



THE LAMPLIGHT SERIES



THE HUNT FOR THE KRAKEN

A
DECIDE-AS-YOU-GO
ADVENTURE

KATHRYN
BUTLER

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The Hunt for the Kraken: A Decide-as-You-Go Adventure

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*To Jack and Christie: May his light
always guide your way.*

*And to the young writers of Friends of
Grace homeschool co-op: Let his word
spark fires in your imagination.*

NOTE TO KIDS

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

PSALM 119:105

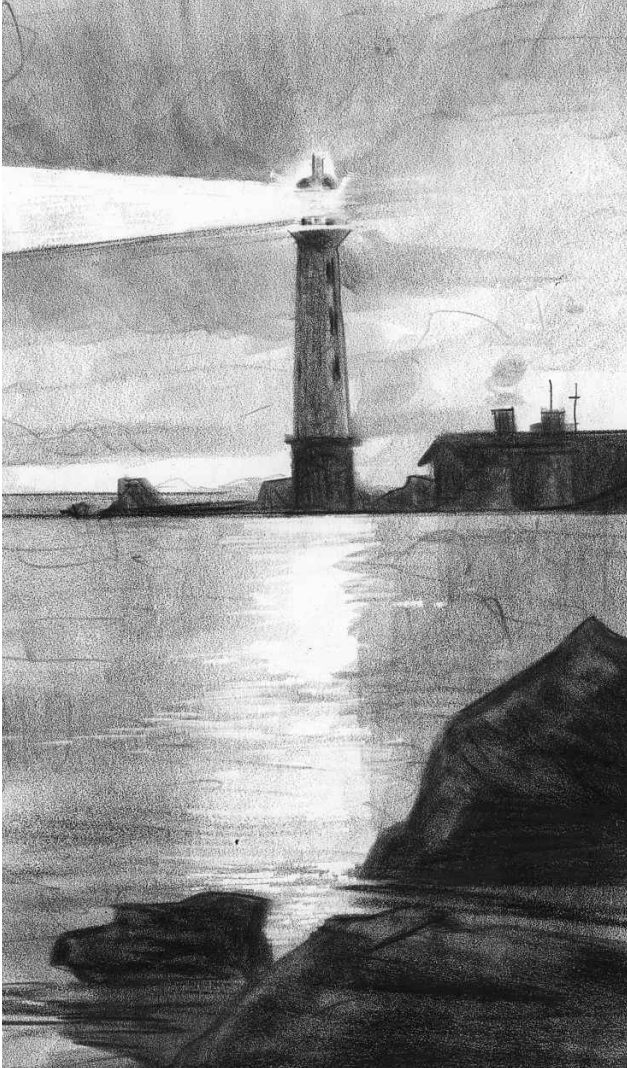
Life is full of choices. Some are easy, like what to have for lunch or what you'd like for Christmas. Others are more difficult, like what to do when a friend does something wrong or whether to tell the truth if it might get you into trouble. Some problems have more than one right choice! Most frustrating of all, the wisest decisions don't always make things easy.

Thankfully, the Bible can help guide us when choices seem difficult. God gives us Scripture out of love for us, so we might walk in his ways (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16). When we abide by God's word, we're always making the choice—however hard—that pleases *him*.

In the adventure that follows, you get to choose the direction of the story. Some choices will lead to

success and others to failure. Some will draw you toward mystery and others into disaster. In all cases, God's word can speak wisdom and truth into the path ahead. At the beginning of each chapter, a "Guiding Light" Bible verse can help teach you about your decisions. Think about these verses. Try to memorize them, if you can.

When you make wrong choices, whether in a book or in real life, take heart. This happens to all of us, because we're born in sin. The good news is that when you trust in Christ, you're forgiven. Seek to know Jesus. Let his word guide you, and embark upon the greatest adventure of all—a personal relationship with the living God, who made heaven and earth and who so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)!



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

At long last, something beyond the rocks tugs at your line. After hours standing on the jetty, with the sun baking the back of your neck and your mouth as dry as parchment, you finally have a bite. “Dad! I’ve got something!” you call, and your mind spins with the possibilities. Could it be a silvery mackerel? Or a pollock staring in surprise, its eyes as wide as silver dollars?

A wave crashes against the boulders and sprays you with saltwater as you reel in the line. You lean back against the weight pulling on your shoulders. *This must be huge!* you think, your fingers trembling, and now you’re dreaming not of mackerel but of striped bass, thick and slack-jawed with blue racing stripes down its flanks. “It’s a big one, Dad!” you shout. “I caught a big one!” You tug and tug but can’t reel it in, and sweat dots your brow. “Dad, help! It’s too big for me!”

Dad cheers, runs to your side, and takes the pole from you. The moment he yanks the line, however,

his smile fades. He tugs the pole several times and shakes his head. "Sorry, kiddo," he says. "That's no fish. You've snagged a lobster trap."

While he fights to unhook the line, you kick an empty mussel shell, jam your hands into your pockets, and trudge off by yourself, your excitement deflating like a balloon. This summer, Dad has caught a dozen mackerel, and even a black sea bass that your mom browned in a skillet and served with crispy potatoes. The other people who regularly fish on the jetty have all brought home dinner, too. Two weeks ago, Mrs. Pham, who crouches on the rocks in her sun hat every Saturday, caught six squid. Last month, Mr. Guitierrez and his five-year-old son even caught a sand shark. Everyone on the jetty shouted as the shark writhed on the rocks, the sunlight catching its belly in flashes of white.

You, on the other hand, have caught nothing. All summer you've stood by your father's side on that jetty, and not once have you reeled in a catch. As you grumble about your failure, the Boston skyline seems to tease you from across the water. Normally, you love spotting its silver spires stretching toward the sky on

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a clear day, but today they seem distant, like a pile of glimmering scales from the fish you just can't hook.

You're resolving to never pick up a fishing pole again when something bright catches the corner of your eye. You turn inland, to where the old lighthouse, built two centuries before to guide fishermen home, stands guard on the rocks with the sea crashing below. It's broad daylight in summer; surely, the lighthouse keepers wouldn't have turned on the beacon now?

As you watch, the light swivels within the glass walls of the lantern room and casts a white beam over the ocean. As it passes over you, however, the beam glows not white but brilliant blue.

You back away and gasp as the beam grazes the rocks at your feet, then turns white again and spins toward the shore. *What just happened?* you wonder. You take a few steps forward, squinting to see anyone inside the lighthouse and wishing you'd brought your binoculars. As you peer into the lantern room, you see no movement or shadow to suggest anyone at work on the light.

The light sweeps by again, and again you back away as the beam turns bright blue when it hits the

rocks in front of you. What could be causing this? You glance around to see if anyone else has noticed. Mrs. Pham still hunches over her squid pole. Mr. Guitierrez stoops as he helps his son bait his hook. A seagull wheels above, scouring the jetty for a forgotten morsel of crabmeat. No one seems to have noticed the blue glow upon the rocks with each glide of the light.

You peer over your shoulder. Dad now kneels on the ground, gritting his teeth and reaching to cut your line after he tried and failed to free it from the lobster trap. Now he'll have to restring the whole line.

Dad's always warned you not to wander away from him on the jetty, but this mystery with the lighthouse is too fascinating to ignore. You feel badly that you've already caused him so much trouble and don't want to bother him again. As you raise your eyes to the light, you consider what to do.

If you ask your dad to investigate the lighthouse with you, turn to page 5.

If you investigate the lighthouse by yourself, turn to page 13.



GUIDING LIGHT

*Children, obey your parents in
the Lord, for this is right.*

EPHESIANS 6:1

“Dad?” you say, returning to your father’s side. You hate to bother him, but something tells you the strange flashes of blue from the lighthouse are important. You know you shouldn’t investigate it alone.

Dad nicks his fingertip on a hook and winces as he shakes away the sting. “I’ll have your pole all set in just a minute,” he says, too focused on tying a clinch knot to look at you. “Then I think we can squeeze in a few more casts before we head home.”

You fiddle with the cuffs of your shirtsleeves. “Actually, I need to show you something that’s not about fishing,” you say.

He meets your gaze and frowns when he sees your expression. “You okay? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Please, I really need you to see this. I think it’s important.”

“All right,” Dad says. “I guess it’s getting pretty late in the day anyway. If the fish haven’t bitten by now, they probably won’t at all, right?” He clambers to his feet, pats you on the back, and offers you a smile as you help him gather up the poles and nets. “Now, what’s got you so spooked?”

You tell him about the strange light, and he cranes his neck to peer into the lantern room. “I don’t see anything,” he says, scratching the back of his head. “Are you sure it wasn’t just a reflection off the glass?”

You spin around and feel a twinge of dismay as you discover that at some point during your conversation, the lamp blinked out. “It was there just a minute ago,” you insist. “Can we please check it out? It was a blue beam, almost like a laser. It hit the rocks right in front of me.”

“Maybe it was just the keeper testing out the light.”

“But I didn’t see anyone up there! It lit up all by itself out of nowhere, and every time it came near

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me, it changed color. I promise you, Dad, I'm telling the truth."

He studies your face, then heaves a sigh. "All right. Let's go see. There's got to be a logical explanation."

Turn to page 8.



You both head toward the lighthouse, your poles clicking together as you sidestep empty crab shells and the occasional greedy seagull stalking for food on the jetty. Although fellow fishermen nod to you both as you walk by, you don't reply. Instead, you keep your eyes fixed on the lighthouse. Only when you reach the windswept seagrass at the base of the building do you pry your gaze away.

Dad carefully places his fishing gear on the ground, instructs you to do the same, and then knocks on the door. The mere rap of his knuckles scrapes away flecks of white paint from the wooden beams. "Looks like nobody's repainted this door since the 1800s," he jokes. You both step back, staring at the closed door, and you try to still your racing heartbeat as you await an answer.

When no reply comes, Dad knocks again, harder this time. "Hello?" he calls out. "Is anyone in there?"

Nothing.

Dad pulls on the rusty iron doorknob, and to your surprise the door creaks open. He calls out again to anyone inside the building, but the only response is the echo of his own voice. You both creep inside the brick tower and find a metal staircase that spirals up and up like the coils of a whelk shell. "I'll go first," Dad says. "Be careful. These stairs are pretty steep."

You both begin the climb, your footsteps clacking against the stairs. You dare to look down, and you grip the handrail as a wave of dizziness swamps you. Dad hears you pause, turns around, and grasps you by the arm just as you wobble and nearly slip back down the stairs. "Hey, you okay?" he says. "Do you want to go in front?"

You swallow down a bit of nausea, shake your head, and resolve to keep your eyes on your dad rather than on the drop to the floor.

After a long, rattling climb, you finally reach the lantern room and survey the chamber. All is quiet and still. No muddied bootprints stain the floor. No radio crackles, and no jackets or hats hint at someone recently attended to the light. The lantern itself, an

enormous metal drum with a single face of glass, stares back at you, blank and colorless.

Dad chuckles, shakes his head, and slaps you on the back. "I think you've been in the sun for too long." He motions for you to descend the stairs again, when suddenly a metallic clank startles you. You both turn and stare, mouths agape, as the lantern glows bright white and starts to rotate.

"See, Dad? What did I tell you?" you say.

"Now, hold on. It's probably just on a timer or something. Why don't we—"

He doesn't have the chance to finish. You grip his hand as the lantern sprays white light through the glass windowpanes, then swivels and points its beam directly at you. The moment it does, it glows not white but bright blue.

The blue glare fills your vision, and a rushing sound, like a fierce wind, roars in your ears. You blink, and suddenly the light fizzles out and gloom surrounds you. Something wet and bracing soaks your clothes and stings your face. You press your lips together and taste salt.

"Ay, what're you two lollygaggin' about? Get to work!"

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You jump backward at the voice, which is as rough and grating as the crunch of gravel. Suddenly you slip, and you slide across a floor that tilts on an incline until Dad grasps your arm and pulls you close. You're no longer in the lighthouse at all—instead, you're on the deck of an old whaleship. The vessel lists to and fro, and all around you see crew members in ragged clothing mopping the deck and tying up rigging. A boy about your age glances at you warily from beneath a tangle of matted hair as he scrubs the



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floor with a brush. Gray clouds stew in the sky above you, and a slate-colored sea roils beneath and throws foam onto the ship.

“Is there somethin’ wrong with your ears? I said get to work!”

A stooped, stone-faced man in a tricorner hat clomps toward you, his grimace revealing begrimed teeth. He has a long, scraggly beard as black as oil and separated into three long strands like tentacles. As he draws close and sneers, he reminds you of a bristling wild boar. He looms within inches of your dad’s face. “If you two don’t pick up a brush right now and scrub, you’ll both be takin’ a swim,” he growls. Then he turns toward you. As his breath wafts over you, you wrinkle your nose at the smell of pickled herring. “D’ye hear me better now?” he says.

If you yell, “Leave us alone!” turn to page 23.

If you run to an escape boat, turn to page 82.

If you say, “Yes, sir,” grab a brush, and quietly watch to learn more, turn to page 135.



GUIDING LIGHT

*Children, obey your parents in
the Lord, for this is right.*

EPHESIANS 6:1

You cast one last glance at Dad, still bent over the fishing pole and waving away the sting of a hook pricking his finger. *By the time he's done with the fishing line, you think, I'll have figured everything out and will be back.* You turn around and head toward the lighthouse with determination.

To your dismay, the lantern has flickered out. The light no longer rotates, and no beams, either white or blue, streak out from the glass walls. *I know I wasn't imagining it,* you tell yourself, and you carry on, sidestepping empty crab shells and the occasional greedy seagull stalking for food on the jetty. Although fellow fishermen nod to you as you walk by, you don't reply

but instead keep your eyes fixed on the lighthouse until you reach the windswept seagrass at the base of the building.

The lighthouse towers above you in a single, white brick column. You reach for the wooden door, your hand trembling slightly as you twist the rusty iron knob. To your surprise, the door creaks open.

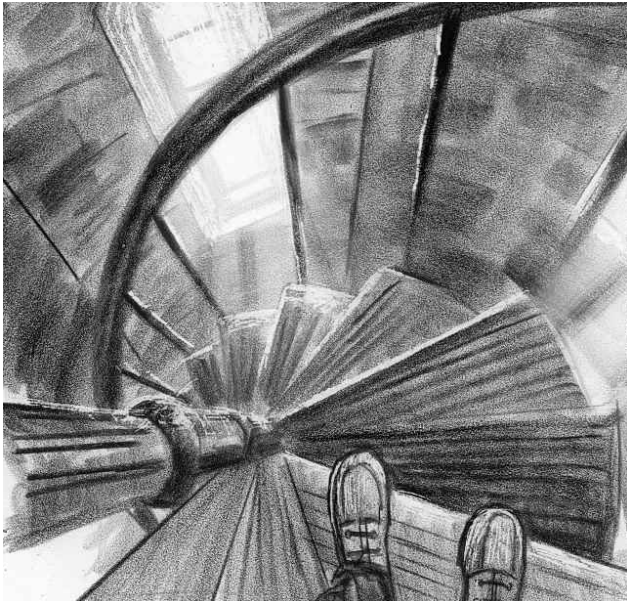
“Hello?” you call, but the only response is the echo of your own voice. You creep inside the brick tower and find a metal staircase that spirals up and up like the coils of a whelk shell. You shudder and debate whether you should turn back and get your father, but the wonder of the blue light shimmering in your mind prods you forward.

You inch your way up the stairs, your footsteps clacking against the metal, and with each step your palms become clammy. Once you’re halfway up, you dare to look down, and you grip the handrail as a wave of dizziness swamps you. Despite your grasp, the room spins and your right foot slips. You stumble down several steps, landing with a clang on your knee and twisting your ankle. As you shakily climb back to a stand, pain shoots from your ankle

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and lights streak across your vision like a burst of fireworks.

You swallow down a bit of nausea and rest your head against the railing until the world stops whirling around you. When you finally glance up and blink a few times, the scene snaps into focus. It's still a long way to the lantern room, with the staircase snaking upward for a couple dozen feet. When you try to put



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weight on your throbbing ankle, pain sears up your leg. You're not sure you can make it up further. And yet, can you bear to hobble away from this mystery?

If you decide to head back down, turn to page 17.

If you decide to continue the climb up, turn to page 161.