

# Captain John Paul Jellyfish Serialized



9.

## Bon Voyage

For breakfast the next morning, Captain John Paul Jellyfish thought he'd fancy a minnow or two.

"Just the thing to restore the old pep," he said, while sailing up and down the shore in search of the little creatures.

Any minnow that had the misfortune of swimming underneath the captain was sure to run into one of his twenty-four deadly tentacles. When this happened, John Paul delivered a paralyzing sting. Afterwards, it was only a matter of rolling up the tentacle and stuffing the hapless fish into his mouth.

This morning, the sand was flat and damp like a playground on a rainy day. A squad of stubby-legged sandpipers was playing tag with the waves. A flock of seagulls had a game of keep-away going with a dead starfish, and everywhere sand fleas were playing hopscotch.

Still early, the freckle-faced boy reappeared on the beach. "Behold, jellyfish!" he cried, upon spying John Paul swimming ten yards offshore. "King Charlie Vee has returned!"

The Captain lazily rolled up a tentacle and munched on a minnow.

"I looked up *jellyfish* on the Internet," the boy called. "A sea nettle, that's what you are. Scientists call you *Chrysassaora quin ... quinquecirrah*."

"Well, scientists should learn that name-calling is not polite," John Paul muttered. Now the boy picked up a stick and wrote in the sand:

**C-H-R-Y-S**

"Chyrs! Short for chrysassaora," he said, raising the stick in the air. "I, King Charlie Vee, hereby dub thee, *Sir Chyrs!*"

"Ah, so I have been knighted, have I?" the captain mused. "Why, thank you very much, my boy."

Within seconds, the boy had stripped off his clothes and jumped into the water. Today, however, his skinny-dip was cut short by the appearance of an old man on the beach. The man squinted at the ocean and shook a finger toward the naked boy.

"Charles Vanilla! You there, Charles!" he called. "Get out of the sea! There's danger out there, boy!"

Danger! That word was echoing up and down the coastline. Danger! The Captain remembered his mission and scanned the horizon.

The boy started dog paddling toward shore.

"I must leave this place, King Charlie Vee," John Paul said, rocking in his wake. "I owe you my life, and as long as there is jelly left in my sac, I will be at your service."

Enough rest. John Paul Jellyfish now felt an urgent need to rejoin his fleet. As he was about to part, however, none other than the fat seagull from yesterday sailed overhead.

"Well, chump," he called. "So I see you made it off that toasty sand. Eh? Saved by that nutty kid. Eh? So I must wait to finish my fine feast."

"Have no fear, foul fowl," the captain returned. "You will get your just dessert someday."

"You haven't heard the last of me, old bean, my scrumptious *jelly bean*," said the bird. "Catch my drift?"

Without further delay, John Paul opened his umbrella wide. He slapped it shut and shot out toward the deep, blue sea.

