

realized that he was frightened. But a Barracuda *never* gave in to fear. “My vote is we sail.”

Jasmine turned to Neo. “What about you?” Jacoby held his breath for Neo’s answer.

“The way I see it,” Neo said, “we didn’t enroll at the Academy to shy away from danger or try to outrun fear. We came here to test ourselves in the most challenging ways and pull together to keep each other safe.” His eyes were bright. “I vote we sail.”

Jacoby beamed, feeling an enormous sense of brotherly pride. He couldn’t have wished for a better answer from Neo. Both boys turned to Jasmine, awaiting her all-important decision.

“I agree with everything you’ve both said. If I let the fear of Uncle Noah stop me from sailing out today, what kind of pirate captain does that make me?” She jumped down from the harbor wall. “Whatever gets thrown at us out there, I know we can handle it. I believe in this crew.”

Jacoby felt joy spreading through his chest and the good type of nerves fizzing through his whole body. “So we’re all agreed . . . we’re sailing?” He stretched out his hand purposefully. The others did just the same, placing their palms one on top of the other.

“We’re sailing!” Jasmine said, a smile spreading across her determined face.

“We’re sailing!” the three of them repeated, palms pressing tight to each other.

