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Opening extract from

Treasure Hunters: Danger Down the Nile

Written by

James Patterson

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A QUICK NOTE FROM BICKFORD KIDD



First off, nobody calls me Bickford except my twin sister, Rebecca, and even then, only when she's really mad at me.

Second, you should know that I, Bick Kidd, will be the one telling you this story, while my sister Beck will be doing the drawings.

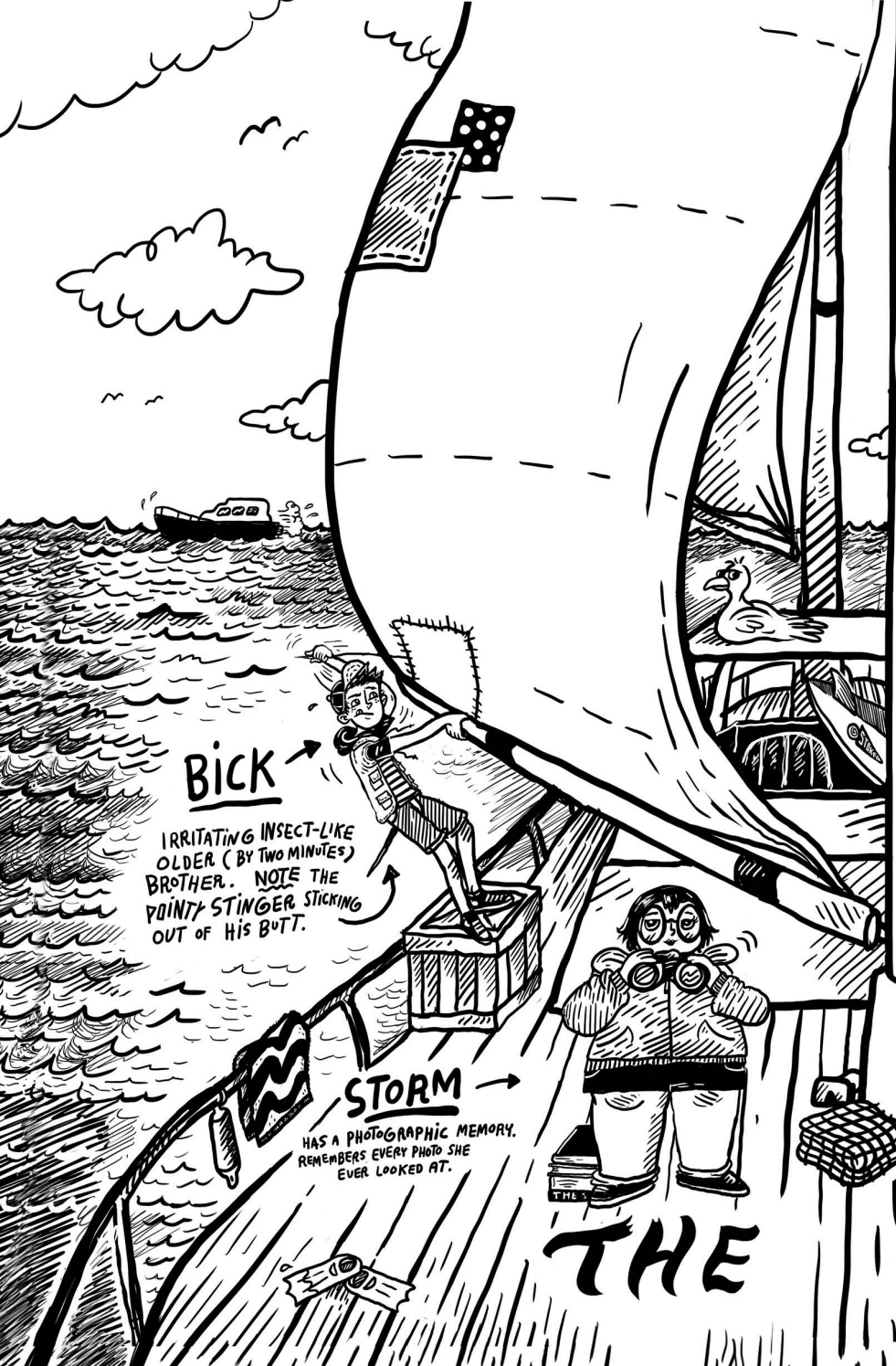
Like the one over on the next page.

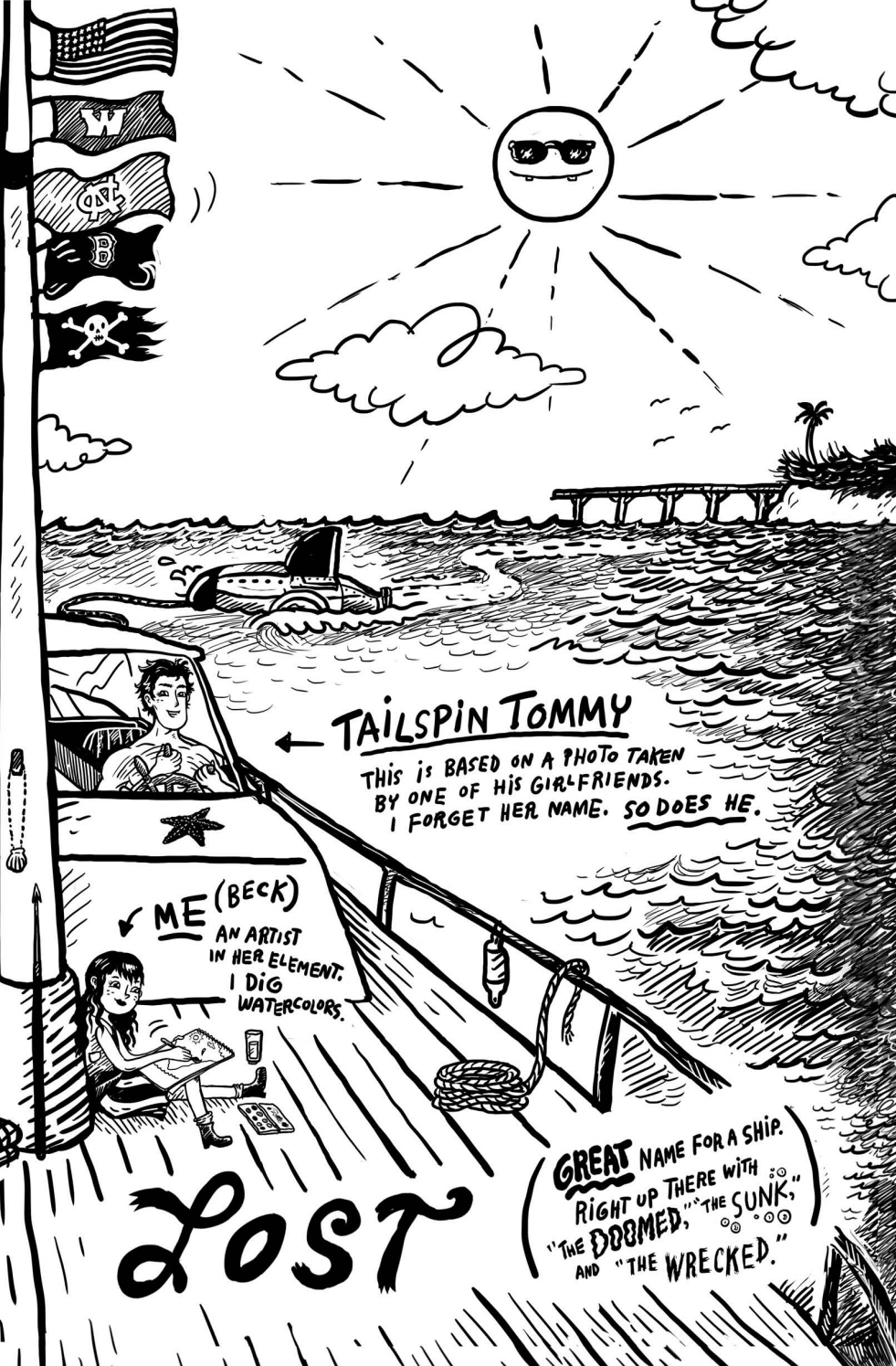
(Beck just said I have to tell you not to believe everything I write, either. Especially if it's about her. Like my snarky comment about her snarky comments. Fine. Now, can we get on with the story?)

Hold on tight.

This could be a wild ride.

Hey, with us Kidds, most rides are.


BICK
IRRITATING INSECT-LIKE OLDER (BY TWO MINUTES) BROTHER. NOTE THE POINTY STINGER STICKING OUT OF HIS BUTT.
STORM
HAS A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY. REMEMBERS EVERY PHOTO SHE EVER LOOKED AT.
THE


TAILSPIN TOMMY
THIS IS BASED ON A PHOTO TAKEN BY ONE OF HIS GIRLFRIENDS. I FORGET HER NAME. SO DOES HE.
ME (BECK)
AN ARTIST IN HER ELEMENT. I DIG WATERCOLORS.
GREAT NAME FOR A SHIP. RIGHT UP THERE WITH "THE DOOMED," "THE SUNK," AND "THE WRECKED."
LOST

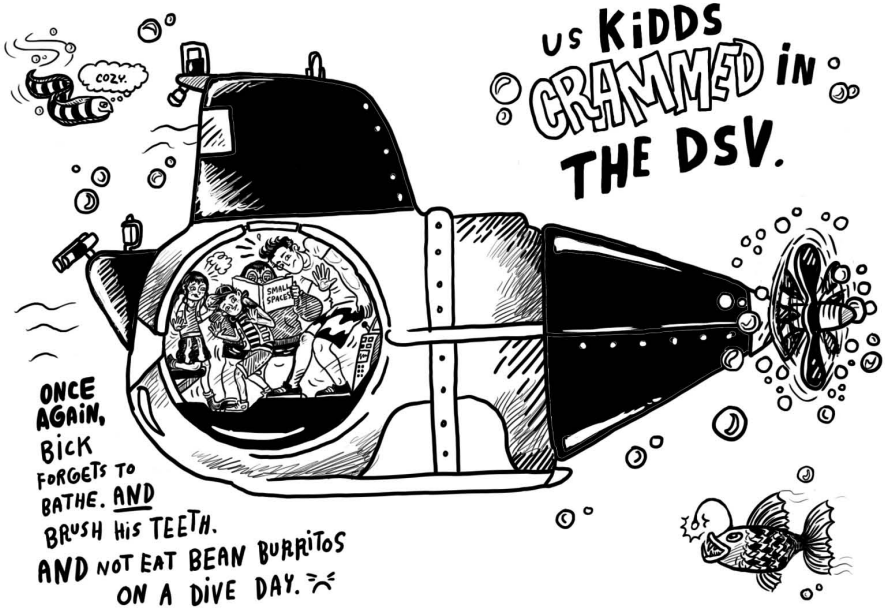
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All my life, we Kidds have lived on the sea. Then, one day, we almost died under it.

The four of us were crammed inside a two-person mini-sub (what the US Navy calls a DSV, or Deep Submergence Vehicle), our newest piece of high-tech treasure-hunting gear. We'd purchased it at an auction with the half-million-dollar reward we collected on our last adventure.

My big sister, Storm, was convinced we needed the submarine to help us in our continuing quest to bring home the two most important treasures in the world: our missing mom and dad.



See, Storm doesn't dive, because the last time she climbed into a rubber scuba suit, some mean old geezer on a yacht called her a "shrink-wrapped whale." Obviously, that little comment wasn't his best idea, because the next time he went to take his fancy yacht for a spin, the fish-head-in-your-bedsheets smell was getting pretty bad. Nobody messes with Storm.

We still needed Storm's photographic memory if we wanted to go back to the pair of sunken Spanish galleons off the coast of Florida that our

father, the world-famous treasure hunter Dr. Thomas Kidd, had dubbed the Twins. That was why we were packed like sardines in the DSV.

Unfortunately, Mom and Dad weren't with us.

The ships' cargo holds were loaded down with treasure—enough to finance Kidd Family Treasure Hunters Inc. for as long as it took to figure out some way to help our parents, who—on top of being world-class treasure hunters—were neckdeep in dangerous CIA business.

So finding those ships was crazy important.

But Tommy had lost the treasure map that took us to the Twins the first time. Well, if we're being honest, he accidentally used it as a napkin for a greasy slice of pizza, then crumpled it up and tossed it into a trash barrel. A trash barrel he and one of his assorted girlfriends used later for a beach bonfire.

So it was pretty much gone for good.

"This sub is awesome!" said Tommy, who's seventeen and the closest thing we have to adult

supervision. "The four of us can dive as a family without messing up our hair."

"Or breathing," added Beck, who was squished up against a porthole.

"Change your heading to two hundred and sixty-three degrees, Tommy," said Storm, navigating from memory. "The sunken vessels will be dead ahead."

"Aye, aye," said Tommy.

But when he nudged the control stick forward, the ship didn't budge.

We kept drifting downward.

Sinking deeper.

And deeper.

"Um, how far down can this thing go without popping a gasket?" I asked.

"Forty-five hundred meters," said Storm. "That's fourteen thousand seven hundred and sixty-four feet, for those of you who skipped the math chapter on metric conversions."

"Maybe we should go back up to *The Lost*," suggested Beck. "And, oh, I don't know—read the operating manual?"

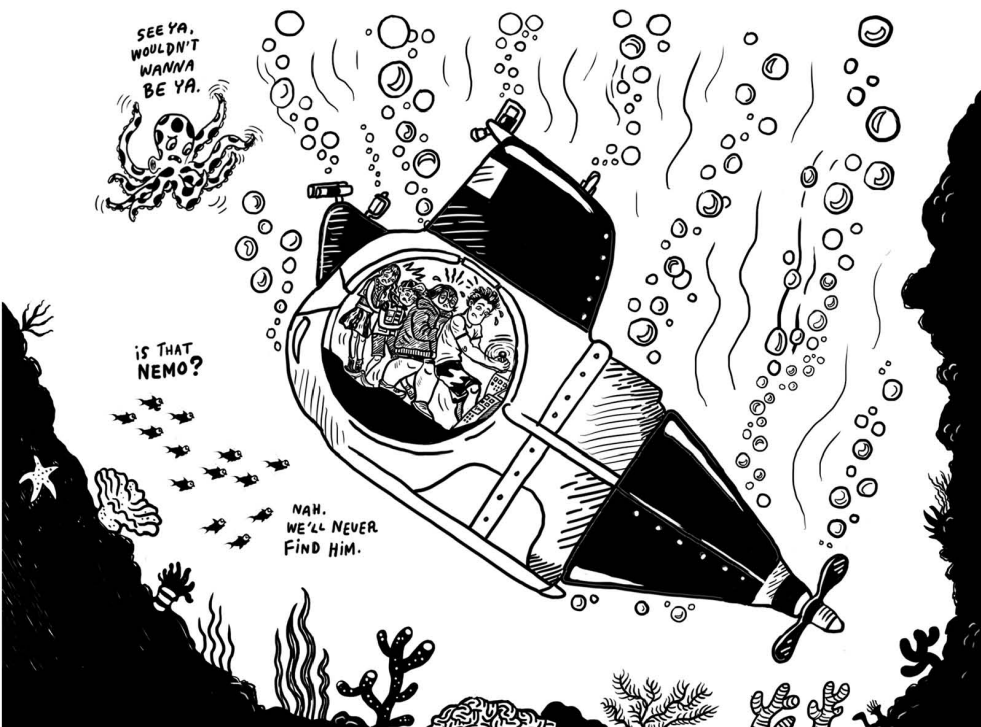
"Yeah," said Tommy. "That'd be a good idea. Make all preparations for surfacing. Secure the ventilation. Shut bulkhead flappers."

Yep. Tommy sure sounded like a real, live submarine commander.

Too bad we kept sinking.

"Uh, those controls aren't working, either," Tommy finally said after nothing he flipped or poked worked.

"So, basically," I said, "all we can do is keep going down? To the bottom of the sea?"



Tommy nodded. "Basically."

That was when our engines cut out.

"We've lost power," Storm reported matter-of-factly. "If you have a favorite prayer, now would be a good time to start reciting it."

Remember how Tommy said that thing about the sub making it easier for us to dive as a family?

Well, it looked like it might help us *die* as a family, too!