

Adventures in  
**ODYSSEY**

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

28

# THE IMAGINATION STATION



## Islands and Enemies

MARIANNE HERING



# ***Islands and Enemies***

**BOOK 28**

**MARIANNE HERING  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO CARIELLO**

**FOCUS  
ON THE FAMILY®**

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To Dani and Ryan. My beloved explorers.

-MKH

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*Islands and Enemies*

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# ***The Biggest Fight Ever***



Patrick stared at Beth across the table at Whit's End ice cream shoppe. His cousin returned a no-blinking, eye-bulging glare.

Beth picked up her metal spoon. She tapped her root-beer glass with it.

*Tink, tink, tink.*

Then Beth rapped with the spoon loud and slow.

*TINK . . . TINK . . . TINK . . .*

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“Traitor,” she whispered.

*Tink, tink, tink.*

Patrick still stared at her. But his hands roamed the tabletop until he found a paper napkin. He tore off a small piece. Patrick rolled it between his thumb and first finger. He put the wad in his mouth.

Beth tapped loud enough for everyone in the shop to hear.

Other customers turned their heads and stared.

*Tink, tink, tink . . . TINK . . . TINK . . . TINK . . .*  
*tink, tink, tink.*

*I am not a traitor,* Patrick thought.

Patrick saw the owner of Whit’s End. His name was Mr. John Avery Whittaker, or Whit for short. The grandfatherly gentleman was wiping down a table next to them.

Patrick pushed the wad into his straw with his tongue. He aimed the tube at Beth. He

## *The Biggest Fight Ever*

wasn't really going to blow the wad. It was enough fun to just think about it.

“Good morning!” Whit said.

Patrick felt a hearty pat on his back. The slap knocked the wind out of him . . . and into his straw.

*Phuuuh. Thwack.*

The spitball smacked Beth in the center of her forehead.

“Gross!” Beth shouted and stood. “You did that on purpose!”

“No, I didn't,” Patrick said. “It's Mr. Whittaker's fault. He slapped me on the back.”

Whit gave Patrick an apologetic look from behind his wire-rimmed glasses. He asked, “What's going on here?”

Patrick felt small. He knew that shooting spitballs was rude.

Whit next looked at Beth.

She was scowling and pointing to the wad.



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It stuck to her forehead and looked like a weird third eye. “This is evidence, Mr. Whittaker,” she said. “Patrick is a traitor *and* a bully.”

“Beth is a baby and a tattletale,” Patrick said.

“Let’s not have name-calling in my shop,” Whit said. He raised an eyebrow. “Is this the reason for the SOS?”

“What SOS?” Patrick asked.

“This,” Beth said. She tapped her spoon three times against the glass.

*Tink, tink, tink.*

“*That* is Morse code for the letter S,” Beth said.

Whit picked up another spoon and tapped the glass harder and longer.

*TINK . . . TINK . . . TINK . . .*

“That’s the letter O,” he said.

Patrick shrugged.

## ***The Biggest Fight Ever***

Beth said, “I bet you don’t even know what SOS stands for.”

Patrick gave a huff.

Whit chuckled. The lines around his kind blue eyes crinkled.

“You two aren’t acting like the cheerful Patrick and Beth who normally hang around this place,” Whit said. He twirled the edge of his white moustache. “Usually you don’t bicker. I’ll ask again . . . what’s going on?”

Patrick’s gut twisted. He really didn’t want to tell Whit.

A memory of the day before flashed into his mind.

*Beth was sprawled on the ground. A soccer ball rolled away from her. Three kids were laughing and pointing at her. Another kid stood beside the three. A boy with freckles and blond hair. Him.*

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Beth was thinking of that day too. Her eyes burned with tears. She grabbed a napkin and wiped the spit wad off her forehead.

“It was after school,” Beth said, sniffing. “I was carrying my project to the car-pool waiting area.” She looked at Whit and managed a weak smile. “I got an A on it—”

“That’s because you bought a kit,” Patrick said. He leaned back in his chair and crossed his arms.

Whit sighed. He said, “Patrick, you’ll get your turn to talk. Please let Beth finish first.”

Patrick nodded.

“I was carrying the *Victoria*,” Beth said. “It’s a model of a famous ship. And I had to go around a group of kids playing soccer. Patrick was with them.”

Beth shuddered at the memory. “There was mud and gravel on the ground,” she said.

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Whit put a hand on her shoulder. “Go on,” he said.

“The ball rolled across my path,” she said. “I had to sidestep. I slipped . . .” She showed Whit her hands. Red cuts marred her palms.

Beth’s eyes welled with tears again. “I dropped the *Victoria* to catch myself. The ship is now in a hundred pieces. Smashed. And it’s all Patrick’s fault!”

Whit turned to Patrick. “It’s your turn,” he said.