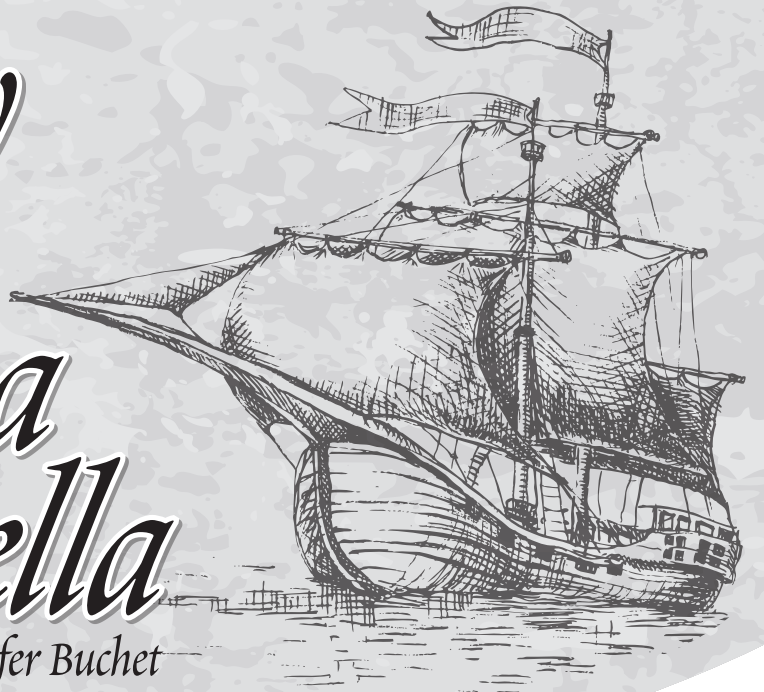


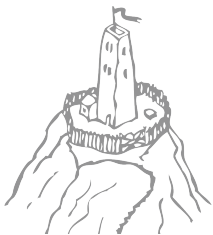
# Cabin Boy aboard the Buena Estrella

by Jennifer Buchet



## August 5, 1524

- 1 At last, the winds are with us. I'm anxious to reach New Spain and discover my fortune!
- 2 Every day I rise at 3:00 a.m. to wake the crew. I sing the morning hymns. Cook and I then lay out salted pork and ale for everyone. Afterward I help the captain with the logbooks that record everything that is happening. And then I walk the ship, working wherever I'm needed.
- 3 Yesterday I helped stop up a small leak. I still smell the awful odor of tar on me. Perhaps tomorrow I can bathe with a bucket of seawater.



## August 15

- 4 I miss my bed at home! I didn't have enough money to buy a hammock before we left Spain. So I sleep against sacks of grain or with the horses. But it really smells down below, and the rats bite. When the nights are clear, I sleep topside and stargaze. The clanging of the rigging (the ropes and metal fixtures) and the whoosh of the waves are my lullaby.

## August 22

- 5 The sky has been darkening all day. The air is heavy. Captain Padilla ordered us to batten down the hatches (to cover up the entrances that go below deck) and secure all the lines. Even the dolphins have gone. I feel apprehensive ...



## August 26

- 6 *Dios mío*, I'm alive!
- 7 These last few days have been the worst of my life. I feared a giant sea monster was trying to devour us all!
- 8 I couldn't tell if it was day or night, so dark was the sky. The ship bucked and pitched in the merciless waves. Twice we nearly capsized! Sadly, three sailors fell into the churning seas. Water was everywhere, including below deck. I helped pump the bilge, trying to ignore the horses' terrified cries. My arms still ache, but at least I'm alive.

## August 28

- 9 We limp toward Havana for repairs. Captain Padilla says our expedition is delayed by at least three weeks! I tried to help by sewing up small holes in the sail. The wind tossed me around like a small leaf as I climbed the mast. Although I nearly fell, the view of the endless waters was magnificent. It's time to turn the hourglass again before I swab the deck.



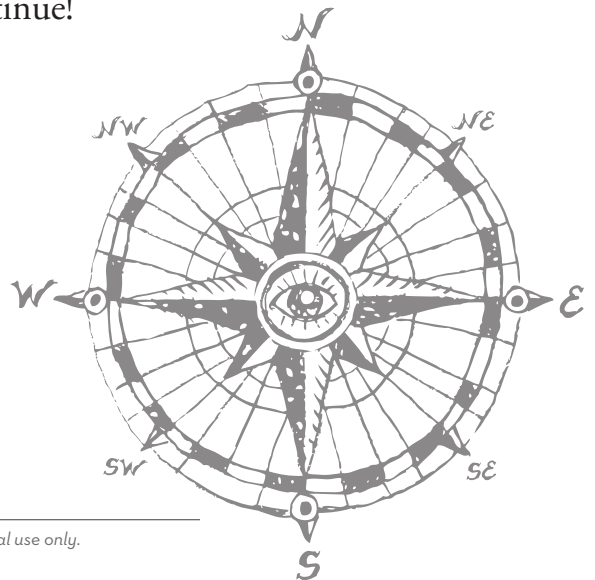
- 10 The watch is called,  
The glass floweth,  
We shall make a good voyage,  
If God willeth.

## September 2

- 11 We're stuck in a blanket of seaweed. Food supplies are low and tempers are high. We couldn't collect rainwater during the storm, and now our barrels are filled with algae scum. The remaining cheese is moldy, and sometimes it hurts to bite into what's left of the hardtack. Hard is the right word for those biscuits!
- 12 I remind myself that gold and glory await me.

## September 8

- 13 At last, dry land! Some sailors talk of staying in Cuba, finding work in the gold mines or on the sugarcane farms. But I am going to continue!



# *Cabin Boy aboard the Buena Estrella*

## Test Questions

*Circle the correct answer.*

**1. Which two words best describe the cabin boy?**

- a. determined
- b. helpless
- c. shy
- d. hopeful
- e. lazy

**2. What does *odor* mean as it is used in the following paragraph from the passage?**

Yesterday I helped stop up a small leak. I still smell the awful **odor** of tar on me. Perhaps tomorrow I can bathe with a bucket of seawater.

- a. sight
- b. feeling
- c. smell
- d. leak

**3. What was left to eat at the end of the voyage?**

- a. salted pork
- b. water
- c. biscuits
- d. fish

# *Cabin Boy aboard the Buena Estrella*

## Test Questions (*continued*)

### **4. How was life on the boat different before the storm and after the storm?**

- a. Before the storm, they were going to America, and after the storm, they were going to Cuba.
- b. Before the storm, they had more water and food, and after the storm, they were almost out of food.
- c. Before the storm, the main character was helping on the ship, but after the storm, he was too scared to help.
- d. Before the storm, the main character had to sleep under the deck, and after the storm, he could sleep above the deck.

### **5. What lesson did the cabin boy learn from his voyage?**

- a. Traveling by boat is too difficult to attempt.
- b. It is better to protect yourself than to help others.
- c. It is too dangerous to fix a broken ship.
- d. Going through difficult times can sometimes be worth it.