

JULIUS ZEBRA

ENTANGLED WITH THE EGYPTIANS!



GARY NORTHFIELD



WALKER
BOOKS

For my brilliant editor Lizzie,
thank you for ten years of
boundless enthusiasm and patience!
(Ten years?! Flippin' eck!)

Special thanks to Chloe for taking
all this nonsense in her stride.

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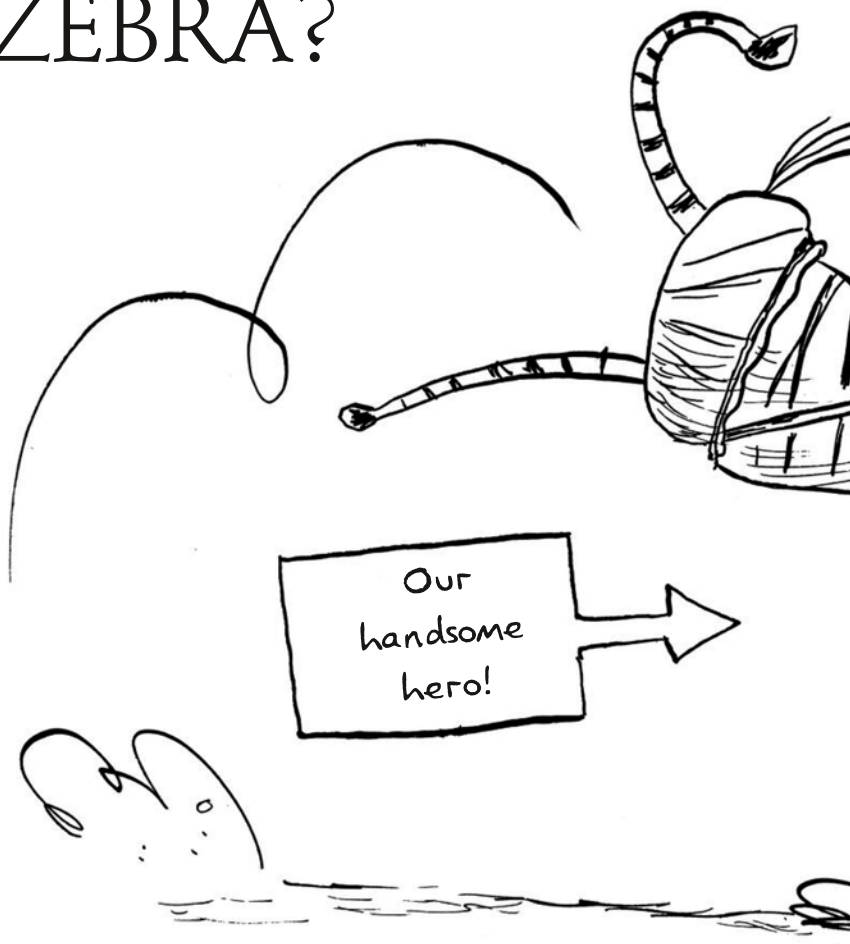
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So you think you know about

JULIUS ZEBRA?

Why yes I do!





WOOHOO!

Well, you're probably

WRONG!

HOW VERY
DARE YOU!



WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT JULIUS ZEBRA!

Easy
peasy!

Knowledgeable
gnu



He's a champion
gladiator!

ZEBRA!
ZEBRA!
ZEBRA!

Thank
you,
fans!



He booted the
Romans out
of Britannia!

And don't
come back!

Boot!



Finally reunited
with his brother!

How I've
missed you,
Brutus!

Woohoo!
Wedgie!

Actually
I hate you.

I knew
all of this.



But I bet you don't know what Julius has been up to since we last saw him?!

This I gotta see.



Vowed to stop the Roman Empire training any more animal gladiators!

Yay!

No more shall we be SLAVES!



Travelled across Europe freeing animals from amphitheatres!

Run!
Be free!

Oi!

Hooray!



Nearly captured his old boss, Septimus, the Roman training the animals!

Curse you!

See ya losers!

Well, you learn something new every day!



Julius wasn't like other zebras and he was determined to prove it!

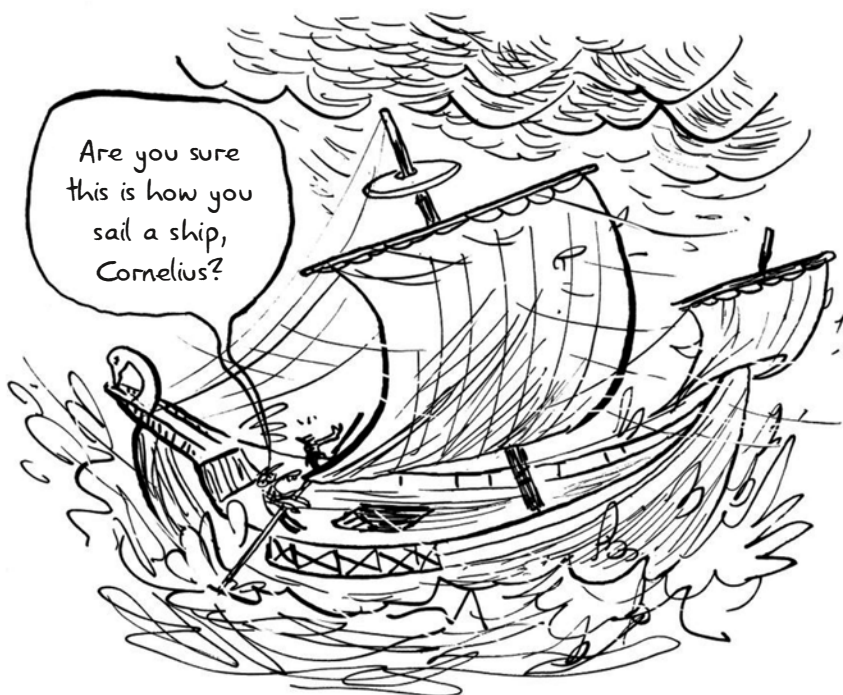


Exciting, right?



CHAPTER ONE

SHIP OF FOOLS



“YES!” cried Cornelius, as he desperately stood on his tiptoes grasping the wet tiller. “JUST HOLD THE BIG STICK STEADY!”

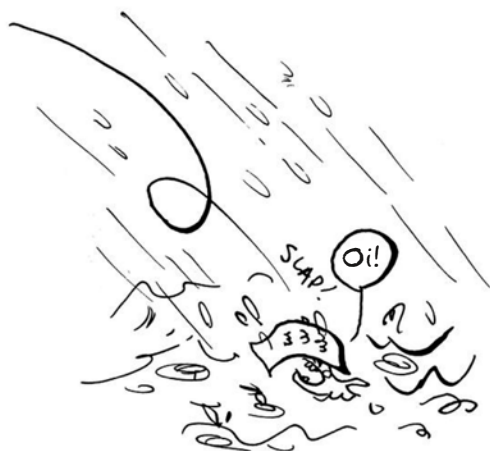
Julius wiped the blinding rain from his eyes. “BUT I’M SURE WE’RE GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES!” he shouted. “DOUBLE-CHECK THOSE INSTRUCTIONS AGAIN!”

With a huff, Cornelius reached into the pouch tied round his waist and pulled out a crumpled scrap of parchment. The soggy note flapped furiously in the wind as he struggled to read it.

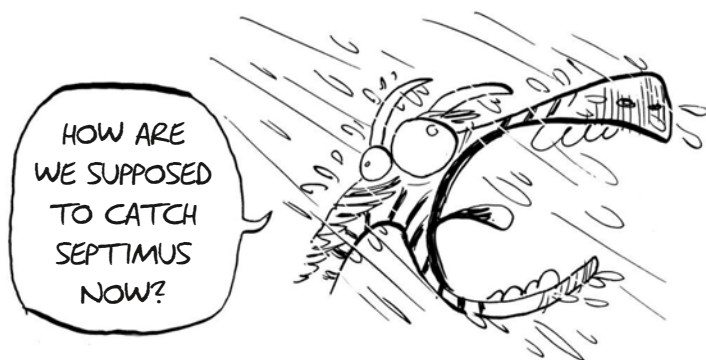
“WE’RE DOING EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS!” Cornelius called out. “HOLD THE TILLER STEADY IN A HEAVY STORM!”



But, just as Cornelius held his note proudly aloft, a great gust of wind snatched it from his hoof and tossed it into the sea.



"Oh, that's just brilliant," groaned Julius.



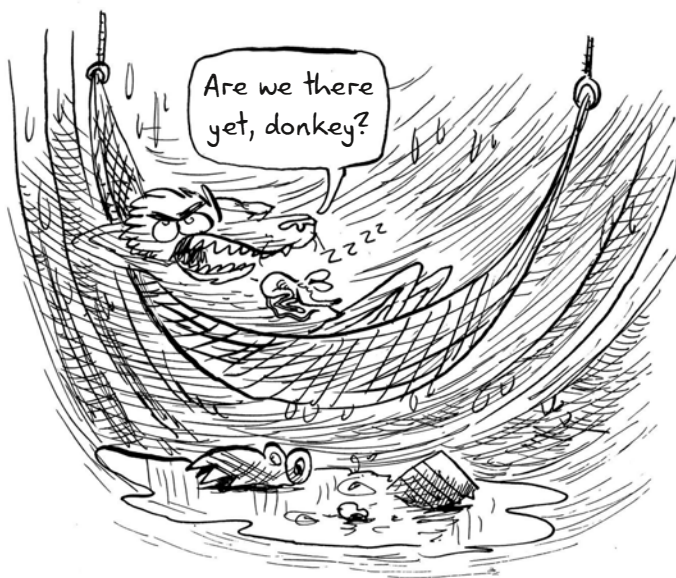
“FORGET SEPTIMUS! WE SHOULD TURN AROUND!” Cornelius squealed. “OR ELSE THIS STORM WILL SWALLOW US WHOLE!”

But Julius was having none of it. “Wait here!” he growled through gritted teeth, pulling himself along the deck. “HOLD HER STEADY, CORNELIUS! I’M FETCHING HELP!”



A huge wave crashed against the side and Julius stumbled as he headed towards the captain’s cabin. He reached the open hatch and, grabbing hold of the slippery ladder, he climbed down gingerly into the dank, dark underbelly of the ship.

In the gloom, Julius pushed past Milus the lion, who was lying in a tatty hammock. On his belly gently slept Pliny the mouse, their tiny combat trainer. Displeased at being woken, Milus growled at Julius.



“No, we’re not!” snapped Julius. “And the way things are looking, we’ll never get there.”

Julius clambered over a pile of soggy crates and sacks, where he finally found the rest of his companions huddled in a circle.

Woohoo! Finding this board game is the best thing EVER!

Brutus - Julius's big-headed idiotic brother

Felix - Dim-witted antelope and avid rock collector

Tap!

Ooh! He's got you there!



Hm...

Rufus - enthusiastic
gladiator and Lucia's
wingman

Get out
of that
one!

Lucia - Vegetarian
chariot-racing crocodile,
always ready with a
cunning plan

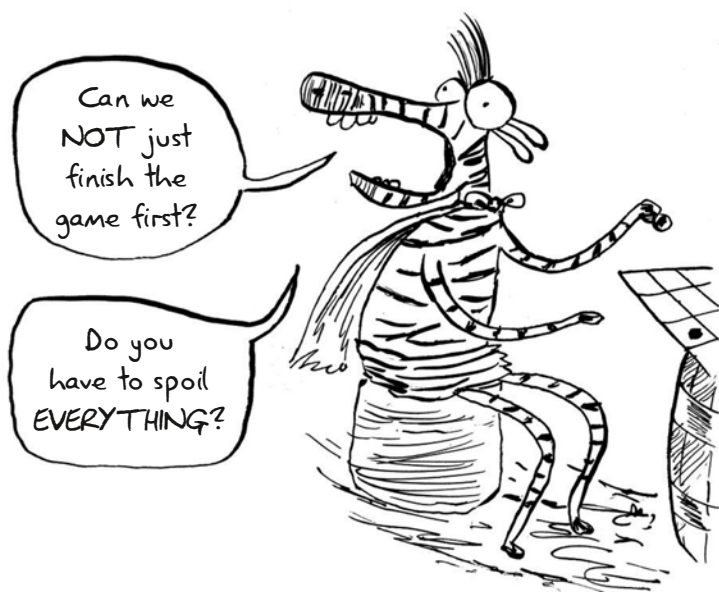


Everyone jumped out of their skins, apart from his brother, Brutus, who refused to look up. "You'll have to wait, Julius!" he growled. "This is a very tense match!" He waved his hoof to shoo his brother away.



Rufus, Lucia and Felix all leapt up in horror.
“WHAT?!” they screamed.

“I thought the ship was swaying a bit,” gasped
Felix. “It’s been hard work trying to watch the game!”



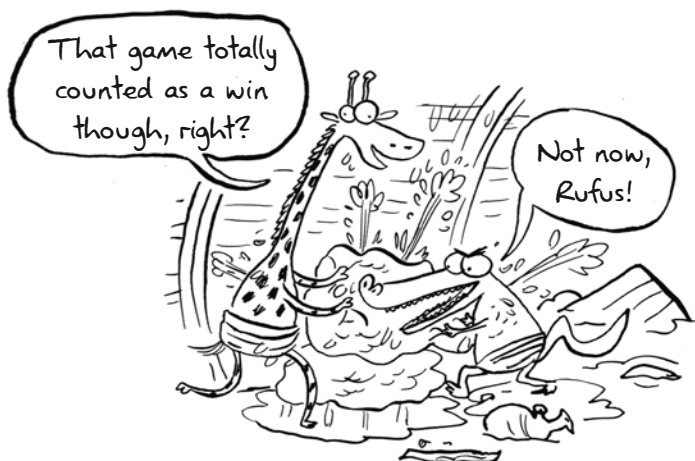
Before Julius could reply, there was a great BANG as the ship buckled and twisted under the force of an enormous wave. It tipped over sideways, hurling everyone and all the cargo into the air.



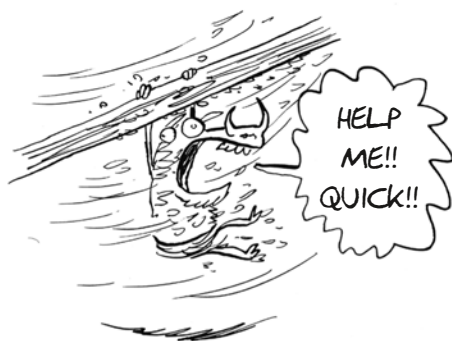
The ship quickly righted itself, but Julius knew another big wave could hit at any moment and rip the old ship apart. He hurried up the wet ladder. "COME ON! WE NEED TO GET THIS SHIP THROUGH THE STORM!"

Suddenly Lucia started screaming. "WE'RE LETTING IN WATER! WE'RE LETTING IN WATER!" She pointed frantically at a big leak spurting water.

"YOU, RUFUS AND MILUS BLOCK THAT HOLE!" ordered Julius. "THE REST OF YOU, FOLLOW ME!"



Climbing out of the hatch, Julius raced over to poor Cornelius, who was still wrestling with the big tiller.



Lucia and Julius leapt onto the big stick and held it as steadily as possible. "GRAB THE OTHER ONE AND HOLD IT!" yelled Julius to Felix and Brutus, who quickly ran to the other side of the boat and grasped the second flailing tiller.

As the rain lashed down from pitch-black clouds, the sea looked like a crazy mountain range thrusting high into the sky, before crashing back down into swirling chasms.

The wind screamed as it ripped through the sail, dragging the ship from one frightening lunge to another.

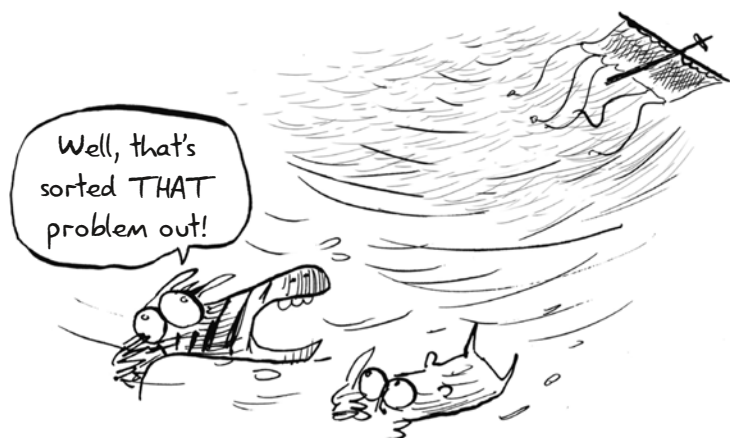


"BUT HOW?!" cried Julius.

Suddenly the great gale whipped through the ship, sweeping the stricken vessel high up on a mountainous wave. There was a loud CRACKING noise as the sail was buffeted out as if fit to burst.

"LOOK OUT!" screamed Brutus, as the heavy ropes that held the sail to the ship pinged off like they were mere washing lines.

With another frightening CRACK the mast and sail were torn off into the raging turmoil of storm clouds.



Then, at that moment, Cornelius looked past Julius, the blood draining from his little face. "I – I think it might just be the BEGINNING of our problems!" he squeaked, pointing upwards.

Julius turned to see a monstrous wall of water rising and blocking out the sky.

"C-can you swim, Julius?" stuttered Cornelius.

"We'll soon find out!" he gulped. And he held his breath, squeezed his eyes shut and clung on to the tiller for dear life.