

Fire robs Elias of his home and loving family. Cruel betrayal robs him of the little he has left. He flees to make a home with the help of friends and a stray dog. After years at sea, he set out for adventure in wild, young America.

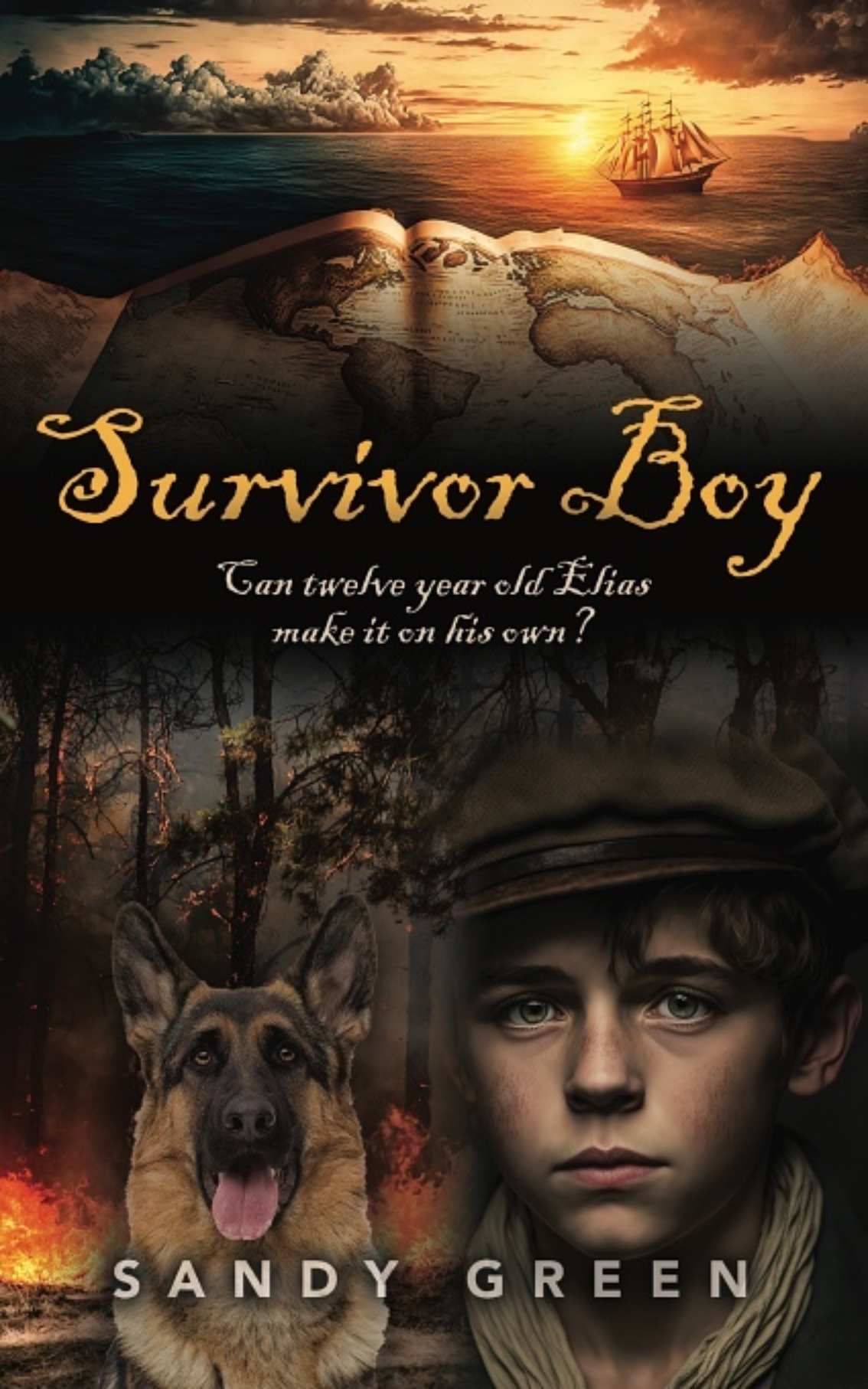
SURVIVOR BOY

By Sandy Green

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Survivor Boy

*Can twelve year old Elias
make it on his own?*

SANDY GREEN

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*A discovery is said to be an accident
meeting a prepared mind.*

– Albert Szent-Gyorgyi –

The Meeting

Elias left the establishment refreshed and content. He had thoroughly enjoyed the food as well as the lively conversation of those he shared the meal with. The weather was beautiful, and everyone he came in contact with seemed to be in a good mood.

He walked rapidly. When he rounded the corner, he collided with a woman coming from the opposite direction. Her hat went backward and then flipped forward over her eyes as she fell against the lamppost and slid to the ground. A blanket was draped over her arm.

“Begging your pardon, miss,” Elias said. He wasn’t sure if he should try to help her up or not. She saw the look of uncertainty on his face, and feeling rather foolish, she started to laugh. Elias thought the laugh was the most melodious laugh he had ever heard.

“I am Evangeline. I’m afraid I can’t say I’m glad we ran into each other.” She smiled while extending her hand. He took her hand and helped her up.

“I am Elias Schmidt,” he said.

As he helped her stand, he thought, *I am very glad we ran into each other*, but what he said was, “I’m so sorry, are you alright?”

She straightened her hat, smoothed her dress, looked him in the eye, and gave him a large smile. "No harm done. It was as much my fault as yours."

He noticed she winced when she took a step. He said, "Please take my arm and let me walk you to where you are going."

"Alright, I'm supposed to meet a friend on the village green."

"Just point me in the right direction," he said.

They walked and Evangeline leaned on his arm. She knew her parents would not approve of her accepting his help, but when she looked up and saw the handsome young man with the compassionate eyes, she was smitten at once. Her heart raced and for the moment her desire to be with him was more important to her than compliance with whatever her parents or proper society might wish.

By the time they arrived at the village green, her leg was no longer hurting. However, she continued to limp. She didn't want Elias to leave. "Here is a nice spot under a tree," she said. "Would you mind spreading the blanket for me?"

"No, not at all," Elias answered.

"Why don't you rest with me while we wait for my friend?" Evangeline continued.

"Alright," Elias answered with a happy heart.

He spread the blanket and helped her sit down. He hoped her friend wasn't a man. They had just settled down when a strong gust of wind whisked a toddler's bonnet off her head. Elias retrieved it for the little girl's mother.

Evangeline spied Adele heading toward her. She glanced to the side to be sure Elias wasn't looking. Evangeline pointed at Elias and put her hand up as if stopping her friend to urge her away.

The girl smiled and spread her own blanket on the green. She knew Evangeline probably wanted her to leave, but she was curious about the handsome man Evangeline was with.

Elias rejoined Evangeline on the blanket. They smiled and stared at each other when Evangeline asked, "Elias, what brings you to England?"

"I'm a sailor. My captain gave me a few days off while he takes care of business."

Evangeline was disappointed that he wasn't a count or someone titled or even a prosperous businessman. That might have helped make him acceptable. Her society would never accept a sailor. But the draw toward knowing him better was still overwhelming.

"And what do you do, Evangeline?"

She was a little perturbed that he thought she might have to do anything, but in a soft voice she answered. "I have my music, reading and needlepoint." She continued with, "My friends and I are part of a literary society. We meet and discuss the books we have read. The discussions are often lively."

"That sounds like fun," Elias said.

She was surprised that a sailor might think reading and discussions would be fun. She wondered if he was just trying to impress her.

"Evangeline, what work are you currently discussing?" he asked.

“We plan to start a discussion of Shakespeare’s Macbeth,” she replied.

“Yes, I’m familiar with that,” he said.

Evangeline doubted his words because she was accustomed to fickle men who said what they thought the female might want to hear instead of what they really knew or believed. She was also conceited and wanted to impress Elias with her superior knowledge. She quoted Macbeth, “Out, out, brief candle, life’s but a walking shadow.” That was all she could remember, so she stopped and gave Elias another huge smile.

She was really surprised when he returned the smile and continued with, “A poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.” He stopped when he saw her mouth drop open and realized he had utterly surprised her.

Evangeline thought, *He might not have money or be titled, but this is the most interesting man I have ever met. I would love to take him with me to one of my discussion groups. How can I take him without letting my friends or family know he is just a sailor?*

She decided she would talk to Adele about it. Evangeline and Elias were so intent in their conversation that dusk was enveloping them before they realized it. Adele and most of the people on the green had left without the pair being aware of it. Evangeline suddenly jumped up.

“Did I say something wrong?” Elias jumped up and asked.

“No, I just suddenly realized how late it is. My family will be worried,” she replied, laughing.

“Since your friend didn’t show up, may I walk you home?” he asked.

“I’m afraid my family would not appreciate me spending so much time with a stranger,” she replied. She did not verbalize her thought, *or spending time with a sailor.*

“May I see you again?” he asked.

“I would like that,” she replied as she tried to take a step. This time the limp was real because her limb had fallen asleep. In a gesture that was uncharacteristic of a lady, she asked, “Do you want to meet here tomorrow?”

“Sure,” he replied, “but why don’t I take you to dinner first?”

She avoided his proposal by saying, “Thank you, but I already have dinner plans with my family. But I could meet you tomorrow morning around ten.”

“I’ll look forward to seeing you again tomorrow morning then,” he replied.

They started to walk back through town when Adele called to Evangeline from across the street. “Evangeline, your parents are worried. You had better hurry home.”

“Coming,” she said as Elias let go of her arm.

She realized she had forgotten to limp, so she called back to Elias, “See? My leg is better after the long rest.”

“I’m glad, Evangeline,” he replied.

The look of tenderness on that handsome face made her heart once again start to beat faster. *Why did he have to be a sailor, why, why, why?*

“Adele, are Mama and Papa looking for me?”

“No, they are with my parents and they think you and I are together at your house. It’s getting late, and I

was afraid they might return before you got back, and I simply could not wait any longer to hear about the handsome stranger.”

“Oh, Adele, he is wonderful, but my situation is awful.”

“Evangeline, you are not making any sense. What are you saying?”

“Well, as you noticed, he is very handsome. He is also very intelligent, learned, well read.” She stopped talking and seemed to be staring into space.

Her thoughts were interrupted when Adele asked, “How could that possibly make your situation awful?”

“I have just met a man I could really care for, but he is a sailor.”

Adele agreed, “Your situation is awful.” Evangeline was always the more compliant, obedient one. Adele smiled and thought, *Evangeline is not so perfect after all.*

The girls had barely made it inside and up the stairs when they heard Evangeline’s parents returning. Adele and Evangeline slowly came back down the stairs.

Before they reached the bottom, Evangeline’s mother said, “Adele, it is too late for you to walk home alone, and since Stewart is not feeling well and the rest of the servants are in their quarters, we begged leave of your parents for you to spend the night with Evangeline.”

This scene was so typical of past times when the girls would say it had gotten late without them realizing it and, thus, would spend the night together. Evangeline’s Mama and Papa took pleasure in being overindulgent parents and headed off to their own rooms.

The servants often left food for the girls on a side table. They grabbed some leftover dinner and headed back up to Evangeline's room. Evangeline was holding on to a chicken leg when she said, "Adele, how can I get our friends to accept Elias into our literary discussion tomorrow?"

Adele thought about Evangeline's words for a minute while she finished off a piece of bread and butter before continuing with, "Did you say he told you his family had property that someone was trying to claim?"

"Yes, that is what he said. Hmm, tell Elias to arrive a quarter past the hour so you can tell the group that you have invited a friend to join our group. Without a doubt, someone will want to know more about him. We can say he is a landowner from Germany who is in the shipping industry. That he is rather eccentric and insists on being involved in all aspects of his business. That he is usually late and that he sometimes even dresses as a sailor."

Evangeline wasn't sure this would be believable. "Adele, when I met him, he wasn't dressed as a sailor, but neither did he look like a count nor a businessman."

Evangeline wasn't sure this would be believable so she replied, "I don't know. Even if they believe Elias to be a count or business man, what can I tell Elias?"

"No need to tell him anything," she replied. "Introduce him simply as Herr Schmidt. Our friends would never believe a common man to be as learned as you say Elias is."

Evangeline thought about Adele's words for a few minutes before replying, "It may work."

The pair tried to contrive a plan to get Elias to dress differently, but in the end decided they would have to leave things as they were and hope for the best.

Elias now believed in love at first sight. His thoughts were so consumed with Evangeline that he didn't remember the walk back to the ship. Some of the men spoke to him as he boarded, but his mind was incapable of comprehending what his ears had heard. He retreated to his bunk so that no one would interrupt his thoughts. It was going to be a long night. All he could think of was being with Evangeline again.

Elias met Evangeline on the green the following morning. Evangeline had already spread the blanket but was standing beside it and looking in the opposite direction.

“Evangeline.”

When Elias spoke her name, she jumped but turned and gave him her beautiful smile. “I was expecting you to come from the direction of the wharf.”

“I think it best to keep lady friends guessing,” he teased.

“I have exciting news, Elias.”

“What is that, Evangeline?”

“I would like for you to join our group discussion of Macbeth tonight.”

“I would love to. I must say that it has been several years since I read the work, and I hope that I don't embarrass you,” he said truthfully.

“You won't embarrass me,” she said, but as she spoke, she hoped her words were true.

It looked like rain so as they prepared to leave, Evangeline told Elias, "Let's stroll through town, and I'll show you the home we will be meeting in tonight."

It started to sprinkle, and Evangeline was thankful for the rain. She put the hood up on the cape she was wearing. She hoped no one would notice her. She continued, "At a quarter past eight, come to the door. Tell the servant your name, that you are a guest of Lady Duncan, and that you are expected. We are meeting at my friend Adele's home, and I promised to help her with preparations so I'll already be there."

Elias wished that they could arrive together, but he wanted to please Evangeline so he agreed.

Evangeline cut the walk short, saying, "Elias, I have to help my mother prepare for an excursion. She and Papa are going to spend a few days in the country and then I promised to assist Adele. I hope you will excuse me for now." She was still very much enthralled with Elias, but she was becoming increasingly concerned that someone might say something to her parents about the young gentleman who was accompanying her.

They stood under an overhang watching the sunshine filter its way through the dispersing clouds. Evangeline thought, *It's almost as if the weather approves of our being together.*

As they stood there, Elias replied, "I'm disappointed to be deprived of your company, but I understand." They turned to face each other as he said, "I will all the more look forward to our next meeting."

As he spoke, he took her hand, and as he kissed her fingers, her heart melted and for a brief moment, she didn't care who saw them.

Elias stopped for a shave and a bath and then hurried back to the ship. He sought out Owen and the captain. He found them both in the captain's quarters. He knocked at the door. Owen opened the door as the captain called, "Come in."

Captain Tucker asked, "What can I do for you, my boy?"

Elias noticed that now that the ship was docked and most of the crew was in town, the captain was far less formal.

"I have been invited by a lady to a literary discussion, and I had previously noticed you had copies of Shakespeare's works. I was wondering if I might borrow your copy of 'Macbeth' for a few hours? Also, begging your indulgence, would you tell me how a proper gentleman might dress?"

Elias wasn't sure how all of these requests were being taken, so he looked from Owen to Captain Tucker to try and discern if he had gone too far.

Instead of answering Elias, Captain Tucker said, "Owen, I want you to open the large trunk. No, not that one, the one closest to the door. Do you see a white linen shirt?" Owen carefully stacked items outside the trunk.

Captain Tucker said, "That's right, it's the one with the elaborate lace. With the shirt you should see, yes, a lace cravat. Ah, don't forget the scarlet waistcoat and stockings that you laid in the stacks of other clothing. Do you know where the shoes that hurt my bunion are?"

Owen didn't answer but went to the smaller trunk and this time began to stack clothing on the captain's desk.

Captain Tucker turned to Elias and said, "Elias, if these fit you, I would like for you to have them."

Elias started with, "But I couldn't..."

The captain stopped him with an upraised hand and said, "I haven't been able to wear most of this clothing for years. It would give me great pleasure to see you use them."

Elias, feeling awkward, tried on the clothing before he retreated to his bed with the copy of 'Macbeth.'

Before he left, Captain Tucker said, "Elias, just leave the clothes here. You can ready yourself for the evening here in my quarters. I'll be away on business this evening."

"Thank you, captain," Elias said.

After Elias left, Owen told Captain Tucker, "I will press the clothes and polish the shoes."

"Thank you. Did he try the shoes on?"

"Yes, and it looked like they fit."

"Why don't you prepare a bath for him, too?"

"Yes, captain, shall I add the herb mixture you like?"

"Good idea," Captain Tucker replied.

Elias read 'Macbeth' and thought he would read it a second time. He was sleepy and had just started the second reading when he dosed off. He awoke in time to eat a scone and a piece of cheese that he had brought back to the ship that morning.

When he had finished eating, he knocked on Captain Tucker's door. Captain Tucker had left the ship after talking to Elias earlier.

"Come in," Owen said.

Elias watched as Owen poured hot water into the captain's tub.

"I'm sorry," he told Owen, "I didn't mean to disturb the captain's bath."

"You didn't," Owen said. "Captain Tucker instructed me to ready this for you."

"How nice of you both," Elias replied. He didn't tell Owen that he had indulged in a bath and shave in town that morning.

Elias was anxious to see the pretty Evangeline, and not even the relaxing, hot, fragrant bath water could hold Elias long. He had dried and dressed in his shirt, breeches, socks and waistcoat when Owen knocked at the door.

"Come in," Elias called.

"I thought you might want some help with the cravat," Owens said as he entered.

"I do," Elias replied.

Owen showed him a couple of ways he had seen them tied.

"Tie it the way you think it looks the best," Elias said.

Owen smiled and tied the cravat. Owen could not help but admire Elias.

"I'm not sure I can walk in this waistcoat without harming the coat or myself," Elias remarked.

"You are supposed to leave the bottom buttons undone," Owen replied.

“Very good,” Elias said.

Owen thought he not only looked like a nobleman, but he was beginning to sound like one, too.

Elias walked at a fast pace until he was within sight of Adele’s home. He slowed down and stopped to look around so as not to arrive too early. As instructed by Evangeline, he told the servant that Lady Duncan was expecting him. The servant invited him in and retreated when Evangeline appeared.

“Herr Schmidt, how nice of you to come,” Evangeline said.

“Lady Duncan, how nice of you to invite me,” he responded.

Although Evangeline was relieved when she saw Elias, she had not expected him to be dressed as he was. She wondered if the tale she and Adele had made up and told their friends might actually be true.

Evangeline and Elias walked up to a group of four people who were closest upon entry.

“Herr Schmidt, may I introduce Mr. Anson, Mr. Hyde, and Madam Fairfax and Lord Spencer.”

Evangeline pulled him along and he said, “By your leave, sirs and madam.”

After introductions, they made their way around the room to where Adele and a gentleman named Thomas Biltmore stood. Elias noticed two men across the room. He had also noticed that one of them had been watching him and Evangeline from the time they entered the room. These men were the last to be introduced to Elias. As they were introduced, Elias intuitively knew that Carleton Barlow was going to be a rival.

Carleton had always assumed that he and Evangeline would someday wed. He had not spoken to her or her father of his thoughts because he liked his life the way it was. He knew that once married, he would be expected to manage the lands owned by his family. When Evangeline entered the room with the handsome and distinguished looking man holding her arm, Carleton immediately felt threatened. As the pair approached him, Carleton listened with rigid stance and a thrust to his chin.

Evangeline continued with her introductions. “Mr. Carleton Barlow and Mr. Benjamin Croft, I would like for you to meet Herr Elias Schmidt.”

As she spoke, Carleton noticed that Evangeline hung tightly onto Elias’ arm and admiringly looked at him. Carleton chided himself for assuming too much for too long, even as an irrational anger and immediate dislike toward Herr Elias Schmidt permeated his being.

“Herr Schmidt, what type of shipping do you do?” Carleton asked.

Elias truthfully answered, “We often carry pelts, cotton and tobacco from the Colonies. First Mate Owen is currently negotiating for us to return with a shipment of tea.”

Adele knew trouble would be brewing when the couple got to Carleton. Adele also knew that Evangeline would not want Carleton asking too many questions. In an attempt to help her friend, Adele quickly grabbed her bell and rang it to let everyone know it was time to be seated and start the group discussion.

Elias steered Evangeline toward a padded bench. As the couple sat down, Carleton joined them with Evangeline in the middle. Evangeline had given up on Carleton as a suitor. He had never stated his intentions. She was very angry with him now for interfering with her attempts to get to know Elias better.

When Adele saw that everyone was seated, she rang the bell again. She silently waited until the room became quiet and began. "We would like to welcome Evangeline's guest, Herr Elias Schmidt to our meeting tonight, and we invite you, Herr Schmidt, to feel free to join in our discussions."

"I'm honored to be here, and thank you," Elias replied.

"Since this is the first evening to discuss Macbeth, Mr. Barlow has agreed to give us the background of this drama," Adele continued.

"I would be most honored to do that, especially for the benefit of Herr Schmidt."

Someone chuckled. Everyone knew that Carleton Barlow was throwing the gauntlet down for Herr Schmidt.

"The setting is Scotland. The main character is Macbeth. As a successful soldier, Macbeth has earned the King's favor and trust," Carleton continued. "Why don't I stop here and allow our guest to go on?"

Carleton was hoping to embarrass Herr Schmidt, but instead Elias jumped right into the narrative, savoring the opportunity to speak.

“Macbeth is informed by three witches that he is to become King. My question to you, Lord Barlow, is did this foretelling of the future, change the future?”

Carleton was surprised at Elias’ quick comeback with a question. He answered, “Yes, I believe Shakespeare would have us blame the three witches for foretelling it.”

“I disagree,” Elias replied. “Shakespeare’s character relates to life as a ‘poor player.’ It seems, from Macbeth’s point of view, that we are acting out a predetermined script.”

The night was electric with the verbal volleys going back and forth. As the evening wore on, Evangeline started to feel flattered that two men would vie for her attention.

“Evangeline, may I escort you home?” Elias asked when the meeting was over.

“Thank you so much, Elias, but I am spending the night with Adele while my parents are away,” Evangeline truthfully answered.

“Would you like to go horseback riding tomorrow morning?” Evangeline asked. “I’ll bring a picnic lunch.”

Evangeline was becoming bold now that her friends had seen Elias dressed as a gentleman. Also, she knew Elias would probably be gone by the time her parents returned from their visit to their countryside home. She thought, *Maybe I’ll be lucky, and they will never hear about the gentleman escorting me around.* Even as she thought it, she knew that her parents would hear.

While Elias and Evangeline were discussing a time and place to meet, Thomas and Carleton talked. “I’ll

send my footman to follow Herr Schmidt. I'll tell him to discretely find out anything he can about the man," Thomas offered.

Carleton nodded his head in agreement, even as he watched Evangeline and Elias talking and laughing. Carleton had always prided himself on his ability to keep his emotions in check. Now he knew his anger and jealousy were evident, but he didn't care.

Thomas' footman, Bartholomew Cross, followed Elias back to the ship. After Elias had entered the hold of the ship, the footman approached the sentry of an adjacent ship.

"Good evening, Sir. I was just admiring the cargo vessel next to you. I've given some thought to becoming a sailor myself. Would you be so kind as to tell me the name of that ship?"

The sentry was glad to have someone to talk to during the long, lonely time of his watch. "Why sure, mate, that ship is 'The Traveler.' It peers like ya have an admirable job by yer speech and yer clothing. Why wud ya be wantin' ta work as a sailor?"

"Even servants to gentlemen might want some adventure in their life," he replied.

The sailor shook his head. He wished he could trade jobs with the man.

When the last guest had left, Adele and Evangeline couldn't wait to get to Adele's bedroom so they could talk about the events of the night.

"Wasn't Elias everything I said?"

“Yes, and even more,” Adele replied. “How did you get him to dress as he did, and how could a common man afford such elegance?”

“I don’t know, Adele, I don’t know.”

Evangeline hurried home the next morning so she could instruct the servants in packing a picnic lunch for her and Elias. Cooper, one of the servants, was to accompany them.

The horses were saddled and ready when Elias arrived. It was another beautiful day, and they rode through town and then followed a meandering dirt road to a small stream of water.

“This was always a favorite spot for Adele and myself when we were children,” Evangeline told Elias. “Our parents would join together for a picnic, and Adele and I would play around the stream.” She laughed before continuing, “Actually, it was always supposed to be around the stream, but we usually ended up in the stream.”

Elias smiled as he pictured Evangeline and Adele as little girls.

They spread a blanket and sat down. Cooper spread his own blanket by the stream but in sight of the pair.

“I loved the water as a boy, too, but for me it was the ocean. I would lie in the sand and try to imagine shapes of people and animals in the clouds.” He paused as he fondly related, “And I loved to fish with my Opa and Papa.”

Evangeline changed the subject, as she knew Elias’ parents and grandparents had died and didn’t want him to be sad.

They had a delicious lunch together and talked for an hour. Some birds were on the ground nearby, waiting for a chance to grab some crumbs. Evangeline picked up a roll, divided it and gave half to Elias. They broke off pieces and threw them to the waiting birds.

“I really need to get back,” Evangeline said reluctantly.

Elias repacked the basket. He held out his hand for Evangeline to take as he pulled her up. Together they untied the horses and led them to the stream for a drink before heading back.

While they stood there with the sun gleaming off the water, a gentle breeze caressed her hair. He wished he could trade places with the wind for a few minutes.

Elias took both of Evangeline’s hands before he spoke. “Evangeline, I will be leaving early tomorrow morning. I know we just met, but I’m very fond of you and would like to see you when I return. I would like to meet your family.”

“Elias, I’m very fond of you, too, and hope we can see more of each other. I’m saddened by the news of your leaving.”

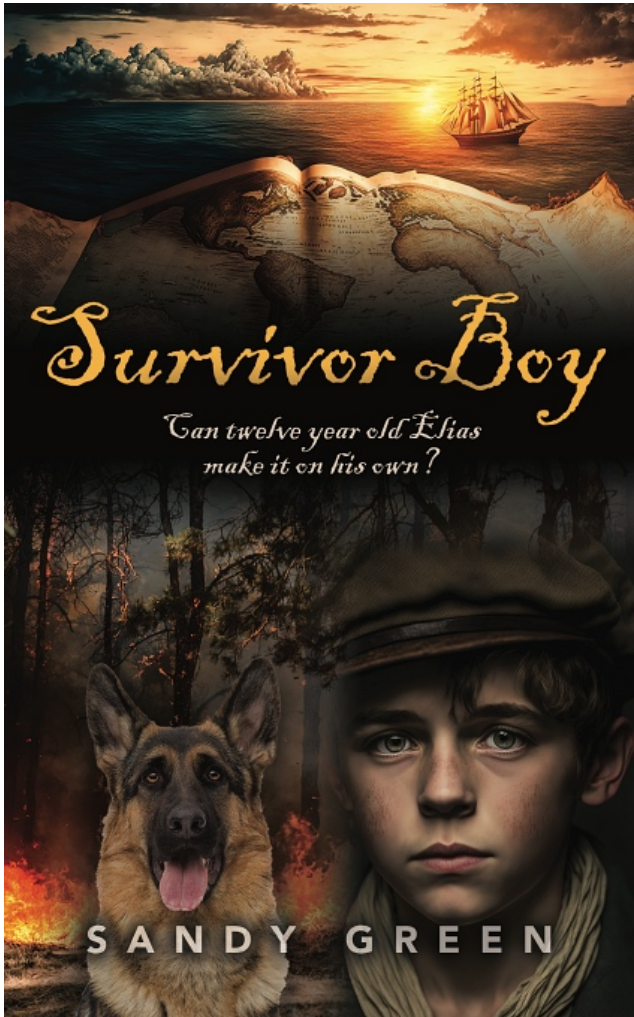
Standing so close together and each looking into the eyes of the other caused Evangeline to think, *I would like to go with you, Herr Elias Schmidt, right now.* Would her heart ever beat normally again?

Elias was heartbroken to leave her.

“Thanks to your help, things went very well,” Elias said to Owen and Captain Tucker.

“Well then,” Captain Tucker told him, “you will be glad to hear that my business was favorable, and it looks like we will return to England soon.” Elias smiled.

The Traveler left before anything could be learned about Herr Elias Schmidt. Mr. Cross promised a dockhand a guinea if he would alert Mr. Benjamin Croft immediately upon its return.



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