

Writing competition

Book an adventure and whisk us away to new lands and unforgettable characters. Write a short story about an amazing and unforgettable adventure.

THE KRAKEN

Trouble never came to the sleepy fishing town of Calisto, not since the storm 13 years ago. But, as the winter grew nearer and shadows grew longer, something stirred underneath the waves. Arion woke up to spitting rain on his window. He jumped up out of bed and rushed to the kitchen. "Hi Ma!" he called. His mother, who sat at the table, smiled wearily at him. "Hello Arion," said Ma. "Did you sleep well?" "Yes ma."

Arion sat down on the chair opposite her. Ma fixed him with a look. "You aren't going sailing today, are you?" she asked. Arion tensed, as that was exactly what he was going to do. "No, I'm just meeting up with Levi." That was a blatant lie. Ma raised her eyebrows. "You better not be lying to me, there is an awful storm coming." "Kay ma." Arion quickly grabbed his gumboots and raincoat. "I'm going out now," he said.

Ma turned to him and frowned. "You better be safe, okay?" "I will be safe, goodbye!" he called. And with that, Arion rushed out into the dark streets of Calisto, headed straight for the harbour. Arion felt at ease. The mess of ropes, boats, and dead fish felt like a second home to him. He wondered if it had felt that way to his father as well. "Heya Arion!" A boy jumped in front of him, smiling slyly. "Hi Levi," Arion said unhappily. "Ma banned me from sailing today."

Levi stared at him. "Damn right she should!" he said sternly. "What?" spluttered Arion. "It's thundering out there today," Levi said, "and they say it's the biggest storm since the one your father..." Arion glared at him. Levi ducked his head. "Uhhh, why don't we go to the rockpools?" he said, looking at Arion apologetically.

"Alright". The pair wandered slowly down the beach. "It wasn't a storm!" Arion blurted out. "My dad, it wasn't a storm that... Y'know." They walked in silence for a few seconds, before Arion continued. "It was the kraken." Levi came to a sudden halt. "What do you mean, the kraken?" he asked. "I mean, that the kraken killed my father," said Arion.

Levi looked at him with a mix of pity and concern. "But... the kraken isn't real," he said. Arion didn't respond. They walked in silence the rest of the way. The rockpools sat tucked away in the shadows of the cliff. Arion and Levi came there often to observe people. The boats milling in and out of the harbour, the bustling Salty-Krill diner. All of this could be seen from the rockpools. The pair sat down on a large stone and engaged in some pointless conversation about fish. Hours passed.

Then, just as they were ready to go home, a boat pulled in to the harbour carrying the strangest thing the village had ever seen. It was a large egg – too large. As the boat docked, a small crowd gathered around, oohing and ahhhing. Arion spotted the egg and grabbed Levi. "What is THAT?" he exclaimed. Both of them stared in disbelief. The egg was as large as a chest of drawers, shiny and fluorescent, unlike anything either of them had ever seen. "Woah" said Levi, "We have to get a closer look at that."

As the two ran down the beach towards the boat, Arion felt a strange tugging in his stomach. He brushed it off. The egg was hauled down from the boat and set on the ground. "Hey!" shouted a random onlooker "How did you find this egg!?" The captain stepped up onto a crate. "Well, thank you for asking! We were looking for fish, as usual and we came across this big shadow. Bigger than this egg here mind you, far bigger. It was moving just below the surface of the water," he said gruffly but enthusiastically.

"The shadow had these great big tentacles that spread out behind it, but we couldn't see its face. Then, we saw

a shining light underneath the waves. We all thought it was treasure, but when we pulled it out, it was an egg!" The man gestured wildly towards the egg. "Our crew believes that that creature was the kraken, and this is its egg."

Levi looked incredulously at the egg. "What a load of bullcrud!" he said. "They probably faked it or something." "You're wrong," snapped Arion. "It was the kraken, they found its egg, they saw it, that's proof enough." Levi stared at Arion. "Even if they did see something, it was probably just a big squid." He looked up at the sky and back at Arion. "Hey, um, my mumma is probably waiting for me. I should get back. Bye Arion." With that, Levi jogged off towards town, leaving Arion alone.

Back in his room, Arion lay on his bed staring at the ceiling. He was sure that the kraken was out there. It was alive. And he needed to avenge his father. The next few days passed in a blur. More sightings of the monster, stronger rain battering the town. The clouds grew dark as the biggest storm in 13 years swiftly approached. All of Arion's dreams were filled with eggs and krakens. Visions of himself heroically killing the monster. Of his dad, screaming and being pulled under the waves.

Rain drummed on Arion's bedroom window when he woke. But he didn't care. He hopped out of bed, hoping to see his mother, but she was already gone, headed off to the seniors home she worked. He sat at the kitchen table, pondering what he was going to do. Arion could feel in his soul that the kraken was near. He knew that today was the day that he should exact his vengeance, for the kraken could kill more people and Arion could not stand for that. He formed a plan. First, he would steal the egg. Then he would find the kraken somehow, taunt it with its egg to lure it to the surface, then kill it. He grabbed a blade from the kitchen and ran quickly out the door into the pounding rain.

At the port he kept his head down, hoping no one would notice him, especially not Levi. But luck was not on his side. "Hey Arion," said Levi. "How are you? I haven't seen you since the egg was discovered." Arion nodded. "Yeah, I stayed indoors mostly, but uhh, I've got to be going now" "Wait!" Levi grabbed his arm. "Where are you even going on a day like this?" Arion thought for a second. "Uh, actually, I need your help. I need to 'borrow' the egg." "Why?" said Levi, raising one eyebrow suspiciously. "You aren't still going on about that kraken thing are you?" "No!" exclaimed Arion. "Of course not. I am simply going to see if I can figure out where it came from." "And why does that involve stealing it?" asked Levi. Arion racked his brain for a plausible answer. "Because those men probably want to sell it, and it would only be for a few hours, then I would return it!" Levi looked unconvinced, but nodded. He trusted his friend. "Okay. But, how are we gonna 'borrow' the egg without getting caught?"

The egg was being kept at the fish market. The harsh light made the egg sparkle and glimmer. It looked almost royal on its splendid throne of ice. "How are we supposed to lift that thing?" asked Levi, looking at the egg in dismay. "Let's just see how heavy it is first," Arion whispered. The two crept over to the egg and lifted "One....Two.....Three!" To their surprise the egg was shockingly light, about the weight of a decent sized fish. "What do we do now?" asked Levi. "Uhh..." Arion looked around and saw a cart and a table cloth. "I know! Lift the egg onto that cart, I will get that cloth and drape it over the egg and we can just wheel it out!" "Alright!" said Levi excitedly "Let's do this."

The walk out of the market was not easy "Hey!" a girl who worked at the market shouted in their direction. "What are you kids doing with that cart?" She started sprinting towards them. "Run!" Arion shouted. It was tricky, running with a laden cart through a busy market. "Stop!" screamed the worker lady, but they were already losing her. They crashed out of the markets, knocking over a barrel of lobsters as they did, spilling the creatures back into the water.

Out on the pier, it was much easier to wheel the cart. "Alright," said Arion, "this is where we stop." "Why here?" asked Levi. "No reason," Arion lied. His boat was docked just next to where they were standing. He could make it. "Hey Levi.. could you do me a favor and take this cart away?" Arion grabbed the egg and while Levi took the cart he sprinted for the boat. Levi turned and screamed: "Arion! What are you doing?" Arion stood up, the egg nestled snugly in its cloth. "I'm sorry Levi," he called, and turned away. He knew what he needed to do. He set sail, and in

less than 10 minutes the harbour faded out of view. All Arion could see was the storm.

The ocean was so dark. The waves and rain pounded Arion's small dingy, stinging his face with salt water. Nothing was dry. The egg glowed faintly in the dim light. Suddenly he saw it. A dark shadow moving underneath the waves. It was big. Too big. Arion knew what it was. He raised the egg above his head, waving it at the dark shape in the water. Then it breached. The thing raised its gargantuan head above the water, two giant eyes like searchlights. "COME AND GET ME!" screamed Arion. "I'M GOING TO AVENGE MY FATHER!" But the kraken did not come any closer. It actually seemed to huddle in on itself. That's when he saw it. A smaller kraken and an egg were hiding beneath the larger kraken's tentacles.

Arion froze. That's why the kraken wasn't using its tentacles. It was trying to protect its children. And maybe it had stirred up the storm because its egg was stolen. But this was the beast that had stolen his father. Surely it was his job, his duty, to kill the creature?

But was it right to take something else's parent? The kraken had taken his father, but it was a mother. Arion realised the kraken was not a monster, but an animal. Not a force of nature, but part of it. Arion's boat floated closer to the kraken. It did not flee, only stared at him with its lampshade eyes. He could have stabbed it. He could have ended it right then and there. But he didn't. Didn't those children deserve to have a parent? To be cared for? They would die without something to care for them. Arion made his choice. He picked up the egg and placed it carefully in the water. The kraken's eyes left him for a moment as it watched its egg sink under the waves. Tenderly, it wrapped its tentacle around the egg and brought it down to where its other eggs lay. Arion watched the kraken slowly retreat underneath the surface.

The rain seemed less heavy, the wind more bearable. It took Arion a moment to realise that the storm was coming to a stop. The sun broke through the clouds, a beam of light illuminating his hometown. He never got his revenge, but he didn't mind. Arion thought of the baby kraken, hiding beneath its mother. He thought of the egg, and how he tricked Levi. And he thought of his father. He hoped his father would be proud of him. Arion felt sure that he would be.

The water turned navy as Arion sailed towards the harbour. He knew that Levi would be angry at him for tricking him. His mother would be mad because he disobeyed her. And the fishermen that he had stolen the egg from would be furious, though they would never know who did it. All these things could wait. They were in the future. The island looked beautiful in the light. Soon, Arion would have to face the consequences. But for now, he enjoyed the sunshine on his face, and the calm sea ahead.