

I am afraid those were our barrels. Only they aren't for apples. They are the barrels in which we transport banned books.

MAY

Do you mean that this was the ship we stowed away on?

CAPT. ANDREWS

I'm afraid so. I said women aren't allowed on board, but that isn't true. The woman I was talking to is a duchess who has been in love with me for years. I didn't want to let her onboard, but I didn't want to hurt her feelings. I told a lie – one I thought would be harmless. But after seeing how I forced two beautiful young ladies to hide in barrels ...

BEATRIX and MAY

Oh, no, don't be sorry – don't worry about it!

CAPT. ANDREWS

I entreat you to be my guests for as long as you like and promise I shall deliver you safely to shore.

MAY

Did you mention those barrels we hid in were for banned books?

CAPT. ANDREWS

We transport banned books across England, much to the aggravation of publishers and the adoration of the public.

BEATRIX

Does not that mean you are pirating?

CAPT. ANDREWS

(embarrassed)

Well, I never intended to break any laws ...

BEATRIX

Not at all. If anyone has a right to pirate, it's a pirate.

CAPT. ANDREWS

My crew and I make up the Piratical Gentlemen's Association. My brother was kidnapped two days ago by a mercenary, but well-read, pirate warlord. It's a shame, as we only became pirates three days ago. I am on my way to rescue him.

BEATRIX

Let us help you! It would make excellent material for our new book, and we are not due in Derbyshire for another two weeks.

CAPT. ANDREWS

I would be most grateful ... more grateful than either of you could guess.

(Enter THE PIRATICAL GENTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION)

CAPT. ANDREWS

Gentlemen, will you see that these ladies receive sustenance?

PGA PIRATE 1

We shall see to it, sir. And the trade winds are picking up now. We'll be abreast Captain Tarragon's ship in no time.

CAPT. ANDREWS

I will remain on deck. You ought to give the young ladies a tour of the library, too. I know they must be as starved for something to read as they are for something to eat.

(Exit MAY, BEATRIX, and THE PIRATICAL GENTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION)

(CAPT. ANDREWS remains on deck, raises his telescope, and gazes out at sea)

Scene 2

(CAPT. ANDREWS lowers his spyglass. Enter PGA PIRATE 1)

PGA PIRATE 1

Captain, we are approaching Tarragon's ship.

(Enter MAY, BEATRIX, and PGA PIRATE 2)

PIRATE 2

Should we sneak up on them, sir?

CAPT. ANDREWS

I am afraid they have been able to see us for some hours. There aren't exactly any bushes to hide behind on the open sea.

BEATRIX