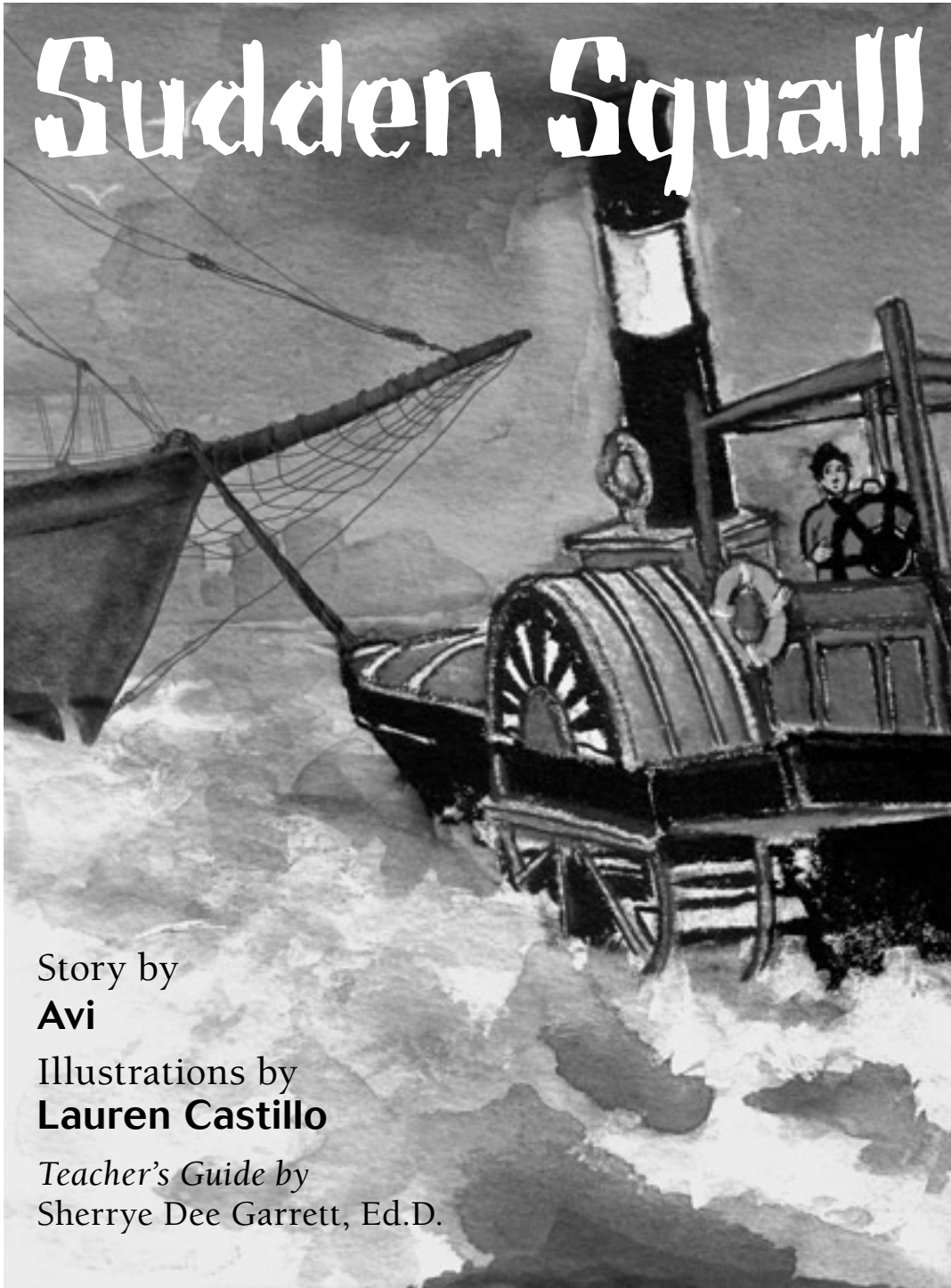


Sudden Squall



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D I S T R I B U T E D B Y :



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Introduction

In *Sudden Squall*, fourteen-year-old Thaddeus Bates lives on a side paddle steam freighter with his father and younger sister Abigail and dreams of becoming a sea captain. His dream, or is it a nightmare, comes true unexpectedly. The year is 1884 and the Bates freighter, the *Neptune*, carries produce from New Jersey to New York City through the narrow Van Kull Channel. A sudden squall develops and ships frantically try to move to safety. A collision disables a sailing ship and the *Neptune* comes to the rescue, towing the ship to the harbor. With his father aboard the disabled ship, and the first mate ill, Thad must steer the *Neptune* through the channel, avoiding near-collisions with other boats. His sister Abigail takes charge of the ship's whistle, signaling others to clear the way. Thad receives a real-life lesson in commanding a ship. Is it everything he thought it would be? *Sudden Squall* is written by Avi and illustrated by Lauren Castillo.

Lesson Plans

The chapter lessons are divided into four parts:

Vocabulary identifies important vocabulary words.

Let's Discuss questions encourage students to think about what is happening in the story. The final question in each chapter asks students to predict what will happen in the next installment.

Ahoy! Portfolio helps students connect events and topics in the chapter to the real world through newspaper activities.

Captain's Log provides additional research activities related to topics in the story.

Additional Activities

This section suggests additional instructional activities related to the content of the story and includes vocabulary strategies, story organizers, a crossword puzzle and a word search puzzle.

Acknowledgements

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About Channels and Steamboats

Kill Van Kull Channel

Sudden Squall takes place in the waterways between New Jersey and New York City. The connecting channel is the Kill Van Kull. While the word “kill” does not appear in the story, it does, however, appear in articles about the channel and maps of the area. The word “kill” comes from an old Dutch word for “water channel.”

The Kill Van Kull is a channel that is 4 miles long and .5 miles wide. It connects upper New York Bay with Newark Bay, between Bayonne, New Jersey and Staten Island, New York. The Kill Van Kull has been an important channel for commerce because it provides a passage for marine traffic between towns in New Jersey and New York City.

Students can find articles about the Kill Van Kull and maps of the channel on the Internet. Have students type “Kill Van Kull” in the Google search box and select “map.” There are many articles about how the Kill Van Kull was too shallow for modern shipping. The channel has a hard rock bottom and it was an expensive and time-consuming engineering project to make it deeper to allow modern vessels to travel in it safely.

Side Paddle Steam Freighters

We can trace the beginning of the steamboat back to 1769 when Scotsman James Watt patented an effective version of the steam engine. In 1787,

John Fitch successfully demonstrated a working 45-foot steamboat on the Delaware River, an event attended by members of the Constitutional Convention. Between 1785 and 1796, Fitch designed different types of steamboats. One design included a paddle wheel. Although Fitch was creative in his designs, he could not make the steamboats economically successful.

The man who turned steamboats into a successful commercial venture was Robert Fulton. Fulton had a fascination for science, especially the application of the steam engine to different uses. He received English patents for many inventions. In 1802, he contracted with Robert Livingston to build a steamboat for use on the Hudson River. In 1807, he unveiled the *Clermont*, the first American steamboat. The *Clermont* traveled from New York to Albany. This trip was the beginning of commercial steamboat service in the United States.

You can have students research more about steamboats and steam engines on the Internet. Several sites for them to investigate are:

www.steamboats.com

www.putinbayphotos.com/modboats/modboats.html

<http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blsteamship.htm>

Nautical Terms

Sudden Squall contains many vocabulary words that refer to ships. Watch for these words in the story.

Amidships, *prep.* In the middle of a boat or ship

Bow, *n.* The front part of a ship

Bowsprits, *n.* Poles that project forward from the main upright timber at the bow of the ship and upon which the lines of the foremast are fastened

Buoys, *n.* Anchored floats that mark a location in the water

Cast off, *v.* Untie the ropes securing a boat so it can move away from a dock

Ferry, *n.* A boat used to move passengers, vehicles, or goods across water, especially across a narrow channel

First Mate, *n.* The officer on a ship who ranks immediately below the captain

Funnel, *n.* A vertical pipe on a steam ship from which smoke and exhaust escape

Galley, *n.* The kitchen area on a boat

Gangplank, *n.* A moveable bridge or plank used when boarding or leaving a ship

Gunnels, *n.* The top edge of a ship's sides that form a ledge around the whole vessel

Hatchway, *n.* A small hole in a wall between two rooms; a door cut into the floor or ceiling of a ship

Pilot house, *n.* An enclosed control room of a ship containing the steering wheel and navigational equipment

Porthole, *n.* A small round window with a metal frame the side of a ship

Portside, *adj.* The left side of a ship (facing the front)

Prow, *n.* The forward section of a ship

Rudder wheel, *n.* The large round wheel that controls the rudder of a ship; the rudder controls the direction of the ship's movement

Second Mate, *n.* The officer on a ship who is ranked below the first mate; the third-highest-ranking officer

Starboard, *adj.* The right side of a ship (facing the front)

Steam freighter, *n.* A ship powered by a steam engine designed to carry goods or cargo

Stern, *n.* The rear section of a ship

Toilet head, *n.* The bathroom on a ship



Captain's Log

Use resource books and the Internet to learn more about side wheel paddle freighters. How big were they? How fast could they go? How were they powered?

Vocabulary

Pilot, v

Direct the course of a ship

Squall, n

A sudden, strong wind, often with heavy rain

Tight ship, n

A situation where everything is under control

Let's Discuss

1. What tells you that Thaddeus and Abigail live on a boat?
2. What kind of boat is the *Neptune*?
3. What kind of business do the Bates have on the *Neptune*?
4. Why does the *Neptune* compete every day with another ship, the *Mermaid*?
5. Why do you think Captain Bates places such importance on education for Thad and Abigail?
6. What was breakfast like on the *Neptune*?
7. What interferes with Thad and Abigail going to school on this day?
8. How does Thad feel about school? Why do you think he feels that way?
9. What events suggest that the *Neptune* will not have a smooth trip?
10. Make a prediction: What will happen to the *Neptune* on this trip?

Ahoy! Portfolio

Create your own Ahoy! Portfolio to collect reading and writing activities that relate to this story. (*Ahoy!* is a word used by sailors to greet another ship or another person or to get attention.) Today, find five different products in the newspaper that you would like to have in your cabin on the *Neptune*. List the items on a piece of paper and then explain why you selected each one. Your items must fit in a container no bigger than a shoebox.

Let's Discuss

1. Why is the loading taking so long?
2. How far does the *Neptune* have to travel to reach New York City?
3. Why was Captain Bates able to advance rapidly in the navy when he was younger?
4. Why do you think Captain Bates wears his beard like Abraham Lincoln? Who is Mr. Oliver's hero?
5. How do you know that Mr. Oliver is not feeling well?
6. Why is being in charge of the whistle an important job for Abigail to have?
7. How do you think ships communicate with each other today?
8. What signs indicate that a storm is coming?
9. Make a prediction: What problems will the weather cause for the *Neptune*?

*Captain's Log*

Use resource books and the Internet to learn more about the navies in the Civil War. What types of ships were used then? How many ships did each side have? What was the role of the Union navy at Vicksburg?

Ahoy! Portfolio

Find classified ads for three jobs that might be available on the *Neptune*. Paste each ad on a piece of paper. Then write a paragraph explaining how each job would help in the running of the ship.

Vocabulary**Brine, *n****The salt water of the sea***Casting off, *v****Untying the ropes securing a boat so it can move away from a dock***Homage, *n****A show of respect***Listless, *adj****Lacking energy; unable to make an effort to do something***Scrutinizing, *v****Examining something very closely***Stowed, *v****Put away in a neat, orderly manner*



Captain's Log

Use resource books and the Internet to learn more about basic rules of harbor traffic. What is appropriate action for a ship entering or leaving the harbor? Who has the right-of-way in different situations?

Vocabulary

Nor-easter, *n*

A storm or wind that blows from the northeast, often a serious storm

Rip tides, *n*

Strong currents

Strokes, *n*

Up and down movements of a piston in an engine

Tacking, *v*

Changing the direction or course of a ship

Land lubbers, *n*

People who are awkward on a ship because they don't have experience at sea

Havoc, *n*

Widespread damage

Let's Discuss

1. How does Thad feel as he sees the threatening weather develop?
2. Why is Thad's job of checking the cargo so important?
3. Why are the ships in the harbor traveling so quickly in *both* directions?
4. Why would it be difficult to stop the *Neptune* quickly? What experiences do you have trying to stop something quickly?
5. What do you think Captain Bates means when he says, "Bad weather makes bad seamen worse, good ones better."?
6. Why did the two sailing ships, the *Columbine* and the *Bonnie Brea*, collide?
7. Why does Captain Bates decide to help the *Columbine*?
8. Make a prediction: How will the *Neptune* help the *Columbine*?

Ahoy! Portfolio

Paste the weather map from your newspaper on a piece of paper. Write the weather forecast for your area. Will it be a good day or a bad day to be on a boat? Explain why or why not.

Racing to a Rescue



Captain's Log

Use resource books and the Internet to learn more about rules of the sea. What are the responsibilities of one ship to help another? What are some situations in which a ship might need help from another ship?

Vocabulary

Furling, v

Rolling up and securing

Swelling, n

Rising and falling movement of a large area of the sea

Pitching, v

Moving up and down in rough water

Let's Discuss

1. Why do you think the towing captain is responsible for piloting the disabled ship?
2. Why does Captain Bates give Thad the job of steering the *Neptune*?
3. Why does Abigail take over the job of communicating with Mr. Pordine in the engine room?
4. Describe the maneuvering Thad has to do to get the two ships in position for the tow.
5. Make a prediction: What will happen to the *Columbine*?

Ahoy! Portfolio

Find a comic strip where a character or characters is helping others. Paste the comic strip on a piece of paper. Write a paragraph describing what you would do in the same situation.