

KATE DiCAMILLO

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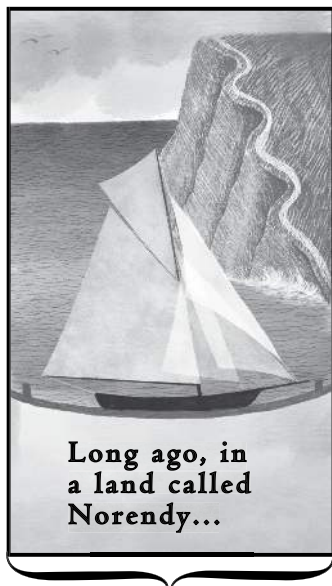
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LOST Evangeline

A NORENDY TALE



ILLUSTRATED BY SOPHIE BLACKALL



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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or, if real, used fictitiously.

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*For Karla, who gave me the lamp,
and for Sophie, who lit it*

KD



*For my father, who made me into
a traveller like him,
and for Kate, who wrote me a map*

SB





CHAPTER ONE

THERE WAS ONCE a boy who longed to go to sea.

“Tsk,” said his father. “Do not be one of those who spend their lives spinning pointless fantasies. I will not have it.”

And so the child put aside his dreams, grew up and became, like his father before him, a shoemaker.

He tried to forget the sea.

One evening, as the shoemaker sat in front of the fire with his wife, he said, “Do you know that when I was young, I dreamed of being a sailor?”

“Well,” said the woman, “that would have

been a foolish and dangerous life. Better that you are here, safe and warm with me.”

The shoemaker nodded. “I suppose,” he said. “But imagine – I would have seen the world!”

“The world?” said the shoemaker’s wife. “Isn’t the world the world no matter where you go?”

“Ah, yes, but to sail on the blue seas under skies bright with stars...” said the shoemaker.

“The stars are over your head right now, husband, are they not?”

“Yes,” said the shoemaker. “Yes, yes, they are.”

“Be content with what you have,” said his wife. “There is no point in thinking things would be different somewhere else.”

The two of them did not ever speak of the sea again.

The shoemaker and his wife had no children, and they had long given up hoping

for them. And so it seemed an entirely miraculous thing when one day, the cobbler sat down to work on repairing an old boot and found, hidden in its squared-off toe, an extremely small child.

The shoemaker held the baby in his cupped palm and stared down at her in wonder.

“Wife,” he said, “come here. You must see what has been given to us.”



The shoemaker's wife came and stood at her husband's shoulder and looked down at the baby in his hand. "No, no," she said. She shook her head. "That is not a child. It is some magic trick."

"Of course it is a child," said the shoemaker. "A perfect little child."

"It can't be," said the woman. "Such a thing is impossible."

The baby started to cry. The shoemaker rocked her back and forth gently in his hand, smiling down at her.

"I don't understand," said the shoemaker's wife. "A child so small seems wrong to me. I'm sure a mistake has been made. Someone will return to claim the boots and want what they have left behind. And what will happen then? You will be nothing but brokenhearted."

The shoemaker was not listening. He was looking down at the baby and thinking of a sloop he had seen when he was a boy. The

small ship had seemed full of joy, pulling and tugging against its anchor, dancing and bobbing in the waters as if to say, *Let's go! Let's go!*

A sailor standing on the dock had pointed to the boat and said, "Do you see this little lady? She has gone around the world – twice, if you please!"

Painted on the side of the sloop in red, flowing script was the boat's name: *Evangeline*.

This was the name the shoemaker chose for the child.

Evangeline.

It was, to him, a name full of joy and curiosity, daring and courage – a name that spoke of possibilities.