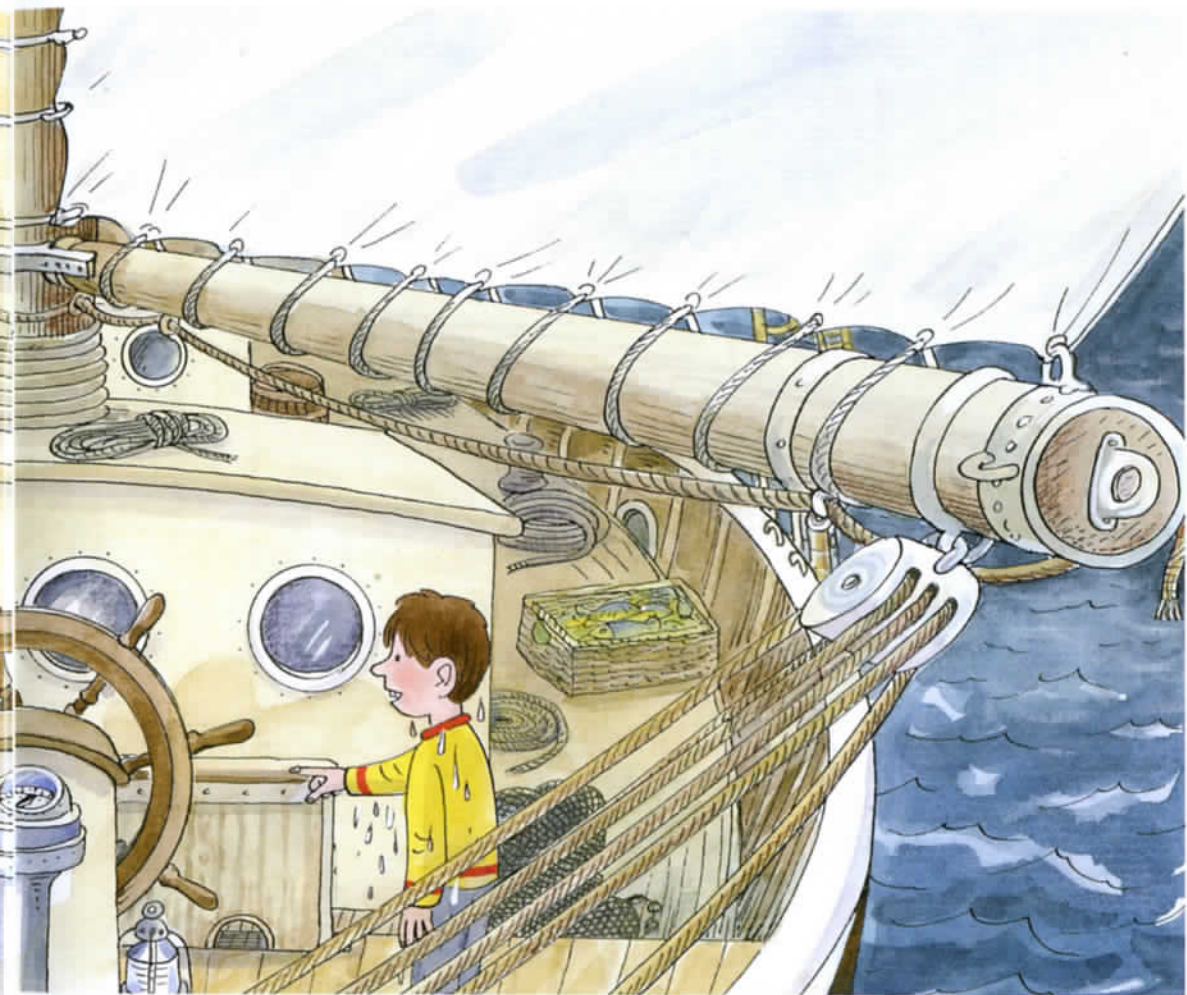


They climbed up on to the boat.

“Phew!” said Kipper. “That was scary.”

“Let’s find the crew,” said Biff. “They can tell us where we are.”



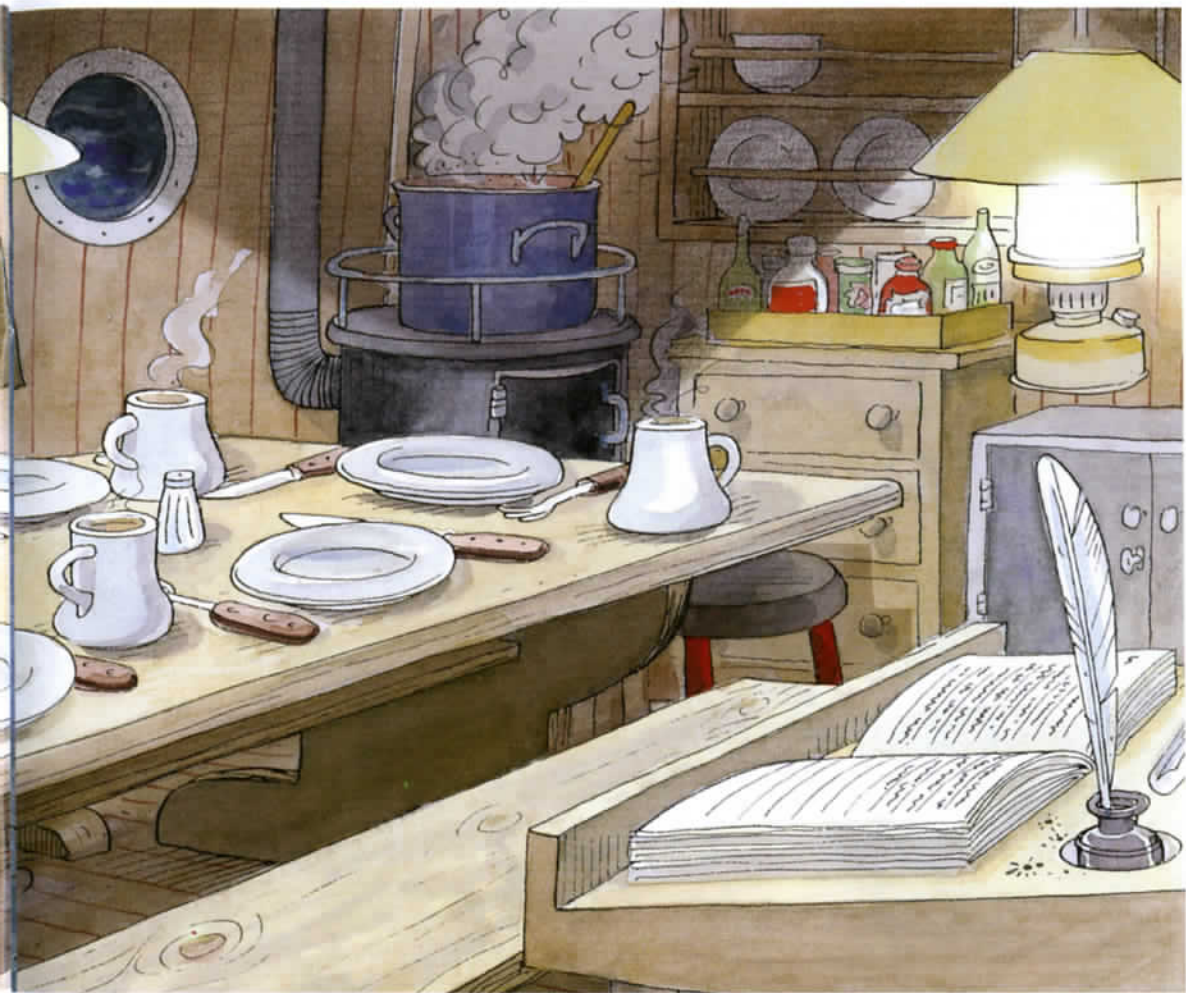


They looked around. On deck there were nets and baskets of fish. There was an open hatch leading down into the boat.

“Maybe they are down below,” said Chip.



The children went down into a large cabin. It was lit by lamps. There was a big table in the middle of the cabin. The table was set for dinner.



In the corner, a big pot of stew was bubbling away on a stove. On the table there were three mugs of hot tea.

“This is strange,” said Biff. “There’s nobody on board.”





“There has to be,” said Chip. “Why would the food be hot?”

“And who lit the lamps?” asked Kipper.

Suddenly, there was a loud crash above them. The boat shook.



The children ran up on deck. The fog had gone. It was windy.

“The crash must have been the sail,” said Biff. “It has caught the wind.”

“The boat’s turned around!” said Chip.



The boat started to move quickly.

"I'll try to steer it," said Biff.

"Good," said Chip. "I'll tie down the sail. Kipper, go to the front and look out."





“Look out!” shouted Kipper. “Rocks!”

“Hold on!” shouted Biff.

She turned the wheel hard. Chip fell over, but the boat missed the rocks.

“That was close!” yelled Kipper.



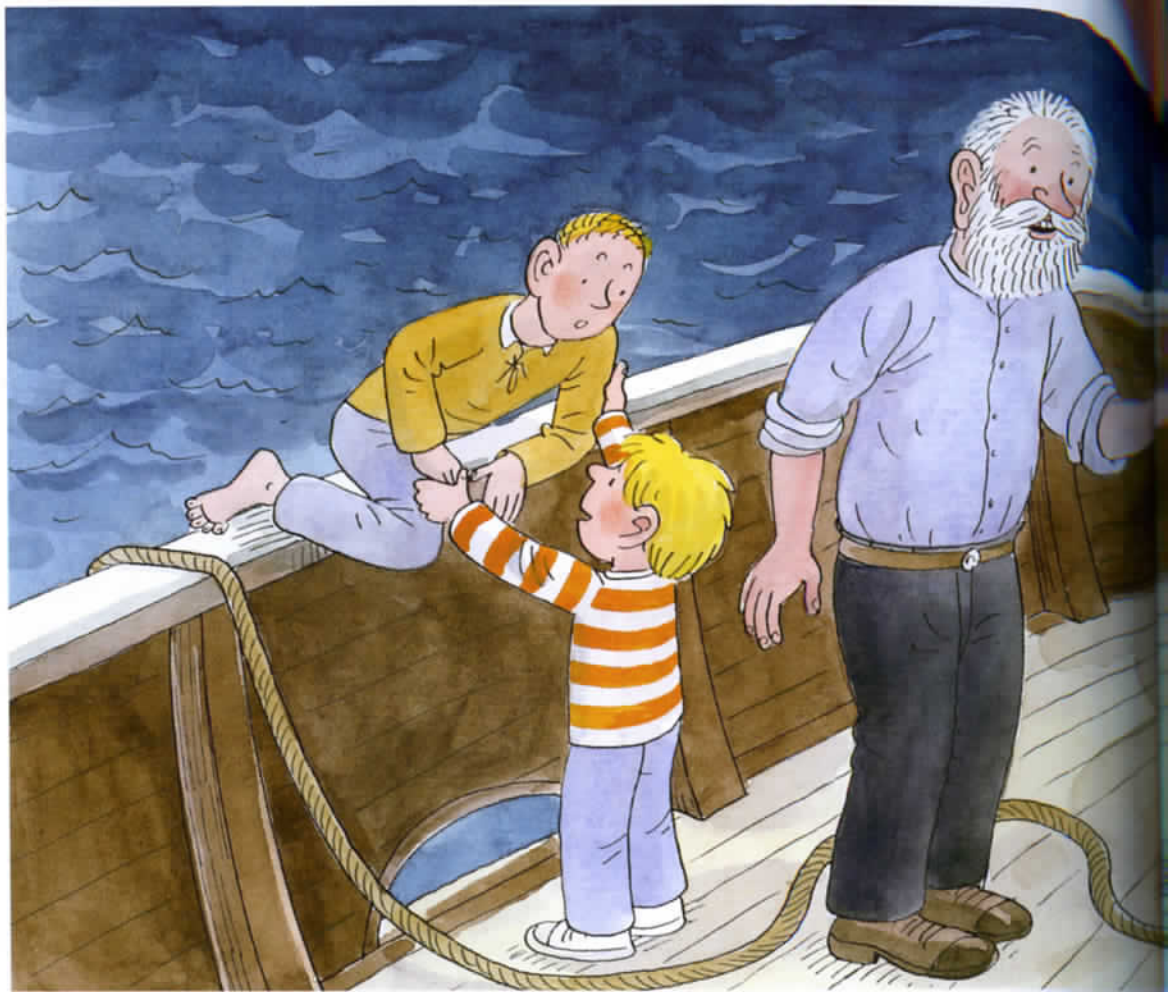
The boat sailed on. Suddenly, Kipper saw a little rowing boat. In it were two men and a boy. They were waving.

“Help us!” they shouted. “We can’t row. We’ve only got one oar!”



Chip pulled up the oar. He threw it to the men. They caught the oar. Then the men rowed to the boat and climbed on.



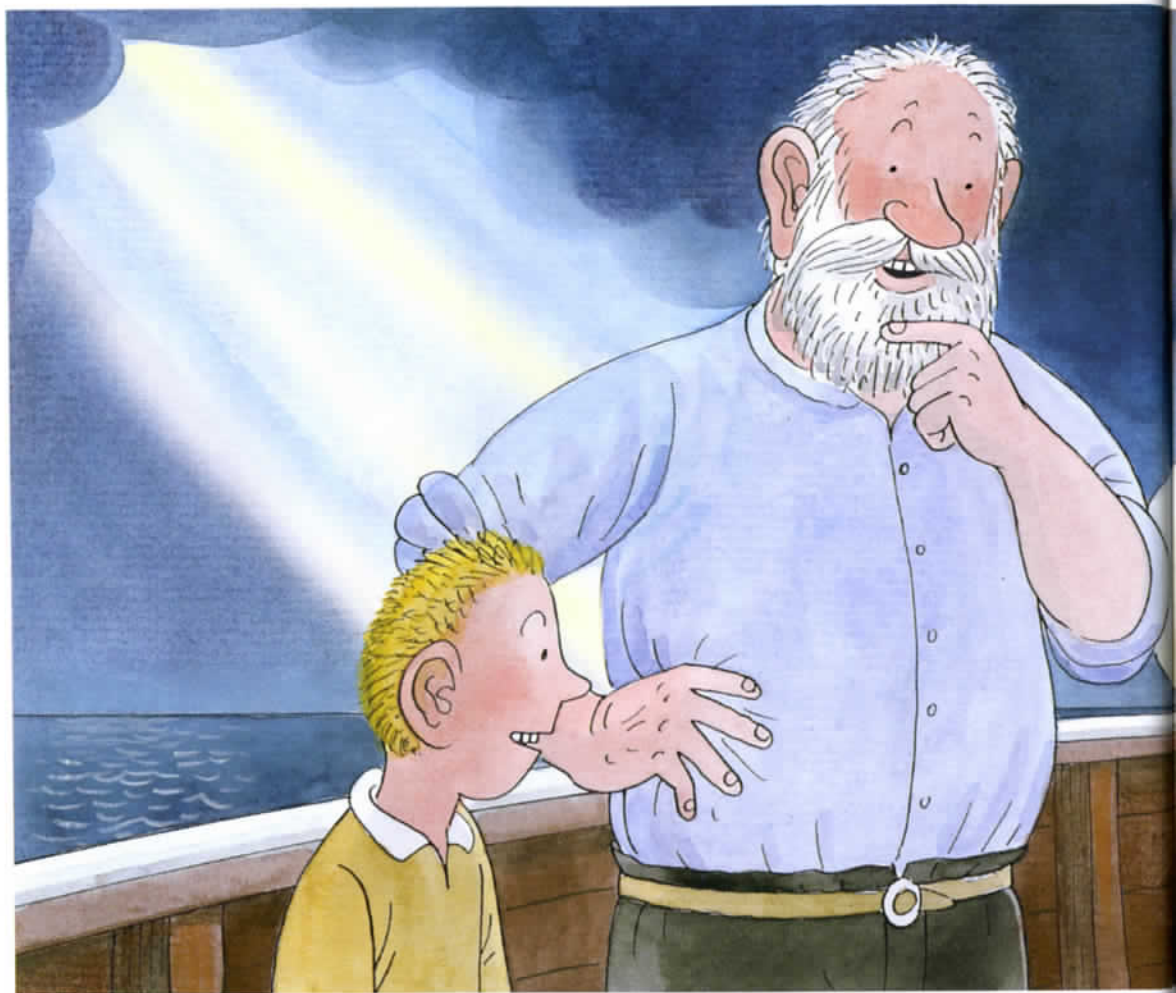


“Who are you?” asked Biff.

“I’m Captain Turbot, this is Flounder, and the boy’s called Shrimp,” said the Captain.  
“This is our boat, The Barnacle.”



“What happened to you?” asked Kipper.  
“We were about to eat,” said Flounder.  
“Shrimp was pulling up the last net when  
we struck a rock and he fell in.”



“We got in the boat to help him,” said the Captain, “but we only had one oar. We couldn’t row back.”

“Where did you find our oar?” asked Shrimp.





“It’s a mystery” said the Captain. “We always keep the oars in the rowing boat.”

Chip thought about the model. “It is a mystery,” he said.

Suddenly, the magic key began to glow.



The magic took them back to Biff's room.  
"Oh no!" said Kipper. "We left the oar."  
They looked at the model boat. It had  
both its oars.  
"It's a mystery," said Chip.

## ***Play a game***

### ***Find the other half***

*To help with understanding story settings.*

- Open the book at any page. Choose an event and ask "Where were the children when...?"
- Then the children ask you a "Where were the children when...?" question.
- Have two or three turns each.

## ***Other ideas***

*You can use these ideas straight away, or on another day.*

- Find words in the book with four letters. For example, 'last'. Read the word, then close the book, say the word and spell it together.
- Look at photographs of the seaside. Talk about any memories or stories you or the children have of the seaside.



# A Sea Mystery

A model boat leads to an  
adventure at sea – a mystery  
ship with no crew.



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