

THE PIRATE'S NEW NECKLACE

Many years ago there was a disgruntled pirate named Spence, who lived in an antiquated wooden ship.

It was clearly once a thing of beauty, however neglect had led to worn floors, sagging sails and a distinct smell of rotting wood. He lived a solitary life by choice, with no one to talk to and nothing to do except count his many bejewelled necklaces. Although this was a melancholy life, the one thing that made him happy was jewellery, or more specifically, the theft of jewellery!

One day, a beautiful mermaid called Kelsea arrived at the pirate's ship. From neck to waist she was covered in glittering necklaces which sparkled like stars. In a lilting voice, the mermaid proposed, "In a hidden cave I have found the most beautiful emerald and ruby necklace you have ever seen. I will give it to you in return for your protection." The pirate jumped at the chance, feeling soon he would be as rich as a king. "That is fine, mermaid. Return in a few days and we shall strike our deal." Little did the mermaid know, his fingers were crossed behind his back. He had no intention of giving up his solitude to help this mermaid!

For days and days, Spence schemed how he could set a trap to steal the mermaid's necklace. Finally, he decided on his plan! He would capture the mermaid and sell her to other pirates for even more jewels! With delight he sent a seagull to a neighbouring ship with a message, inviting them to come. Then, from the bow of his ship, he called to Kelsea. Eagerly, she appeared, a great wave lifting her to sit on the ship's dilapidated hull. "I agree to give you my protection," announced Spence, trying desperately to control his glee. "Now, where is my necklace?!" Kelsea stretched her hand out, the gorgeous necklace dangling tantalizingly from her fingers.

It was even more beautiful than the pirate ever could have imagined. Mesmerised, his hands turned to jelly. Crudely he tried to gather the net at his feet and toss it over the mermaid. Realising the pirate's sinister intentions Kelsea

snatched the necklace back, quickly diving into the safety of the ocean.

Now, safely away, the mermaid flew into a rage at the pirate's deception. How dare he try to trick me? She thought furiously. Hastily, she swam back to her cave where she found the most dangerous necklace in her collection. "This will teach that brainless clod a lesson!"

As night came, Kelsea silently slipped onto the sleeping ship. Carefully, balancing on her tail, she hopped to the slumbering pirate and slipped the cursed necklace onto his neck. As the clasp clipped into place its power was activated. BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!!!!!! "AAAGGGHHHH!!!!" Spence woke up, screaming in agony! The necklace had an electrifying jewel at its centre! The pirate desperately tried to take the necklace off but it was stuck like glue! Kelsea looked at the pirate with satisfaction. "Now, every time you try to steal you will get electrocuted!" With that, she disappeared into the immense ocean, looking for a new, more honest, protector.

From that day on the pirate was unable to enjoy his jewellery, as when he touched the stolen items he received a sharp zap! He spent the rest of his days alone and sad, learning the costly lesson: Crime doesn't pay!