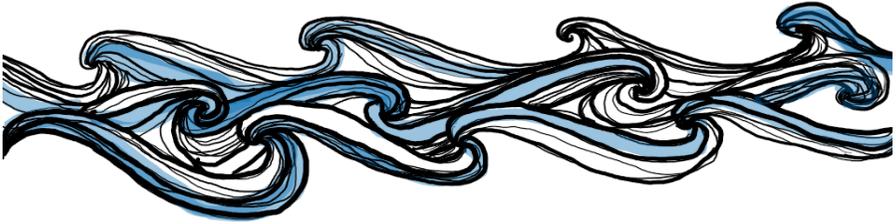


Petra Din is a young writer whose passion for putting pen to paper started at a young age. Half English and Hungarian, she spent her early years in England before moving to Switzerland. Her love of Cornwall came from family holidays spent by the sea and on the doorstep of Daphne du Maurier's country. Her happiest place is by the ocean with a pen and a notebook.

Do All Sailors Lie?



A Cornish Tale
By P.E.Din

tredition®

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Do All Sailors Lie?

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To anyone in need of an escape.

Chapter One

Cadan

"A single dream can be more powerful than a thousand realities."

-J.R.R. Tolkien

The sea can be both loving and heartless. It was the only thing keeping Cadan here. The only thing keeping him from leaving everything behind and starting a new life somewhere else.

Despite it being early summer, a cold breeze blew through the sleepy Cornish fishing village of PortEllen. Small, white-washed cottages overlooked a narrow estuary where boats of varying sizes bobbed up and down. This was the place that Cadan knew as home.

It was the first Saturday of the summer vacation. The village's narrow streets were busy with tourists arriving or leaving for their holidays. The cloudless sky and sunshine had fooled many holidaymakers into wearing shorts and t-shirts, but Cadan knew better.

It was his evening off, and he ducked and weaved his way through the quieter back alleys as he hurried to reach his destination of the marketplace. This ancient cobbled square was the

centre of the village and a place where locals congregated.

He could hear them before seeing them; the jeering and whistling were now audible from where he stood across the village's main street. He paused for a moment against the wall and watched his gang or 'the crew' as they called themselves. He felt sad knowing that it would be hard to leave this lot. They grew up together and were like brothers, or how he imagined brothers to be.

Alaric, a tall skinny lad with wispy blond hair, was sitting on top of a red telephone box. The others were perched on an adjacent wall, jeering and taunting new holidaymakers entering the village.

The whistling stopped for a brief moment as they caught sight of Caden pushing his way through the crowd. Caden's distinct sun-bleached hair and lightly tanned skin were hard to miss.

"Well, well, the man of the hour!"

"There he is!!!"

"Cadan, my man!" each of them yelled before making space for him to climb up next to Alaric. This was where he and Al usually sat.

To anyone else, this might seem unusual, but to the group of boys, it had become a weekly ritual in the summer. Balancing various part-time jobs, this was the only night of the week Caden had off, and he definitely wasn't going to spend it at home.

The jeering restarted, earning them disapproving looks from the older passers-by.

"Now now, boys, don't be rude. These people are here for a nice holiday!" Cadan chided playfully, and all the boys grinned sheepishly.

As groups of pretty girls walked by, the whistling stopped and turned to nudging and whispering and the occasional wink for anyone who felt brave enough.

"Don't fancy yours much," they each quipped, and so the banter continued.

After a while, the crowds started to thin out, and they turned to local gossip. In a small village like PortEllen, it seemed that everyone knew everyone else's business. The boys took turns sharing tit bits of information: news of who was seeing who or what dodgy goods were up for sale, usually fake cigarettes or drink. As the stories dried up, Cadan now became the focus.

"Tell him, Al!" One of the boys urged.

Cadan frowned as everyone else stared at him.

"It's your stepdad." Alaric sighed, and Cadan felt all traces of a smile suddenly drop from his face.

"What's he done now?" Cadan asked, his voice slipping into a growl as he tried to read the faces of his friends. They must have known a lot more than he did but were kind enough to spare him all the details.

He then turned to Alaric, who looked as frustrated as Cadan. They'd been friends for as long as either of them could remember, Alaric often giving Cadan a heads up about his

stepfather's drinking habits, saving him many a night of beatings.

Alaric worked in the Rusty Anchor, a historic harbourside pub popular among the local fishermen. They would often meet here after unloading their daily catches. It was a dark and dirty place, with low-hung ceilings and poor lighting. According to local folklore, it was haunted by the ghost of a musketeer, but Al never really believed this. He thought it was a story made up to keep the tourists away.

"He hasn't found your university money, has he?" Alaric asked hesitantly as Cadan's expression turned to a look of panic.

"He couldn't possibly have found it, could he?" Cadan asked himself repeatedly as he thought of the pot of cash safely hidden in the walls of his bedroom. His 'escape' fund.

Cadan's stepdad Thomas was well known for his bad drinking habits, and unfortunately, his lack of money for it. Thomas was friends with Jed, landlord of the Rusty Anchor, who would often 'sub' him when he'd run out of cash.

Jed was a notorious ex-trawlerman from Newlyn and looked the epitome of a Cornish fisherman. He was overweight and sported an unruly white beard and always wore the same blue threadbare jumper.

Cadan never really understood how the two had become friends. To him, they were both reprehensible, but in the case of Jed, he could never put his finger on why. Come to think of it, there were many things, including halitosis, brown nicotine-stained fingers that matched his

teeth, the fact that he never smiled and was arrogant beyond measure.

Cadan's stepfather had a habit of stealing money from Cadan. Cash that Cadan had worked long and hard for. He'd lost count of birthday money that had gone missing over the years, often earning him a beating when asking where it had gone.

"You accusing me of stealing?" his stepfather would often yell in a drunken rage, followed by the usual "ya' selfish little shit!" or similar profanities.

Cadan knew he had to get out. The money would go towards paying for university and, hopefully, one day, to get him far away from here.

It wasn't that Cadan didn't like PortEllen. He loved the village's quaint cottages and higgledy-piggledy streets. Most of all, he loved the long sandy beaches, which had found a special place in his heart. At the same time, he felt trapped by the thought of being hostage to the village's struggling fishing industry or life in the Rusty Anchor.

Sure, there were always jobs for ship hands, and the money could be good. But it was also hard work and dangerous. He'd set his heart on University and becoming a marine biologist.

He shook his head in response to Alaric's question, and Al just nodded.

"Has his horse come in then?" Bill, Al's younger brother, goaded in a bid to keep the spotlight on Cadan.

Al pulled out a pack of cigarettes and offered one to Cadan before pulling one out himself. Cadan obliged with his lighter before resuming his former position against the wall.

"Not that I know of..." Cadan muttered, still not quite following what they were hinting at, but having a bad feeling, nonetheless.

"Well, he's been spending a lot more time in the Rusty Anchor recently. Not only that but he's been boasting a lot about how much money he has made. Flashing the cash." Al explained before Felix joined in.

"I heard he's been hanging 'round them Pengelly brothers." He said in a thick Cornish accent. They all had accents, but Felix's was by far the broadest.

Cadan usually smiled at it, but the mention of the Pengelly brothers suppressed any hint of a smile.

He took a long, slow draw of his cigarette before exhaling a long chain of smoke while murmuring a curse under his breath.

The Pengelly brothers were bad news. Shady, dishonest, and worst of all, dangerous. The village's rumour mill was full of stories linking them to black money, drugs, and stolen goods. There were also tales of murder.

Cadan thanked them distractedly, his mind wandering back to the notorious Pengelly brothers and what they could possibly want with his useless stepfather. His mood became heavy, and the sinking feeling grew in his gut. He pondered the notion for a while, but it made no sense.

It wasn't long before he was awakened from his thoughts by his friends.

"Damn...", followed by a unison of whistles and hoots lifted him from his state of contemplation. He looked up, trying to figure out what all the excitement was about, his eyes landing on a couple of pretty girls who had stopped across the street.

"Let the best man win!" Alaric murmured, but only loud enough so that the crew could hear him.

Cadan couldn't help but feel embarrassed and looked over at the two confused girls who were whispering among themselves. He caught the shorter one's gaze and gave her an apologetic smile before the two hurriedly walked away.

"Hey, isn't that your stepdad?" piped up Bill pointing to a figure across the marketplace. The whistling immediately died down at the mention of Cadan's stepfather.

The boys all stared towards the back alley leading down to the harbour. They could see an older, stocky, grey-haired man looking suspicious and making every effort to go unnoticed.

All of the boys looked up to Cadan as he'd always been there for them. Sometimes, even when their parents hadn't been. Knowing how difficult his own home life was, they were all very protective of him.

"Well, boys, this must be a record. What time is it?" Cadan asked in disbelief, trying to make a joke about his stepfather still being sober after five in the afternoon. But he couldn't disguise how much this unusual behaviour bothered him.

"What on earth is he doing? Sober and sneaking around?" Cadan went on as thoughts tossed and turned before Alaric had something to say on the matter.

"Well, he certainly wasn't like that half an hour ago," Al said with confusion.

"He was fully knocked out and sleeping at the end of my bar in the Rusty Anchor." He murmured.

Cadan knew for certain that something was wrong.

Chapter Two

Maeve

"A writer can see a story in anything." -Anon

Maeve was determined to get a story out of the next few weeks in the small Cornish fishing village of PortEllen. Her father had grown up here and, though she and her siblings had heard plenty of stories, Maeve often wondered why they hadn't been back since her grandmother's funeral ten years ago. The prospect of spending the summer in her cottage by the sea excited Maeve beyond measure.

The family headed off early from their leafy London suburb, having packed the car the night before, with everyone apart from Maeve and her father, quickly falling asleep on the journey. The early start added to the excitement, and it wasn't long before Maeve was concocting her next adventure.

They arrived no less than four hours later, large motorways gradually thinning into smaller winding country lanes, urban landscapes evaporating into farms and fields.

After finally seeing a sign for PortEllen, they turned off the main road and followed an old railway line for several miles along the banks of the PortEllen river. The landscape became increasingly welcoming as the harbour finally came into view.

Seagulls bobbed up and down on the water as small boats came and went. Fishing boats hugged the old quayside as men went about their business unloading crates of pilchards, hake, and mackerel. Absorbed by the picture, Maeve imagined herself in a completely different world.

Equally mesmerized were Maeve's younger brother and sister, Mason and Jane, who were now fully awake with their faces glued to the window. Even Maeve's older brother, Danny, stopped to look up from his phone. Although Danny always protested about coming on holiday with the rest of the family, he was happy to return to PortEllen.

"Did you really grow up here Dad?" Mason asked excitedly, his face still attached to the glass and his voice full of awe as Maeve's father chuckled.

"Argh, that I did!" came the reply, in a thick Cornish accent, sounding more like a pirate. Danny rolled his eyes while Maeve just smiled, still lost in her own little world.

Maeve's father pointed out various sights as they approached the village's main thoroughfare, Fore street. Old shops lined either side, selling everything from cakes and pasties to souvenirs and beach towels. Cafés, tea shops, and ice-cream parlours paid host to holidaymakers of all shapes and sizes while historic restaurants and pubs

looked on. Fore Street, running parallel to the quayside, eventually meandered past various side streets and cobbled alleyways towards the village's sandy beach.

Now sounding as excited as Mason, Maeve's father went on telling them about all the places he wanted to show them and the many things they could do. Talk of fishing trips and coastal walks eventually awoke Maeve's mother, who had slept for the entire journey. She too, joined in on the conversation, adding trips to old gardens and historic houses to the itinerary.

"When will the Browns get here?" Maeve asked hurriedly, trying hard to change the subject, remembering her family's plans for later that day.

The Browns were close family friends, Lizzy Brown being the same age as Maeve and her childhood best friend. They hadn't seen each other for over a year and had much catching up to do. Bursting with excitement, Maeve knew that Lizzy would love it in PortEllen and had no doubt the two of them would pick off right where they had last left it.

"Well, if all goes well, they should be arriving in about an hour or so," said Maeve's mother, checking her phone for messages. Through school runs, fetes and playdates, the two girls' mothers had also become friends and were just as excited to be reuniting.

Maeve's dad pulled off into a back street before finally stopping outside a medieval fisherman's cottage.

"Welcome back to Lantau Cottage!" he exclaimed with a hint of pride, and, eager to get inside, the four children stared up at the uneven flint walls that now towered above them. Two oriel windows overhung the Elizabethan façade on either side of a large oak door.

So many stories hidden within, Maeve thought it was brilliant. She had a special connection with the house and had missed coming here. Though her dad used to joke about the house being haunted, she would often hear strange sounds and sensed peculiar goings-on. Nothing sinister, but she always felt a strange presence.

The interior was just as vintage as the exterior of the building, with wooden beams supporting a reasonably low ceiling and a great big fireplace in the centre of the living room.

Were it not for the lights and television, Maeve might have thought she stepped back in time, imagining an old sailor smoking his pipe in the large armchair in the corner and his wife preparing a pie in the adjoining kitchen.

The cottage stood next to an old chapel, beyond which was a small car park, and then the beach. The faint sound of crashing waves could be heard as they unloaded the car, driving an urgency to finish as quickly as possible. As the last of the bags were taken inside, a cool breeze brushed Maeve's cheek, calling her towards her old friend the ocean.

"Now remember, no shoes on upstairs!" Mason and Jane were both reminded as they kicked off their footwear before running upstairs to claim their beds amid a shriek of giggles.

Despite Maeve wanting to explore and rediscover the house, the calling of the sea had a far greater pull. Besides, there would be plenty of time to explore later, when Lizzy had arrived.

Maeve had already 'bagsied' one of the attic rooms for her and her friend. The small cosy room was once an old net store that had been built into the eaves.

After agreeing to wear wellington boots, Maeve's mother finally let her out to the beach, along with a cardigan and anorak for good measure. She had a habit of overdressing them, even when the sun was out. Maeve marched purposefully towards the beach with the rhythmic clonking of her boots echoing down the street.

Old fisherman's cottages stood to attention on each side of the street. Each was as old as Lantau, and each with a unique history and tale to tell. Some cottages had duck-boards in front of their doors which Maeve guessed was to protect against flooding, though she didn't remember seeing these at her grandmother's house.

She soon reached the end of the street and clambered over the old car park gate before taking a few steps up to the promenade that arched around a shore of golden sand.

The wind picked up, causing her already messy hair to tangle even further and finally, she saw it. The salty tang in the air accompanied the blues and greys of the water as she looked out to the horizon and sea.

A long pier flanked the beach on one side and sharp jagged rocks on the other. In between was a

collage of holidaymakers sitting on rugs and towels of all colours and sizes. As she got closer, the sound of waves intensified as if luring people in for a swim.

Transfixed by the vista, she leaned against the promenade's railing, absorbing the smells and sounds of the beach as the wind continued toying with her hair. For a while, time stood still, and she breathed slowly and freely. A sea of calm washed over her, and Maeve felt a feeling of instant inner peace. A sense that she had returned home. Suddenly, there was no longer any urgency to do anything or go anywhere. Here, nothing other than her stories and the ocean mattered.

Maeve was startled out of her stupor by a hefty hand landing on her back. She looked up to see her father's smile as he leaned on the railings beside her.

"I used to do that too." He told her thoughtfully as he stared out at some imaginary object on the horizon.

"Spent hours stood where you are, just watching the sea. She's beautiful, isn't she?" Maeve could only nod at his statement and listen to the hypnotizing crashing of the waves and watch them shimmering further out as if the sea itself was a giant fish. They were both caught in a spell and stood together in silence.

After what could have been ten or even twenty minutes, her father broke the spell.

"Come on Eve. We should probably get going. The Browns will be arriving soon." He said. Maeve