# To Catch a Smuggler Story Text

Hello! My name is Leslie, and I'm going to take you on a journey back in time, to 200 years ago, a time when there were smugglers, pirates, and battles on the sea, here in South Shields. To make your journey more fun, I would like you to help me tell this story by joining in, by creating sounds, noises, actions, and even tasting and smelling things. Don't worry: you can do as little or as much as you like; and if you prefer, you can just sit comfortably and listen.

You will need to gather the following items to take with you on your journey. Don't worry if you do not have everything; you can still use your hands, voices, and feet to make lots of noise, and there is plenty for you to join in with.

Right. Are you ready for your list?

You can write them down, and then stop this recording while you and your grown-ups go and find them.

It is a good idea to keep all your props close by.

OK. Here we go.

Number 1: Some rice on a plastic or metal tray. Or why not make a sea sausage? The directions are included on our website.

Number 2: A plastic bowl, with some water and a wet flannel.

Number 3: Some bubble wrap.

Number 4: Some Lego pieces, some beads, or some shells.

Number 5: An empty cardboard box or plastic tub.

Number 6: A bunch of keys.

Number 7: A bottle with some water. Make sure the lid is closed tightly.

Number 8: A hardcover book.

Number 9: A cup of lightly salted water.

Number 10: A bottle of vinegar.

Number 11: A healthy snack.

**[Pause here while you collect your props.]**

Hello again. Are your props in front of you?

Your grown-up can help with handing you things and joining in.

I love to tell stories that are packed with sensory activities to help you bring it to life.

Let's get started.

**[Story begins.]**

Our story begins in 1830, in South Shields, where Jimmy and his cousins Maggie and Drew are at a family picnic on Marsden Bay.

Let's try to make the sound of the sea. Pour some rice onto a plastic tray, and then tip the tray slowly from side to side. If you've made a sea sausage, you can use that instead.

**[Sea sound.]**

“Drew, Maggie! Me mam says we can play on the rocks at the end of the beach”, shouted Jimmy. “Come on!”

Right. Fetch your plastic bowl of water and drop a flannel or two into it. Then use your hands to make the sounds of running on wet sand, by gently squeezing the wet, squishy flannel.

**[Wet sand sound.]**

Right, left, right, left, right, left; one hand then the other.

**[Wet sand sound.]**

You can make the sound more splashy when the children run into the sea.

The three children ran across the wet sand.

They splashed through shallow water.

When they came to the rocks, they found little pools to dabble in, and Jimmy found some seaweed.

**[Popping sound.]**

“Did you do that, Jimmy?” said Drew. “Make that pop noise, with your finger and your cheek like this?”

He put a salty finger into his mouth, closed it, and flicked.

**[Popping sound.]**

Why don't you try this too? Can you make a pop sound, or have you got any bubble wrap? Try popping some of that instead. If you like, you can stick your finger in the cup of salted water and find out what the sea tastes like.

“No”, said Jimmy, “I use seaweed; this one; it's called bladder wrack. Watch.”

Jimmy held one of a cluster of the bladders and squeezed it hard. It popped! He and his cousin spent the next five minutes popping away, until they got tired of it.

“What now, Jimmy?” asked Maggie. “Can we climb the cliffs?”

“I promised me mam we wouldn't, but we could go looking for caves. There's some around here somewhere.”

They clambered up the rocks like steps, between high cliffs either side, and then down to a tiny beach they had not seen before.

“Look!” cried Jimmy. “That could be a cave!”

They walked up a slope of pebbles to a dark hole in the cliff.

Why not make a pile of Lego or plastic beads or shells on the carpet, and use your hands, like feet, again:

**[Pebble sound.]**

Left, right, left, right; moving your hands through the pile.

**[Pebble sound.]**

Do you think it sounds like pebbles?

“I'm going in”, said Maggie. “Come on boys!”

At first they could see nothing. Then slowly their eyes got used to the dark.

They felt their way forward touching the walls. They were cold and damp.

“Our voices sound different”, said Drew. “Listen. Woooh! It's like shouting into an empty fish barrel. Hollow. Spooky.”

OK. Fetch a cardboard box or large plastic tub. Try calling into it.

**[Woo-hooh sound.]**

Does your voice sound different?

“Are there ghost stories about these caves?”

“Not that I know of, but there are stories of smugglers. They use caves. Father knows lots about smugglers.”

“Why? Is he a smuggler?” asked Drew.

“Of course not. He's the very opposite: he's an excise man; he catches smugglers, bad men.”

“What do smugglers do?” asked Maggie.

“They bring cheap gin from Holland and sell it without paying taxes. Like Dolly Peel. She sells gin from her fish basket for much less than it costs in a shop. That's why the local people love her.”

“Shh! Listen!” Jimmy whispered. “I can hear voices.”

“I'm scared”, said Drew. “Perhaps it's a smuggler? Can we hide?”

Maggie went deeper into the cave, feeling her way.

“I found a place, just to the left. Quick!”

They pressed together into a large hollow, hardly daring to breathe; the footsteps were getting closer.

“Jack. Time to light the lantern.”

The children were terrified. Now they would be seen! They heard sounds they knew: a tin being opened; a fumbling; the strike of steel on flint.

Another strike. Puffs of breath. A soft blowing. The men were making a flame.

“Listen!”

Light flickered on the wall of the cave.

“Done it!”

The light was steady now, and moving towards them. This was it!

But it went right on past the children, so they could see the shapes of two large men and the shadows behind them.

“Jack? Found the key?”

“Where is it?”

“In a hole above the door.”

“Got it.”

Why not join in with the sounds by rattling a bunch of keys?

**[Rattling sound.]**

They heard the clink of a key on metal, a turning in the lock, and a rattle and a creak as the door opened. Footsteps echoed in the cave, and then the door closed.

No more footsteps, no more light. The children breathe sighs of relief: “uherrrh”, “uherrrh”.

“Have they gone yet?” asked Drew.

“I think so. Let's get out of here”, said Jimmy.

“Not yet!” said Maggie. “I think they left the door unlocked. I didn't hear the key turn again. Did you? I'm going to take a look.”

The boys followed her; quietly, carefully.

“It is open, and they've lit a candle. Come and look! There's some steps. We can climb them and see where they go.”

The three of them looked at the steps. They were cut out of the rock, and led to danger.

“I don't want to go up there”, whispered Drew. “I'm scared.”

“You should be scared”, Jimmy said softly. “Smugglers have killed people who got in their way.”

“Well, I'm going in!” replied Maggie.

“I can see that,” said Jimmy, “which is why I'll come with you. Drew can help by being a lookout.”

“What do I do?” asked Drew.

“Stand just inside the entrance of the cave. If you see a boat coming close, get back here and tell us. Then we really will need to get out of here!”

“If I see anyone, I'll make my ghost noise!”

While Drew made his way back, Maggie and Jimmy climbed the steps. Candles lit the way, until they found themselves in a cellar lined in brick. In one corner, there was a ladder, leading to a trapdoor above; it was closed. Around them were small barrels and empty bottles. There was a smell of tobacco smoke, and something sharp in the air. Jimmy picked up a bottle that had something like water in the bottom. He shook it and sniffed.

Pick up your bottle of water. Make sure the lid is on tight. Slosh the water around.

**[Sloshing sound.]**

“Genever!” he whispered. “Gin!”

Above them they could hear the steps of people moving about and talking. It was difficult to hear what they were saying, but they picked up words here and there.

“More men…the tide…moonlight…cutter…defend yourselves!”

Maggie moved as if to climb the ladder to hear better, but Jimmy held her back.

He signalled, showing with his head and eyes that they had to go. As they tiptoed back down the steps, a sound came up from below.

“Woo-hooh! Woo-hooh! Woo-hooh!”

Why don't you try that echo sound again? Get your box.

**[Woo-hooh sound.]**

It was definitely Drew, not a ghost. He was waiting inside the cave at the entrance, pointing out to sea.

“A ship!" he said.

“Landlubber!” said Jimmy. “That's a cutter: one mainmast, two head sails; just the kind of boat a smuggler might use: cutters are fast.”

“They were talking about a cutter”, said Maggie. “I thought they were talking about knives and swords.”

“Well, they'll have knives, and cudgels. Come on; we must go! Me mam might be getting worried, and I want to get this to my father.”

“What?” they asked.

“The bottle I found, with the genever in it. Father will have to believe our story when he sees it.”

“What's genever?” asked Drew.

“A drink grown-ups like.”

He pulled a cork out of the bottle and held it out towards Drew.

Can you try to do a pop like before?

**[Popping sound.]**

Or, have a sniff of your vinegar now.

**[Sniffing sound.]**

Drew put his nose almost into the bottle and sniffed hard.

“Ugh!” exclaimed Drew. “It smells like medicine. I'll never drink that.”

The three children clambered back over the rocks and down to the beach, where Jimmy's mother was waiting.

“About time!” she said. “Our carriage is up there, waiting to take us back home. Jimmy, carry the hamper, and Maggie, can you make sure everything else comes too?”

Minutes later, the horse was trotting along a lane, pulling them on their way.

Let's try to make the sound of the horse and carriage. You can choose either:

* Rattling a bunch of keys in time with the horse’s hooves, for the sound of its bridle; **[Bridle sound.]**
* Or, get a hardback book and tap your hands on it to make the sound of the hooves. **[Hooves sound.]**

What rhythm does a horse make? Is it different to a human’s footsteps?

“We've got a story to tell you, Auntie Mae” said Maggie, “about caves and smugglers in a tunnel!”

“Well, keep it until we get back. You can tell your uncle too; he's coming home early. You do have a wonderful imagination, Maggie; you've told me stories ever since you were four.”

The children looked at each other and smiled; their secret would have to wait.

“Just as well you've got that bottle, Jimmy”, whispered, Maggie. “Without it, nobody would believe us.”

Sometime later.

Maggie and Drew were excited. Their uncle Harry had brought Jimmy to stay on their farm, and wanted to talk to them. The whole family were in the living room, waiting for him to start.

“Well, children,” he began, “your adventure in the cave has really helped King and Country, and helped me. I want to thank you very much.”

Why not try and make the sound of the sea again now?

**[Sea sound.]**

“We kept a watch on that cutter, and the bay where the cave is, and for several days nothing happened. Then one night, when there was no moon, we saw a light flash out at sea. We then saw a light at the mouth of the cave. They were signals, smugglers’ signals. I moved some of my men to the farm building on the cliff. I sent another on horseback to alert a Royal Navy cutter, and I had men at shore level. Sure enough, a boat was coming in.”

Pick up your water and bowl, and your flannels. Make the sound of the oars in the water. Then splash through the sea.

**[Oar sound.]**

**[Splashing sound.]**

“We could not see it, but we heard the creak of oars, their splash on water, and then noises, as men splashed through water and up pebbles to the cave. We could see them going in carrying barrels, leaving them there, and going back for more. When I was sure that everything was landed, we moved in.

“We had our own signals. We had the smugglers trapped. There was a bit of a fight, and one or two of our lads had sore heads for a while, but they came off worse. We arrested all of them.

“We also confiscated the contraband, the gin, and we will destroy the farm building, the cellar, and the steps to the cave. And in the early hours of the morning, we boarded the smugglers’ cutter. They were in the middle of taking down the black sails they had used to sneak onshore unseen. We confiscated the cutter too.”

If you're hungry, now is a good time to get your snack before we finish the story.

“There's one other thing: you deserve a reward. Not money; something better. The captain of the Royal Navy cutter has agreed to take you out to sea for a short trip. You will see its guns, help the sailors, and visit the wheelhouse, and have lunch with him in his cabin! Not even I had done that.”

The children were stunned; they could not believe their luck. Then they all cheered at once.

“Hurrah!”

“Outside, all three of you. Run off that excitement and don't do anything daft!”

“We won't”, they said all at once.

“We’ll see”, said Uncle Harry with a smile. “We'll see.”