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opening extract from

# The Barefoot Book of Pirates

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published by

**Barefoot Books**

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# The Barefoot Book of PIRATES




retold by Richard Walker
illustrated by Olwyn Whelan

Barefoot Books
Celebrating Art and Story



# The Captain's Goose

SCANDINAVIAN

Long, long ago, in a distant land, there lived a great sea captain. He was stronger and braver than any sea captain who lived before or after him. He was a sworn enemy of all pirates. It takes a lot to scare a brave pirate, but this sea captain was so mighty in battle that all evildoers kept well away from him. He had a reputation for honesty and everybody wanted him for a friend.

One evening, the captain was sitting in his cabin waiting for his cook to bring him a goose which had been roasted for his dinner. He could smell the appetising fragrance wafting in from the kitchen and his mouth was watering. He had had a busy day and he was looking forward to the delicious meal the cook was preparing for him.

Suddenly, the cabin door opened and in walked a wizard. The wizard was dressed in a long robe with a staff in his hand.

'Greetings, Captain,' he said. 'I have heard of your courage and honesty. I know of your strength. I am here to ask whether being a mere sea captain is enough for you, or whether you would prefer to be a king?'

The sea captain was rather taken aback by the wizard's question, but it







didn't take him long to gather his wits and give his answer. He was so good at keeping order that for months now all the pirates, and with them any hint of trouble, kept well out of his way. To be honest, he was really rather fed up with his life. Apart from the occasional storm, nothing exciting had happened to him in a long time.

'It would be a new challenge to be a king,' he said, 'but how could it be so?'

'For me, everything is possible,' said the wizard. 'I can easily arrange for you to be a king. All I would ask in return is that you give me ten golden coins each year in gratitude.'

'It would be worth more than that,' said the captain.

'Yet that is still all I ask,' said the wizard. 'Now, if you really want to be a king, you must come with me.'





So the captain forgot all about his dinner and followed the wizard. As soon as they were out of the cabin, the wizard touched the captain with his staff to make him invisible, so that none of the crew could see what was happening. Then the wizard uttered a strange spell and a magical boat appeared out of nowhere. Together, the wizard and the captain travelled in his boat far across the sea to a land where the king had just died. It was a very beautiful land, with high mountains and deep fjords. The mountains were full of gold mines and the fjords were full of fish, so many people wanted to control it. But the dead king had only one son and heir, a child who was just ten years old. Word had already got around to the pirates and their boats were crowded into the little harbour. They knew they could easily deal with a child and that the country could soon be their pirate kingdom.

The royal advisors didn't know what to do and were having a meeting in the great chamber when the wizard and the sea captain walked in.