

Chapter 66

A WATERY GRAVE

The bolt of lightning passed through the girl and shot down the metal chain. The anchor had been pushed against the lifeless creature's chest, and now it delivered a thump of electricity to Woolly's heart.

DUMF!

Elsie slumped to her knees at the highest point of the ship, and the mammoth's legs twitched.

One eye opened.

Then another.

"SHE'S ALIVE!" shouted Dotty. "Do you hear me, Elsie? Elsie?"

As thunder and lightning boomed around them, Dotty and Titch looked up to the crow's nest.

"NOOOO!" screamed Dotty when she saw the girl slumped over the side, lifeless.

A Watery Grave

"You look after Woolly!" cried Titch as he began climbing up the rigging.

The boat was now swinging wildly from side to side, and the higher he scrabbled, the more he felt he was going to be tossed into a watery grave.

Eventually, he reached the crow's nest. Elsie was now lying motionless on the floor.

"ELSIE? ELSIE?" he cried, but there was no response. Titch scooped her up in his arms, and put her over his shoulder. Then he made the hazardous climb down the rigging, and laid her out on the deck of the ship.

Elsie's face was blackened and, despite the rain, her hair and clothes were smoking.

It seemed that the electric bolt, which had given the mammoth life, had taken life away from the girl.



On seeing her friend laid out like this, Woolly scrambled over to her.

First, the mammoth tried to rock her friend awake with her foot.

"HOO!"

Elsie just flopped from side to side.

Next, she licked the girl's face with her tongue.

"HOO!"

A white streak appeared on her skin.

Dotty burst into floods of tears and held Elsie's lifeless body close to hers. "No! No! Please!"

Titch put his arms round her. "I think she's left us."



Chapter 67

HEADS BOWED

The pensioners stood around the body with their heads bowed and their hats held close to their chests.

All was quiet and still on the deck of the *Victory*.

However, the mammoth was not giving up on her friend.

"HOO!"

To everyone's surprise, Woolly placed her trunk over the girl's nose and mouth, and blew air into her.

"What's the beast doing?" said the admiral, as he tried to keep steering the *Victory* through the storm.

"I think she's trying to recessuss... resasstate... restitute... blow air into Elsie!" replied Dotty.

"Her chest is moving up and down!" exclaimed Titch.

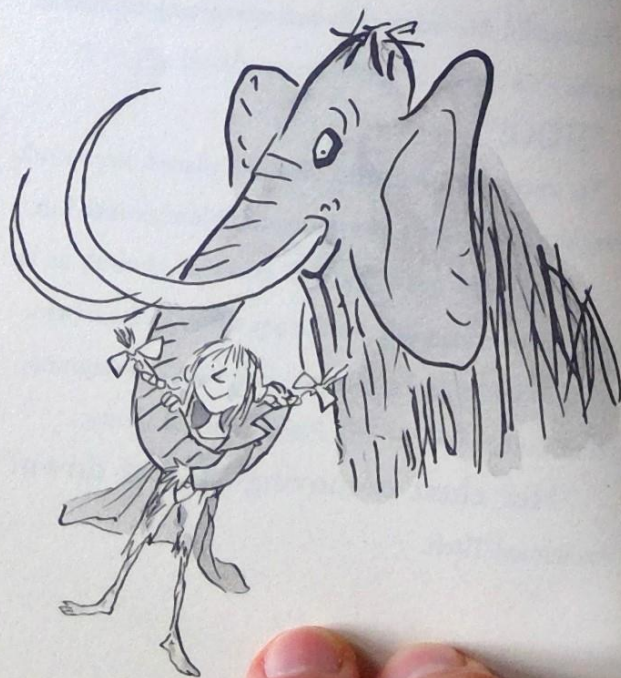
"Thank the good Lord for his mercy!" cried out Dotty. "She's alive!"

Elsie's eyes opened. A huge wet furry trunk was staring back at her. At first, she didn't know where she was, or even who she was.

"What the...?"

But, as soon as she realised who was looming over her, she took the trunk in her hands and kissed it.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, Woolly! I love you!"



The mammoth wrapped her trunk round the girl, and pulled her close for a cuddle.

"HURRAH!" cried the old soldiers.

"This is all very well and good, gentlemen, and, er, lady, and, girl, and, of course, mammoth, and so on and so forth," began the admiral, "but can I politely remind you that we are still sailing through the heart of a storm? It's going to take every last man, every last person and prehistoric animal for us to survive this! Back to work at once!"





PART III
—◆—
THE
NORTH
POLE

BATTERED AND BRUISED

Battered and bruised, HMS *Victory* eventually sailed into calmer waters.

An **icy wind** blew across the ship. They were moving closer and closer to the **North Pole**. A shout came down from the crow's nest.

"ICEBERG AHOY!"

Elsie whispered into the mammoth's ear. "We're getting close, Woolly."

The mammoth nodded her head up and down, and called out, "**HOO!**"

"Very close."

The admiral expertly navigated HMS *Victory* through the maze of ice.

"**LAND AHOY!**" came another shout from above.

"**HOOO!**" hooted Woolly. Somehow, she knew she was going home.

The ship stopped alongside the edge of the ice, causing a huddle of walruses to scatter into the water.

PLOP! PLOP! PLOP!

After weeks at sea, the mammoth was eager to step out on to solid ice. Her entire body was swaying with excitement.

"Not long now, Woolly!" said Elsie.

As soon as it was safe, she led her friend down the gangplank and on to the ice. Immediately,



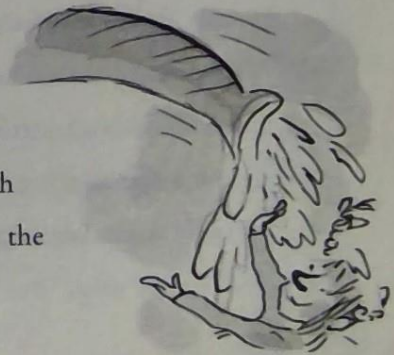
the mammoth rolled on to her back, rubbing herself on the snow. Elsie thought it looked like fun, so joined

in too. She even fashioned a snowball,

which she lobbed at Woolly.

BIFF!

In return, the mammoth hoovered up some snow with her trunk, and sprayed it at the



PFFF!

Dotty and Titch looked on from the deck of the *Victory*, like proud grandparents.

When Elsie and Woolly both began to tire, the girl decided it was time to say goodbye. She gave her friend the biggest cuddle she could.

"I'm going to miss you so much," she whispered into the mammoth's ear.



Woolly shook her head.

Whatever did the animal mean?

She reached out her trunk, and took the girl by the hand, and began tugging her along.

"Woolly wants me to go with her," Elsie called out to those on the ship. "But where?"