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For there on the path ahead of them was a tiger. It swung its tail lazily from side to side, and raised its golden eyes at them, and then opened its mouth and roared so loudly that Lila thought the very earth was shaking. One of the smallest pirates put his hand in hers.

So there they stood, and the tiger was just gathering his strength to spring, when Lila suddenly remembered her self-igniting Crackle-Dragons. She took her hand back from the small pirate, reached into her bag, and took out the three she'd brought with her.

'Mind,' she said to Rambashi, and, pulling the string of the first one, she threw the firework in front of the tiger.

The mighty beast had never been so surprised in his life. First one, then another, then yet another Crackle-Dragon snapped and flashed and sparked and leapt at him,

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Chapter Three

Rambashi and his pirates managed to get *The Bloody Murderer* to the other bank of the river, but Lila had to fish another oar out of the water when one of them dropped it, and promise to sit still and not joggle the boat.

When they hit the bank, everyone fell off their seats.

'All right,' said Rambashi, picking himself up. 'Tie the boat to a good bit of tree or something and take the prisoner ashore.'

'Are we going to eat her?' asked one of the pirates. 'Cause I'm hungry.'

'Yes, we've had nothing to eat for days,' grumbled another. 'You promised we'd have a hot meal every evening.'

'That's enough of that!' said Rambashi. 'You're a pack of scurvy dogs. Take the prisoner up to the cave and stop complaining.'

Lila wasn't sure if she could run away *just* yet. Some of those pirates did look fierce enough to run after her. Though now she looked more closely, she saw their daggers were made of wood wrapped in silver paper, so they wouldn't be able to do her much damage.

'I hope you don't mind this little transaction,' Rambashi said, as they walked along a jungle trail. 'It's purely business.'

'Have you kidnapped me, then?' asked Lila.

'I'm afraid so. You're going to have to hand over all your money in a minute, and