

**JACK
FERRINGTON
AND THE SCHOOL FOR
SWABBIES**

Also By Clint Perry

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Jack Ferrington and the School for Swabbies
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Dedicated to my favorite swabbies,
Sean, Connor & Brandon.

ISLAND OF MAGIC

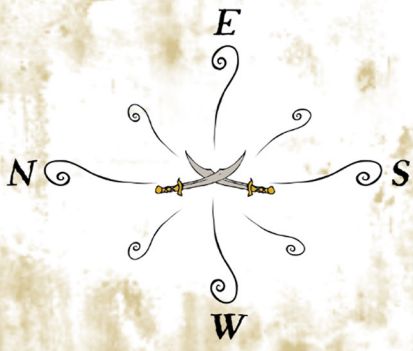


WRECK
ARCHI

CRYSTAL
ISLAND



TERRA
ISLAND



TRADER'S BAY

ISLAND OF WIND

MANTA RAY BAY

COMPASS COVE

HILLMAN HARBOR

TRITON COVE

ISLAND OF FIRE

CKED
PELAGO



*“Yes, I do heartily repent.
I repent I had not done more mischief...”*

— Anonymous Pirate



CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Jack was wide awake before his parrot, Cap'n Keno, had a chance to squawk out an alarm. For a parrot, Cap'n Keno had an incredibly accurate sense of time and knew the hours of the day almost as dead on as a watch. Today it was his job to make sure Jack got up in time for school, but there was no need. Jack beat him to it.

Nonetheless, at 7 AM, Cap'n Keno squawked "Get yer booty outta bed!"

"Keno," Jack said with a chuckle. "You can see I'm already awake."

"Keno bell. Keno bell." The parrot responded, bobbing his head in an up and down

motion.

Today was the first day of the sixth grade at pirate school. Jack was giddy with anticipation. He had barely slept the night before, tossing and turning in his hammock, just under the edge of sleep, dreaming of sea serpents and sword fights. He woke several times throughout the night, hoping it was morning, but when he looked out his porthole, all he could see see was stars and the black sea.

Jack had been waiting for this day for five years. No more lessons in numbers and letters. No more tests on pirate history. No more lunches with the 1st-grade pirates. They were the worst! Brand new to the pirate school, they couldn't stop asking questions. Oh, Jack was *so* done with 1st-grade pirates, not remembering he had once been one himself.

He already had his new octopus backpack filled with all the supplies he thought he'd need for the first day of school. Octopuses made for great backpacks The tentacles worked as straps, and the octopus itself was a stretchy elastic book bag with great durability. You just had to get

used to the suction cups sticking to any exposed skin. That could be kinda creepy.

His octo-pack contained some seagull feathers and a new bottle of squid ink for writing, a compass for direction (no good pirate would ever be without a compass), a bandana, in case he had a stray booger or needed to dry something off, his knife (sixth-grade pirates were now allowed to carry a small utility knife) and a spy glass.

Jack quickly threw on his breeches, boots, shirt, monkey jacket (that's what pirates call a vest), tri-corn hat and grabbed his octo-pack. He headed straight to the galley for some grub.

His mom waited with a plate of salted junk, cackle fruit and a glass of apple cider. He loved cackle fruit, or eggs as the landlubbers called them. He didn't get them often and knew this was special for the first day of sixth grade. More than ever before, Jack felt like a grown-up pirate.

Keno had flown in through the galley window and rested on the table in hopes of picking at Jack's scraps. Jack wasn't sharing

today. Keno squawked, “Cackle fruit” but Jack only waved him away. Keno fluttered in the air a moment and landed on the other side of Jack, “Salted junk!” he screeched. Jack loved his parrot, but today Keno was just going to have to survive on his normal bird seed and rat tail combination. Jack needed his strength.

“Are ye excited?” Jack’s mom, Grace, asked.

Grace had been up early preparing Jack’s “First-Day-Meal” and seeing Jack’s father, Morgan, off to work.

Jack’s father would leave before dawn most mornings. He was a big and burly pirate who, when not on a raid or treasure expedition, worked as a fisherman on a ship that trolled the Caribbean for codfish. Codfish was a main ingredient in many pirate dishes and had to be caught and brought to market almost daily.

Jack’s father’s size and strength made him a valuable asset to have on a fishing boat, hauling in heavy nets.

“Yes!” Jack said through a mouthful of old, salted turkey meat. “I can’t wait to learn

how to shoot a cannon.”

“I don’t think that’ll be ye first day.” She chuckled.

“I know.” He said while gulping down some apple cider, his spittle spraying Keno.

“Wet bird.” Keno interrupted.

“But I can still be excited, can’t I?”

It didn’t take long before Jack was finished breakfast. He got up from the table, quickly hugged his mom and raced up the ladder to the upper deck.

“Wait!” He heard from below.

He turned to find his mom halfway up the ladder holding his octo-pack. “Aye, don’t forget this,” she said with a reassuring smile. “Now hurry along, or you’ll miss the ferry bus. Oh! And your father says, ‘heave ho!’” she finished in her best impression of Jack’s father’s deep voice.

Jack lived in Manta Ray Bay. It was a small bay on the north side of the Island of Wind. The Island of Wind was one of six islands that made up a circular chain in the Caribbean Sea known as the *Wrecked Archipelago*. It was named by

the pirates living there because ships, unfamiliar to the chain, would often wreck and sink trying to find their way to the center. It proved a great chain of islands to defend, live in and learn in. Plus, with so many accidental shipwrecks, it was a great way to acquire treasure... somewhat legally.

Jack ran to the ferry bus dock, his dark brown hair blowing in the wind from underneath the sides of his hat as he hurried to get there on time. At five-feet, Jack was a little taller than the average twelve-year-old, so his longer legs gave him an advantage against the ticking clock. He got that extra height from his father, but his dark eyes, that matched his chestnut hair, his warm smile, and his approachable demeanor came straight from his mom. As he ran, Jack thought back to the day he learned the name of the island chain: *Ark-i-pe-la-go*.

“Archipelago. Archipelago. Archipelago...” He said it a few times under his breath. Each time it made less sense. Why couldn’t they just say *group of islands*? Why the fancy word that no one would ever use, and that

he could barely pronounce? This is the type of useless information he was hoping to avoid as he entered the sixth grade.

Sixth grade would be about cannons, muskets, sailing, spying, sword fighting, blacksmithing, navigation, construction, strategy and parlay.



CHAPTER 2

CRUSTY'S WILD RIDE

The ferry bus arrived at Dock 15 just as Jack started running down the dock. The bus was a relatively small barge, ideal for weaving in and out of the island chain. The ferry bus was rowed by twelve muscular pirates whose job it was to get the kids to Triton Cove by 8:30 AM. These were some of the strongest pirates in the island chain and when they weren't rowing the bus, they were often found at the trade docks loading ships.

Their captain, Crusty Taggert, was one of the wildest ferry bus drivers in the group of islands. Every morning, Crusty Taggert had less than one hour to circle two islands and get the

kids to school in the middle of Triton Cove. Triton Cove was tucked into the northwest side of the Island of Fire. Triton Cove was where all the young pirates from the Island of Wind and its neighbor to the south, the Island of Fire, went to school.

It was a fantastic cove that broke into three smaller coves as one made their way deeper inside. Each smaller cove was home to a carrack. Carracks were one of the largest European sailing ships to travel the Atlantic. Three of the carracks had been confiscated over the years from lost traders in the Atlantic. The ships were then retired and remodeled, in Triton Cove, as schools.

The first tip of the Triton was home to those pesky first-grade pirates and ended at fifth grade. The Tip of the Spear, the center cove, was where Jack was headed, but he'd never get there if he didn't get to his bus.

Kids kept filing into the bus. One by one, over the gangplank they walked. Parents of younger pirates stood and waved. Older pirates made their way to their normal spots and Crusty

yelled, “C’mon! C’mon! We ain’t got all day.”

Jack made it to the gangplank just as it was about to be brought in and crossed in two quick jumps. He quickly found a few of his friends from last year and sat down. Tom Goff, Finn Doherty and Macy Douglas had all been in his fifth-grade class at Shark Bait Elementary. The name seemed harsh, but it also seemed to keep the young pirates from creating too much mischief. Maybe they thought of it as the final punishment for too much trouble. After all, getting expelled did include walking the plank.

Jack was glad to see his friends. Yes, he had seen them throughout the summer, but seeing them here on Crusty’s bus was a comforting consolation for a new year of school.

Finn seemed excessively excited. “Do ya think we’ll start with fire?” He asked.

“What do ya mean, ‘with fire’?” Macy asked with a note of concern in her voice.

“I don’t know,” Finn answered, “just anything with fire would be awesome!”

“I think they’ll probably want to get to know ye a little better before they just let ye go

‘round playing with fire,’” Tom said sternly.

He knew Finn was a loose cannon, outgoing, full of mischief and had a passion for blowing things up. Just this past summer, Finn had blown up a rum barrel at the trade dock on the Island of Wind, just to see what would happen. What would happen? Well, it would appear that no one told Finn that rum is flammable, meaning, it catches on fire. Finn thought the barrel itself would burn, but the liquid inside would put it out, once it burned through the wood. Finn and Jack thought the logic was solid. Wrong! That barrel blew into a thousand pieces, and the rum inside exploded all over the dock, the other barrels of rum, a supply shed and even a couple of catamarans floating in the nearby water. It looked like a tidal wave of light orange had washed over the dock.

Jack, Finn and Tom took off running up a the hill as pirates from nearby homes and ships raced for the dock. The good news was that the rum had burned itself out by the time they had gotten there. The bad news, one of those pieces of barrel had shot itself directly into Tom’s right

leg. He spent the rest of the summer limping around the island. When people asked what had happened, he just smiled and said he fell while trying to hike down to Triton Cove. The flammability of rum wasn't something they had been taught yet in pirate school, but Jack, Finn and Tom knew all about it now.

As Jack's friends bantered about what the new year might bring, Jack drifted off into thoughts of school. He started thinking about the final tip of the Triton, or High Tide High, which was home to grades nine through twelve. His daydreams about the ninth grade and what that meant for pirates were quickly interrupted by Crusty Taggart loudly bellowing, "Watch war yer goin!"

The ferry bus jolted left, then right. Kids and octopuses rolled everywhere. Laughter erupted, and the younger kids grabbed frantically for the rails. Ha! First-graders, Jack thought and shook his head with a smile. They'd soon get used to Crusty. Jack had spent five years on this bus and knew it was a wild ride. A pirate better have an iron stomach to ride with Crusty. If they

didn't, they'd get one. He remembered when Macy vomited over the side of the boat for the first week of their first-grade year. He thought, even then first-graders were so annoying.

Crusty had his route down to a science, but there were plenty of wild turns and evasive maneuvers, as he'd like to call them. Especially when some other pirate ship or small fishing boat was in the way of his planned route.

“Don't ye know it's the first day of school, ya scallywag!” He screamed at a small fishing boat just evaded by the cat-like reflexes of the barge and its commander. “Get out of the way,” He continued.

Maybe Crusty had mellowed out in the last year. Maybe he had been scolded by a pirate mom or dad, because when he was riled up his language was often much saltier. Maybe he was just trying to start the year with a little more self-control. Often one could hear him yelling, “Left up!” or “Pull 'em in” followed by some under the breath curses or hexes he may have learned at the Island of Magic. But no matter what Crusty said, Jack liked him. He was always impressed

with his ability to maneuver that barge. In the years Jack had been riding with Crusty, there had never been a wreck. In these islands...that took skill.

Crusty Taggert's bus made its way from Manta Ray Bay to Compass Cove and on to Hillman Harbor before coming around the southern tip of the Island of Fire and back north to Triton Cove. His route was like a giant "S" around his designated islands.

In between each of his stops was a barrage of hard turns, fishtails, weaving in and out of rocks, loud screams and seasick students. Jack had spent five years getting used to the choppy ride that came with Crusty at the helm, but as they finally started the hard right turn into Triton Cove, he looked around and saw many green faces. Some of the older kids, like him, were just fine, but there were plenty of first, second and a few third-graders that would be making their way right to the infirmary on board the Shark

Bait carrack. What's funny is that each of them was making their own shark bait as they hurled over the side. Maybe this is why they were given that name, Jack thought with a smile.

They entered the Triton Cove after fifty-seven minutes and docked at the gated entry to the three long gangways that led each set of students to their correct ship. Crusty stood at the gangplank and patted each departing male student on the back and tipped his raggedy tricorne at each female student as they left. He loved his job and secretly kept a running tally of each seasick student. No one knew, but Crusty kept a record of how many students left his ship a little more wobbly in the legs. This first day of school had been a record with at least 13 students still hunched over the rails as the majority departed. If anyone looked closely, they could see him smile and quietly count as the students left his ferry bus.

Jack, Finn, Macy and Tom exited and started toward Moray Middle. In just a few more minutes they would officially be "Fighting Eels," their school's mascot.

“Move outta the way.” They heard from behind. They turned around to look and saw John Lawson pushing his way down the gangway to school. John was a seventh grader and Jack hadn’t seen him in over a year. John had moved on to Moray Middle while Jack was still stuck at Shark Bait.

John was even bigger than Jack remembered. It looked like he had grown about a foot in the last year, and was that facial hair? He’d always been bigger than the other kids, and he used his size to muscle his way around school and intimidate other pirates. But now, he looked like he should be in high school.

Jack, Macy, Finn and Tom all pushed their backs against the railing as John stomped through giving Macy a smirk while flicking Tom in the ear as he passed.

“Jerk,” Tom said, under his breath.

John paused, and closed in on Tom, “What was that?” He growled, towering at least six inches over the slighter Tom. Finn took a step forward.

Tom had neither the size or personality to

provoke someone like John Lawson, but Finn had some size and strength that Tom didn't. If Tom needed him, Finn would step in.

Tom cowered and, with a shake in his voice, answered, "Nothing... I was just thinking about work. Ya know...all the school work we'll have to do."

John hovered, then flicked Tom in the nose again, snickered and said, "And I'm sure you'll be doin' some of mine." He turned and continued stomping down the gangway.

Finn stepped back. Tom took a deep breath.

Finn put his hand on Tom's on the back, "Don't worry, we won't let that overgrown seaweed mess with ya this year."

Tom smiled meekly and said, "Thanks"

Jack didn't think John wanted to get to school any faster than the rest of the kids. He stomped, pushed and raced his way to the ship to show his dominance over the new and smaller kids at school.

Jack and his friends continued to make their way to the ship, crossed the gangplank and

found seats on the Main Deck near the front.

Thank you for previewing
Jack Ferrington and the School for Swabbies.

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