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By Lisa McMann



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Island of Shipwrecks (The Unwanteds Book 5) By Lisa McMann Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #28034 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-02-03
- Released on: 2015-02-03
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Lisa McMann is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the middle grade dystopian fantasy series *The Unwanteds*, the YA paranormal *Wake* trilogy, and several other books for kids and teens. She lives with her family in the Phoenix area. Check out Lisa's website at LisaMcMann.com, learn more about *The Unwanteds* Series at UnwantedsSeries.com, and be sure to say hi on Instagram or Twitter (@Lisa_McMann), or Facebook ([Facebook.com/McMannFan](https://www.facebook.com/McMannFan)).

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Island of Shipwrecks



In Tatters

When Alex opened his eyes, he saw a blurry image of Fox standing before him on the deck of the *Unwanteds'* pirate ship. Kitten stood on Fox's head, mewling at the top of her voice. The sound grew distant and then faded altogether, and the young mage's lids drooped once more.

Fox stepped on Alex's thigh and licked his face, trying to get the boy's eyes to stay open. Kitten pointed over the bow with one tiny paw, still mewling.

Alex groaned. He was soaking wet and his entire body ached. His arms were tangled in rope, and he couldn't pull free. And Fox's driftwood tongue was harsh on his skin. He lifted his head to move away from it and squinted in the sunlight. The world swam before his eyes.

"Mewmewmew!" cried the tiny porcelain kitten. Alex didn't have a clue what she was saying.

Fox began loosening the knots that held Alex to the ship's bow. He paused to translate, "Kitten is wondering if you are okay. She considers you to be one of her very, very special friends, and—"

"I'm okay," Alex interrupted. He coughed. Salt water burned his throat and nose. Fox worked at the knots with his teeth, and soon one of Alex's arms was free. Fox moved to the next, and when that one came loose, Alex plunged forward and put his hands out to catch himself.

"Thanks, Fox. You're a good, um, cat," he said, which pleased Fox immensely. Alex's arms wobbled. He pushed himself up and locked his elbows, then turned gingerly to a sitting position. He coughed again and winced. "And speaking of cats, please tell me the big one is around here somewhere."

Simber flew over from a short distance away when he heard Alex's voice. The enormous stone cheetah glanced out over the water and narrowed his eyes. "I am. But we'rre missing someone else."

Alex struggled to his feet, alarmed. "Who's missing?"

"Octavia."

Alex's breath caught. He scanned the waves. "At least she can swim."

"Yes. But I'm not surrre wherrre we lost herrr. If it was back at the beginning . . ." Simber trailed off.

Alex wasn't at all sure how far they had traveled since their ship began the insane journey down a thunderous waterfall. When they'd reached the bottom, they'd gone screaming around a forward turn so that they were sailing upside down, and then another forward turn, climbing straight up a different waterfall, and around one final forward turn, bringing them upright again, depositing them here—wherever "here" was. It was the most frightening ride Alex had ever been on, and he wasn't sure how he'd survived it.

"Oh no," he said softly, thinking about the highly regarded octogator being battered about in the surf. Especially since she hadn't fully recovered from her ordeal with the eel in the aquarium under the volcanic pirate island. "How will we find her?" He rose on shaky legs and rubbed the rope burns on his wrists.

"Spike is out therre calling forr herrr. Hopefully she'll shoot up the waterrrfall like the ship did." Simber was silent as his gaze swept the surface of the water, looking for the blue whale's sparkly horn, but he didn't see it. The sea grew calm, almost glassy, and the ship inexplicably moved away from the up-waterfall from whence they'd come, into the open water.

"Ah, wait a moment," the giant stone cheetah said. His regal neck stretched upward, and his eyes narrowed. He flew higher and sampled the air with a delicate sniff. After a moment, he nodded. "Yes. Herrre comes Spike now with Octavia. She's the last one." The frown on his face softened, and he let out a sigh of relief, which almost never happened unless things had been very, very serious.

Alex, his brain still fuzzy, wondered how long he'd been unconscious, and what else he'd missed. He strained to see the two creatures, but they were too far away for his eyes to detect. Instead he looked around as the fog in his head began to clear. The ship was in tatters. Ropes and nets still held various humans, creatures, and statues who had tied themselves down to keep from flying about. And some members of their party were definitely broken. Captain Ahab's hand held on to the ship's wheel, but the rest of him was nowhere to be seen.

"Captain?" Alex called out.

"Aye," came the gargly reply from the deck behind the ship's wheel, where the captain lay in six or seven pieces. "I live. My wretched existence shall waste away another day."

"He sounds about normal," Alex muttered, and mentally checked Captain Ahab's well-being off his list of concerns. He caught Samheed's eye. "You okay?"

Samheed was easing his way to his feet nearby as Fox chomped at the ropes around his wrists. "Ugh. Major headache." Once freed, he staggered and grabbed the railing for support. "Where's Lani?"

Alex looked up at Simber for the answer. "And Sky?" His pulse raced when he remembered that sometime during the horrible ride he'd been holding on to her. The fear cleared his head.

"They'rre both fine. Helping the injurrred. Everrryone is batterred but alive thanks to Spike." The cheetah swooped down to the water to pick up Ms. Octavia from Spike's broad back.

"Mewmewmew!" cried Kitten.

Fox began to interpret, but then glanced at Simber and closed his mouth.

Alex shook his head. "I don't know how any of us lived through that, whatever it was." He stepped carefully to the railing and used it to steady himself. The water sparkled with the sun hanging low over it, making a pale yellow path in front of them. "Are you sure you're okay, Sam?"

Samheed nodded and limped over. "I think so."

"We're still heading west," Alex mused. "Unless it's morning now." He narrowed his eyes and wished for a better sense of direction. "Where are we? How do we get home? Do we have to go through that thing again to get back?"

"I doubt we'll have to go through it again," Samheed said. "I'm pretty sure that was a scroll feature. We're on the other end now." He rubbed the back of his throbbing head. His fingers came away sticky with blood. "Ick."

Kitten hopped and mewed again.

Alex ignored her, completely puzzled by Samheed's words. "What do you mean, scroll feature? Other end of what?"

Samheed wiped his fingers on his shirt. "I mean it's like the scroll feature Mr. Today turned on in Artimé whenever new Unwanteds arrived to keep them from getting lost or eaten in the jungle. I rode on it our first day, remember?"

Alex frowned. He remembered Samheed getting mad and stomping off, away from the group, but he'd never asked what had happened to him. "I didn't care much for you back then, you know."

"Likewise," Samheed said with a smirk. "I don't think I actually told you guys what happened. But it was sort of like what we just went through, only on a much smaller scale."

"You mean you scrolled on a waterfall and didn't tell anybody about it? Are you joking?"

"Not a waterfall—I wasn't on water in Artimé, I was on land. It was like . . . like I got sucked down a hill that rotated, and my feet were stuck to it, so even when I was upside down, I didn't fall anywhere." He pursed his lips. "Picture Kitten with her feet glued to the ship's wheel. If we turned it, she'd stay stuck to the wheel all the way around. It's kind of like that—I just went around, and it brought me to the other side of Artimé."

"So . . . you're saying that we went around the world? And now we're . . . where exactly?" Alex looked left and right at the vast, open sea.

Samheed shrugged. "My guess is that since we began scrolling when we were as far west as we could be, beyond the Island of Legends, we're now as far away from the Island of Legends as we possibly can be. We're . . . we're . . . east."

"MEW. MEW. MEW."

Everyone turned to look at Kitten, whose tiny face was furious. She pointed with her porcelain toes toward

the bow of the ship.

“She says—” Fox said.

“She says,” Simber interrupted, “that Ms. Morning’s seek spell came from the west. Arrrtimé is that way.”

Users Review

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Alice Ybarra:

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