

Princess

CIRKELINE

"How old must you be to be an sky pirate, grandma?"

"Old enough to hold a sabre, but not old enough to forget your imagination."

"So I can become a sky pirate?"

"Can you hold a sabre?"

"Yes."

"Then you are ready."

Cirkeline is the historian. She gathers every bit of knowledge about Dad and the Land in the Clouds. She believes 100 percent in EVERYTHING that Grandma says. She has no filter.

Dad's death

The others say that Dad died by mistake. Because he ate too many pills. As long as you only eat one or two, the pills help. But if you eat a whole lot, you die. And Dad ended up eating too many. Maybe they just tasted too good. A bit like when you've promised that you'll only eat one, maybe two, chocolate biscuits. And then you end up eating the whole package. Except you don't die from that. Maybe you end up with a tummy ache.

It happened six months after you had moved. You didn't want to move away from Dad, but Mom said you had to. Dad needed rest, she said. But he didn't at all. He needed you three. That's what Grandma says. And now he's not there anymore, because you weren't there to tell him that you weren't allowed to eat all the pills you wanted, even if they taste good.



Mom

Mom is nice, but she is just so mad and tells everybody off all the time. She's on your case in particular. About all sorts of things. You can be certain that if you do something that dad would have thought is funny, mom thinks it's terrible. She did the same thing back when Dad was alive. Dad once built a pillow fort out of pillows and duvets and blankets and clothespins and old fairy lights you use for the Christmas tree, and it filled the entire living room and most of the kitchen. It was fantastic. You ate and slept and lived in the fort for two whole days, until Mom had had it with sitting on the floor. Next day when you came home from school, the fort was gone. Mom had cleaned up everything while you were gone. You. Were. Furious. You refused to speak to mom for a week.

You don't know why she is such a grump. She used to be happy all the time. Or at least you don't remember her being so sour all the time when you were younger. And she's always mad at Grandma, and you really don't understand that. Grandma is amazing and never gets mad at you.

Things you hate

You hate Torben. Torben is Mom's new boyfriend. He is not dad, but he wants to be. But he's just plain wrong. His entire face lacks a beard. Dad had an amazing beard. And he always smelled like pipe tobacco and deodorant.

And you hate Mom's new apartment. It's all a bunch of cheap crap. But Mom says it's what you can afford. Dad's house was better, you tell her. She always gets mad, but she knows you're right. It used to be your house. But when Mom moved out and took you with her, it became Dad's House. An amazing place where you could draw on the walls and were never told off. You slept in hammocks. All of the mattresses were outside, so you could jump out of the windows whenever you wanted. There was a treehouse in the garden and the lawn could grow in peace.

Now the house has been sold. The guy who sold the house for you was mad. So were the ones who bought it from you. "Decay! Dereliction!" they'd said. You don't know what that means, but it probably doesn't mean what you hope. In Torben's apartment you can't draw on the walls. He got very mad when you did. And it was even a very lovely airship. Dad would have been proud. But not Torben. Torben is the most boring and the stupidest man in the whole world. And he is not your dad. He will never be. Why Mom thinks he's so great, you'll never understand.

You always call Torben "you there" or "that guy" when you're talking to him or about him. You know it annoys Mom no end, so you guess it's ok.

Torben also cooks food that's gonna give you an ulcer. That's what you say about food you don't like. You once heard Dad say that to Mom. It was something about some pills he didn't want. They were gonna give him an ulcer, is what he said. You think it's because they tasted so bad they made sores in your belly. Goodness gracious, that's real bad.

Katinka and Solveig

You are the little sister. Boo hiss. And you have two big sisters.

Solveig is the oldest. She is 12 years old, and she always sounds sooo clever, you'd think she was born in a library. So boring, and she's always on Mom's side. Never on Grandma's. It's as if she's forgotten how wonderful Dad was.

Katinka is 9 years old. She will be ten very soon. Katinka is an odd duck. Her best friend is her cat, Mr. Herman. She found Mr. Herman the same day you came home from the funeral. He's a black, shaggy cat. A bit chubby, just like Dad. Sometimes you can even hear her talking to it as if it was Dad. As if she can hear it responding to her, even if it doesn't answer at all. Katinka likes the stories about The Land in the Clouds, as she calls it. Katinka is also the diplomat, who throws herself between you and Solveig when you're fighting like crazy.

But no matter how much you get at each other's throats you're still sisters, and you love them both more than life itself. When you're lying in a big pile every Friday watching Disney Afternoon might be the best time of week for you.

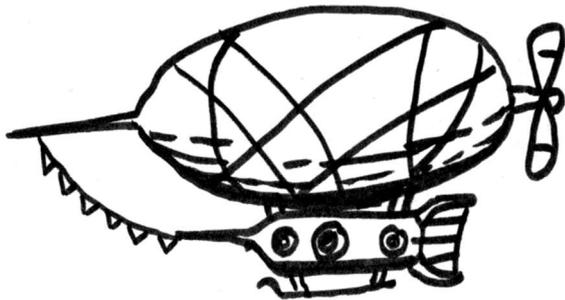


Grandma

"Goodness gracious!" you often say. You'd much rather say darned shitty ass, but Grandma has taught you that it's bad. At her house, you have to say "Goodness gracious!" instead. You can also say "Oh, get outta here!"

Grandma is the only adult who understands you. Grandma also hates Torben. And she's not too fond of Mom, either. She says it's Mom's fault that Dad isn't here anymore. She should never have moved, she says.

You love your Grandma, the old witch. She says so herself, you didn't make that up. "Watch out," she'll say, "or I'll put a spell on you to turn you into a slimy slug!" You wish that she'd turn Torben into a slimy slug someday.



Airmail from Cloudland

Grandma gets letters from Dad. Airmail. Every week he flies by with the airship The Cotton Ball and drops a letter. The airmail always lands on her balcony. He writes about all of his adventures as a Sky Pirate in the Heavenly realm of Cloudland. You save all of the letters in a folder. They are amazing tales.

Like that time when your dad's ship was stuck on the top of the highest mountain in the world. All of their water turned to ice, but luckily it was vanilla. So it wasn't so bad. Or about Black Trixie's revenge. About air whales and sky sharks. The cannibals on Skull Island. That time Dad won the Cloudland pancake eating championships. Or when there was a mutiny on the Cotton Ball, because there were no more pancakes left.

You love, love, LOVE those stories, and you have collected all of the letters from Dad in nice folders, where you have also drawn illustrations for all of the stories and glued in pictures of Dad. You've even taught yourself to read, so that you can read all of the letters again and again. Not an easy task, because it's all written in some kind of cursive. A bit like when Grandma writes.

Summary - Cirkeline

- Cirkeline is the youngest of three sisters
- Solveig is the oldest. She is boring and smart and sticks with Mom.
- Katinka is the middle sister. She is quirky and has a cat, Mr. Herman, that she is always talking with.
- Cirkeline loves Grandma and trusts everything she says.
- Cirkeline doesn't swear, but says things like "goodness gracious" and "get outta here". Grandma taught her that.
- Grandma might be a witch.
- Cirkeline collects all of the stories from Cloudland in a folder. The letters have taught her how to read.
- Mom is grumpy and is always telling them off.
- Cirkeline hates Mom's boyfriend, Torben. He is not dad.
- Dad was amazing and funny and wonderful, and it seems like Mom and Solveig have forgotten.

