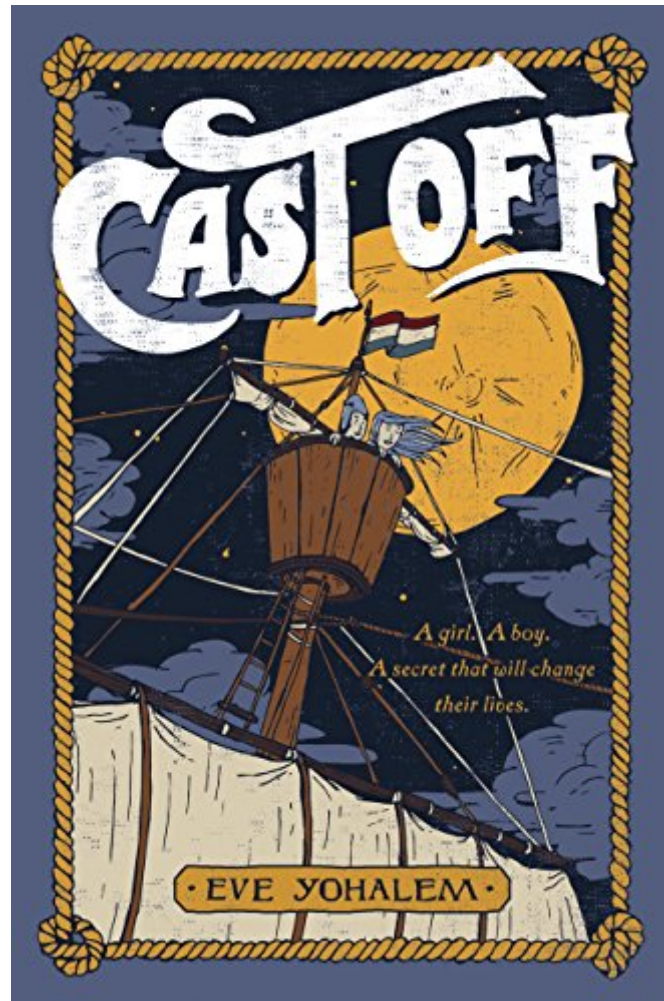


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# Cast Off: The Strange Adventures Of Petra De Winter And Bram Broen



## Synopsis

A tale of pirates, mutiny, and friendship on the high seas, perfect for fans of *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and *1663* and there is an extra passenger on board a Dutch merchant ship setting sail for the East Indies. Twelve-year-old Petra has stowed away to escape her abusive father. But she quickly realizes that surviving for months at sea will be impossible without help. So when Bram, the half-Dutch / Half-Javanese son of the ship's carpenter, finds her hiding spot, Petra convinces him to help her stay hidden . . .and help disguise her as a boy. If Petra is discovered and exposed as a girl, she could be tossed overboard, or worse . . . returned to her father. And if Bram is exposed for helping her, he could lose the only home and family he has. As tensions rise on the ship, with pirates attacking, deadly illness, and even mutiny, Petra and Bram face impossible decisions that test their friendship and threaten their dreams of freedom. Told in alternating voices and filled with secrets and intrigue, this richly researched novel is historical fiction at its best. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What a fun and perilous ride! *Cast Off* is smart, witty, detailed, historical, warm-hearted, and near impossible to put down. The cast of characters is truly a collection of colorful and varied participants in this heroine adventure story. I am waiting a few days before diving in and reading it again! Wonderful read!

I'm only thirteen, but I know a good book when I can't stop turning the pages and I read past the marking point that was set for homework. It's a fresh plot with twists and turns along the way. I've read the whole book ten times over the summer and keep it in my backpack so on the bus I can pull out a great historical fiction! LUV IT ^•

**Summary:** When Petra de Winter's wealthy father threatens to kill her, she runs away and hides on board a ship sailing from the Netherlands to the East Indies. Bram Broen, the mixed-race son of the ship's carpenter discovers her and helps her stay hidden. She disguises herself as a boy which turns out to be fortunate when she is eventually discovered. After surviving a keel hauling, she is put to work as the surgeon's assistant, using skills she learned back home in Holland. Told in alternating voices, Petra and Bram relate a story that includes piracy, mutiny, and lots of adventure. Grades 5 and up.  
**Pros:** While more of a middle school book, good fifth grade readers will enjoy this non-stop adventure. It would also make an exciting read aloud.  
**Cons:** Pretty much every aspect of life for anyone living in the 17th century who wasn't wealthy, white, and male.

A wonderful good which will leave the reader smarter, well researched historical detail. If you've read "Girl with the Pearl Earring" and wondered "where did all this wealth come from"? It was from the Netherlands prodigious maritime trading empire, and in particular the Dutch East India Company . . . to have a young adult novel that so richly documents a real place is a gift; all very well to read about imaginary places, "Cast Off" is historically solid. Readers will end the book having read a great story, and knowing something about an important part of world history. If you ask "how could I introduce teens to the history of the Dutch mercantile empire and world trade" -- without getting them to roll their eyes dismissively-- "Cast Off" is the right answer.

To escape her abusive father, a wealthy Amsterdam merchant, Petra de Winter seeks refuge on a ship setting sail to the East Indies. She fears dire consequences when Bram Broen, the ship's carpenter's son, finds her. Instead, together they come up with a plan that will help Petra escape and Bram find favor with the captain. As they sail they find adventure in fending off pirates,

weathering storms, and navigating a mutiny. *Cast Off: The Strange Adventures of Petra de Winter and Bram Broen* depicts life on a 17th century Dutch sailing ship in detail while telling a story of friendship and survival. Petra is used to hard work, but life on the ship will test her in new ways. She has to navigate living next to rats, eating meager rations, learning to climb up into the crow's nest, and helping the ship's surgeon tend to the sick and injured—all without giving away that she's a girl. Bram's father is Dutch but his mother is Javanese, and as a mixed-raced child he's not allowed on shore in The Netherlands. With the recommendation of the captain, he may be able to earn the legitimacy he longs for. But talk of mutiny has him questioning whether his loyalties lie with the crew he works with or the captain in charge. With the challenges they face, the friendship between Petra and Bram soon becomes the only thing they can count on. *Cast Off* is a historical adventure that shines light on what life was like for cast-offs and misfits in the early 1600s. It was a time when children had few options without the protection of legitimacy and loving parents. The action never stops and it is sure to satisfy adventurous girls and boys aged 10 and up. The author provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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