

VICTORY

Synopsis

Mid-coast Maine, 1969. 11½ year old Richard Clinton Elliott III stays up late one Friday evening to watch a rerun of the classic Errol Flynn film, Captain Blood. Richie falls asleep in the easy chair, and is wakened at 5 AM Saturday morning by the Star Spangled Banner, blaring from the TV. He slips quietly into the kitchen, where he meets some imagined characters—a refrigerator light who always jumps out and tries to run away and cookies who climb out of the cookie jar and waddle across the counter to say hello. (Obviously Richie has a wild imagination.) He leaves his dog, Ruff, at home and heads through the dense fog toward the marina for some early-morning fishing.

While on the dock, sleep catches Richie in its net as he drifts off into another adventure. In his dream, he finds a huge old three-masted sailing ship docked close by. But before he can climb on deck and examine his prize, he hears the muffled footsteps of someone coming. The intruder turns out to be the ugly white-eyed pirate, Shark, and his vile parrot, Compass. Shark curses the old ship, scares the bejeebers out of Richie, then hurries away in the fog, walking right off the end of the dock. Rich follows but instead of finding the pirate, he finds a large black shark in the water, glaring up at him ... with that one white eye!

Later, when Richie returns to the ship, he accidentally wakens her and finds that she is very much alive. She tells him her name is Victory and informs the boy that she has come to take him on an adventure cruise to teach him how his imagination, his faith, self determination, and old-fashioned New-England hard work strive together to make his dreams come true.

Victory and Richie set off in the fog, following the compass of Richie's imagination, and drift back in time until they come upon a pirate ship from the past. To Rich's surprise, however, the pirate ship is manned by his grade-school janitors and principal, and the captain is his fifth grade teacher, Miss Hurley.

Rich is assured by Victory that if he goes onboard the pirate ship, he can observe but he will not be seen. But while there, Captain Hurley comes on deck screaming because she found a small green snake in her desk drawer. (Richie had pulled that very trick on her, in real life, several days earlier, at school.) She sentences him to walk the plank and as he is falling toward the open mouths of several large green snakes in the water.

Richie lands instead on Victory's deck, shaking, crying, and upset. The old ship then proceeds (in her humorous sarcastic way) to set up "Imaginative Illustrations," as she puts it, to teach Richie the details of how his imagination works and how to make his dreams come true. She also explains why his imagination tricked him, back on the pirate ship.

As their adventure unfolds, Rich is introduced to a menagerie of animated characters who all play a part in his "education." Contributors include a group of teenage whales, a tiny ballerina who writes in the Captain's log with the tip of her toe, recording Richie's hour by hour history, a choir of butterflies, a dignified old-English swivel chair, a cockney dinghy with half a brain, a rusty pot-bellied stove who tells corny stories, and a distracted pelican.

Later, Victory spreads her wings (studding sails) and takes Rich up into the clouds to see himself in his future, as Captain Richard C. Elliott, U.S. Naval fighter pilot. While there, she teaches him the value of honesty and humility to keep “The Mirror of His Imagination” clear so he can see his future. And it is here that she also gives Richie and each reader a never-to-be-forgotten lesson in how to pre-visualize one’s dreams as an aid to help them come true. After this, Victory returns Richie to the dock at the marina where she draws her teaching to a satisfying conclusion, laying out the simplicity of how to make our dreams come true. She promises to return another time, then disappears, leaving Richie alone to ponder his adventure and all he has learned. And he is satisfied, and very, very tired.