

The Lighthouse Keeper's Breakfast



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Mr. and Mrs. Grinling lived with their cat, Hamish, in a little white cottage perched high on the cliffs. Mr. Grinling was a lighthouse keeper. By day and night, with his assistant Sam, he lovingly tended the light.

One Wednesday morning when Sam was polishing, he noticed a tiny inscription right at the top of the lighthouse.

“Well, well,” he said to himself. “Just fancy that!”

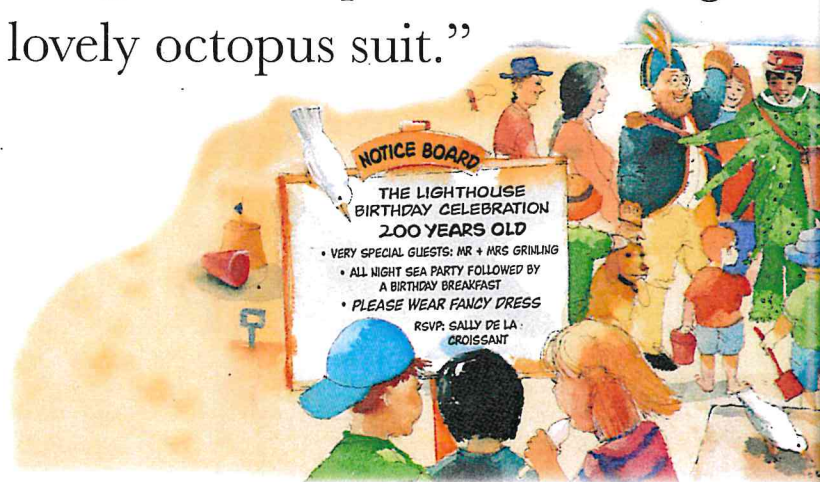


"Our lighthouse is 200 years old this year," he told everyone. "We should celebrate."

"Maybe some presents," said Mr Grinling. "And a fresh coat of red and white paint."

"And a party," said Mrs Grinling. "How about fancy dress?" suggested Sally de la Croissant, the baker.

"Something to do with the sea," said Jason the postman. "I've got a lovely octopus suit."



"We can use my old sailing ship," roared Admiral Fleetabix, "I'll moor her out in the bay."

"Can it be an all night party with a birthday breakfast?" asked the children. "It is an extremely important occasion."

And everyone agreed that Mr and Mrs Grinling should be the Very Special Guests.





It was so difficult to choose the best fancy dress costume.

"Shall I wear the shark suit?" asked Mr Grinling.

"Could I be a mermaid?" wondered Mrs Grinling.

But then they discovered the pirate costumes.

"All my life I've yearned to be a pirate," sighed Mrs Grinling.

"To spit and swear and roam the seven seas."

"And search for treasure," added Mr Grinling.

"We'll be splendid pirates!" cried Mrs Grinling as she swashed and buckled around the room.



"Oo-aargh!" said Mr Grinling and he swashed and buckled too.



"Perhaps Hamish could be our pirate cat," suggested Mrs Grinling.

But Hamish had very different ideas. Whenever Mrs Grinling wanted him to try his pirate costume, Hamish disappeared.

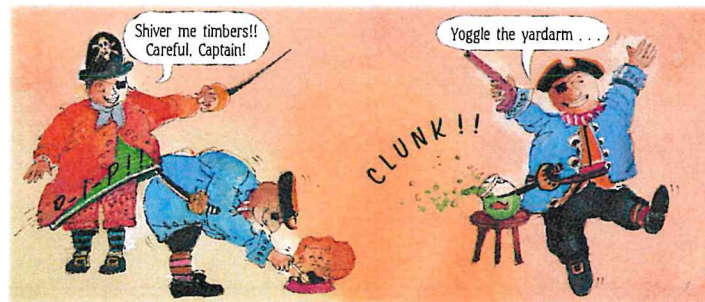
"Drat that cat," she exclaimed. "Where does he go these days?"



The Grinlings practised being pirates at every opportunity.



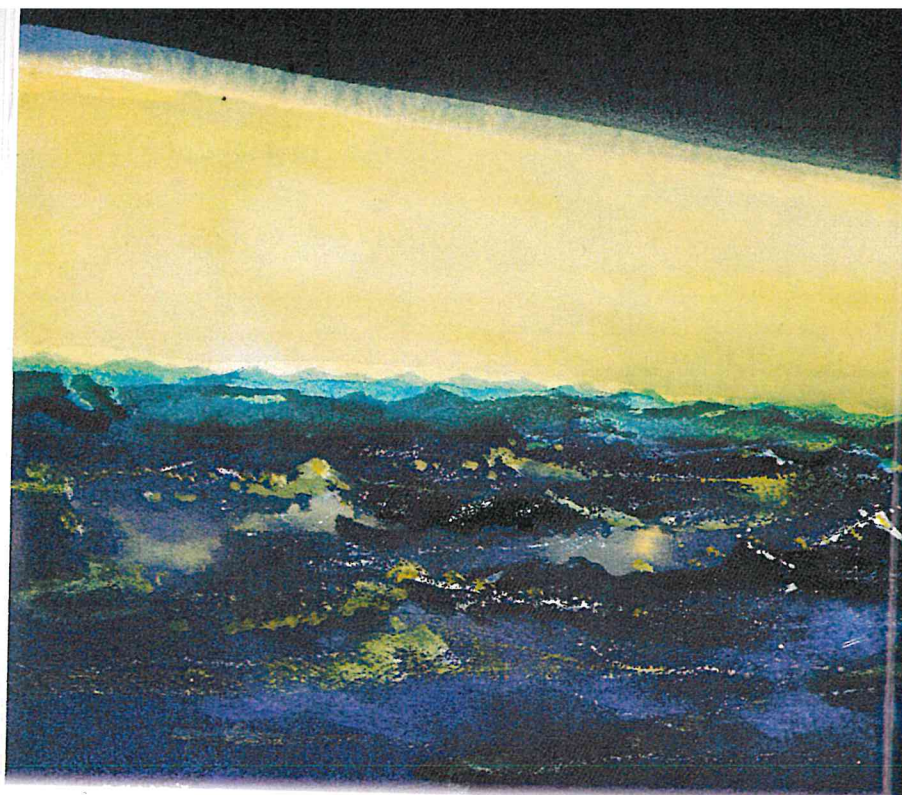
But Mr Grinling's cutlass caused all sorts of difficulties.



"I do want to be a pirate," he said sadly. "I'm just not very good at it. Perhaps I should have gone as a shark after all."

Mrs Grinling quite frightened Sam and the seagulls with her cursing and swearing.





On the night of the party the Grinlings rowed out towards the party ship. At first its lights shone clearly across the water but gradually they dimmed and soon they vanished altogether.



“What can have happened, Mrs G?” said Mr Grinling. “We can’t be lost.” The waves slapped against the little boat. It was darker than Mr Grinling had ever seen it. And then as the lighthouse flashed across the bay...