

Unit  
5

# Stowaway!

This historical adventure tells the story of a young Tudor boy in the sixteenth century, and his dream to sail with the famous Captain Francis Drake.

How Dickon envied his best friend, Tib, who was aboard the *Pelican*, for the famous Francis Drake was its captain – Francis Drake, England's greatest sailor and friend of Good Queen Bess. Francis Drake who had come back from the Spanish Main, his ship laden with gold. And now he was setting out on another exciting voyage – with Tib as his cabin boy.

Dickon gritted his teeth to stop the tears. He'd tried to get a job, but the second mate had taken one look at his lame leg and said, "Sorry, lad. We only take the fit and able. You couldn't climb the mainmast."

"I could ..." But the second mate hadn't listened. Instead, he said to Tib, "You'll do. You look a strong lad." So Tib would have gold for his mother when the ship returned to Plymouth. Dickon would have nothing, and his poor widowed mother had eight boys to feed.

Dickon was suddenly jolted out of his misery by a loud voice. "Here, boy, carry this!" A young gentleman in a leather doublet had dropped a bag at Dickon's feet.

Then a gentleman with dark hair and beard called out from the *Pelican*.



"Cousin John! Not a moment too soon. We sail at five!" Dickon couldn't believe his eyes. It was Francis Drake! It must be. He wore a gold chain round his neck.

"Cousin Francis!" The young gentleman ran up the gangway. Dickon ran after him, carrying the bag. He *could* run and climb. He could do lots of things.



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## Do you remember?

Match these questions and answers. One has been done to help you.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Who was Dickon's best friend?         | Tib was chosen to be Drake's cabin boy. |
| What was Francis Drake's ship called? | Drake's ship was the <i>Pelican</i> .   |
| Who was chosen as Drake's cabin boy?  | Dickon had a lame leg.                  |
| Why wasn't Dickon chosen?             | Tib was Dickon's best friend.           |

## More to think about

Read these sentences about the story. Write 'true', 'false' or 'can't tell' for each one.

- Francis Drake was a friend of Good Queen Bess.
- There were eight boys in Tib's family.
- Francis Drake had a cousin called John.
- John's bag was too heavy for Dickon to carry.
- Francis Drake had a ginger beard.
- Tib and Dickon were seasick.



## Now try these

- Think about the title of the passage. What do you think Dickon decides to do once he is on board the ship?
- Write ...
  - what Tib might have said when he realised Dickon was on board.
  - what Dickon's mother might have said when he didn't arrive home the evening after the ships sailed.
- Imagine that you are Dickon. Write a letter home explaining what has happened and how you are feeling.