



Montgomery Bonbon: Sabotage at Sea

Alasdair Beckett-King

Claire Powell, Illustrator

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In Alasdair Beckett-King's playful mystery novel *Montgomery Bonbon: Sabotage at Sea*, a shipboard death leads to a buoyant investigation driven by a disguise and a deductive performance.

When a sea captain dies and his body vanishes aboard the *Dreadnawt*, Bonnie adopts an alter ego as mustachioed detective Montgomery Bonbon. Wearing an oversized coat and a beret and speaking with exaggerated accent, she conducts inquiries alongside Grandpa Banks and her friend Dana. She conceals the ruse from her mother, who dismisses sleuthing as troublemaking. Still, Bonnie assembles a theory of the crime, using interviews with fellow passengers, physical clues, and rumors about sabotage to shape her investigation. Indeed, each playful exchange reveals new clues, clarifying people's connections to the captain's disappearance.

The book is narrated via comic set pieces built on wordplay, exaggerated personas, and the friction between Bonnie's age and Bonbon's authoritative manner. Its characterizations emphasize people's dual identities too. As Bonbon, Bonnie adopts a theatrical confidence that adults accept; her exchanges with Dana and Grandpa Banks reveal the improvisation at work behind her disguise. At her opposite is a gallery of eccentrics, including officers, travelers, and staff members whose speech patterns and habits are humorous while also informing Bonnie's investigation.

The book's illustrations feature visual gags that mirror the text's timing. These drawings highlight physical comedy, clarify chase and discovery scenes, and reinforce the pacing of the unfolding mystery, whose brisk prose and tight-staged scenes guide the investigation toward a gathering of suspects and a satisfying reveal of the saboteur.

In the spirited mystery novel *Montgomery Bonbon: Sabotage at Sea*, a girl solves a shipboard crime while disguised, thanks to her careful questioning of those around her.

BRANDON PAWLICKI (May / June 2026)

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