

The Best Kind of Adventure

"It is decided! We will go in search of treasure and adventure! We must depart at once! To the ship!" said the captain, taking charge.

"Maybe we can meet a dragon or two?"

"Or rescue someone from something terrible!"

"Shhh! Do you hear?" whispered the captain to his crew.

"We're being followed! Quick! Hide!" The small troop ran behind some nearby bushes as footsteps drew near.

"Can I play too?" asked Rory's younger sister, Nia. After a long silence, the bushes parted and the fierce captain strode forward.





"I've told you before—you're too little to play with us!" said Rory as he straightened the bright red sash around his waist. "Besides, you're a girl, and you play with..." Rory wrinkled his nose.

"Dolls!" exclaimed Leo, one of Rory's friends, as the rest of the make-believe pirate crew climbed out of the bushes.

"Yes, dolls! And it wouldn't be fun for you anyway!" Rory proclaimed.

"But I could help," said little Nia, "I-I could bring you tea ... and cookies."

"Teatime is for girls!" said Rory, turning his back to Nia. "Lads! We must set sail immediately!"

And without a backward glance, the three boys ran as fast as they could toward adventure, leaving Nia alone.

Some time later, the pirate crew's spirits weren't as high as when they had first started to play.

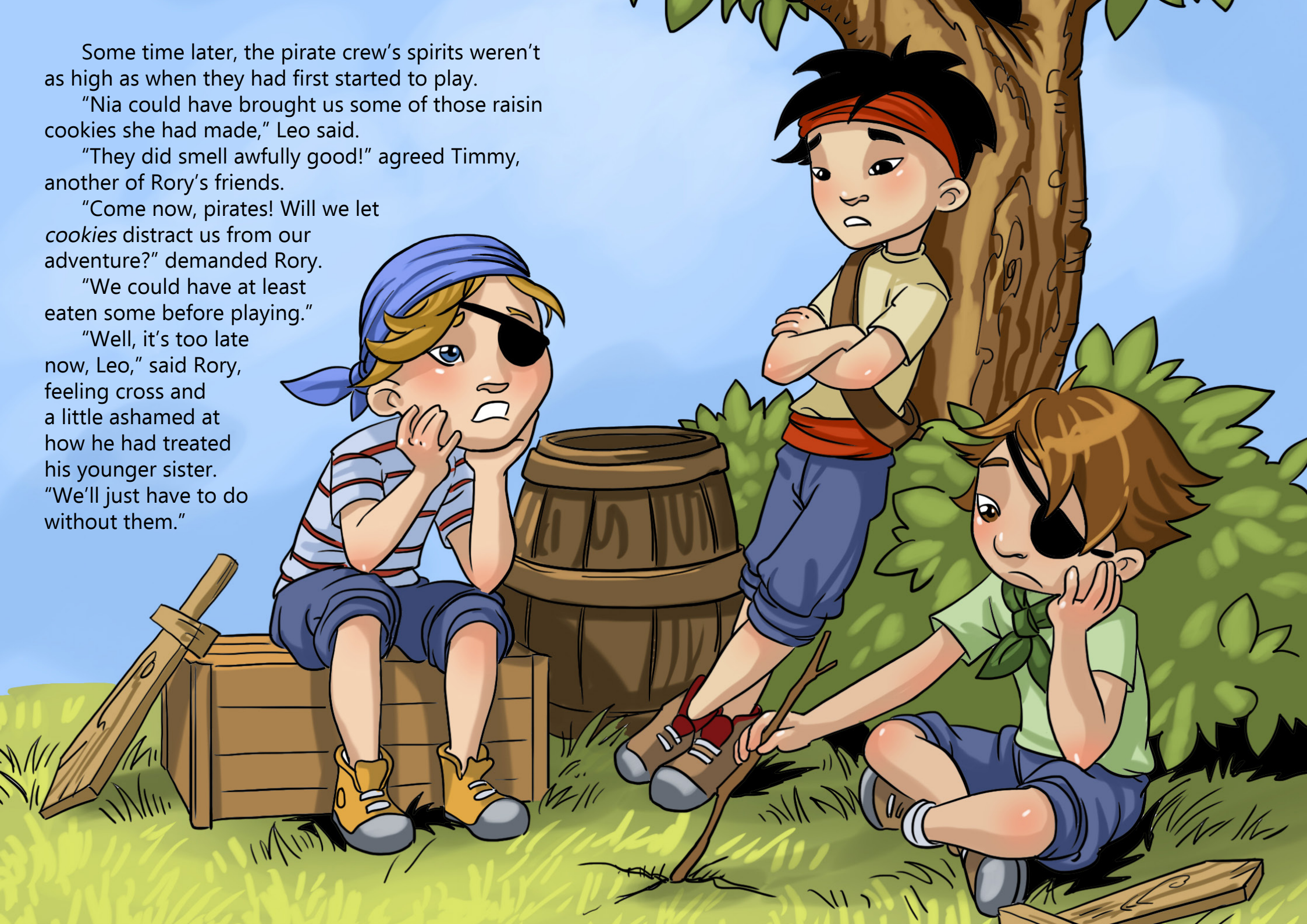
"Nia could have brought us some of those raisin cookies she had made," Leo said.

"They did smell awfully good!" agreed Timmy, another of Rory's friends.

"Come now, pirates! Will we let cookies distract us from our adventure?" demanded Rory.

"We could have at least eaten some before playing."

"Well, it's too late now, Leo," said Rory, feeling cross and a little ashamed at how he had treated his younger sister. "We'll just have to do without them."





Suddenly a shout of "Ahoy!" stirred the boys. They turned and stared as a figure that looked just like a picture-book pirate approached. It was Rory's older brother, Aiden! One of his eyes was covered by a black patch, and a stubbly beard was painted on his face. A red scarf was tied around his head.

"Ahoy!" cried the boys, eager to see what Rory's inventive brother was up to today.

"Captain Rory," said Aiden, "how goeth thy search for adventure?"

"Not well at all!" said Rory. At that, Timmy and Leo began the story of how Nia had wanted to play and finished the tale by mentioning the cookies they'd missed out on.





"Well, one thing seems plain to me—this is set to be a day filled with adventure and treasure!"

"Really?" asked Timmy.

"Yes," said Aiden. "Adventure can mean many things, but I believe that the best kind is when you help others, right wrongs, defend ladies in distress, and champion the weak."

"Do you mean Nia?" asked Rory, regretting his earlier words to his sister.

"Yes, from what you said, she did seem to be rather sad."

"Because I wouldn't let her play with us?"

"Yes. But that does seem to be a wrong that we can make right," Aiden said.



"And the treasure? Could that be the cookies?" inquired Leo.

"A bowl of raisin cookies is a treasure worth going on adventures for," said Aiden.

Everyone was smiling by now, and even Rory laughed a little.

"But wait," said Rory, "we—I mean *I*—wasn't so nice to Nia earlier. I don't think that she would want to give us cookies anymore." Timmy and Leo sadly nodded their heads in agreement.

"Well, I can see that you are sorry," said Aiden. "Let's put our heads together and see what we can do to make it up to Nia."

A band of pirates came marching into Nia's room. They crowded around Nia and began to all talk at once. Aiden lifted a hand for silence. "I think Rory has something he would like to say."

"Here, this is for you," said Rory, pushing a package into Nia's hands. "It's from all of us, and I wanted to say *sorry* for not letting you join our game."

Nia began to smile as she accepted the parcel from her brother. She tore at the paper, and grinned as the contents fell into her lap: a red handkerchief for her head, and a black cloth eye patch!



"Oh!" exclaimed Nia. "I can play too?"
"Please do!" said Leo and Timmy.

"Besides, we'll need a girl to bandage us up when we get banged up in our adventures," added Rory, remembering how his sister liked to put bandages on everything.

"Will you come and be part of our merry crew?" asked Aiden, speaking on the behalf of all the good pirates crowded around.



"Oh, yes! Thank you!" said Nia. "Would you also like some raisin cookies?"

"We'd be so happy to have some!" said Rory. Leo and Timmy cheered as Nia led the way into the kitchen.

Aiden gave Rory a wink.

This is definitely the best kind of adventure! thought Rory as he smiled back.

The End