

COLLINS BOOKSELLERS WARRNAMBOOL

GREAT SOUTH COAST YOUNG WRITERS' PRIZE – SHORTLIST 2025

A Good Book & A Big Imagination (Yr 6 Student)

Optional introduction to entry: In my story I wrote about a girl with an enormous love for books and a huge imagination. Missy is like a fictional version of myself. I am a big book fan and as cheesy as it sounds sometimes find myself in a different world while reading (especially if it is Harry Potter). I originally wrote this for my school's book fair competition and my library teacher told me I should enter it. I love books so much so I decided to write a story myself and I hope you'll enjoy it because I really loved writing it. Thank You.

A young curly haired girl sat cross legged in a beanbag, reading a book with a picture of a pirate ship on the cover. It was called 'The Adventures of Captain Frank'. Her name was Missy. She LOVED books, especially if they were about pirate adventures. Sometimes she pictured herself on a majestic ship looking out towards the ocean as she sailed over the waves and the dark sea below her.

Anyone who knows Missy knows that when she is in her bean bag, she is engrossed in a good book. In fact this book was so good, and she was so engrossed in it that she didn't notice the sudden change of scenery. Missy was no longer in her bedroom. Instead she was on a large wooden boat with tall masts that reached to the sky. Only when someone called out to her did she look up.

"Ahoy there!" boomed a rough voice. Missy looked up and saw a big man with a bushy beard and one scary looking eye patch. As he hobbled towards her Missy noticed his funny looking wooden leg. "Who are you and how did you get on my ship?!" he growled.

Where was Missy and how did she get here? Missy had a sudden longing for her bedroom. "I... I don't know," she stuttered, "I was just in my bedroom, reading a book and then... and then... I don't know!" The pirate, who Missy recognised as Captain Frank from her book, looked extremely confused.

"What's reading and books got to do with anything?"

"I don't know, but I love to read so much, especially about your adventures, Captain Frank," said Missy, trying to change the subject. Although he was very intimidating, he was her favourite book character.

“You can read?!” Captain Frank looked surprised, “We have so many maps and stories but none of us can read them!”

“Oh that is terrible. I can teach you and your crew if you wish.”

“Oh no Matey, we’re too impatient to learn, you must read them for us.” This is not what Missy had imagined. If she is reading all the pirate books how will she read other books?

“Sir, I can’t read them for you.” Captain Frank was getting angry and you could tell by the way his ears began to go red.

“Well you will, scallywag!” Captain Frank had made up his mind. Missy was taken by a large, even more intimidating pirate to the library. It was amazing, there were hundreds of books, a bookworm's dream. But Missy, as big of a bookworm as she was, knew that these books were not full of adventures and fun; these were non-fiction books. As useful as they were, non-fiction books were not something Missy would read for fun and so Missy picked up a book called “The History of Hidden Treasure”.

Missy had read eight books on the first day and when she was on her ninth she began to doze off. She was determined to read ten books by the end of the day and she would not give up. Missy went back to reading. This book wasn’t a non-fiction though. It was about a boy who got lost at sea and built his own ship. Missy was so intrigued in this story that she didn’t hear the person knock on the door.

“Excuse me.” Missy looked up. “What are you doing?” The question came from a boy. He looked about Missy’s age and he had scraggly hair which matched his grimy clothes.

“Um... I’m reading.” Missy and the boy looked equally confused. “Don’t you know what reading is?”

“Of course I know what reading is, but why are you doing it?”

“Because Captain Frank forced me to.” The boy walked in and sat on the armchair opposite Missy.

“Yes, that sounds like Father.”

“He’s your father!” Missy was surprised. “That means you’re Andrew!”

Andrew looked confused, “You know my name?”

“Yes, you’re in one of my books.”

“Reading sounds fun, I wish I was able to read.”

“You can’t read?” This made Missy sad, everyone deserves to be able to read. “I can teach you.”

“Really? I would love that!”

And so Missy and Andrew began reading lessons. You probably don’t remember how you learnt to read and if you never learned how to read then you’re probably not reading this. Anyway, learning to read is difficult and teaching people how to read is even more difficult. Luckily Missy and Andrew are perserverers.

Over the next week or so Missy and Andrew became extremely close. Andrew helped Missy survive the pirate life and in return Missy taught him how to read. They had learnt simple words like cat and fish but Captain Frank did not like this. One sunny day Captain Frank called for Missy and Andrew to come onto deck.

“Missy, Andrew what are you doing in the library?” Missy looked at Andrew, but he was staring at his feet.

“Um... we’ve been reading.” Missy said.

“Reading? Andrew can’t read.”

“I’ve been teaching him.”

“I don’t want my son to have such things in his head!”

“I... I’m sorry.”

“Young girl, you are not to teach my son how to read anymore, in fact you are now my prisoner.”

A tall pirate grabbed Missy up and carried her to one of the masts. He sat her down and tied her to the wood, the bright sun shining brightly above her. Missy didn’t know how to get out of this.

She was looking towards the endless ocean when she saw a bubble floating towards the ship. She pointed to the strange thing. “What’s that?”

Captain Frank and his whole crew looked to where she was pointing. As the bubble was getting closer to the ship Missy noticed that it wasn’t a bubble at all instead it was a book. On the front it said, ‘The Adventures of Captain Frank’.

“A flying book!” yelled a short, stubby pirate.

“What does this mean?” asked another.

Missy reached for the book but another hand grabbed it instead.

“Why is a picture of my ship on this?” asked Captain Frank, the red of his ears spreading across his whole face.

“Oh that’s my book, I was reading it before I got teleported to your ship and then -”

“Teleported, that is witchcraft and I do not associate with witches!”

“But I’m not a witch!”

“Ben! Rob! Seize her!” Captain Frank yelled at the short pirate and a tall scrawny pirate.

“Uh... that’s not my name,” mumbled the tall pirate.

“Oh sorry Ed, now take her to the plank.”

“Still not my name,” said the pirate as he grabbed her by the ear.

“Noo!” yelled Andrew.

Missy was just about to reach the plank when she realised why she was here on this boat. “A good book,” Missy yelled, “and a really big imagination, can take you anywhere!”

Captain Frank laughed as his whole pirate crew began to chant, “Walk the plank! Walk the plank!” To the pirates Missy’s fate was set. They thought she would die in the freezing cold water, but Missy knew... Missy hoped that something different would happen.

She took one final breath before she began to plummet towards the water. Her feet left the platform but they never hit the water. Instead the cold wind rushing past her disappeared as she landed in the comfort of her warm beanbag.