

“We *saw* it. At least *I* saw it, but I drew it for you!”

“I mean,” said Mai, “that I know exactly where it was on *that* map, but it isn’t on *this* map.”

Tourmaline swallowed and looked up at Captain Violet, whose face had suddenly become unreadable.

“Show me,” she said.

Mai pointed to a spot on the map. “It was there in the middle of the Skayqua Ocean.”

“Are you sure, girl?”

Mai nodded. “It was right there, I swear it.”

“About ship!” bellowed Captain Violet. She hauled on the wheel and the ship listed left in the water, the stones holding the map in place sliding across the deck along with Mai and Tourmaline, who tumbled into the railing. Laughter came from the crow’s nest, and Tourmaline scowled at the sky as she righted herself.

“Where are we going?” she asked.

“Elsewhere, of course,” said the captain.

She looked at Tourmaline in a way that made her feel as though she was still about to be offered to a hungry flesh-eating fish. Just one that wasn’t in the sea. “But first, we need to make a little stop *somewhere*.”



Chapter Eleven

“We can’t trust Captain Violet,” said George very quietly. “Did you see her face when Mai pointed out where the island was?” The three of them were looking over the side at the water churning by. The captain had dismissed the girls once she’d changed course and they had set sail for ... well, Tourmaline didn’t know where. She was slightly worried but Captain Violet had promised that they would go to the island and that was, she thought, really the best she could hope for in the circumstances.

“I saw her face,” said Mai. “She wants something on that island. She already stole artefacts from the museum and destroyed the lab. I’m absolutely sure we can’t trust her.”

Tourmaline said nothing about the very recent threat of flesh-eating fish or about the way the captain had looked at her.

“We don’t have to trust her,” she said. “We just have to keep our wits about us and be careful while we’re on this ship. As soon as we get to the island, we’ll find a way to escape from Captain Violet, but until then all we need to do is stay quiet and out of trouble.”

Tourmaline was perfectly right. So it was a great shame when the ship sailed into a horseshoe bay lit with a thousand lamps that evening, and she learned that they had no chance whatsoever of staying out of trouble.

The children looked at each other, before staring out at the lights in the bay while the captain yelled at the crew to haul the sails and drop the anchor.

Tourmaline didn’t want to tear her eyes away from the enchanting sight of the bay. Its golden sand rose to rocks then to turreted buildings latched right on to the cliff side, pouring out their lamplight over the sea. Whatever else her trip on *The Hunter* was proving to be, it was exciting. The kind of exciting that she’d wished for when she’d looked at the photograph of

Persephone on her mirror at home.

She planted her foot on the bow and thought that surely her mother had done this very same thing and felt this very same way – as though she were about to embark on a great adventure. Tourmaline was sure that Persephone had told her all about it, though she couldn't specifically remember her mother saying that exactly. But it had almost definitely happened.

Captain Violet suddenly called everyone to gather on the deck. There was an energy about her that made Tourmaline think of Persephone when she was about to leave for a hunt. It made her chest ache and put tears in her eyes that she had to furiously blink away.

“Where are we?” she asked, to get rid of the feeling.

“I told you,” said Captain Violet. “Somewhere. And we have work to do tonight.”

The blue-haired woman grinned and tapped her fingernails on her knives. Quintalle let out a half-laugh, half-whoop that startled George.

“I suppose I'd better formally introduce you to my crew,” the captain said to the children, “since you'll be coming with us tonight.”