

Flamenco Beard and the Story Shortener



Educational Value

Enjoy family story time.

Moral of the story

A fun pirate tale that shows us that everyone, young and old, should enjoy story time.

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There once was a Daddy who was in such a hurry to finish the stories that he told his children every night that he began to leave out some of the words. Taking out words here and there, he was able to finish the stories a little quicker. However, this still didn't seem enough, so he kept shortening them more and more until, one day, he cut out the most important words of a tale: "THE END".

That night he went to bed peacefully but he woke up feeling rather strange. He got up and when he looked in the mirror he realised that he was wearing a big pirate hat and a black eye-patch and had an enormous red beard with white spots! There was no doubt in his mind: he had been transformed into Flamenco Beard, the notorious pirate Captain from his tales.

Worried, he ran to his children's bedrooms. As he opened the door, a great wall of water came crashing down on him and he soon found himself swimming in the middle of the sea. He wasn't alone, however. He was being chased by hungry sharks which had not eaten for weeks. Flamenco Beard prepared himself to fight, grabbing the butter knife that he always kept hidden under his hat. Just as he was about to lunge at the first shark, he felt himself being lifted into the air and then dropped onto the deck of a giant pirate ship.

"That was close, Captain" – said a pirate sailor who was the spitting image of his eldest son.

"The Captain could've dealt with those clumsy sharks!" shouted a couple of cabin boys who were so similar Flamenco Beard could have sworn they were his twins.

There was no time to lose. The Captain was told that the Queen had been kidnapped and there would be a great reward for whoever rescued her safe and sound. Without a second thought, they set sail to The Island of The Last Cannibal, the favourite spot for all baddies wishing to hide kidnapped Queens.

They were at full sail when a big, dark storm started to form and, as fate would have it, a bolt of lightning struck the mast of the ship, triggering a massive fire. They were so busy putting out the fire that they didn't realise that an enormous wave had hurled the ship onto the reefs around the island with so much force that the captain and his sailors were sent flying into the air.

When the Captain woke up, he found himself tied to a big tree trunk. His crew of pirates was tied up next to him. They were in the heart of the island's volcano, the place chosen by the cannibals for their sacrifices and rituals. However, they were not the ones who were going to be eaten. Everything had been put in place to sacrifice a beautiful woman with a crown, who had to be the Queen.

The cannibals started their chants. How annoying, they always did everything while singing. Then the Captain had an idea. With a loud voice, he began to sing pirate songs and all the crew joined in singing at the top of their voices. The cannibals tried to sing louder and, even though there were more of them, they couldn't sing louder than the Captain and his men. Without their chants, they couldn't begin the feast so, red in the face with anger,

they decided to switch the Captain for the Queen.

Now it was the Captain who was hanging above a big pot, about to be cooked. He could feel the burning of the pepper and smell the sauce, and he became so hot that he no longer had the strength to sing. His men were silenced also by the big dollops of chocolate ice cream they were eating with relish. How did those savages know that chocolate ice cream was his crew's weakness?

Just then he saw the Queen smile, a crooked smile that only Withered Flower possessed. Clearly, it had all been a trap, set by the fearsome woman pirate captain - once his greatest companion but was now his biggest rival - to capture Flamenco Beard and his men. Surrounded by cannibals and grimacing at the pain of the first bite, the Captain accepted defeat.

"You win, Withered Flower. This is the END."

On saying that last word, everything disappeared and the Daddy found himself in bed, still scared and sweaty. Lying next to him, wearing the same crooked smile as Withered Flower, his wife gave him a kiss and said:

"Next time you shorten the stories you tell the children, you'll have me to deal with in The Cave of Madness."

The Daddy lay deep in reflection throughout the night. It had been great fun to be part of the stories but he was also so terrified that he vowed never to cut even a single word from his children's stories again.

(Story translated by Lewis Morgan / Abbey Glen at [Manchester Metropolitan University](https://www.manchester.ac.uk))

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Source URL: <https://freestoriesforkids.com/children/stories-and-tales/flamenco-beard-and-story-shortener>



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