

A sailor is born, not made. And by "sailor" is meant, not the average efficient and hopeless creature who is found today in the forecastle of deepwater ships, but the man who will take a fabric compounded of wood and iron and rope and canvas and compel it to obey his will on the surface of the sea. Barring captains and mates of big ships, the small-boat sailor is the real sailor. He knows, he must know, how to make the wind carry his craft from one given point to another given point. He must know about tides and rips and eddies, bar and channel markings, and day and night signals; he must be wise in weather-lore; and he must be sympathetically familiar with the peculiar qualities of his boat which differentiate it from every other boat that was ever built and rigged. He must know how to gentle her about, as one instance of a myriad, and to fill her on the other tack without deadening her way or allowing her to fall off too far.

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The deepwater sailor of today needs know none of these things. And he doesn't. He pulls and hauls as he is ordered, swabs decks, washes paint, and chips iron-rust. He knows nothing, and cares less. Put him in a small boat and he is helpless. He will cut an even better figure on the hurricane deck of a horse. I shall never forget my child-astonishment when I first encountered one of these strange beings. He was a runaway English sailor. I was a lad of twelve, with a decked-over, fourteen-foot, centre-board skiff which I had taught myself to sail. I sat at his feet as at the feet of a god, while he discoursed of strange lands and peoples, deeds of violence, and hair-raising gales at sea. Then, one day, I took him for a sail. With all the trepidation of the veriest little amateur, I hoisted sail and got under way. Here was a man, looking on critically, I was sure, who knew more in one second about boats and the water than I could ever know. After an interval, in which I exceeded myself, he took the tiller and the sheet.



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My favourite breed of dog is the Bearded Collie. This is because it was the first dog I can remember. She was called Sue, why I don't know. We used to play tig on the garden. As she got older her fur became more matted and I used to clip her. My next door neighbour has a dog, who is also a Bearded Collie, called Ben. He is getting very unsteady on his feet and by a remarkable coincidence has the same back problem as she does.

We used to have a cat called Topsy. We got him when I was a baby, so I never thought about why a cat might be called Topsy. Later when I was a teenager I finally asked my parents why he got that name and discovered that they neutered him before he had a name and as my father was a vet he came back up to the flat as soon as the deed was done and was very tipsy for a couple of hours. I think it was nice to have a completely unique name for a cat.

Audunn went on his way until he reached the city of Rome in the south. When he had stayed there as long as he wished, he turned back, and a severe illness attacked him, and he grew terribly emaciated. All the money which the King had given him for his pilgrimage was now spent, and so he took up his staff and begged his food. By now his hair had fallen out and he looked in a bad way. He got back to Denmark at Easter, and went to the place where the King was stationed. He dared not let the King see him, but stayed in a side-aisle of the church, intending to approach the King when he went to church for Nones. But when Audunn beheld the King and his courtiers splendidly arrayed, he did not dare to show himself.