

Toby and the Pirates



Shirley Coughlin

Toby and the Pirates



SHIRLEY COUGHLIN



Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

Copyright © 2012
All rights reserved – Shirley Coughlin

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the permission, in writing, from the publisher.

Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.
12620 FM 1960, Suite A4-507
Houston, TX 77065
www.sbpra.com

ISBN: 978-1-62212-730-6

Illustrations by Kirsty Williams

Book Design: Judy Maenle

Dedication

For Abbey and Mitchell

Acknowledgments

*My husband for his input and support,
and my friend Randy for his encouragement
and enthusiasm for this story.*



Chapter One

“**T**obias Elliot Jones! You’re away with the fairies again,” said Mrs. Green crossly.

The class sniggered.

“You mean pirates, don’t you miss?” said a voice from the back.

Mrs. Green glared at the owner of the voice. “No one asked for your opinion, Thomas Jefferson Wakefield, *accurate* though it may be.”

More sniggers.

Mrs. Green was fond of calling the children by their full names, including their middle names, *if* she could ferret them out, especially so if they were of interest. How she managed to obtain Toby’s full name he was not quite sure, but he cringed all the same.

Yes, Toby was away with the pirates . . . again; in fact, you could say he was obsessed with pirates. He played, slept, and ate with pirates. He read everything he could lay his hands on about pirates. He watched all the movies he could about pirates, including the really old black-and-white movies. The only good thing to come out of it all, thought Mrs. Green, was that Toby’s reading skills had improved, as did his knowledge of history, albeit pirate history, that is if you could consider Sir Francis Drake a pirate; the Spanish certainly did. His favourite movies were the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, 1, 2, and 3; his favourite book was *Treasure Island*; and his favourite games were not football or basketball, but

pirates. Making his friends walk the plank was great fun, especially with a crocodile in the water going *tick, tock, tick, tock*.

Filing out of the classroom to go to their next lesson, Toby and Thomas did high fives and giggled; they were, after all, best mates.

“It’s the summer hols in a couple of weeks. Are you going to your aunty’s again this year?” asked Thomas wistfully. He never went away on holidays; his family couldn’t afford it.

“I suppose so.” Toby loved going to his aunty Sandra’s on holiday. She had a B&B down in Cornwall overlooking the sea. There he could indulge his fantasies of pirates to his heart’s content; and there were even smuggler’s caves nearby to explore.

“I know; why don’t I ask if you can come this year,” said Toby enthusiastically. “Much more fun playing pirates with someone else rather than on one’s own,” *or worse, one’s own siblings*, Toby thought. Thomas’s eyes lit up. “That would be fantastic! Do you think your folks will let me come?” he asked.

“One way to find out; I’ll ask them tonight,” Toby said as they entered the door into the history room for Toby’s favourite lesson.

Toby’s younger twin brothers were clowning around as usual that evening at the dinner table, which didn’t bode well for their father being in a good mood, so Toby kicked them both under the table and glared.

“Ow!” wailed Edwin, “what did you do that for?” Simon rubbed his leg furiously, glaring daggers at Toby.

“Boys, settle down and behave. Your father’s home now; at least give him some peace while he eats his dinner,” said Jill as she placed bowls of steaming hot pasta and crusty bread on the table in front of them. Just then, their father, Frank, entered the room and sat down. He had been talking on the phone.

“Sandra, called to see if we’re still coming down for the holidays so she doesn’t let the rooms out,” he said, picking his fork up to eat. “I told her we’d definitely be there.”

“I do hope that the weather will be better than it is at the moment,” Jill remarked, looking out the window at the grey clouds scudding past.

“Dad, any chance of Thomas coming with us to Aunty Sandra’s this year?” Silence. All eyes looked at Toby. Feeling uncomfortable at the scrutiny, he continued quickly. “He never goes away on holidays. His

mum and dad can't afford to, so I thought it might be nice if he came with us this year . . ." his voice faded as he looked from his dad to his mum.

"You know Aunty Sandra has only the two spare rooms, which she lets out. There wouldn't be any more room for an extra person," said his dad, twirling pasta around his fork and into his mouth.

Toby looked glum. "Couldn't he just bunk in with us?"

"The three of you are crammed in like sardines as it is in that small room," said his dad, getting annoyed.

"That's all right; I can sleep on the floor," Toby said hopefully.

"Don't be silly; you're not going to sleep on the floor and that's that," said his mother.

Frank sat thinking for a moment.

"Look, the best I can do is to phone Aunty Sandra back after dinner and see if she has a solution. If not, well, he can't come."

"Thanks, Dad," Toby grinned happily. He knew his aunt would do anything to please her nephews, not having any children herself. She doted on them, and they doted on her. She was a bit whacky though, which the boys loved. She was odd, one might say—his parents certainly thought so—but they all loved spending time staying at her rather old rambling cottage that overlooked the sea.

"Of course he can come," said Sandra over the phone to her brother. "I'll pop them both up into the attic; it'll be easy enough to move some things around to make room. Boys don't mind roughing it a bit," she said cheerfully. "Besides, they might be able to spot the pirate ship from up there a lot easier."

"You know, Sandra, I'm sure that Toby's fixation on pirates is fuelled by your encouragement," said Frank, a little sarcastically.

"Oh nonsense, Frank, boys love pirates. Just look at all the movies made about them," she said defensively.

Well, that sorted that problem out. Now the only hiccup would be if Thomas's parents said no. Toby thought that wasn't likely to happen, as they'd probably be pleased to have one less child for a couple of weeks, seeing as how there were five kids in the family with Thomas being the middle child. All this was going through Toby's mind, along with the thought of looking for hidden treasure in the caves. He knew there was

always hidden treasure in caves and hopefully, not having to look after his two pesky brothers, he would find it. He could always make them walk the plank, he supposed, in glorious anticipation.

As expected, Thomas's parents were only too pleased to let him go and a few days into the school holidays, they all scrambled into the old Humber, which Toby's dad had lovingly restored, and off they went. The weather was fine though not particularly sunny.

Four hours later, they pulled off the motorway and drove along a quiet, narrow road for nearly half an hour. The road climbed until it ran along the edge of the cliff, with great views of the sea, before descending through a small picturesque village and pulling up outside a pretty stone cottage with yellow roses climbing up along the wall on either side of the door. The sign outside read: Rosecroft Bed & Breakfast.

"Wow!" said Thomas as he looked at the cottage. "It's just like something out of the middle ages."

Toby grinned. "I don't think it's quite that old, seventeenth century according to Aunty Sandra." Just then, the door opened and the lady in question came rushing out with hugs all round. Ten years younger than her brother Frank, she was small and petite with dark, wavy hair.

"This must be Thomas," she said smiling. "I've heard all about you. You are most welcome." Thomas grinned. They entered the cottage, with Jill leading the way to their usual rooms, while Sandra took Toby and Thomas up to their room. They chatted all the while as they climbed the old, narrow stairway that wound its way to the attic. There was a small landing half way up with a tiny round window, which reminded Toby of a ship's porthole. Ancient blackened oak beams supported the low roof.

"Neat," said Thomas as he looked out.

Sandra asked the boys about school and where Thomas lived. He soon felt comfortable with her.

"Your aunt's great; you're so lucky," he said after she left the room. He thought about his own two rather austere aunts; they were completely different and not much fun at all.

Dumping their bags on the narrow beds, the boys ran across to the small dormer window and looked out.

"This is fantastic! You can see right out across the cove from up here," said Thomas excitedly.

“Look at all the boats, and there’s a huge ship right over there. Come on; let’s go down to the beach.” Toby turned to rush out of the door, running down the stairs two at a time with Thomas following closely behind.

“We’re going down to the beach, Mum,” Toby yelled down the hallway to the other guest room where his parents were settling in. Jill poked her head around the door.

“Okay,” she said, “have fun.”

“Wait for us!” Simon yelled, coming out of his room followed by Edwin. Toby grimaced as he looked at Thomas.

“Stay close together, you two, and don’t wander off. Keep an eye on them, won’t you Toby?” asked his mother.

“Don’t I always, Mum?” he said sourly.

The afternoon sun was warm as they walked across the road and down the steep, narrow path that led onto the beach. There were quite a few people sitting around on the sand; some were wading in the sea. It wasn’t quite warm enough to swim, but that didn’t stop the boys from taking their shoes off and running along the edge of the water, splashing about in the shallows.

“Can we go to the caves, Toby?” asked Edwin.

“There’s not enough time today. The tide will be coming in soon, and we wouldn’t be able to get around the rocks and back in time; we’d be cut off,” said Toby, kicking at the water with his bare feet. “We’ll come back tomorrow morning.”

The next morning, they were up bright and early. They had a quick breakfast and the boys were off down to the beach. The tide was just receding and they raced along the sand to the rocks where small pools of water had formed and were full of small sea creatures. Thomas was fascinated. They poked around in the rock pools for a while until the water had fully receded, and they were able to climb around to the cave. They were the first people there that morning. It was a large cave tunnelling back deep into the side of the cliff from centuries of seawater pounding the rocks. The sand was still wet, and the water line rose several feet up the cave walls; seaweed clung in great clumps to the jutting rocks.

“Wow!” Thomas’s voice echoed around the cave. “This is fantastic!” The twins disappeared further in, looking for anything that had been washed up inside with the tide. The two older boys followed. It was much

darker towards the back; the cave came to an abrupt end with large rocks jutting out from the sides.

“Okay,” said Toby, “let’s play pirates.” He picked up a piece of driftwood to use as a cutlass. The twins groaned. They had been through this many times before and they were the ones that inevitably walked the plank. “I’m Captain Tobias Jones. You can be the bos’n, Thomas, and you two are the deck hands,” said Toby to the twins as he waved his cutlass around. They played for a while, using a sloping rock to climb along and jump off; even Thomas had to walk the plank much to his disgust. Eventually, when all but Toby had had enough and they could hear voices outside the cave from other visitors, they decided to head back; it was nearly lunchtime and they were all hungry. Toby jumped down from the rock. Losing his balance, he fell into the sand and his hand touched something cold and hard just under the surface. Brushing the sand away, he lifted out a shiny brass object. Holding it up to the light he gasped; it was a large buckle. Not an ordinary buckle but a pirate buckle. They all gazed at it in awe. There was even a worn description on the back; Toby could just make out the letters: Cpt. Jonas Black. At that moment, other people wandered into the cave. Toby shoved the buckle into his pocket. “Let’s go,” he said, and they left the cave quickly, climbing back across the rocks. Turning to look one more time at the cave entrance, Thomas noticed an opening further up the side of the cliff as it sloped back just above the cave.

“What’s that?” he asked, squinting into the sun and pointing.

“It’s probably another cave,” said Toby. “This place is riddled with them, but there’s no way of getting to it from the beach; the cliff’s too steep.”

“What about from the top along the road?” Thomas asked.

“I’m not sure; there’s a railing right along the cliff top at the lookout to stop people from trying to climb down. Why don’t we go and have look before lunch,” suggested Toby enthusiastically.

Simon groaned. “We’re starving!” His tummy rumbled loudly in protest.

“Why don’t we go and have lunch first and come back afterwards,” said Thomas. He knew what Toby was like. If they didn’t have lunch now, it could be hours before they all ate.

Toby hesitated. “Okay,” he said reluctantly.

“That’s a fascinating find,” said Aunty Sandra, as she turned the buckle over in her hands. Her face glowed as she read the name engraved on the back. Toby glanced curiously at her. “It’s a real piece of history,” she said, her breathing a trifle fast. “I know, why don’t we pop down to the antique shop in the village and see if Peter Baxter can shed some light on it; he’s a good friend of mine,” she said smiling, her face warming suddenly to a soft pink. Toby’s dad glanced quickly at Jill, who looked back at him, grinning. Much to Toby’s relief, the twins weren’t interested in going with them as he and Thomas piled into Sandra’s smart new Honda Civic.

“It’s certainly genuine,” said Peter later after examining the buckle closely. “Captain Jonas Black was a notorious pirate around these parts in the late seventeenth century.” Toby was over the moon; he couldn’t believe his luck—a real piece of pirate memorabilia.

“Captain Black was also known as being tough, but fair to his men. Story has it that he was given a letter of marque from the king who allowed him to seize certain ships, probably Spanish, and return half of any riches to the king.”

“A real pirate? You’re kidding,” said Toby excitedly.

“Not only am I *not* kidding, but rumour has it he left treasure in one of the caves around here.” Peter laughed and said, “He probably thought the king had enough treasure and decided to keep some for himself. Needless to say, no one has found it . . . as of yet.”

They left the shop and walked over to the car, everyone chatting at once. As Toby held the buckle up to the light, they didn’t notice a small, odd-looking man watching them.

Buy the B&N ePub version at:-

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/toby-and-the-pirates-shirley-coughlin/1111244048?ean=2940015176186>

Buy the Kindle version at:-

<http://www.amazon.com/Toby-and-the-Pirates-ebook/dp/B0093B3DZG/ref>