



## CHAPTER SEVEN

“Hey, Jim! Like the new Lady?”

There was only one shout on the Fisher that sounded like music.

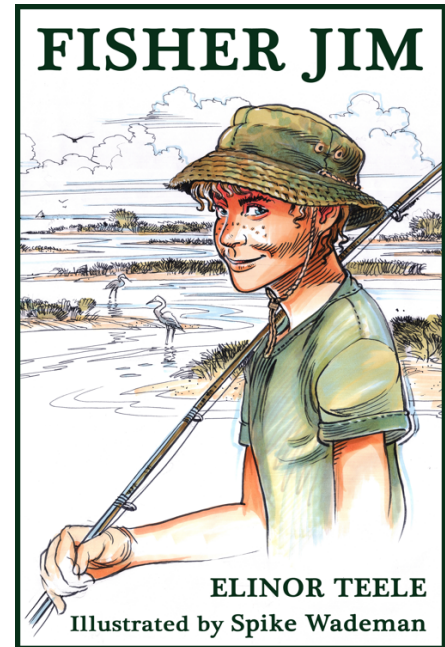
It was Pepper McGill.

Pepper McGill is the most famous woman in the state. Since hitting thirteen, she’s been the captain of a swordfish boat, a schooner, *and* a Viking battle ship. She’s sailed around South America—twice—by herself. She’s even led her seine boat crew to four straight wins at Fiesta. She knows everything there is to know about the ocean.

And she can spit farther than any man in the marsh.

“Well, whadda ya think?”

“I think you’re gonna make a lot of lobstermen puke with jealousy!” I yelled. And I was telling the truth. It was the sweetest lobster boat I’d ever seen. “What happened to the Lady Jane I?”



### About Fisher Jim

A Free eBook for Kids Ages 8-12

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### About Elinor Teele


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“Gave it to my Dad for recreation. He got tired of watching the Red Sox lose.”

Pepper had come up along my port side so she could talk under the pot hauler.

“Need a hand?”

What I like about Pepper is that she’s real understanding. She doesn’t ask you why there’s super glue on the car seat or fireworks in the toilet. She simply smiles and digs out the nail polish remover. I didn’t have to tell Pepper what I was doing on the river. She was a fisherman. She knew.

“Yeah. Lost my anchor and the fuel filter’s clogged.”

Pepper nodded.

“I can help with that. Throw me your line.”

I threw her my painter and she snatched it before it hit water. Then she brought the Rita Anne snug up against the Lady Jane.

“I’m headed for Fisher Harbor. I could shout you lunch.”

Now, that was no good what-so-ever. The last thing I needed was a tow back to the scene of the crime.

“Um, couldn’t we fix the engine now? I kinda set my heart on being out today.”

“Where were you originally headed?”

“Back of Hog Island.”


Pepper nodded in a wise-like way.

“Might be some stripers in the warm spots. Why don’t we get out of channel traffic and then we’ll see to the filter?”

Though I didn’t say it aloud, this was a much better plan. I’d save up on gas and stock up on stories. Pepper told great stories.

“Twist my arm,” I joked.

She grinned.



“Hop aboard.”

I clambered over the gunnel and into the cabin. Pepper had the Lady Jane II set up nice and trim, with her wheel mounted under the front window, a life preserver hung against the cabin wall, and a wide locker bolted to the deck.

Because it wasn't a big commercial boat, there was no open transom. It was a pure solo operation. Using the pot hauler, Pepper could bait and reset her traps all by herself.

“You wanna drive?”

“Sure!”

I grabbed hold of the wheel and swung it round. The Lady Jane II groaned.

“Gentle, Jim. Remember, we've got a whale calf.”

I'd plumb forgotten about the Rita Anne. I chuckled sorta idiotically and corrected course. The Lady Jane II sighed and settled into her rhythm.

“You been out checking traps?” I asked Pepper.

“Sure have.”

“Get anything good?”

“Look in the tank.”

I handed Pepper the wheel and peered into the outdoor locker. There must've been around thirty bugs crawling up and over each other.

“All of them this morning?”


“Yep. They're for a special birthday dinner I got planned tonight.”

“Whose birthday?”

“Mine.”

Pepper grinned again. I tried not to look too hard at her face, but she read what I was thinking.

“Forty, Jim. I'm going to be forty.”



That's probably what I would've guessed. Pepper wasn't what you'd call pretty, but she was freckled and strong in the arms and kinda friendly-looking. Especially when she scrunched up the wrinkles around her eyes.

"Wish I was invited."

"You and your Da can stop by anytime. We're doing a cookout at Folly Cove."

I don't know why, but it struck me that Da might enjoy talking to someone like Pepper McGill. It would sure beat the con-ver-sations he had with his dingbat girlfriends. I'd have to mention it to him.

"Thanks. We might."

By the time we finished gabbing, we were coming round to the south side of Hog Island. The spruce trees were rising green and straight and tall over the old farmhouse. It was about as pleasant a place as you could hope to imagine.

"One day I'd like to buy that house." I pointed to the chimney. "And live in it all year round. No wife and no kids and no neighbors. I'd stay there in the peace and space 'til the end of my days."

"Sure, you could do that." Pepper paused. "As long as you don't mind the ghosts."

"What kinda ghosts?"

"Oh, the lady in white. The moonlit stag. And..."

Pepper paused again.

"And...?"

"You've never heard about the man who was eaten by hogs?"