

*The Girl Named Unless* 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

What if I told you there was a girl named Unless? What would you say? Well, let me just say that she totally exists. Maybe you don't know anyone named something like that, but I believe everyone knows someone such as this; one of those girls who never are content unless they have their way. Unless was not the kind of girl upon whom anyone hung their hopes, despite her odd name. She had that pun to her name, you see. "The world will end, unless Unless has something to say about it." You get the point. Unless had soft, blue eyes and kinked blond hair which sparkled in the sun whenever she decided to have some outrageously dangerous quest with whomever would go with her. But don't get me wrong, despite her soft complexion, she had a tough attitude and hard spirit.

"So you really have no idea what your surname is?" asked Sorm. "That must feel pretty odd."

"It does, at some points," said Unless softly. "But it's not like it defines me, well, not technically. Most people think my odd first name has to do with my fate anyhow..."

"Things are getting darker every day; you think you'll make a difference, Unless?" Sorm asked.

"Sure as heck, if I have something to say about it," she said.

Sorm and Unless lived in a dark society, where cloak and dagger were everywhere. They lived in Central. Central was ruled by three judges, each of whom were immoral and corrupt. It was so bad there that even library books had to be chained to the shelves until proof of the borrower's credibility was shown, just like the ways the old churches in the Middle Ages chained up bibles to racks. In fact, their town was not far from being as barbaric as the Middle Ages. However, they did have a miniscule military; thirty-five men who got drunk more than defend Central.

There were also marauders who came across the Large Lake and pilfered and hauled off enough women for each man to have two. These marauders, who called themselves The Doloram, had been way too close to calling a total raid on Central. The three fat judges really had no power over the people. In fact, because of the judges' immorality and lack of leadership, whispers of a revolution had been growing louder in the crowds day by day. No one could really blame the people of Central, because they were treated like scum by the upper-class, more

commonly known as The Dirty Rich. The community mainly consisted of Europeans, since Central is now in the general area of where Buckingham Palace lay. There are some North Americans as well, since their resident country is now referred to as “Home.” Ironically enough, what used to be the rich center of the business world—the United States—was now the base for The Doloram, drug dealers, and most of the slave-trading business.

Usually The Doloram was mistaken to be a bunch of ugly Neanderthals with hammers by people who had never seen them, because they actually were clever, brutal and sly. And the only thing they pledged not to touch was the single Orphanage which sat close to the center of Central, where the citadel was. This was where the three judges met. Their names were Rubicle Rook, Phileas Flop, and Cornelius Rumbunkle; and yes, I do believe that they deserved those wretched names.

The orphanage consisted of about twenty boys and thirty girls, and was run by one of the meanest creatures on God’s green earth, Mrs. Abbey Crum. She had the nastiest features: a large, festering wart the size of a pea sprouting from her left cheek, a crooked nose she had won in a fist fight. She was also as skinny as a broom stick.

The way Sorm and Unless had met and became friends was when Unless accidentally broke one of Mrs. Crum’s pictures while she was cleaning her office. When Sorm walked by he saw it take place. He thought that the girl looked rather nice, so he decided to take the blame when Mrs. Crum came back. He ended up getting a sprained finger and a black eye later that night. Unless loved him like a brother from then on.

On one particular day when Unless and Sorm were taking a walk around Central trying to pick up what was going on in the citadel, they suddenly heard a “pssst.” They turned around, and saw Rubicle Rook peaking out a window from the second story of the black citadel.

“You there, boy; girl!” he wheezed.

“I say, what do you want ya big worm?” yelled Unless harshly. “If you drop trash on me again, I’ll throw this rock and break that window!”

“I am not sure that he wants to harm us, Unless,” said Sorm, who was the levelheaded one.

“No, no!” said Rubicle. “I just desire you to deliver a message to Cornelius Rumbunkle. You see,” he wheezed again, “he’s out sick today and this is so very urgent!”

Unless’ ears perked up. “Urgent ya say?”

Rubicle wagged his flabby head. “Oh yes! ‘N I’ll even pay ye for your trouble!”

Now Unless was listening. “How much?”

“One Qript and one Srint!” he blubbered hastily. “But just hurry!”

Unless weighed the offer around in her mind, and grinned. “Yea, we’ll take ya up on yer offer, but first, ya pay.”

Rubicle grumbled and fluttered the sealed envelope down as well as two coins, a small one made of cold rock, and a fat coin made of silver. The Qript is more worth than a silver Srint, yet it is smaller in size. The envelope was old and yellow, with the seal of a large X to make sure no one opened it.

The only reason Unless thanked Rubicle was because Sorm, who had caught the money, said he wouldn’t share unless she thanked him. Sorm and Unless didn’t know why Rubicle wouldn’t go to Cornelius’ house because it was only about twenty feet from the black citadel. Though after all, Rubicle was a pretty fat man, and everyone knew it.

They reached Cornelius’ house, more like a small palace, and walked up to the door. Sorm was about to knock, when Unless stopped him by gripping his wrist.

“What was that fer?” asked Sorm indignantly, rubbing his sore wrist. “Let’s just deliver the letter!”

“Oh, Sorm, you’re not even a teensy bit curious about what’s in th’ letter!?” asked Unless seriously. Sorm shrugged sheepishly. “Well I’m lookin’ at it!” she said, tearing the seal off the letter. Inside was an old, yellow piece of paper about eight inches long which had only ten words on it:

**The Doloram are coming from the Large Lake tonight! ~Rubicle**

Unless almost dropped the letter. Nevertheless, she composed herself and then knocked hard on the wooden door. A minute later, the door opened and a rather attractive maid appeared. She inquired of their presence, and they told her their intent for being here. The maid nodded, took the letter, and gave them a Qript for their trouble. She then shut the door.

As they walked away, Unless’s head was swimming with thoughts.

“Sorm,” she said. “We need to do something! We need an army!”

“Yea, I know, but they’re all drunk!” said Sorm. “Though maybe we still have a chance at getting help from Scrupulus!”

Scrupulus was the neighboring district which sat about three miles to the left of Central. Unfortunately, Central was not on particularly friendly terms with the people of Scrupulus.

“Okay, okay,” thought Unless. “I’d bet that they’re planning on war and destroying the whole continent and taking it for themselves. Maybe even making a new Home to start from, taking on all the other districts and continents!”

Sorm gulped at the thought.

“I’ll run there, Unless,” he said. “I’ll let them know of the situation, and I’ll tell the drunks too. It might not be until the next morning, though.”

“Yes, I’m aware,” she said. “But my passion is equal to the task.”

Sorm laughed. “Ha, ya quoted that from a movie, correct?”

“No need for competition, Sorm,” she said mockingly. “Now here’s my plan...”

She explained her brilliant plan, then Sorm, who was shaking profusely, nodded, and ran off to get the army. Unless sprinted back to the black citadel, stood under Rubicle’s window, and started throwing rocks. Slowly, the window cracked open. A chubby head popped out of the window, looking irritated that someone had interrupted his nap.

“You, girl! What do *you* want?” he said, pointing a fat, pink finger at her. “I was trying to take a nap!”

“So I noticed,” she said, rolling her eyes. “I—I have a—a strange question to ask ya...”

“Well?” he grunted.

“I need a stick of—a stick of d-dynamite,” she said finally. “But only for a bit! I’ll return it!”

Rubicle spat and cursed with language so bad, no human should hear such of it. If it had been cleaned and edited it would go something like: “Are you out of your mind? A little girl like yerself, handlin’ a stick o’ dynamite?! Are you crazy?!” he shouted.

Unless just waited for him to stop rambling, then she told him her plan. Rubicle seemed to listen, fascinated with this plan. Finally, after she finished her idea, Rubicle just stood there.

“Well?” she asked, expectantly as she was losing her patience.

“Sounds like a good plan,” he weighed around in his mind. “Alright, BRUTUS!” he yelled behind him. “Bring that little girl a stick of dynamite—yes, I’m seriously serious!”

Unless grinned. “Thank you, Mr. Rook, this won’t be for naught! Don’t worry!”

Rubicle grumbled a response and popped his head back inside.

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Twenty minutes later, Unless found herself standing on the shoreline of Large Lake. And indeed, on the horizon, she saw little steamboats floating across the gap between Home and Central. Unlike a normal girl, who would start freaking out and running, Unless started a fire. Not a large one, but just big enough to catch the eye of The Doloram. The ships came ever closer. Closer, closer, closer. Finally she could get a clear view of the ships using her spyglass, which she had brought from her few belongings. They were nasty, rugged looking ships which had one large sail in the middle of the each. She saw about three dozen burly, ugly men with large clubs and some with naked swords dangling at their waists.

Unless got out the stick of dynamite and waited.

The murmur of angry men became stronger as the steamboats came closer to shore. Finally, with a swoop of motion, the steamboats came to a stop. Unless got out her small knife which was a whopping six inches.

The Doloram laughed cruelly and they emerged from the ships. These men looked tough, with arms looking like someone had stuffed a few dozen sausages in them. They had cruel, beady eyes which shifted from side to side frequently. But the one that stood out was obviously their leader. He had a black military haircut with a goatee and multiple scars around his yellow, cold eyes. He wore black suspenders with no shirt and was wearing metal boots with spikes on the end. He had yellow, crooked teeth with a black cigar shoved between them somewhere, which had blackish-yellow smoke pouring from the tip.

“Aye, you, girly!” he said. “Ge’ out of th’ way!” he pulled a large hunting knife out from his left boot. “I don’t wanna hurt ye!”

Unless had obviously heard a counterfeit promise before so she did nothing, except held her knife higher.

The greasy man grunted. “I sed, git out of th’ w—” he stopped midsentence, for in one fluent motion Unless had grabbed the dynamite and held it over the fire. There was no fear in Unless’s eyes.

“Oh, now you wouldn’t go and do a stupid thing like dat, would ye?” he asked fearfully.

“Oh, but I would,” she coolly replied. “Tell your men to *step back NOW*, unless they want to see their chief—”

“Bruno...” he muttered.

“—Bruno,” she picked up, “destroyed by this piece of dynamite I’ve got here!”

Bruno was only three feet from her, and he beckoned for the crew to nod. Unless smiled slyly. Her plan was going well for the first...five minutes. But how long would it be until Sorm would come?

Bruno laughed. “Alright, girly, I see you want a standoff. Well then, a standoff is what ye get!”

Unless gulped. It sounded like Bruno knew something that she didn’t. Bruno sat on the ground next to the fire, and beckoned her to sit down. She decided to, yet didn’t put her guard down. She held the dynamite strongly over the fire, waiting for any sudden movement.

She waited. Then she looked at her watch. Then she put her eyes back on the men, ready to drop the dynamite in the fire at any sudden movement. The whole crew had sat down as well. She waited, and waited and waited. Where was Sorm?

The men started to get uneasy, moving around. They started to talk amongst themselves. It was getting old fast. Oh, where was Sorm?!

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A complication had arisen. Sorm and the Army of Scrupulus had angered the Bobbies of Central, who were now chasing after them. They ran through streets, knocking things over. The Bobbies were obviously annoyed at how many people Sorm was leading from somewhere else. They were buff looking men, who all had naked swords. Sorm had come through, and as you guessed, he had brought the Army of Scrupulus.

“Hurry! We might already be too late!” he called to the men. There were about fifty-five in all.

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“Okay, we’re tired of yer games, miss,” said Bruno. “It’s time to die!”

“Heh heh, gentlemen, let’s take a deep breath and th-think for a minute,” she said. They were losing patience and she absolutely needed Sorm and his army.

Call it providence, but she heard clattering and rumbling behind them. It was Sorm! He had come with an army!

“Nice talking with you!” she said, as she ran, she threw the dynamite and it landed in the fire.

*CRaBOOOOOM!!!!!!!!!!!!*

Men landed everywhere, and before anyone had come to their senses, the army was upon The Doloram! It was amazing to watch. Sorm had caught up to Unless and gave her a hug. They watched the battle from about thirty feet away on one of the dunes. The battle was won.

“We did it, Sorm,” she said, very proud of herself.

Sorm put a hand on her shoulder. “No, *you* did it...And hey, ya even lived up to yer name...”

She smiled and put her arm around him for a moment. After they broke apart, she stared out at the sea. She felt like she should be able to have one of the steamboats to go wherever now.

“What are you thinkin’ about?” asked Sorm.

“Planning...my next adventure,” she said mysteriously.

The two friends watched the sun go down, talking sleepily about their next adventure they were to have.