

Name _____ Date _____

Captain Amanda

“Dad, tell me about that picture,” said Amanda as she pointed to a painting of a ship sailing in a storm. “The painting is called The English Galleon,” Amanda’s father explained. “Galleons sailed the seas in the mid 1500s and 1600s. They were very large and had what was called a sterncastle in the front. This is where the living quarters were. The quarters were often quite fancy. Galleons were used as both warships and cargo ships. What do you think, Amanda? Would you like to take a ride on a ship like that?”

Amanda smiled. She was already imagining what it would be like to be aboard an English galleon. The wind filled the sails as the proud galleon glided through the waters toward home. A cargo of jewels, spices and silks from the Far East filled the hold. The crew was tough. Of course, you had to be tough to sail in these seas, and Amanda was as tough as they came.

A new captain was commanding the ship on their return voyage. Captain Smith looked fierce as he approached his crew. Just then, the ship unexpectedly jerked and Captain Smith fell flat on his face. Amanda held back a giggle. She wasn’t sure what the punishment for giggling at a captain was, but she didn’t want to find out. The captain stood up, wiped himself off, and tried to look “captainly.” The crew was a bit unsure what to think of their new leader. “Good morning,” he shouted. “Has anyone seen the maps? I fear I might have misplaced them.” Just then, a huge wave swept over the ship’s side and drenched the captain. He stood there soaking wet as his crew roared with laughter.

“Oh no,” thought Amanda, “with a captain like this, we’ll never get home. These sailors won’t listen to a thing he says, and without the maps, we’re sure to get lost. Maybe I can help somehow.” She followed Captain Smith to his living quarters. The door was open, so Amanda stood and watched. The captain seemed to be searching for something. After a moment, he noticed Amanda. “Yes, what do you want?” Captain Smith asked gruffly. “Can’t you see that I’m busy?”

“Captain, my name is Amanda McNeil. I’m an experienced sailor and I’m here to help,” Amanda announced. The captain looked at Amanda for a moment and then said, “I guess you could say I need a little help. I seem to have lost the maps.” Amanda and the captain searched the entire cabin. The maps were nowhere to be found. The captain sat down, ready to give up. “It’s no use,” he cried, shaking his head. “We may end up in Africa or Spain or who knows where unless we find those maps!”

“You can’t give up. Let’s look again,” said Amanda. They began the search once more. Suddenly, another strong wave slapped against the ship. The captain lost his balance, fell and bumped into the desk. “I’m just not used to this sailing thing,” he said sitting on the floor rubbing his head. Amanda looked at Captain Smith and thought that he would probably never get used to sailing. Then, she spotted the maps, peeking out from one of the desk drawers.

Amanda pointed to the open drawer. “Captain, there are the lost maps.” “Wonderful!” he shouted jumping up. Just then, the ship tipped sharply to the left, sending Captain Smith tumbling. “Amanda, could you help me with just one more little thing?” he asked, rubbing his knee.

“Would you take over as captain? I don’t think I’m right for the job.” “Hmm, Captain Amanda McNeil.” She liked the sound of that.