



FLYNTLOCK BONES

'Welcome to the Black Hound -
a ship full o' the cleverest pirate investigators
ya ever set eyes upon . . . You OK, lad?
Ya gone paler than a full moon.'

When Flynn applies for the job of cabin
boy on the Black Hound, he doesn't expect
it to be a pirate ship! But soon he's setting
sail for the Seven Seas, on a perilous quest
to recover ancient treasure bound by a
magical curse . . .

The first riotous instalment of this
swashbuckling trilogy is brilliantly
illustrated in anarchic and hilarious style.

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FLYNTLOCK BONES

THE SCEPTRE
OF THE
PIRATAONS

DEREK KEILTY
MARK ELVINS

Scallywag
Press

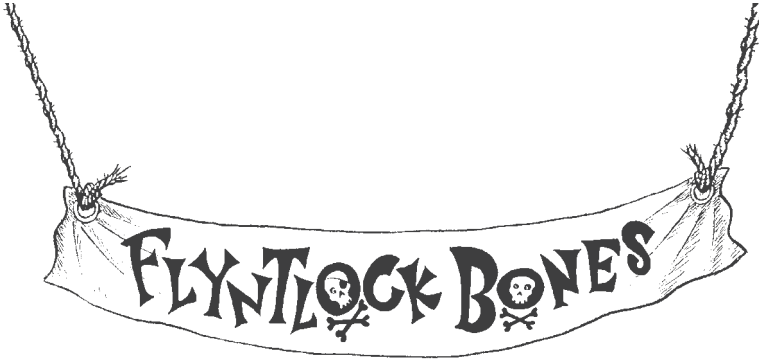
FLYNTLOCK BONES



The SCEPTRE of the

PIRATAONS

DEREK KEILTY • MARK ELVINS



The SCEPTRE of the
PHARAOHS





For my wife, Elaine, with love

DK

For Kit

ME

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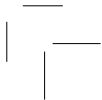

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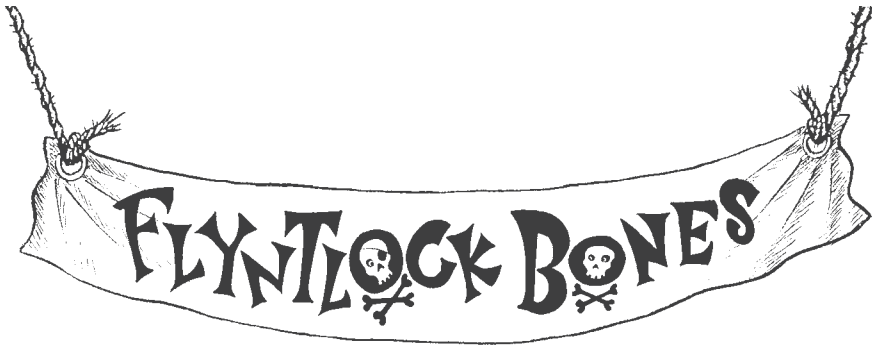
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The SCEPTRE of the
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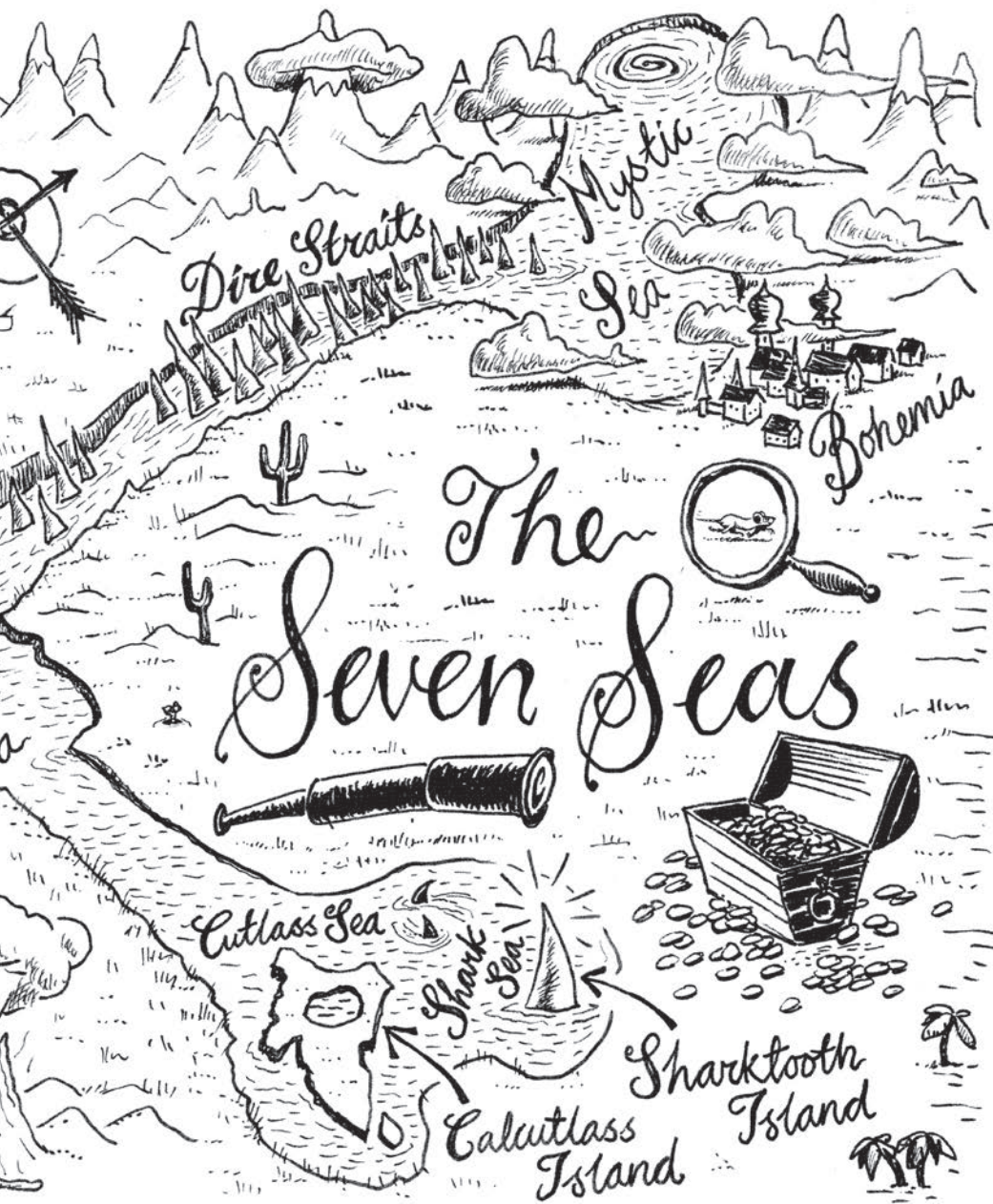
By Derek Keilty

Illustrated by Mark Elvins



Scallywag Press Ltd
LONDON





Dice Straits

Mystic Sea

Bohemia

The Seven Seas

Cutlass Sea

Shark Sea

Calcutlass Island

Sharktooth Island

GALLERY OF CHARACTERS

The Black Hound



Flynn



Red



Cap'n Watkins



Briggs



Drudger



Hudson



Scratch



Fishbreath



The Twins

The Savvy Serpent



Cap'n Moriheartly



Dog bite

Gypshun Museum



Dr Khan



Miss Wrinkly



Miss Chatti



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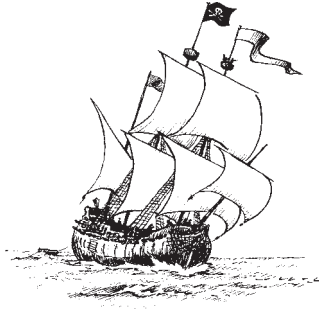


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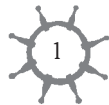




CHAPTER ONE THE BLACK HOUND

Creak! Squawk!! Creak!!!

My heart flutters as I stride up the gangplank of the tall sailing ship that lurches and creaks in the harbour. There's a loud crack of thunder and I slip, almost plunging head first into the murky sea that is swirling round the ship's hull. I hope the sailor in the crow's nest hasn't got a spyglass





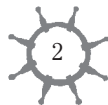
trained on me. The last thing I want is to look like a complete landlubber. I have a job to get.

Going back to the orphanage is not an option anymore. Mrs Wiggins the Matron practically chucked me out on my ear this morning, saying I'm too old now for mollycoddling. She says it's high time I was out

working for a living, making my own way in the world.

Mollycoddling! The cheek of her, when it was me that did all the shopping, washing and cleaning, for which, I might add, she never gave me a penny.

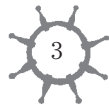
At the top of the gangway, a gruff voice calls out.



‘Ahoy there! What scuttling sea rat gets aboard the Black Hound without my knowing?’

I freeze as a big, burly man looms over me, silhouetted in the sunlight. Squinting up at him, I can’t help but notice he has not one, but two eye patches, covering both his eyes. He is wearing a black hat and has the bushiest beard I have ever seen. My heart hammers even harder and I swallow an anchor-sized throat lump. I have only ever read stories about pirates and seen maybe a picture or two in books, so I’m no expert... But the man standing in front of me is the spitting image of a pirate – and I have a sudden cold fear that the boat I’ve boarded might be a real pirate ship!

‘I’m...I’m here about the job, sir,’ I stutter, struggling to keep my voice steady. I am struck by the thought he might knock me flying, right then and there, putting an end to my hopeless





job hunt before it even began. What would Mrs Wiggins think then?

‘Job. What job?’

‘The one advertised in Mrs Bunn’s bakery.’
I fish out the card I’d taken this morning when buying bread for the orphanage. There had been a whole pile of them. It reads:

***Cabin Boy wanted
for the Black Hound.
Apply at Baskerville Harbour.***



‘I don’t see any card. What are you talking about, lad?’

‘Yer eye patches,’ I point out to him with a nervous chuckle.

He flips up one of the patches. A pale blue

eye blinks down at me.

‘Ah, there y’are. I were havin’ a bit of shut eye before we set sail.’ He takes the card and stuffs it in his pocket.

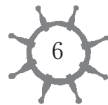
‘Y’are a bit on the scrawny side for a cabin boy. It’s hard work, y’know.’ He peers at me and grins hopefully. ‘Don’t suppose ya brought anything from the bakery? Mrs Bunn makes the best hot pies I ever tasted!’

I notice a tall man striding across the deck. It is the ship’s captain, it must be. He is wearing a three-cornered hat, a long coat, ruffled shirt, pants, boots, and a cutlass on his belt. And he has a nose like a beak.

‘What’s all the fuss about, Briggs?’

‘There be a lad ‘ere, Cap’n, looking for a job.’

‘Well don’t just stand there, bring him aboard.’ He straightens his hat and beckons to us. ‘I’ll see him in my quarters right now. Must say I was beginning to wonder if anyone was



going to show up. You did remember to leave all those cards around the shops in town, didn't you Briggs?'

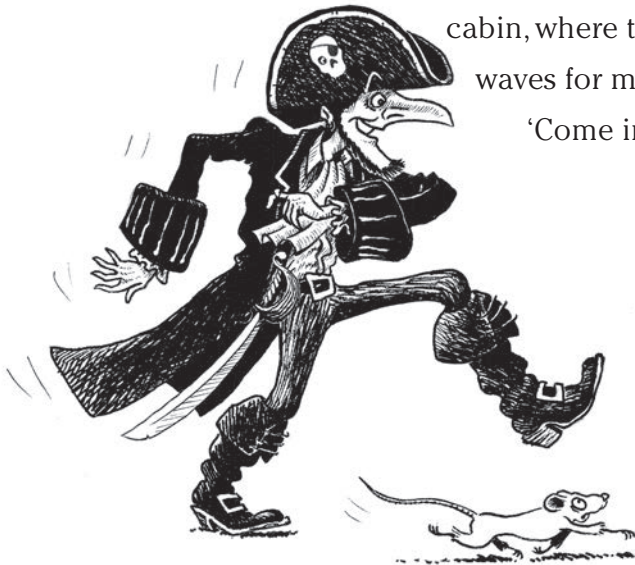
'Er... aye, Cap'n.'

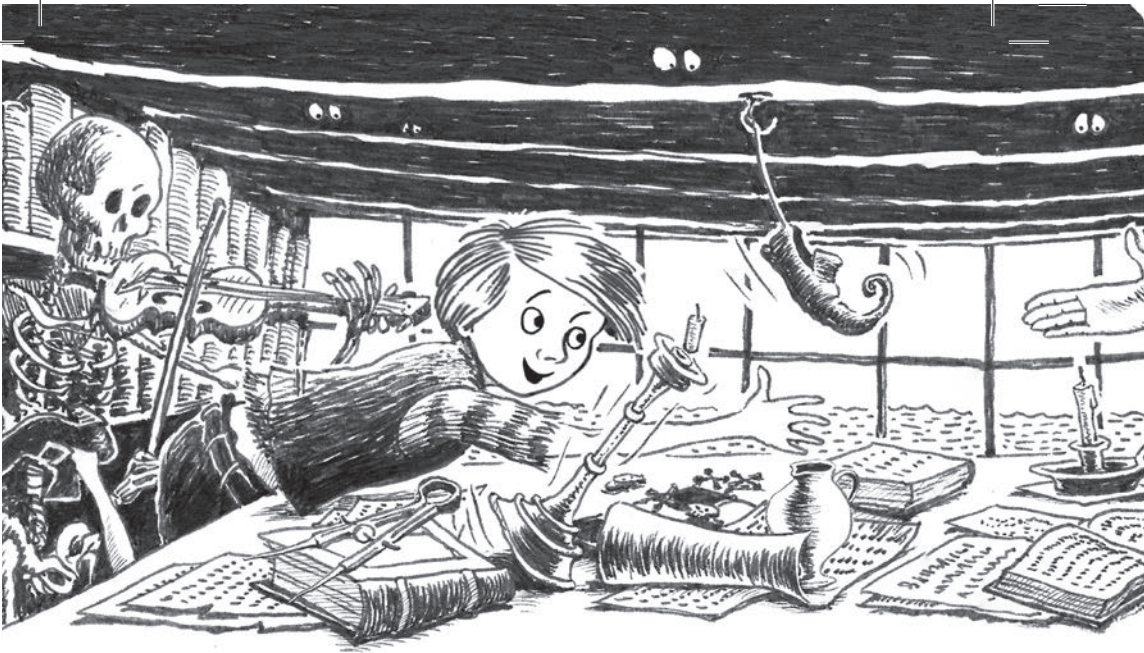
My heart leaps. And though I am worried that it is a job aboard a pirate ship, I balance it with the fact that a job is a job. And surely it couldn't be any worse than skivvying for Mrs Wiggins.

I follow the patch-wearing Briggs across the deck to the open door of a cabin, where the Captain

waves for me to enter.

'Come in. Come in!'





Inside, the cabin is large and gloomy, almost the size of the dormitories at the orphanage. The first thing I notice is a bookcase by the window, crammed with all kinds of volumes. There's a desk too, cluttered with candles, maps, a pipe, and a magnifying glass. And in the corner, a grinning skeleton, holding a violin, and a single brown slipper containing a pouch of tobacco.

'Captain Long John Watkins o' the Black



Hound, and you might be?’ says the Captain, extending a hand.

‘Flyntlock Bones, sir, o’ the good town of Baskerville. Though most folks call me Flynn. Pleased to meet you.’

He pulls out a stool for me, then strides round to recline on a wooden rocking chair. A scrawny black cat with a matted coat and one eye leaps up on the table to lie by the Captain’s hand. It stares at me, almost like it knows what



I am thinking – like it knows all about me.

‘What’s your cat’s name, Captain Watkins?’ I ask.

He gives her a rub between the ears with a grimy finger.

‘Scratch. She’s the hardest worker on this ship. Keeps the mice and rats away from all the sacks o’ grub down in the hold.’



‘What happened to her eye?’

‘You’ll have to ask her that one yourself.’ He grins. ‘One of the crew picked her up a few years ago on an island in the Dire Straits. She was in pretty bad shape. We took her in, fed her and she’s been with us ever since.’

‘I always wanted a cat, but I was never allowed one.’

The Captain fiddles with his pipe, reaching over to take the





tobacco pouch from his slipper.

‘About the job, young Flynn. Y’ever been to sea before?’

‘Not till today, Sir.’

‘It’s tough work y’know, tougher if you have to learn everything from scratch, too.’ He glances at the cat. ‘Not this Scratch, of course.’

‘Wouldn’t expect anything less, sir but I picks things up real quick, so I does, so you’ve nothing to worry about there.’

‘Your parents OK with you going to sea?’

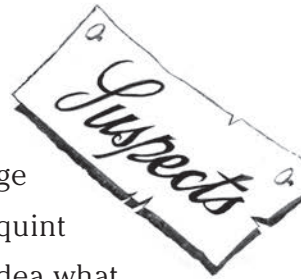
‘I’m an orphan, sir. My folks died in the great fire of Baskerville when I was a baby. They say it’s a miracle I survived.’

‘Sorry to hear that, lad. Then you live at the orphanage?’

‘Not anymore. Mrs Wiggins the Matron all but kicked me out only this morning, sir. That’s why I needs a job.’



I notice
the pictures,
pages and notes stuck onto a large
square board on the cabin wall, and squint
to try and see them better. I have no idea what
they are. The Captain follows my gaze.



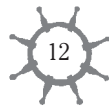
'Yer pick things up quick, y'say?'




'Yes sir.'

'Well, first thing you'll have to
know is we're a bit different from yer
normal rum-swilling, treasure-looting,
swashbuckling, scourge o' the seas pirates.
It's clues we're after, not treasure.'

'Clues, sir?'

'It all happened by chance.' He
rises to his feet and strides





over to the board. 'A few years back we hit a bit of a lean patch. Treasure were getting harder and harder to find. Then one day we came upon a rich countess in a tavern in Bohemia, with a tale of woe about her stolen jewels. Proper sobbing her heart out she was. Telling the whole tavern how priceless they were, and that pirates were most likely to blame. Obviously, she had no idea she was in the company of a whole band of 'em, on account of us being with her in the same establishment.'

He chuckles and puts a match to his pipe, puffing and blowing at it until I am pretty sure it has gone out. Unperturbed, he places it gently back on the desk.

'Said she'd tried everything, including the local constabulary, who were next to useless. Anyways, an idea popped into my head and I asked if there would be a reward for the safe return of her jewels, to which the countess

replied there would. And, yo ho ho, our first ever investigation. We set sail, procuring the stolen booty from old Scarletbeard, resident pirate of Sharktooth Island – sneaked them away in the dead of night, when he was out celebrating his ill-gotten gains. So we brought the jewels back to their rightful owner – though I confess I did think about putting them in our own pitilessly empty booty chest. ‘Course my honesty paid off with a handsome reward. The countess told her friends about me and it weren’t long before we set sail on our second case. The rest, as they say, is history. So you

see, this job en’t just for a cabin

boy, young Flynn. It’s for a cabin boy aboard a ship full o’ the cleverest pirate

investigators ya

ever set

eyes upon.’



He pauses. 'You OK, lad? Ya gone paler than a full moon.'

While the Captain had been speaking, I'd come over a bit dizzy. I had hoped that concentrating on the story would have made me feel better, but it hadn't.

'It's not that sir, just feel a bit queasy, that's all.'

'Ah sea sick then. Been a landlubber too long, and this choppy weather won't help very much.'

'Reckon it's just nerves, on account of me needing this job so very much.'

He pours a glass of water and hands it to me.

I wish it weren't so stormy today. I take a sip and clear my throat.

Then everything goes the darkest shade of black.

