

Voyage

Eyes had opened, awakening to a vast, empty blue as far as the eye can see. The colour was almost omnipresent and the vivid smell of salt permeated the air. Looking down, I saw wooden planks were below, I was on a vessel of sorts. Where was I, *who* was I? I'd have to set aside those questions for another time as my vision had settled upon two people much older than myself, though I had imagined that this was our first meet, the familiarity I'd felt with them was too profound for that to be true. They called the all encompassing void we found ourselves floating above, "the ocean". After explaining my circumstances, the familiar strangers I was conversing with revealed that they were actually my navigator and captain, ready to guide me through the endless ocean to find the island paradise just begging to be charted. They were recruiting me to be their new crewmate. O' course, I had many questions. What was an island? What was a navigator or better yet, a captain? This was all very confusing to my younger self, but despite this, I accepted. As a newly appointed crewmate, my role was as clear as day, learn as much as possible about the sea surrounding, all its ins and outs had to be second nature to me. As natural as the breeze which blew past from time to time. My journey through the ever expansive ocean was relatively calm, with still waters abound. Seemed my condition was fairly favourable overall.

The task was by no means easy, but it was one I endured. Time and time again I would fail, repeatedly believing my efforts to gift me no rewards. Whenever I wandered into this state of doubt, my cap'n would be there to pick me up off the ground, while my navigator could show me the direction in which answers were found. I could think of no better crew than the two I was with, all my needs and wants constantly catered to, so as to ensure my development. But this crew was not made to last, it seems. See, the captain had once found his island. This island was discovered alongside his old crew. They spent a good bit of time on that island, completely overlooking the turbulent waters slowly increasing in intensity around them. The crew didn't last, battles with the violent waves and thunderous storms left the crew a tattered representation of what once was. With just two members left, the Cap abandoned ship, gave up on his crew. Why he did this, I'll never know, but what I do know is that leaving yer buddies alone at sea is an action that no sailor should ever consider. Hearing all this for the first time, the navigator couldn't bear the task of sailin' the seven seas with a treacherous man like the cap, and at the nearest port, off she went. As for me, I didn't know what to think. These events had happened just as I reached an age to improve my rank and forge my own path on a new ship, so I did.

Though it may have been premature, I knew that I couldn't exist on the same ship as that man, he'd done a lot for me, but it was time we parted ways. What I'd been through was tough, but the times ahead were much worse. Aboard my dingy, old ship which sported a discoloured brown look along with more barnacles than you could count, I braved the gargantuan, azure monster before me. Towering waves, spiralling whirlpools, devastating storms and horrific sea beasts, I'd seen em all. Every day I hoped to see my island, the place to settle down and escape the terrors of the water I found myself upon, but no salvation came. Days passed, then weeks, then months, even years. I was well and truly lost, with no hope of spying another living soul in my lifetime. Though I had felt the presence of other ships, I failed to ever lay my eyes on another vessel, but they were there, I was sure of it. After an uncountable number of days spent wallowing in self-pity and doubt, I spied another. A woman could be seen not too far out from where I was, but there was no ship to speak of. Instead, a single plank was all that was keeping her from a watery grave.

Of course, I sprung into action and pulled her aboard. Who was this person? How did she get here? I had many questions for her, but more than anything, I was excited about the prospect of even being able to ask questions to another person in the first place. In my feverish state I had failed to notice the beauty of the person I had rescued. Sure, I'd seen plenty of attractive people in my time at the various port-towns with my old crew, but none held a candle to this woman. She had a pale complexion with cascading hair as black as the basalt rocks I'd seen building up near volcanoes. With emerald green eyes that shimmered under the sun, reflecting a refreshing radiance and subtle intelligence too complex to describe in mere words. Needless to say, I had been captured, all those questions that simmered towards a boiling point in my mind had died down and become completely irrelevant to me in that moment. Despite this, she still explained her situation. As it turns out, we shared many similarities, a struggle in the crew had left her cast aside, left alone. Through many hours of talking we better understood each other and our circumstances leading up to our meeting. It took some time and convincing, especially because of my subpar vessel, but we eventually agreed to form a new crew and sail together. Sure, there were problems, notably our complete lack of navigational skills, but the seas that I had once been thoroughly defeated by were nothing to me... *us*, anymore. For the first time since I had awoken on that ship all those years ago, I felt supported, maintained and above all cared for. Though we called ourselves a crew, we had no order, sailing as equals and dividing the jobs accordingly.

Time passed by, the waters became still, and the voyage changed from a game of survival to discovery. I was no longer searching for my island, but our island. And that moment of discovery came much sooner than expected. “Land ahoy!” Hearing that was something that I’ll never forget, I’ll tell ya. Call it fate or a dumb stoke of luck, but we had found our island. Pearly white sand and a lush green forest in the centre, it looked to span for a long distance, farther than the eye could see, even. Despite its size, we had spotted it too late, I couldn’t slow the ship down in time to properly beach it, at best we would crash. What would I do? What *could* I do? That confusion that had plagued me for all of my life began to set in once again. Not allowing this, my crew member sprung into action, fastening a few heavy barrels full of metal junk onto a rope and threw them into the ocean. The rope quickly tensed and began dropping rapidly into the sea, my crewmate acted much quicker than myself. Just like lightning, she wrapped the rope around the ship’s mast and tied a knot that wouldn’t come undone even if a sea leviathan’d pulled on it. To my astonishment, the ship began to slow, she’d done it, a makeshift anchor of junk that had been simply lying about had been fashioned into a life saving device by that woman, finally, we had made it.

So why am I telling you all this crap? That’s what yer probably thinking right now, Caspian. As you’ve probably guessed by now, that crewmate is your co-captain, Mary. By the time of you reading this, you’d have already set sail and departed the island. I’ve welcomed many into my crew, but you were definitely one of my favourites. Now, it’s time for you to set sail and embark on your own voyage across the sea, I do worry that the lonely fate among the endless ocean that I had experienced will be reflected in your own adventures, but it’s best not to worry. You’re better than me after all. I’ve taught you everything you need to know to conquer those tides. And though they may seem overwhelming, too large to chart. I guarantee that you and your navy will find their own path across the navy waters that surround the island. I found my island despite my unfavourable circumstances, now its time for you to find yours. May the wind forever fill your sails, Caspian.

Best of luck,
Cap’n Briggs.