

The First Voyage of Sinbad

MANY YEARS AGO, there lived a young man named Sinbad. Sinbad was born into money, and as such, spent his youth frittering it away; dropping huge sums on the finest food, clothing, and other luxuries. He had had a good life, but as he got older, he felt something was missing. He had everything a man could want, sure, but he had never had any experience. He craved excitement and adventure.

The very next day, he sold all his things. Not knowing quite what else to do, he walked down to the harbor at Baghdad. "Say, could you all use another merchant?" he asked a group of men surrounding a boat.

"Sure, we'll take you on," they replied, and in a matter of minutes, he had signed a contract and joined the crew of their ship. Off to sea they went.

They steered toward the East Indies, and on the way they passed many little islands, where they got out to sell or exchange goods. One day, they stopped off at a little island. It was low; almost even with the edge of the water, and they went about their business as they usually would on islands—eating, drinking, and resting for the next leg of the journey.

Suddenly, the whole island began to tremble! "Quick! Back to the boat!" the sailors shouted, and they scrambled back to the ship. Turning to look behind him, Sinbad saw that what they thought was a restful island was actually a giant whale, angered by the fire they had set to cook their dinner.

The others made it back to the ship

in time, but Sinbad was not so lucky. He had time enough to catch a piece of driftwood, but the captain wouldn't wait for him. He hoisted the sails and drifted away, while Sinbad crashed about on the waves.

He stayed adrift for the rest of the day and the entire night. Miraculously, at dawn, a great wave picked him up and threw him ashore. He had been tossed around so much, he had no idea where he was, but he found a dry cave and slept for many hours to regain his strength.

The next morning, he searched the island for food and drink. After hours of searching and coming up with nothing, he spotted a little spring in the distance. As he pushed further into the jungle, a stern voice shouted behind him: "Who are you?"

"I am Sinbad the Sailor," he answered, his voice trembling. "I was cast ashore here; I know not where I am."

Suddenly, the man materialized in front of him. "Come with me," he said and took the ragged sailor by the hand. He led him into a cave where merry men and women sat around a table, eating and drinking.

Sinbad was ravenous, and he immediately set about feasting. After he had filled his stomach, he asked them all how they had found their way to the land. "We are the staff of King Mirage," they answered. "You're a lucky man," said one.

"We are scheduled to leave tomorrow. Had you been caught in that storm for another day, you might have never been saved."

The next morning, the band of merry-makers went to the capital, and took

Sinbad with them. They presented him to King Mirage. "Who are you?" he bellowed at him, "And what has brought you to my land?"

Sinbad recounted his adventure; of being tossed upon the shore by an unforgiving sea.

"My, my. What a time you've had!" he said. "You must be exhausted. I'll see to it that your health is taken care of here."

For weeks, Sinbad remained in the land and got to know the people in it. He mostly stayed near the port, where he made fast friends the merchants and sailors. All the while, though, he made sure to keep close ties with the king and his men. After so many weeks without much more for him to do than chat, they became quite close.

One day, he was at the port when a familiar ship cast anchor there. He watched the names on the crates and boxes they were unloading, when suddenly he saw his own on some of them. He then approached the captain and asked whom the cargo belonged to. "Oh, a man named Sinbad," he answered. "He joined us at Baghdad. We had an accident at a little island a ways out, and he got caught in a storm and drowned. He won't be needing these, so I've decided to trade them and give the money to his family."

"Actually, he might," Sinbad replied. "For I am Sinbad, the same Sinbad that

joined you at Baghdad."

"Pssh—that's not true," the captain guffawed. "I saw him drown with my own eyes. Everyone on board did."

"It's me!" Sinbad persuaded. "I survived on the sea for an entire day and night, and the next morning washed up on the shore here. I've been living among the king's men in the palace ever since."

Just then, one of the other sailors came ashore, and the moment he saw him, he ran over to give him a hug. "Sinbad! You're alive!" he cried as he threw his arms around him. More and more of his colleagues came down onto shore, and when they saw his face, they all whooped and shouted and surrounded Sinbad in joy. Sinbad brought them back to the palace for a celebration.

The next morning, Sinbad brought his belongings from the ship to King Mirage. "These are fine things," said the king as he slowly looked them over, running his hand gently over a golden chalice. "I know you are eager to get back to your home, and I know the hardships you have suffered." The King looked up at Sinbad. "I will buy all of these riches off of you...and I will pay handsomely for them."

Sinbad sailed home richer than he ever had been, for not only did he have wealth, he had friends.

THINK ABOUT IT

Now that you've read the story, pretend you're the captain of Sinbad's ship. On the following page, fill out the ship's log entries from the day after the storm and the day you reunited with Sinbad.

SHIP'S LOG

date: _____

location: _____

weather: _____

SHIP'S LOG

date: _____

location: _____

weather: _____
