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The Story Shop

Welcome to Puddletown High Street!


Looks completely normal, doesn't it?

Normal baker's selling normal bread.

Normal shoe shop selling normal wellies.

Normal toyshop selling normal bats and balls.

But nestled between the hairdresser's
and the hardware store (which sells *entirely*
normal brooms) is the most **unusual** shop:

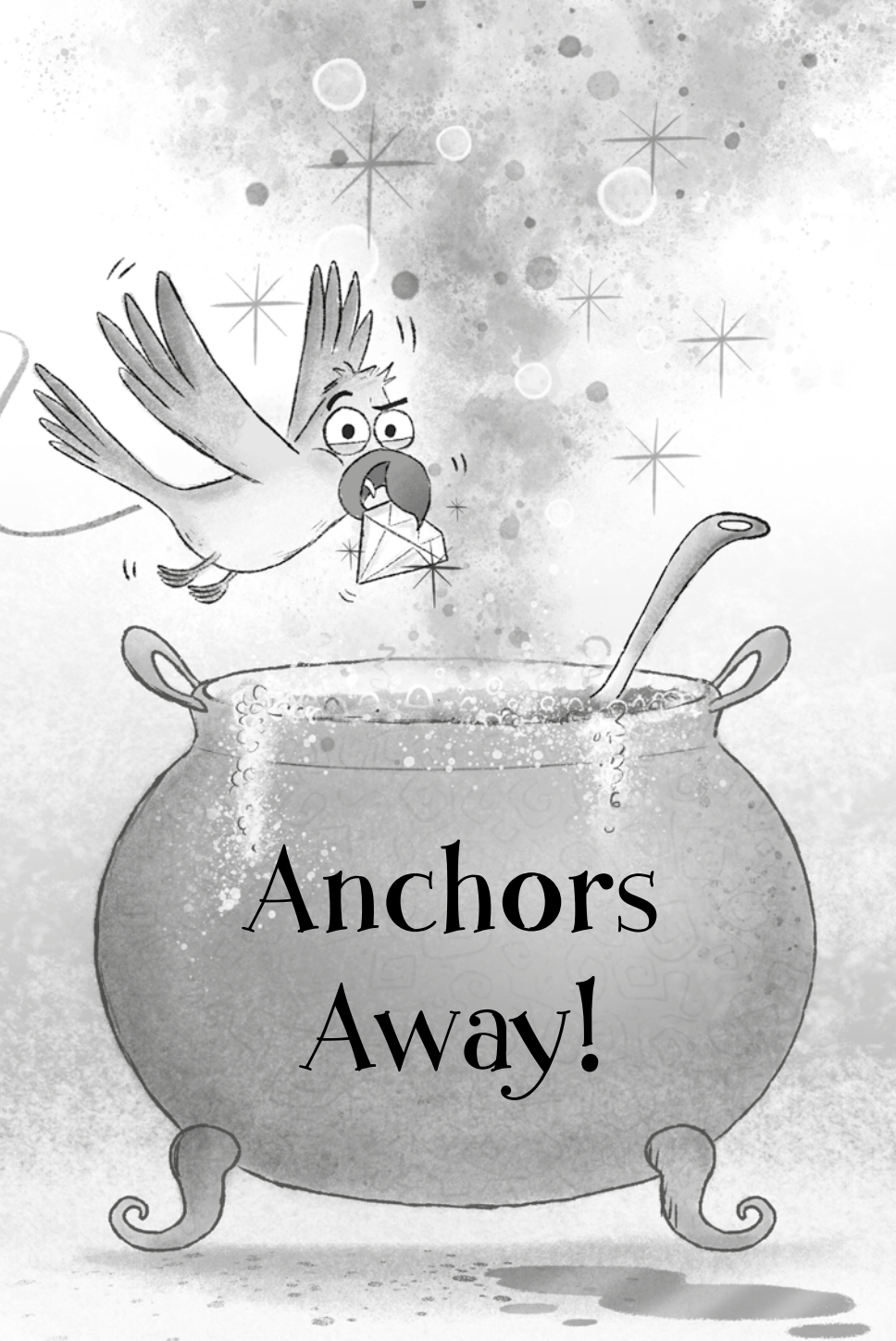


The Story Shop sells adventures you can
BE in. With real characters you'll actually
meet!

Shopkeeper Wilbur and his assistant
Fred Ferret have props and plots galore.

So, what are you waiting for? Step inside
if you're **BRAVE** enough.

But be warned, anything might
happen...



“Wilbur – watch!” cried Fred.

It was the end of the day and Fred and Wilbur were tidying the Story Shop.

Fred picked up three hats from the counter, juggled them in the air, then flung them on to the hat stand one by one.

“Hoopla!” chuckled Wilbur.

They did a final check around. Not a costume or prop out of place. But as Fred went to lock the door, a last-minute customer bustled in.

"Your blackboard sign – on the pavement," she tutted. "I **very** nearly tripped over it. I'm Pearl Johnson, famous explorer. I expect you've heard of me?"

They hadn't. But Pearl Johnson *did* look like an explorer. Her trousers were tucked into her well-worn boots and her shirt had lots of pockets. Attached to her belt was a flask and a compass. And dangling around her neck were a pair of binoculars.

"Sorry about the blackboard," Wilbur replied.

"You should have used your binoculars!" joked Fred.

"Actually I **was**." Pearl examined him closely. "To search for rare birds. On shop rooftops! I had it all planned. Because **PLANS**," she nodded, "make everything run smoothly."

Fred blushed.



"You need a plan for that sign! If it was **MY** shop," sniffed Pearl, "I'd pop it nearer the wall. I never nearly trip. Though I've been on many **exciting** trips. Why, I was flying planes across the world before you were even born!"

Pearl turned to go, nearly tripping over the doormat. "Honestly," she bristled. "If I were you I'd put that on the planning list too!"

"Very helpful advice," Wilbur nodded. "I wonder if, before we close, you'd like a quick story adventure? We've many thrilling, um ... trips on offer here."

Pearl shrugged. "I challenge you to find something I've not already done. I've crossed deserts, wrestled tigers, sky-dived – blindfolded. I've **even** taken tea with pandas."

"Challenge accepted!" Wilbur replied. And off he went, picking out costumes and props.

He held up some ideas Pearl could 'try for size' – but...

"Done **mummies!**" she declared.
"Busted **ghosts** galore."



"And as for p—" Pearl stopped.

"Ever been treasure hunting with pirates?" grinned Fred.

"G-goodness," gasped Pearl. "I haven't!"

Fred hurried behind the counter to pop on his costume, as Wilbur escorted Pearl to the changing room.

When she came back out...

"Look!" she cried.

"I'm a pesky pirate!"



Wilbur laughed. "So you are!"

"Captain Pearl has a rather nice ring to it, don't you think?" She swished her cutlass as Pirate Fred reappeared, sliding his eyepatch into place.

Pearl frowned. "Sorry, but you can't come. I always travel alone."

"But Fred goes on every adventure," insisted Wilbur. "Although," he added hastily, "you'd be in charge as you're so—"

"Bossy," whispered Fred.

"H-helpful!" spluttered Wilbur. "Now let's get your adventure started!"

He whisked the feather off his hat and waved it over a patch of bare floorboards. They parted – **SWISH!** – and up rose a big black pot.

"This is the **Story Pot,**" Fred told Pearl. An inky-blue liquid bubbled inside it.

On a nearby shelf a blank book gave a jiggle, as if **itching** to get the story started. Fred popped it in the pot and Wilbur added a few props...

"A dash of cannon ball. A pinch of crab. And a sprinkle of sand, salt and jewels!"

"And look!" Fred pointed to some drawers behind the counter as one labelled 'Pirates' rattled open.

"Edie!" laughed Wilbur. "Why, of course, all pirate captains need a **parrot.**"

The scruffy bird took flight immediately, sending props, books and inkpots flying. She crash-landed on Pearl's arm, a pair of bloomers on her head.

"Knickers!"
Edie squawked.



“**Manners!**” sniffed Pearl as Edie shook off the bloomers, a cheeky glint in her eyes.

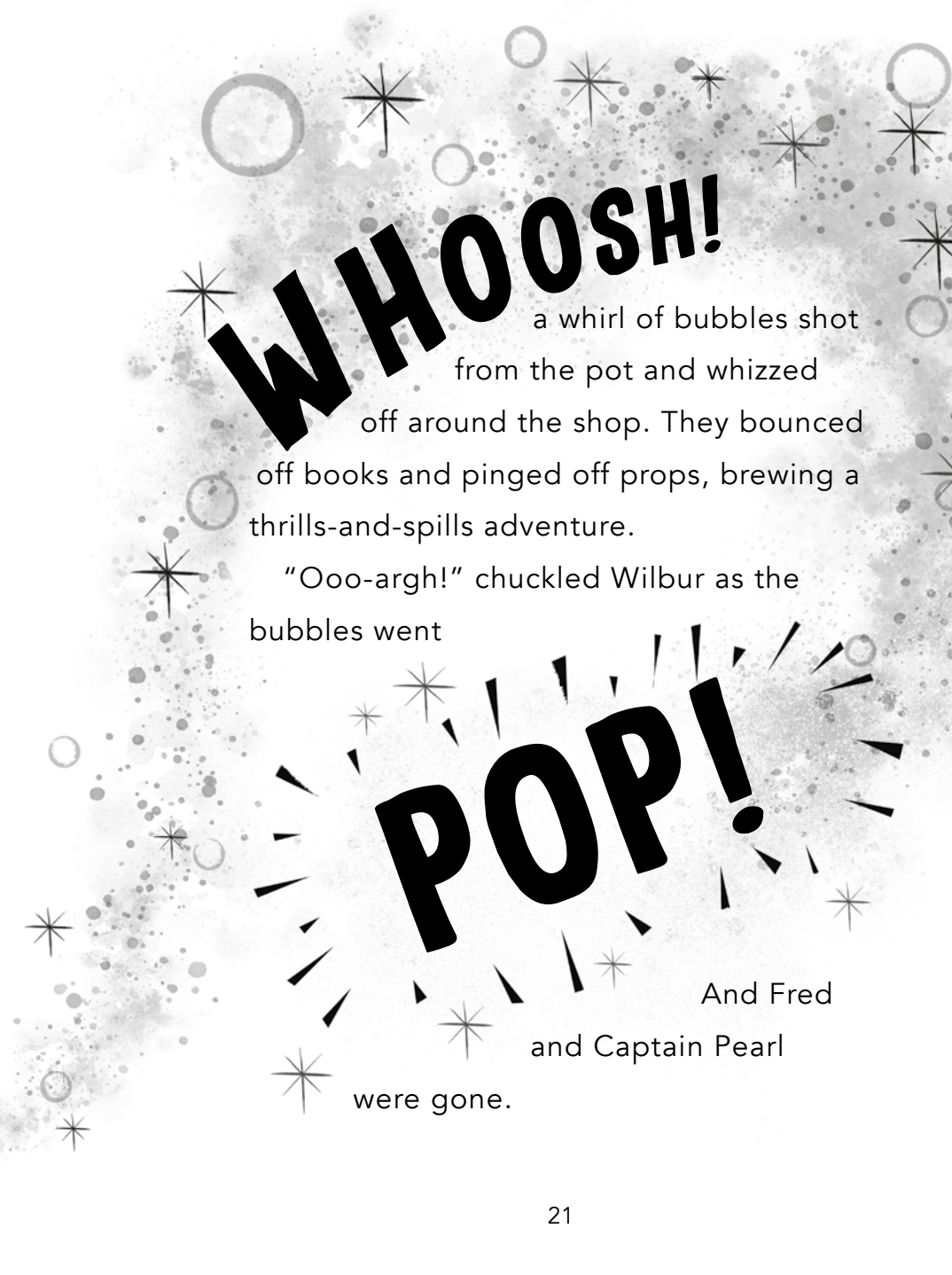
Wilbur handed Fred a bag of marbles, a torch and two nets to stash in his loot sack.

“Marbles?” said Pearl. “We’ll have no time for games when we’re running amok with pirates!”

“But these are emergency items,” replied Fred. “To help with tricky story twists.”

Next Wilbur handed him a toy pirate ship, which Fred slipped into his pocket. Then, taking the spoon, he started to stir.

“Not like **that!**” huffed Pearl, reaching out to grab it. But when she touched it too—



WHOOSH!

a whirl of bubbles shot from the pot and whizzed off around the shop. They bounced off books and pinged off props, brewing a thrills-and-spills adventure.

“Ooo-argh!” chuckled Wilbur as the bubbles went

POPI!

And Fred and Captain Pearl were gone.

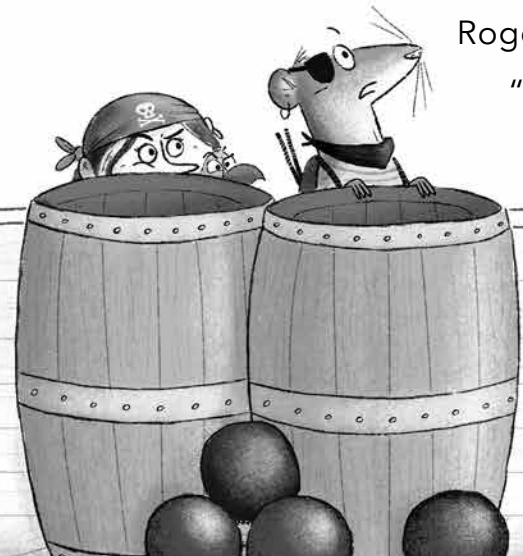


THUNK!

They landed behind some barrels and Fred popped up to take a look.

There were cannons. And ropes. And fluttering up a mast was a huge Jolly Roger flag.

"We're on a **real** pirate ship!" gasped Fred.



"Get **down** then!" hissed Pearl. "First we need a *plan*. I didn't wrestle tigers without a plan!"

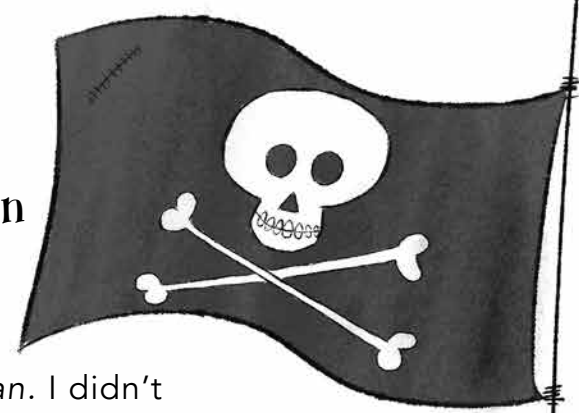
Fred ducked back down.


"**Nincompoop!**" squawked Edie from her perch on Pearl's shoulder.

"And you can be quiet too!" commanded Pearl, clearly used to doing things *her* way...

"Just ... reporting," whispered Fred, "there are no pirates on deck."

"Then they'll be down *below* it," nodded Pearl. "So, the *plan*: we surprise them, take charge of this ship, and command them to sail us to an island to dig for treasure. Then we'll double-cross them and scarper with **ALL THE LOOT!**"





Fred frowned. "But what if they don't want to?"

"As if they have a choice!" said Pearl with a nod. "It's **my** way or walk the plank!"

She strode from behind the barrels, Edie gripping on tight and Fred bringing up the rear.

"To the stairs!" Pearl pointed. "And mind the rats and weevils."

"But there are no rats and weevils?" shrugged Fred, looking around.

He was right. In fact, the deck had been swabbed, the cannons polished, and the flag's rips neatly mended.

"There's even a **washing line!**" grumbled Pearl.

"Poo pants!" squawked Edie.

"More like *clean pants*," tutted Pearl, noticing a string of underpants blowing in the breeze.

"**This,**" said Pearl, rounding on Fred, "is not the adventure I signed up for! You and that **shopkeeper** led me to believe there'd be proper pirates with proper pirate ways!"

Fred gulped. "I ... wait – what's that smell?"

They sniffed the air and Edie coughed. It was **flowery** and coming from below deck.

"It's time," rumbled Pearl, "to find out what's going on!"

They followed the smell down the stairs and along a corridor to a door. Behind the door they could hear voices.

"Careful," said Fred. "It might be a trap."

"I jolly well hope so!" And whipping out her cutlass, Pearl burst through the door yelling: "**Rahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!**"

"**Arghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!**" came the pirates' terrified reply.

Fred and Edie gaped, eyes wide.

"What on earth—?!" Pearl stopped. This was all wrong.

There were pirates knitting scarves. Pirates arranging flowers. Pirates making mobiles – **out of shells!**

"Please don't hurt us!" they all cried.



"Where's your captain?" demanded Pearl.

"Um ... h-here."

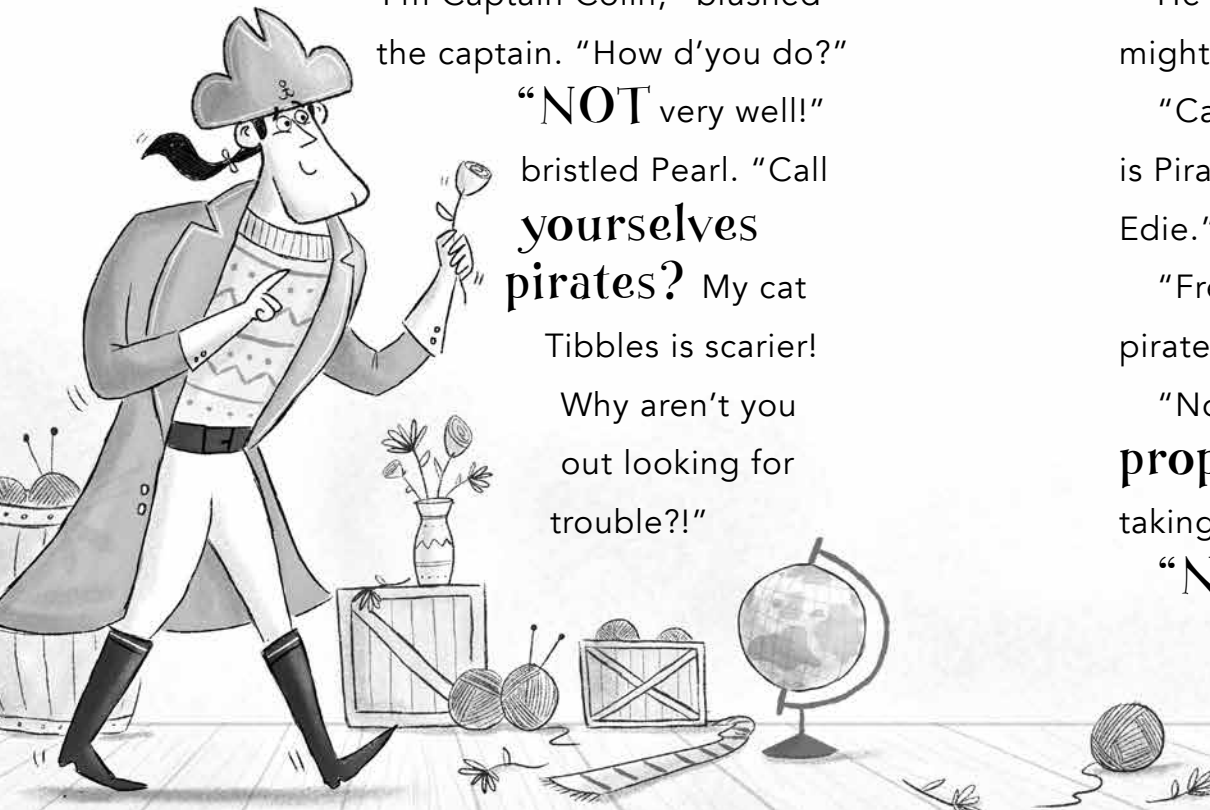
A freshly shaven man shuffled forward in **disgustingly** clean clothes and gleaming boots. He smiled nervously. And in his hand was ... a rose.

Fred wrinkled his nose. "So **that's** the horrid flowery smell."

"I'm Captain Colin," blushed the captain. "How d'you do?"

"**NOT** very well!" bristled Pearl. "Call **yourselves pirates?** My cat

Tibbles is scarier! Why aren't you out looking for trouble?!"



"Ah, well," replied the captain. "All pirates are different. And us on the *Pretty Polly* are a friendly bunch who like a spot of crafting on a Tuesday."

"But it's Wednesday!" snapped Pearl.

"Ooo-argh!" the captain nodded. "And **normally** we'd be fishing today, except we didn't finish our crafting yesterday."

He shuffled nervously. "And, er, who might you be?"

"Captain Pearl!" snapped Pearl. "And this is Pirate ... Fredrick and my rascally parrot Edie."

"Fred," nodded Fred, and Edie blew the pirates a raspberry.

"Now then," sniffed Pearl. "I'm here for a **proper** pirate adventure, which is why I'm taking over your ship!"

"**Noooooo!**" wailed the pirates.

Fred saw their look of fear and quickly stepped forward.

“Don’t panic! I’m sure we can come to some arrangement to keep everyone happy,” he said.

He turned to the captain. “Any battles brewing? O-or pressing pirate problems ... big or small?”

“Well, we **did** have a problem,” Captain Colin replied. “We dug up some treasure. An **enormous** black pearl. Jake Smallsparrow found it one Daytrip Friday.”

“**Ooo-argh!**” Jake waved his knitting at them with a grin.

“But then Captain **GRIME** pinched it off us,” sighed the captain.

“Then go and get it back!” boomed Pearl.

“Can’t,” shrugged the captain. “We don’t

stand a *chance* against the Scabby Seagull crew. They’re bigger and badder and sneakier than us.”

“Plus,” gulped Roger Roundfellow, “some say they don’t **EVEN** ... wash *their underwear!*”

Fred knew what was coming...

“**THANK GOODNESS!**” roared Pearl, and Edie almost jumped out of her feathers. “A proper pirate adventure. And of course, I have a **PLAN!**”

She turned to the crew. “I shall teach you to be **SNEAKIER**. Then we’re **off** to steal **back** your black pearl!”

