



Cast Off: The Strange Adventures of Petra de Winter and Bram Broen

By Eve Yohalem

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Cast Off: The Strange Adventures of Petra de Winter and Bram Broen By Eve Yohalem

A tale of pirates, mutiny, and friendship on the high seas, perfect for fans of *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

It's 1663 and there is an extra passenger on board a Dutch merchant ship setting sail for the East Indies. Twelve-year-old Petra has stowed away to escape her abusive father. But she quickly realizes that surviving for months at sea will be impossible without help. So when Bram, the half-Dutch / Half-Javanese son of the ship's carpenter, finds her hiding spot, Petra convinces him to help her stay hidden . . .and help disguise her as a boy.

If Petra is discovered and exposed as a girl, she could be tossed overboard, or worse . . . returned to her father. And if Bram is exposed for helping her, he could lose the only home—and family—he has. As tensions rise on the ship, with pirates attacking, deadly illness, and even mutiny, Petra and Bram face impossible decisions that test their friendship and threaten their dreams of freedom.

Told in alternating voices and filled with secrets and intrigue, this richly researched novel is historical fiction at its best.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5–8—The year is 1663, and motherless 12-year-old Petra escapes her once well-to-do abusive alcoholic father by stowing away on a merchant ship bound for the East Indies from her home in Amsterdam. She is discovered and befriended by Bram, an illegitimate boy of mixed-race heritage whose mother was Javanese and whose father was a Dutch sailor. Petra secretly assists Bram with his daily tasks such as weaving rope, making repairs, and organizing supplies. The boy is hoping that if he works hard, the ship's captain will sign papers that make him a "legal son" and that will allow him to set foot on European land. The story is told in alternating points of view from each of these unique perspectives. Disguised as a boy, Petra eventually boldly exposes herself to the crew, using her sewing skills to assist with an emergency surgery. After being keelhaunched as punishment for being onboard, Petra continues to work alongside the ship's doctor. Yohalem's thorough research, authentic nautical jargon, and sailors' dialect brings this riveting tale to life. Likable characters and rich historical detail from daily food and drink to the elaborate hierarchy of the ship's crew to how to use a "butt-broom" make this a believable tale. Adventures abound as Petra and Bram struggle through raging storms, rollicking battles with pirates, and deadly bouts of disease. Plots of mutiny heighten tensions and divide loyalties, and Bram and Petra are both dangerously caught in the middle, fighting for survival and a place to call home. VERDICT Pair this book with Avi's *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) or Karen Hesse's *Stowaway* (2001, both Scholastic). A thoroughly satisfying high seas adventure.—Madeline J. Bryant, Los Angeles Public Library

Review

"The story brims with luscious detail...This novel has all the required elements to appeal to zealous historical-adventure buffs." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"An absorbing, informative read." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Riveting...A thoroughly satisfying high seas adventure." —*School Library Journal*

"Young teen readers who like authenticity in their historical fiction will find life on ship in the seventeenth century vividly detailed." —*Voya*

About the Author

Eve Yohalem is the author of *Escape Under the Forever Sky* and *Grandpa Hates the Bird*. She lives with her family in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Miguel Philip:

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