

Emerald Island

By Paisley Thomason

Caylen stared at the beautiful island in front of her. Emerald Island. She felt her ship lurch to a stop as she lowered the anchor. She raised the sails and worried about her task. Her heart raced and she felt butterflies in her stomach, but she did not care. Caylen was here for a reason; she had been waiting for four months. There was no turning back now.

Caylen flicked her long braid off her shoulder and climbed down the ladder of her small, old ship. Some people would call it a pirate ship, but Caylen refused. Pirates were the reason she was putting herself through this. The memory of the letter, accidentally left on the doorstep of her house, haunted her to this day:

Rafiel,

Time is running out. We must steal something if we wish to remain in the crew. Captain Picrol will be furious if we return to the ship empty-handed, he believes that we are the poorest crew on the waters. I have tracked down a young lady who is in possession of a Diamond Sword, passed down to her by her mother. Her mother was Madam Dorath, a warrior who fought against us in the Great War of the Seas. She is one of the reasons us pirates have little land. The young lady, Miss Caylen, lives on Iron Island, the largest and most fortunate island. Her home is the largest in Pine Square, after, of course, to the niece of the Queen of the Seas. You must steal this sword immediately; it is worth 10,000 pieces of gold. If we retrieve this sword, Captain Picrol will be extremely pleased. Once you have stolen the sword, bring it to Emerald Island. I will be waiting for you in our old camp. This is an order.

Fenril

Right after discovering this letter, undoubtedly fallen out of the pocket of a pirate looking for extra gold, Caylen rushed up to her mother's old room. Sure enough, the glass to the case holding the sword had been broken, the sword gone. That sword had been her mother's most prized possession.

Pushing the terrible memory out of her mind, Caylen waded through the shallow waters to Emerald Island. The water was freezing in the midnight air; Emerald Island was one of the most northern islands. Caylen soon stepped onto the sandy shores. Emerald Island was small but beautiful, huge palm trees rustling in the light breeze and lush flowers of every colour.

Caylen felt her pocket for the dagger she had brought, just in case. The pirates had planned to be here. The worry hit her again with a mighty force: what if she had waited too long? That letter had been dropped on her doorstep four whole months ago. The pirate whose name was Fenril had probably been waiting longer. Fenril's desperate tone suggested that they were not going to laze around for no reason once they had stolen her sword.

Caylen carefully trekked through the bushes, keeping her eyes peeled for the camp. She did not know anything about this camp. She imagined it as a few tents, but it could be anything. When Caylen thought of it, tents would be a bad idea since Emerald Island wasn't land owned by the pirates.

Caylen soon came to a sandy clearing in the centre of the island. It was perfectly round, with colourful flowers blooming on the bushes around it and... a recently drawn large X right in the middle. Caylen gasped. Everyone knew that X's drawn in the sand were the pirates' way of marking something important... usually treasure. Caylen's heart raced. Would retrieving her sword really be this easy?

Caylen ran over to the large X. She stepped on it and... fell, into a large hole. She rubbed her back and checked that no bones were broken, then she got up and looked around. The pit was at least five meters deep. Caylen's breathing sped up. Was this a trap? The pirates could not have known she was going to come for her sword... could they? Caylen turned around to look at the rest of the hole. Expecting to see more dirt, she gasped when she saw a three-meter-high entrance! This had to be the pirates' camp! She had found it!

Caylen darted through the entrance and into a large triangular room. To her relief, the room was pirate-free. The walls were made of the same dirt that the hole was, but the floors were smooth stone. There was not much furniture: a large but uncomfortable-looking couch, a couple of chairs, and a huge map on the wall behind them.

There were also two doors in the room: one to her left, one to her right. Since she did not find her sword in the main room, Caylen decided to check them out. Unless the pirates had sold it already, it had to be behind one of them. Caylen pushed open the larger door on the right and it revealed... two pirates glaring at her!

Caylen froze as the pirates ran right at her! Just when her attackers were about to reach her, she ducked, causing them to trip over her and roll into the main room. Caylen dashed into the side-room, pulled out her dagger, and quickly looked for her sword. There were many empty frames above two small beds, but none of them had her precious sword in them.

Caylen switched her attention to the pirates and thought fast. If the pirates were here, that must mean they hadn't sold her sword! It had to be in the left room. The pirates got up, looking angrier than ever! Caylen grabbed her dagger and

desperately tried to work out a plan to get around the pirates, get her sword, and get back to her ship. It seemed impossible.

But Caylen was used to the impossible. Her mind quickly worked out a way to get past her first obstacle. She simply stood there and waited for the pirates to reach her, and stepped out of the way at the last second. Her dagger accidentally skimmed one of their arms, leaving a small cut. That might keep them distracted long enough for her to get her sword back!

Caylen bolted into the third room and whipped her head around. It was nowhere to be seen. This room had cooking supplies, a small wooden table, three chests, and a ladder. The sword was nowhere to be seen. But a ladder! That must be her way out! Though her sword was not in sight, Caylen was not giving up. The chests were her last hope. Caylen rushed over to the largest chest and quickly opened it. Inside was a pile of food, mostly fish. Caylen wrinkled her nose at the foul smell and moved on.

The second chest held random supplies. Caylen rummaged around inside and found a mop, some books, clothes, and many other objects. Again, no sword. Caylen heard the pirates starting to look for her.

Her heart racing, Caylen opened the third and final chest. Her last chance. Inside was treasure! Gold, rubies, sapphires, diamonds... diamonds! At the very bottom was the familiar shiny, diamond-encrusted sword passed down to her by her mother! Tears of relief threatened to well up inside her eyes, but she kept them down. Her job wasn't over yet.

Caylen began to rush up the ladder just as the pirates entered the room. Shouting with anger, they ran at Caylen, trying to reach her. Caylen was oblivious to their words. All she wanted was to get out of there.

Caylen scrambled out of the camp and found herself in the middle of the forests of Emerald Island. With a rush of relief, she realized she had passed right beside here and her ship was near! Almost forgetting about the pirates, Caylen sprinted to her ship. She had done it; she had her mother's sword! Her mother would have been so proud! The beautiful rising sun welcomed Caylen as she exited the forest and ran to the cool waters.

Caylen waded back through the shallows near her ship and climbed the ladder. The pirates came into view on the shore as she raised the anchor, lowered the sails, and set off. They looked like they were about to explode! "I'll take good care of it!" Caylen yelled and looked back to the sea.