

Buster's Big Surprise



Little Red
Robin



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Chapter One



Buster Gutt, the pirate chief, leaned on the ship's rail, scratching Bowzer's ear and thinking dark thoughts about his arch-enemy, Admiral Ainsley Goldglove.

Buster was the biggest, baddest pirate who ever sailed the seven seas. He and his crew had a terrible reputation. They bristled with pistols and cutlasses and would do anything for treasure.

Buster's ship was called *The Bad Joke* – people trembled whenever they saw it coming.





The only person who didn't tremble was Admiral Ainsley Goldglove, of the *HMS Glorious*. The admiral's noble chest dripped with medals for catching pirates. He always wore a gold glove on his left hand, just for show. Buster hated him. "Catch me, would he?" he growled to Bowzer. "Ha! We'll see about that!" Bowzer bared his teeth in agreement.



Their little talk was suddenly interrupted by the crew, who had some very bad news indeed.

“What?” snarled Buster. “No food? 'Ow come?”

One-Eyed Ed, the lookout, shrugged and rolled his eye. Threfingers Jake, the bosun, nudged Jimmy Maggot, the cook, who stepped forward.

“We ate it all, Captain,” he explained.



“But what ’appened to the ship’s biscuits?” Buster growled.

“Weevils got ’em,” said Jimmy Maggot.

“What about last week’s sea pie?” snarled Buster.

“Went mouldy,” sighed Jimmy Maggot. “I gave it to Bowzer. And that’s not all. We’re out of fresh water too.”



“Sharksbum!” bellowed Buster. “We be scuppered!”
(In pirate speak, that means, “Oh, bother. We’re finished.”)



“Not quite, Captain,” said Threefingers Jake, unrolling a chart. “There’s land ahead, accordin’ to this. See? Allspice Island. Put your glass eye in, Ed, and climb the rigging. See if you can spot it.”

“No need!” croaked Timothy Tiddletfish, the cabin boy, who always had a cold. He wiped his nose on his sleeve and pointed across the water to a fast-approaching hump covered with trees. “There it is, comin’ – ahh-ahh-*achoo!*”

“E’s right,” said Buster, grimly. “It is comin’ at me. Fast, too. All ’ands on deck, *at the double!*”

