



KATHERINE RUNDELL

Rooftoppers

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The baby was found wrapped for warmth in the musical score of a Beethoven symphony. It had drifted almost a mile from the ship, and was the last to be rescued. The man who lifted it into the rescue boat was a fellow passenger, and a scholar. It is a scholar's job to notice things. He noticed that it was a girl, with hair the colour of lightning, and the smile of a shy person.

Think of night-time with a speaking voice. Or think how moonlight might talk, or think of ink, if ink had vocal cords. Give those things a narrow aristocratic face with hooked eyebrows, and long arms and legs, and that is what the baby saw as she was lifted out of her cello case and up into safety. His name was Charles Maxim, and he determined, as he held her in his large hands - at arm's length, as he would a leaky flowerpot - that he would keep her.