

## By Rebecca Cockcroft

Character List:

The Captain / Jacky Bosomworth

Dinah The Ship's Cat / Lord Bosomworth

The Ship's Cook / Evelyn The Maid

Lady Bosomworth / A Creature

Everything has a Victorian/Steampunk vibe, but isn't set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some future time after a technology collapse has plunged the world into a pre-industrial time.

## ACT 1. SCENE 1. 3000KM FROM THE COAST OF ENGLAND

*A large sailing ship, THE TROY, somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic ocean. The sea is calm and it is a glorious evening just after sunset. THE CAPTAIN sits in her desk chair looking out of the window, stroking THE SHIP'S CAT. Behind her is a large MAP OF TROY, clearly labelled.*

1 The Captain: Avast, Cat, would you look at that sky. I do love a sunset.

*A bell rings off stage.*

2 The Captain: That's dinner.

*THE SHIP'S COOK appears, wielding a frying pan menacingly.*

3 Ship's Cook: Right, Cap'n, dinner tonight is porridge and a battered saveloy. How about  
4 that?

5 The Captain: That's it?

6 Ship's Cook: True Cap'n.

7 The Captain: Nutritious, I'm sure. Cook, we'll be making land in just a few days, do you  
8 think you'd look up that culinary school while we're ashore? I do so love  
9 your Cheesecake –

10 Ship's Cook: Exceptional Awarded.

11 The Captain: Don't follow?

12 Ship's Cook: Well, it won me an Exceptional Award trophy at the National School Fete  
13 Bake in 89, it did. I was so proud, Cap'n. I never made nothing so good, I  
14 did.

15 The Captain: Did it?

16 Ship's Cook: True, Cap'n, It was awarded by the grande dame of baking 'erself, sir. Lady  
17 Claudia von Cupcake. She told me, she did, that she thought it the best  
18 Cheesecake she'd 'ever 'ad, Cap'n, she did. An' I'm fierce proud of it, sir.  
19 Fierce proud. I will not 'ear a bad thing said 'gainst it, no!

*She points the frying pan at the Captain's face.*

20 The Captain: Of course not, Cook, I was merely saying how much I enjoy your  
21 Cheesecake. It is the highlight of my day. But, the battered saveloy, I fear, I  
22 could definitely forgo.

23 Ship's Cook: Oh. Right.

24 The Captain: Though, your porridge is outstanding. And always with the freshest milk,  
25 dear Cook.

26 Ship's Cook: Know you about the cow, Cap'n, below the decks? Daisy, that's her name.  
27 Ship's Cat: Eow miow!  
28 The Captain: Woah there, Cat! Of course I know about it. I am the Captain.  
29 Ship's Cook: Naturally, ma'am  
30 The Captain: Right, and she is well, the Cow? Daisy? How well does she travel?  
31 Ship's Cook: Like she right were born to it, Cap'n. Not like that other beast.  
32 The Captain: That thing.  
33 Ship's Cook: Green, silent.

*The Captain stands and stares out of the window. The Ship's Cat makes itself comfy on the chair.*

34 The Captain: That beast, who knows what that beast is. In all of my adventures at sea, I  
35 declare, I've never met with such a beast. Those long – can we call them  
36 fingers? 7 on each, I don't know that I could call them arms. And that eerie  
37 silence that accompanies it constantly. Like it somehow draws all of the  
38 sound from around it, absorbing it. Storing it. Who can tell what use it will  
39 make of it. The creaking from the ship, the footsteps as you enter the cage  
40 in which it now dwells – all, gone. Even the roaring of the sea, the breaking  
41 of the waves against the hull. Drawn, entirely, into silence. I know you hate  
42 it too, Cat.

*He pets her affectionately. She purrs.*

43 Ship's Cook: Terrifies me, Cap'n. Must we carry it on to land? Take it home?  
44 The Captain: Essential that we do, Cook. My brother, Lord Bosomworth, will want to see  
45 it. He is an expert in the unusual and peculiar. And of course, for my dear,  
46 sweet Jacky.  
47 Ship's Cook: Yes, Cap'n.  
48 The Captain: Dear Jacky!  
49 Ship's Cook: You said, Cap'n, that if you were to start goin' on 'bout Miss Jacky, I was  
50 to take a swing at you with this here fryin' pan. Shall I do it?  
51 The Captain: Tush. I am not (*mimics her voice*) "goin' on" as you so succinctly put it,  
52 madam.  
53 Ship's Cook: Might've fooled me, ma'am. She's a fine lass. But far too young ma'am.  
54 The Captain: Really, madam?  
55 Ship's Cook: (*suggestive*) Might I suggest ma'am, that an older lady might make a better  
56 wife?

57 The Captain: Easy now.

*An awkward pause.*

58 Ship's Cook: Well, Cap'n. Dinner is ready when you are. Porridge and that battered  
59 saveloy.

60 The Captain: Yum. Cat, what do you say to Cook? You like saveloys, don't you?

*Ship's Cat says nothing, but looks Ship's Cook up and down and turns away.*

61 The Captain: Unusual creature.

*The Captain gets up and follows The Ship's Cook out of her office. The Ship's Cat hunkers down under the table and falls asleep.*

## ACT 1. SCENE 2. 1000KM FROM THE COAST OF ENGLAND

*The Captain's office - days later, closer to England, the ship is rolling around a little as the sea is less calm. It is early morning. The Captain walks into her office with a wooden bowl and spoon, and sits at her desk. The Ship's Cat is chewing away noisily on a squeaky toy, perched on a chair.*

62 The Captain: Eating away on your toy again, Cat? Is it as nice as this porridge? Cook has  
63 excelled herself again with this. I truly don't know how she makes such a  
64 meagre meal so filling and enjoyable. She is a witch! (*The Ship's Cat rolls*  
65 *her eyes*) I know you two do not get on. I have never understood the  
66 animosity.

67 Ship's Cat: Yeow miow.

68 The Captain: Whatever it is, I hope you two will be finer friends on land. Perhaps I  
69 should leave you there; plenty of rats to be had in London I am sure. It shall  
70 be so strange to be ashore again. We have been so long at sea, Cat! I shall  
71 whisper, save Cook overhearing, but Cat, I do so long to see Jacky again.  
72 She has it wrong, of course, our dear Cook. I have no intent to turn  
73 husband. The sea is my wife, and always shall be. But my dear, dear niece  
74 Jacky – she is a jewel in this oftentimes dull and dreary world. But please  
75 do not mistake me, Cat, is it not love I seek from her.

*Enter The Ship's Cook*

76 Ship's Cook: Right miserable out today, Cap'n. But we looks to be making good speed.

77 The Captain: Destined to be home by the week's end, I think Cook. And not a moment  
78 too soon, I feel. I visited the beast again late last night. It unnerves me  
79 greatly.

80 Ship's Cook: You ventured down to the belly of the ship 'gain Cap'n? But I thought after  
81 the last time you- well, I didn't think you'd be so fierce keen to face it?

82 The Captain: That's true, Cook. Not keen one jot. But it must be done. It is imperative we  
83 get it home to Lord Bosomworth in good condition. Whatever that means  
84 for the thing.

85 Ship's Cook: Green devil, ma'am. I don't likes being near it. Even Daisy seems to be  
86 afeared of it. Milk ain't be 'alf as good this last week. Good job we're  
87 nearing home.

88 The Captain: Each day brings us a little closer. Pardon me one moment, dear Cook, I  
89 need to say good morning to the crew. They're as keen to be home as we  
90 are.

*The Captain leaves, leaving Ship's Cook and The Ship's Cat in a bit of a stand off. Neither wishes to communicate with the other. Ship's Cat drops her squeaky toy, and it falls at Cook's feet. Cook look down at it, raises her food and hovers over it. Ship's Cat looks horrified. Ship's Cook smirks, picks up the toy, snaps it in half, and puts it in her pocket. Ship's Cat hisses.*

91 The Captain: *(as she enters)* Each and every one of you! I'm incandescently proud of you  
92 all! *(shuts the door)* Cat?

*Ship's cat curls up under Captain's feet, and glares angrily at Cook.*

93 Ship's Cook: That cat's a menace, Cap'n I don't know why I thought to buy her – she  
94 was s'posed to keep the rats out of the oats, but she's useless. Stupid  
95 scraggy thing.

96 The Captain: Gentle, madam.

97 Ship's Cook: My 'pologies, Cap'n. I s'pose we're right stuck together, that Cat and I.

98 The Captain: Indeed so.

99 Ship's Cook: Only, as much as I detest her, I ain't about to give up what little I 'ave in  
100 the world. She is mine as I is 'ers. 'Eaven help us both.

101 The Captain: Here now, I'm certain you'll feel much kinder towards each other once we  
102 set foot back on good English soil. You'll stay with my brother  
103 Bosomworth once we land, wont you?

104 Ship's Cook: Unless ma'am demands it, I 'ad thought to stay with my brother for I ain't  
105 seen him since a month before we left. But if you insist upon it Cap'n, I-

106 The Captain: I shall make no such demands on you. It will be a fine thing for you to see  
107 your brother. Heaven knows I am anxious to see my own dear family.

108 Ship's Cook: Yes Cap'n. Does I needs get the frying pan ma'am? I can just-

109 The Captain: That wont be necessary Cook. Please, take a seat. I feel I need to explain  
110 the situation here, for I would hate for you to be under any confusion.  
111 Jacky, my dear darling niece, and I – we are not destined for any romantic  
112 attachment. Please understand, that's not what our relationship is. Not at all.

113 Ship's Cook: Lord, you posh folks ain't 'alf peculiar. No proper folks would be  
114 pondering marrying their niece! *(Captain tries to interrupt but she*  
115 *continues)* Even if she is only your niece by marriage. I says it's peculiar  
116 Cap'n, ma'am.

117 The Captain: That's not...

118 Ship's Cook: Trouble is, with you posh folks, is that you thinks you're right, the whole  
119 time. Whatever yous lots says is the rules, ennit? But us common folks  
120 don't have that luxury.

121 The Captain: Yes, Cook, please, may I continue? Look, it is important that you  
122 understand.

123 Ship's Cook: Do I need to understand, Cap'n, or does YOU need me to understand?

124 The Captain: Dear Cook, before we make land, I want you to have the full facts about  
125 myself and dear Jacky. It has broken my heart that we are not together on  
126 this voyage – she would love nothing more than to take off with her dear  
127 uncle and head out to adventure. But my sister-in-law, Lady Bosomworth  
128 will not hear of it. But now, upon returning, dear Jacky will be 20 years of  
129 age, and a fine age to make up her own mind. Perhaps, dear Cook, upon the  
130 success of this most dangerous and daring adventure, her mother will  
131 finally allow us to be together at sea. She will be here, by my side, where  
132 she should be. At long last.

133 Ship's Cook: That still sounds like you want to marry 'er. But forgive me, ma'am, I'm  
134 gettin' 'bove my station. I'll take myself back down to the kitchens where  
135 my kind belong. Saveloy for tea.

*Ship's Cook gets up and opens the door, then stomps out.*

136 The Captain: Ah, Cat. Rumours will be rife as soon as we set foot in London. It would  
137 make my life simpler, no doubt, to marry dear Jacky, and there is no law to  
138 prevent it. But, damnit, it is not what I want! I want her by my side, to  
139 adventure as we always dreamed we would. I cannot bear to think it may  
140 never come to be. She would understand, dear Cat. She would understand  
141 why I do not wish to marry, she would understand when others don't. My  
142 heart is certain of it. Why must Lady Bosomworth be so determined to  
143 prevent it. My poor heart aches. One day, Cat, one day she shall be free. To  
144 choose me.

## ACT 2. SCENE 1. LONDON

*Evening, in a modest drawing room in a modest London townhouse. A fireplace, the room is lit with candles. There is nice furniture, perhaps that looks a little out of place in such a modest room – it is too grand. LADY BOSOMWORTH sits at a small writing table.*

145 Lady B: Evelyn dear!

*Enter EVELYN THE MAID.*

146 Lady B: Remind me this evening to ask Lord Bosomworth about his day at  
147 Newmarket last week. I quite forgot when he arrived home, and he's not  
148 said so much as a word about his wins or losses. I'm most concerned about  
149 the losses. He promised to keep me in the manner to which I was  
150 accustomed!

151 Evelyn: Dear Ma'am, of course, I should so try to do; / an' faith, should's't I ever fail  
152 to prove you / a helpful maid, then bid me gone. An' adieu.

153 Lady B: Understood, Evelyn.

*Evelyn curtseys then leaves. Lady B picks up her quill and starts to write.*

154 Lady B: Never did I think I'd sink to such poverty as this! One house. One house in  
155 town and no great estate. Dear cousin, I implore you, invite Jacqueline and  
156 myself to stay with you at Norwood. We can be quite comfortable with only  
157 a few rooms, and hardly any servants. Charles can do without us.

*Enter LORD BOSOMWORTH, a little drunk.*

158 Lord B: Susannah! I am returned! Do you have a kiss for your beloved lover?

159 Lady B: *(under the breath)* Really? *(to Lord B)* No! But I do have one for my  
160 drunken husband. Come along.

*She kisses him on the cheek. He pouts.*

161 Lord B: Give me your hand, my beautiful queen, let us dance! We need music!

*He moves across the floor to put on a record. Then pulls her to her feet by her hands. He spins her around the room. They are quite clearly still in love, even if she's cross with her living situation.*

162 Lady B: Come now, Charles, is this really called for? It's exceptionally late. I'm  
163 tired.

164 Lord B: Don't tell me that! That's always your excuse. Where is the bright,  
165 vivacious woman I married, hey? I know she's under all these skirts  
166 somewhere. Perhaps if I remove them all...

167 Lady B: *(giggles)* Lord Bosomworth!

168 Lord B: Hear that, servants? My wife giggles! I am the proud husband who can still  
169 make my wife giggle! *(he stumbles slightly, and catches his head on the*  
170 *edge of the door)* Blast... I say, I think I'm bleeding. Would you call a  
171 servant through?

172 Lady B: Here. Evelyn! Come in at once, bring iodine. Lord Bosomworth's hurt his  
173 head.

174 Lord B: Thank you.

175 Lady B: Usually you fall asleep before you fall over. Let's see your head. Ouch.

176 Lord B: Hurts lots.

177 Lady B: Surely you're far too merry to be too much in pain! Rest now.

*Enter Evelyn with a first aid kit as Lord B takes a seat on the sofa.*

178 Evelyn: Will ma'am permit my servants eyes to see / the wound, the cut, the Lord's  
179 new injury? / I have, methinks, a nurses gentle touch, / and salves to soothe  
180 an open wound so much. / Potions, vials and creams to stop an ache. /  
181 Although for some, I fear, some time doth take. Dear Madam?

182 Lady B: Marvellous, Evelyn. Please, do have a look. Perhaps you have some iodine  
183 in your bag of wonders? My aunt always said it was the best thing for a  
184 scrape. May I look?

*Evelyn nods, and goes to inspect Lord B's head.*

185 Lord B: Kings don't get such fine treatment, I am sure. Thank you dear Evelyn. I  
186 fear I would be lost without your help. How bad do you think it is? Will I  
187 need a bandage? Only, Captain Bosomworth is due on the morrow, and I  
188 would hate him to think me again an incompetent older brother.

189 Lady B: Really, dear, I'm sure he does not consider you incompetent. Just eccentric,  
190 perhaps.

191 Lord B: Salty sea dogs like Jemima think nothing to inconsequential injuries like  
192 these. Hell, I'm sure she's many a pal at sea who is missing limbs. With  
193 god knows what else missing.

194 Lady B: God only knows. But all I know is that my darling husband had hurt his  
195 head in an accident, and that as soon as he is all patched up I will march  
196 him up to bed, so he can be ready to receive his baby sister, and whatever  
197 she has bought back with her.

198 Lord B: My word, I have the very best of wives. I'm a lucky man.

*Lady B pulls out a bottle of Soy from the medical bag.*

199 Lady B: Now, Evelyn, you said there was some iodine in here? You don't mean this  
200 bottle do you, because I don't think Soy will have quite the same affect. Or  
201 will it?

*Evelyn takes the bottle and shakes her head, rummages in the bag herself and pulls out the correct bottle.*

202 Evelyn: Pardon, madam, I do not know for why / that jar inside my bag decide to  
203 lie. / Forgive me, for confess I must that I / did lend my bag to Chef to let  
204 him try / to heal the scrape 'pon Mistress Jacky's hand / and check-ed not  
205 the stuff for content bann'd.

206 Lady B: Dear Evelyn, it is no worry at all. How does Lord Bosomworth's head?

207 Evelyn: Do not concern yourself, madam, all's well / the wound is small, and time  
208 itself will tell / perhaps a scar will form upon his head? The worst be that  
209 his shirt be stain-ed red. / Don't fear, ma'am, for up my sleeve have I / A  
210 way to solve the issue of blood dye.

*Evelyn curtseys and leaves with her medical bag.*

211 Lady B: Evelyn is such a help. When we move back to the country, we will have to  
212 ensure she stays with us. I don't know how else I would cope. I should not.

213 Lord B: The country?

214 Lady B: Yes, I have written to Cousin Thomas at Norwood. I expect Jaqueline and I  
215 to spend the summer there. You are, of course, welcome to join us, although  
216 I thought the country way of life may be too slow for your liking. It would  
217 only be a few weeks, really. I miss having an estate.

218 Lord B: Estate? Your father lost the estate, please don't make it sound as if I did. I  
219 may be a drinker, and on occasion I have been known to make a bad bet or  
220 two, but I've hardly pushed us into this hardship, as you call it. I quite like  
221 this house. It is perfectly fine.

222 Lady B: Except the estate would have been Jaqueline's inheritance, as well you  
223 know, Charles.

224 Lord B: Susannah, you and I both know Jacky is not the sort of girl who would want  
225 to settle on a family estate. She wants to see the world. She wants  
226 adventure.

227 Lady B: Good lord, Charles, you're beginning to sound just like your sister. Do stop.

*Enter Jacky wearing a waistcoat and Edwardian cycling trousers.*

228 Jacky: Papa! Evelyn said you're hurt. What have you done now? Are you well?

229 Lady B: Luckily, your step-father had only a mild glancing blow on the door frame.

230 Jacky: Each time I leave this house, I return to find you worse off than when I left.  
231 How am I supposed to fly the nest if you insist on injuring yourself? The  
232 folk band is taking off - I could go professional, but that I'd constantly  
233 wondering what you'll have done to yourself when I return!

234 Lord B: For goodness sake, my child, you are not my nurse. I am, I hope, not yet so  
235 far gone in years to need to be watched over again like a child. You go out  
236 and you play that harmonica of yours, beautifully, and be paid to do so.  
237 You are so talented, my wonderful child.

*Downstairs, the doorbell rings.*

238 Jacky: Dear me it is too late for visitors. I shall retire. Goodnight, mama.

239 Lady B: Adieu, dear.

240 Jacky: Remember to rest, papa. Get some sleep for that poor broken head, yes?

241 Lord B: Sure thing.

*Jacky kisses her mother and step father on their cheeks, then leaves.*

242 Lady B: Get yourself to bed too, darling. I will come and check on you once I have  
243 got rid of these visitors. What absurd hour is this to think to come calling!

244 Lord B: Going, dear wife. I wonder if Evelyn has a tincture for a headache?

*Lord B slowly gets to his feet, kisses his wife's hand tenderly then leaves the room.*

*Lady B tidies herself, and then the room around her a little to welcome her guests.*

*The door opens, and in crawls Dinah ( the ship's cat)*

245 Dinah: Eow miow!

246 Lady B: Why? Dinah! Heavens, it cannot be! You silly cat, where on earth have you  
247 been! We thought you very long gone – oh and you still have your collar.  
248 Oh my darling cat – how I cried for you! How Jaqueline cried for you! And  
249 now here you are again! Sit on my lap you silly thing! Oh what adventures  
250 you must have had. Jaqueline will be quite jealous I'm afraid. What is this  
251 in your collar? A fish hook? You naughty thing, have you been at the docks  
252 all this while? Oh, I understand, dear thing. I would run away too, if I could.  
253 Back to the country. Away from all the noise. There now – oh I've so  
254 missed you, I have.

255 Dinah: Eow, miow

256 Lady B: Wait until Jaqueline sees you when she wakes! Oh, goodness – do you  
257 remember where she sleeps? I bet you do clever puss. Go and surprise her.  
258 How happy she will be!

*Dinah crawls away back out of the door. Lady B takes a moment to gather herself. The door knocks. Enter The Ship's Cook.*

- 259 Ship's Cook: Evelyn said I should see myself in, Ma'am. She said you'd not mind.
- 260 Lady B: Did she?
- 261 Ship's Cook: Evelyn is my niece, ma'am, I 'ope you don't think me too familiar.
- 262 Lady B: Restless woman, Evelyn. She never seems to stop or take a moment's rest.
- 263 Ship's Cook: That runs in the family. We're all the same. We likes being busy.
- 264 Lady B: Yes, I have heard as much. We have not met – I'm Lady Bosomworth.
- 265 Ship's Cook: Here's the thing, ma'am. I'm the cook aboard The Troy. Captain  
266 Bosomworth's ship.
- 267 Lady B: Proceed, please.
- 268 Ship's Cook: 'Ers landed, ma'am, the Troy is docked. 'Ers making her way now, ma'am,  
269 an' sent me on ahead. Thing is, we 'ave a precious cargo, she wants 'er  
270 brother to see.
- 271 Lady B: Every trip!
- 272 Ship's Cook: Please, ma'am, I've served 'board Cap'n ship this last five year, and this is  
273 somethin' the like as not been seen before. A creature, ma'am, not of this  
274 world, I fear.
- 275 Lady B: Rather inconvenient to arrive at this late hour, insisting upon us greeting  
276 you.
- 277 Ship's Cook: Unfortunate, ma'am, but we 'ave so little time to waste. The creature ails.
- 278 Lady B: So let it! If it is strange, how are we to assist it?
- 279 Ship's Cook: The Cap'n will be 'ere shortly, ma'am. She will explain the creature far  
280 better than I. But know, ma'am, that this be more important than I can  
281 express or know how!

*The door knocks – enter The Captain.*

- 282 The Captain: Why, sister!
- 283 Lady B: Really, Jemima, this really is far too much. Have you seen the clock?
- 284 The Captain: Kindness was always your most gracious trait, Susannah. Where is Charles?  
285 We must make haste. The beast has not much time remaining I fear, and he  
286 will know what to do.
- 287 Lady B: Oh he is in bed, as should we all be. Can not this wait until the morrow?  
288 We did not expect you tonight, and are ill prepared for guests. I can have

289 Evelyn make up your rooms now, if you'll rest. It will not take her long, the  
290 girl is a wonder. Such a wonder.

291 The Captain: Rush the poor woman? No, I am in no haste to sleep. If not my brother,  
292 then my niece? She was always so like myself as a child, I have no doubt  
293 she will understand the gravity of this situation. Sister, we must act now. I  
294 insist upon it. Or I shall never forgive myself.

295 Lady B: For what? For allowing some peculiar creature to perish? Is that not why  
296 you brought it all this way in the first place? To have it poked and prodded  
297 by people of science? To figure out how it works? To take it apart and see  
298 what we can learn from it? Is that not it?

299 The Captain: Trust me, sister, I have far greater plans for this most alien being.

*The door opens, enter Lord B with a large bandage around his head.*

300 Lord B: Good god, Jemima! I thought I heard your voice! You are returned to us  
301 safe and sound, and earlier than expected! Susannah, is it not superb to have  
302 my sister returned?

303 Lady B: Delightful dear.

304 Lord B: Really, darling, it's been five years! You should be jumping up for joy.

305 Lady B: You may. I am going to bed. We will discuss whatever this creature is at a  
306 more reasonable hour in the morning. *(to the Cook)* Come along, I will get  
307 your bed made up.

*Ship's Cook and Lady B both leave. Captain embraces Lord B.*

308 The Captain: Perhaps you ought to start the sharing with the tale of that injury!

309 Lord B: You see, I am still the drunken fool you left in London all those years ago,  
310 sister. I shall very much live. What on earth did Susannah mean by creature  
311 Jem?

312 The Captain: My brother, what a tale I have for you. 4 years and 6 months into our  
313 voyage, as we planned our long return to England – you will remember I  
314 sent message on a clipper of our plans? We came across a stricken vessel,  
315 unlike anything I have seen before, or even dreamt of. Sleek silver smooth.  
316 She jugged out of the shallows around Jamaica. We pulled up closely  
317 alongside to search for survivors. But there was no human in sight. Just a  
318 creature, the like of which I believe no one has ever seen. Tentacles, long  
319 and thing, like an octopus, but each tipped with finger like protrusions. 14  
320 eyes I saw, on last count. And utterly, eerily, totally silent.

321 Lord B: Then how can you know it is a creature and not a plant?

322 The Captain: This is the thing, brother – it draws in all sound from around it, only to use  
323 it to speak to us, in our own minds. I can hear it now. Hush, be still.

324 The Creature: (voice) Learned travellers!

325 The Captain: Shhh, did you hear? It speaks to me, brother. In such gentle tones.

326 Lord B: Softly, low.

327 The Creature: (voice) Weak, weaker.

328 The Captain: Return the creature. That is my plan. It has told me all of its desire to return  
329 to their home. It is a bigger journey than even I am used to.

330 The Creature: (voice) Oh learned traveller. Assist my return. I beg of you. So close now.

331 Lord B: Where to? Your home? Where is your home? How can we assist you?

332 The Creature: (voice) Underneath the Moon. I will teach you how. If you will allow me.

333 Lord B: Every effort must be made. Such a gentle voice! On the morrow, we shall  
334 plan. I know of a man who has been working on a new method to reach the  
335 stars. Perhaps we'll be able to convince him of our plight also? No one who  
336 hears that voice can refuse to help, I'm certain.

337 The Captain: No, you're quite right dear brother. Let us get some rest, for tomorrow will  
338 be the beginning of a truly great adventure. I wonder, Charles, should relate  
339 our tale to Jacky?

340 Lord B: You have not seen her? Perhaps we had best work secretly, for now. You  
341 know how deeply she desires for adventure, and I fear her mother's fervent  
342 disapproval will only force her to chase it harder. This is an ideal  
343 opportunity for her to break free of Susannah's grasp, but is this the right  
344 time?

345 The Captain: Ever wise. I will think on it and will decide before we depart.

*The Captain and Lord B leave the room – quick change essential here for Jacky enters via the opposite door.*

346 Jacky: To adventuring!

*Jacky charges out of the door behind them. Enter Lady B through the other door.*

347 Lady B: Good lord, where can that cat have got to? Dinah? Come along now.

*Enter Ships cook from the first door talking.*

348 Ship's Cook: Where can she be? I 'ate the blasted beast but still I search.

349 Lady B: Have you seen a black and white cat on your way down stairs?

350 Ship's Cook: So I was jus' about to ask the same question of you, 'fact.

*Enter Dinah The Ship's Cat, who jumps up on to the sofa.*

351 Lady B: There you are! You silly thing, where did you get to now then?

*Dinah cocks her head to one side.*

352 Ship's Cook: Now? That'd be my cat, ma'am. An' she's coming back on board my ship,  
353 back to mousing my galley, an' she'll do it proper on our next voyage, I'll  
354 warrant it.

355 Lady B: This is Dinah, my cat. She went missing 5 years ago (*realises*) Oh, I see.

356 Ship's Cook: 'Ere, ma'am, I ain't got a lot in this life, but this 'ere cat 'as been by my  
357 side, reluctant like, for the past 5 year, so she be mine now.

358 Lady B: What makes you think that? We have had her from only a kitten.

359 Ship's Cook: Now aboard Cap'n's ship, we 'ad a dis'greement, we'd talk it out proper.

360 Lady B: Right. I say we let Dinah decide where her fate lies. That fair?

361 Ship's Cook: Right so.

*Lady B and Ship's Cook look at Dinah. She merely washes herself. This goes on for several beats, before she makes to make a move – then changes her mind and lies back down. Lady B and Ship's cook watch her as the lights go down for the end of the act.*

## ACT 2. SCENE 2. A LABORATORY IN PRAGUE

*Lord B and The Captain stand in awe at the foot of a rocket ship, wearing space suits. A small ladder leads up to the open door.*

- 362 Lord B: Never in my life did I imagine I'd take a journey into space.
- 363 The Captain: Every dream of mine is coming true, before my eyes. Truly the greatest  
364 honour one can have. To be up, amongst the stars that have long guided me  
365 on the sea.
- 366 Lord B: Alexander said that humans used to travel into space before the collapse. He  
367 came across some articles in the few remaining libraries in Baikonur before  
368 they raised them to the ground.
- 369 The Captain: Dear brother, we are fortunate you had such a friend at your disposal.
- 370 The Creature: (voice) Learned travellers, the time us upon us. I will guide you once the  
371 ship is in space. Have no fear, friends. I am certain of our mission's  
372 success. It was foretold.
- 373 Lord B: Disaster may strike us, dear sister, but we will have ventured to try.
- 374 The Captain: You are correct, Charles. And try we must, to save this gentle creature.
- 375 Lord B: Even so, I fear we should have explained our mission to Susannah and  
376 Jacky. Should the worst happen, they will have no knowledge of the reason  
377 we have not returned from our European trip.
- 378 The Captain: Perhaps. I prepared a letter, which I put into the hands of my trusted Ship's  
379 Cook, that she will give to your wife if we have not returned in 6 weeks.  
380 And she gave me some of her speciality foods for the journey. If she packed  
381 her Cheesecake yet you are in for a treat-

*The Captain opens the rucksack and pulls out a bag of saveloys*

- 382 Lord B: That's not-
- 383 The Captain: This! Of all the food she could have packed, she chose the one meal she  
384 knows I detest. If her porridge were not so fine, I'd fire her for being  
385 useless.
- 386 The Creature: (voice) Soft, friends, it is time to depart. I am comfortable here, in the belly  
387 of your ship – join me as we make way. *(Lord B and The Captain board the*  
388 *rocket, as The Creature talks)* You have made a very old being happy.

*Once The Captain is aboard, Lord B takes a little longer to get inside. As he struggles, Jacky enters the office hastily doing up her space suit. Once Lord B is inside, Jacky follows him, and the door shuts.*

389

### ACT 3. SCENE 1. THE ROCKET, HALFWAY TO THE MOON

*The bridge on a very retro looking spaceship that would not be out of place in a 1980s space adventure. The Captain is sitting alone, watching the stars out of the window.*

390 The Captain: You look so small, planet. Those vast seas I've spent my life traversing  
391 now look no larger than my thumb nail. I thought I should look upon you in  
392 awe, but I cannot find the words for such a feeling. I am honoured to have  
393 sailed you, planet. And honoured to leave you now too.

394 The Creature: (voice) Our Captain, you speak so eloquently of your world. We have  
395 watched, my people, we have watched the earth for many thousands of  
396 years. We feared once your technology collapsed, we would never again see  
397 you reach the surface of our cold moon. We cheered you on from afar.  
398 Today is momentous for us both.

399 The Captain: Here I stand, looking upon my beautiful planet, and all I can think is how  
400 much young Jacky would have adored standing here. Alas, everything  
401 divides us from our adventures together.

*Enter Lord B*

402 Lord B: Right, Jemima. What is today's plan of action? How far left to go.

403 The Captain: Only the same distance again. A few days more, Charles. Then the return.

404 Lord B: Never mind the return, how long are we to explore the glorious Moon?

405 The Captain: No time at all, brother. We must return home as soon as possible.

406 Lord B: Even though we have come so far, we wont get your desired adventure?

407 The Captain: Even so. Space is no place for me, brother. I long for the splash of the  
408 waves, the smell of sea salt in the air. The fair Moon has no air.

409 Lord B: Returning home is your only desire then? Where is your adventurous spirit,  
410 sister?

411 The Captain: Remember, Charles. I never dreamed of adventure, just the sea. I am proud  
412 to stand here, amongst the stars, and say I have been here. But it has not the  
413 raw intensity of the sea that I long for. The roaring of the winds, and the  
414 hearty crew. This is not for me, dear Charles.

415 Lord B: So be it. We shall return the gentle creature to its home, then to our own  
416 home we shall return. What a story we shall have to share of our time!

417 The Captain: Everyone will be so shocked. Space. Maybe we shall bring in the start of a  
418 new period in human prosperity. Reignite the spark that drove us to the  
419 moon before, perhaps.

*The Captain begins to cry.*

420 Lord B: Surely you can not be sad? We are amongst the stars! The stars!

421 The Captain: Sad that our beloved Jacky could not have joined us. Imagine how she  
422 would have loved this adventure. I wish she could have been here – and  
423 then beside me, ever more, as we made our way around that pale blue orb  
424 below us. Forgive me, brother. I – I must be alone for a while now.

*The Captain sobs as she leaves the deck.*

425 The Creature: (voice) Wishing, for them, will not make it so. Their fortunes are written,  
426 and cannot be altered. They will never travel together, on Earth, now. With  
427 all of myself I wish I could make it so. But they will always try. And  
428 always fail. It is their long adventure that cannot end, and will never start.

429 Lord B: Then my heart aches for them. They will neither one of them be content  
430 with their lot, no matter how many adventures they may undertake. If only  
431 it could be so.

*Jacky tumbles out of a panel in the back wall holding a copy of Playboy.*

432 Jacky: Oh! Ow!

433 Lord B: What- Jaqueline!

434 Jacky: Easy, papa, I was stuck in there with these pornographic magazines from  
435 centuries past. Did our ancestors really require such modification, or  
436 perhaps have we evolved to have smaller, more sensibly sized breasts for  
437 feeding and clothing since this filth was published? I can't believe we ever  
438 needed such little clothing before the collapse happened.

439 Lord B: Dear gods, what on Earth are- wait! On Earth! You said on Earth!

440 Jacky: Heavens papa, who were you talking to? It could not have been me.

441 Lord B: Earth! Earth.

442 Jacky: Have you banged your head again, father? You do not make any sense.

443 Lord B: Earth! You brilliant creature! You clever brilliant creature. Can it be done?  
444 Really?

445 The Creature: (voice) You understand they cannot be together once they return? The fates  
446 have decreed.

447 Jacky: Dear god, what is that sound? Where does that beautiful sound come from?

448 Lord B: My word, on Earth! But on the Moon! Perhaps I can persuade Jemima to  
449 extend our visit after all. Dear Jaqueline. The fates have kept you and my  
450 dear sister apart for so long. Our beautiful creature here has discovered a  
451 way for you to adventure together at last. You can be together, here. Space.

452 Jacky: Either I have gone mad, or nothing here makes sense. Which is it?

453 Lord B: Truly, I barely understand it myself, but it seems that your every attempt to  
454 travel with your aunt has been thwarted by some higher power – the fates,  
455 as it were. But they can only affect your adventures on Earth. We are here,  
456 thousands of miles above the planet, and soon to be on the Moon.

### ACT 3. SCENE 2. ON THE MOON

*The same flight deck as before. Lord B looks out of the window looking forlorn. Jacky bounds in.*

457 Jacky: Nearly ready.

458 Lord B: You are?

459 Jacky: Exceptionally so.

460 Lord B: Only you?

461 Jacky: Unusually, aunt Jem is in a hurry to depart too. We've said goodbyes.

462 Lord B: Sad day.

463 Jacky: Yes. In a way. We had time. It was more than we hoped.

464 Lord B: Didn't want to say we had to go; you understand. But time ticks.

465 Jacky: She and I found this plant. It reminds me of something. Any idea?

466 Lord B: A dead vegetable. The way it wilts. Pok choy! I detest the things.

467 Jacky: So it does. We shall take it home, plant it in the garden.

468 Lord B: No! Don't!

469 Jacky: Then what shall I do with it? The creatures here don't want it.

470 Lord B: The compactors.

*Jacky puts the plant in a small metal shoot.*

471 Jacky: She told me of the letter. We will be back in time papa.

472 Lord B: And you?

473 Jacky: Uh huh?

474 Lord B: How are you? You are very well? You enjoyed your time with Jem?

475 Jacky: More than I could have imagined. Beats adventures at sea I'm sure, papa.

476 Lord B: Ah. Good.

477 Jacky: Don't worry, papa. Mother need not worry neither. I will stay home now.

478 Lord B: We'll see.

479 Jacky: Sure will!

480 Lord B: Leave me now, child. Go finish packing your things. We must leave soon.

481 Jacky: No, papa. I am all packed. I shall stay here as we rise.

482 The Creature: (voice) Except, you cannot. You and your aunt needs always be apart. That  
483 is the price you must pay for your adventures here. From this day forward,  
484 as you leave our world, you must be a stranger to one another. Take your  
485 place in your quarters so your aunt may board the deck. Now's the moment.

486 Jacky: That's- but no one told me it would be now! I didn't know!

487 Lord B: We are sorry, Jacky. So very sorry. Remember your adventures here. You  
488 must.

*Jacky runs sobbing from the deck.*

489 The Creature: (voice) Then us.

490 Lord B: So soon?

491 The Creature: Never forget.

492 Lord B: Thank you.

*The roar of engines fire into life. Enter The Captain.*

493 The Captain: Usually my favourite part of every voyage is the launch. Not so much  
494 today.

495 Lord B: You did not tell Jacky the full deal the creature made with you?

496 The Captain: Uh uh (*shakes her head*)

497 Lord B: Here Jem (*he hands her a tissue*)

498 The Captain: Memories. I wanted to make memories. Those adventures will stay with us  
499 both.

### ACT 3. SCENE 3. THE LANDING SITE, EGYPT.

*A small shack. Lady B sits tapping her toes impatiently, holding onto a piece of paper. She looks repeatedly at her watch, sighing. It is hot, she is uncomfortable.*

*A loud roar as the ship lands. Enter Lord B*

500 Lord B: Here's the lady I've been longing to see. My beautiful wife. Who has  
501 brought the whiskey I asked for in my letter. It made it to your hands ok, I  
502 see.

503 Lady B: Everything you have ever told me has been a lie, hasn't it Charles. I don't  
504 seek adventure, I'm not going to do anything ridiculous to bring shame to  
505 the family. I'm not going to dash off into OUTER SPACE with my only  
506 heir to run some errand for god knows what or who! Speak then!

507 Lord B: Never mind all that darling, where's my kiss from my beautiful wife, hey?

508 Lady B: You do not deserve one. I have never been so cross, ever. Ever!

509 Lord B: Really dear, I quite believe you. But look I have brought home our daughter  
510 and my sister in safety, the creature has been returned home, and what an  
511 adventure I have to tell the lads at the club on Monday! They shall never  
512 believe a word of it. They'll just think I was drunk again!

*The Captain steps down off the ship.*

513 Lady B: Now that you're home, will you be staying a while? We lost you for 5 years  
514 last time, and I'm certain Jaqueline will want to keep you around a little  
515 longer.

*Silence. The Captain and Lord B look at each other sadly.*

516 The Captain: Russia. Sister. That's the next adventure. I had a commission come through  
517 before I went away. I sail for Novorossiysk on the next tide. Jacky will not  
518 miss me. Nor want for adventure herself, I hope. Do not keep her in,  
519 Susannah. A girl must needs see the world. It is a truly beautiful place.

*A horn honks, The Captain salutes Lord and Lady B, then leaves quickly.*

520 Lady B: Ever since I've known her, I've never known her ever to be still.

521 Lord B: Loves the world. Loves travel. Loves adventure. If we can't do the things  
522 we love in life, then what is the point to it all. Space gave me some  
523 perspective darling. Let's let our brave adventurer go out into the world. A  
524 little perspective would do her good too. See more of what life is.

525 Lady B: She could join Jemima in Russia? She would be safe with her?

*A beat. Lord B cannot find the words to explain the problem.*

*Enter Jacky from the ship.*

526 Jacky: Russia isn't an option, mother. Besides, what wild sort of adventure is safe?

527 Lord B: Ever correct, our little Jaqueline. She's all grown up, darling. Let her go.

528 Jacky: Oh, you never know. Mother might still yet herself catch the adventure  
529 buzz!

*The three walk off together as the lights fade, with Jacky playing the harmonica lightly.*

**ENDS**