

# The Messenger

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## Beached

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## Beached // Chris Boss

We made to search the wreckage for unique items.

"You're not to search the wreckage," said Billy.

"We'll do just as we so please, whatever whatsoever," we replied.

"On my orders," said Billy. "You're not to search the wreckage on my orders."

We made for the wreckage anyhow. Billy fumed about it.

We told him he'd not yet finished teething.

He said, "I'll be the first among you with a PhD. You watch."

Whatever Billy. You always were a queer one.

When we drew closer to the wreckage, Billy decided he would change tactics. "You know," he said, "my mother... she's an excellent sous chef. She could whip us up a batch of tater tots real smartly. I'm sure of it, in fact."

"We know what you're up to," we said. "It won't work."

"No, honest! She's a great sous chef. I would know!"

We'd had his mother's tater tots before. "Nothing special," we said.

"Nothing special?" Billy said. "Need I remind you for whom she caters nowadays?"

Yeah, yeah, one of the Ursen twins or something.

"That's right. I'll be darned if those aren't the finest taters on the eastern seaboard."

It was silly for him to bring up food at a time like that, when we had our minds fixed on finding unique items in the wreckage. We thought...well, we thought about all the things that were unique. Keys, mentioned Gregory, those are unique. No, we said, they are but also they are not. Well then, what about the lock-box which befits the key? No, that's the same idea as the keys themselves. We were thinking more along the lines of cartographic charts of sorts.

We could see the wreckage come into detail. It held us in a trance until Billy started screaming. He had fallen to the ground. He screamed and held his hands over his foot.

"Cut it out," we said.

Well, he only started screaming louder.

We told him the excuse about his mom was one thing, but this was something else entirely. "Stop that now," we said. "We're

going to the wreckage and you can stay here by yourself.”

He rolled around until we saw the bottom of his foot. It was gushing blood. And it was all mixed up with the sand as well, both his blood in the sand and the sand in his bloodied foot.

“Oh,” we said. “He must have stepped on an upturned nail. What can we do?”

One of us suggested we apply pressure to the wound, but the prospect seemed rather vulgar.

Another one of us suggested tying cloth around it. But none of us had shirts, and the alternative was out of the question.

“Oh!” said Gregory. “Maybe there’s a first-aid kit at the wreckage site!”

But he wasn’t thinking clearly. There’s nothing unique about a first-aid kit.

“Then we’ll have to let him bleed it out,” said Gregory.

You know something, we said, that’s just about the only thing to do.