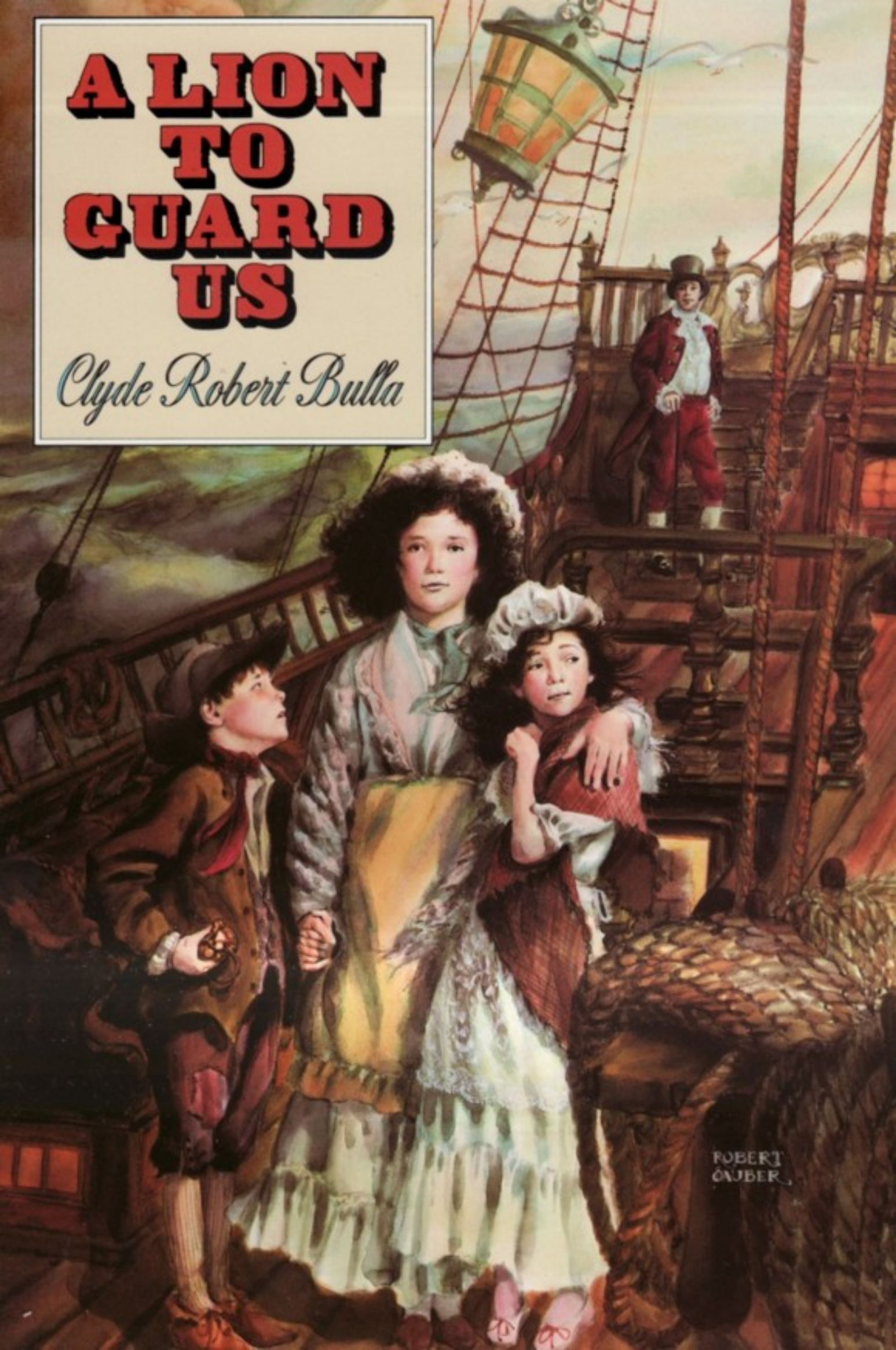


# A LION TO GUARD US

*Clyde Robert Bulla*



ROBERT  
GAUBER

# *The Sailor Man*

On a February morning in the year 1609, a small, thin-faced man made his way over London Bridge. He wore a leather jacket and a blue wool stocking cap. His clothes were splashed with mud, and mud sucked at his shoes. He could hardly see for the cold rain in his face.

He had been looking for Fish Street, and here it was, at the end of London Bridge. Now he was looking for a house on Fish Street—a great stone house not far from the bridge.

Here was one with tall chimneys and many windows. It must be the house, he thought. He went around to the back.

A plump, pretty maid opened the door.

"Would this be the Trippett house?" he asked. She looked at his muddy clothes. "What do you want?"

"A word with Mistress Freebold, if she's about."

"Mistress Freebold? Oh, you mean Annie. You can't see her," said the maid. "She's sick abed."

"Could you just let her know there's someone here from America—?"

"America?" The maid stared into his face. "Then you must be—" She was gone. He heard her crying out, "Amanda, Amanda!"

Someone came running. Someone cried, "Father!" and a girl was there. She looked no more than ten or eleven—a pale little thing with great, dark eyes.

She stopped. She said in bitter disappointment, "You're not my father."

"I shouldn't think so," said the man.

"Ellie said you were from America, and she thought—I thought—"

"So you're James Freebold's girl," he said.

"One of them. I'm Amanda." She asked quickly, "Do you know my father?"

“I do, and I saw him not many weeks ago. We were together in America, in the colony of Virginia. I’m a sailor, you see, and my ship was there—”

“And you saw him.” Her eyes were bright again. “Was he well? What did he say?”

“He was well enough, for all I could see. He’d built a house in Jamestown. That’s the only town there. When my ship sailed, he asked if I’d stop for a word with his family in London. He thinks of you each day. He prays you will all be together before another year is out.”

Tears came to her eyes. “When you see him, will you tell him—?”

“I’ll not be seeing him again,” the man broke in. “It’s a long, hard voyage to Virginia. I’ll not be going back.”

“Oh,” she said.

Someone was calling, “Amanda!”

“You’re wanted,” he said. “I’ll take my leave.”

“But you’ll come again?”

He shook his head. “I’ve told my tale. Good-day to you.”

He left her. He was gone, and she didn’t know his name or where to find him again, and there were

Amanda Freebold doesn't know what to do. Her father left three years ago for the new colony of Jamestown, in America, thousands of miles away. All Amanda has to remember him by is a little brass lion's head he gave his family to guard them while he is gone. Now her mother has just died, leaving Amanda to take care of her younger brother and sister.

As head of the family, Amanda finally decides to take her brother and sister to America to find Father. The ocean crossing is long and hard, and the children don't know whom to trust. But with the lion's head to guard them, Amanda knows that somehow everything will work out fine.

"An exciting tale. Top-notch writing."

—*The New Yorker*

**Clyde Robert Bulla** is the author of many books for children including, in Harper Trophy, *DANIEL'S DUCK*, an ALA Notable Book, and *SHOESHINE GIRL*.

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