



## The Wreckers by Iain Lawrence

**Subjects:** Shipwrecks—Juvenile Fiction; Fathers and sons—Juvenile Fiction; Survival—Juvenile Fiction; England—Juvenile Fiction

**Awards:** Best Books for Young Adults

**Book Lists:** Europe, Gifted, Grade 6, Middle School, Reluctant Readers



**Props:** Music from *The Perfect Storm*, sailboat

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*(Play music)* Back in the late 1800s, early 1900s there was a law in England that said when a sailing ship wrecked along the rocky coast of that country any cargo that could be salvaged belonged to any of the crew or passengers who survived. But what if there were no survivors? Well, then the cargo belonged to whoever found it. There were many along that coast who made their living off what they could salvage from wrecked ships.

14-year-old John Spencer and his father were aboard the ship the *Isle of Skye*. *(Bring out sailing ship)* They were nearing the southernmost tip of England, the rocky coast of Cornwall, when they found themselves in a violent storm. *(Toss ship)* The huge waves tossed the ship from one side to another with the deck going straight up and down until they thought the ship would be torn to pieces by the storm. Then they saw the beacon lights—lights that were set along the coast to guide ships to a safe harbor. They cheered! They were saved and they hurried to follow the lights. But they were false lights—lights set not to save ships but to guide them straight to a rocky formation called the Tombstones to be wrecked. And wreck they did. *(Turn off music, put down ship)*

When John regained consciousness he found himself way up on the beach, entangled with a large mass of bull kelp. He looked around and saw the scattered bodies of the crew. Then,

down the beach he saw some men walking, checking to see if anyone was alive. He saw them find Old Cridge alive and John was about to yell for them to come and help him as well. But then he saw one of the men put a foot on Old Cridge's head *(Put down foot as if holding head under water)* and hold him under the water until he drowned. These were wreckers who were out to make sure there were no survivors, to claim the cargo for themselves. Somehow he found the strength to get up and run as fast as he could up toward the village. But the men saw him and ran to their horses to follow him.

He got to the village and ducked into an old crumbled blockhouse. Crouched in the dark, John peered out and listened to the advancing sounds of the drumming, thundering beat of horse's hooves. They pounded the empty streets, growing like a rising wind. John could hear nothing but the booming hoof beats until . . . he became aware of a soft secret sound *(Breathe)*—a man breathing. He looked towards the sound and the shadows moved. A voice rasped like a rusted hinge in his ear, "Are ye scared? I would be if I were you."

John had every right to be scared. He may not survive to see another day. Find out what happens, *(Hold up book)* read *The Wreckers* by Iain Lawrence.

