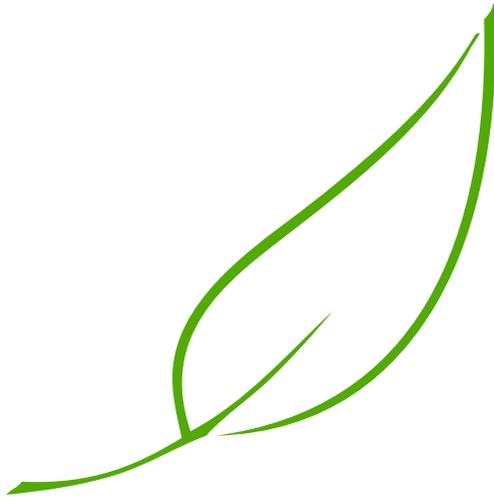


SAILING, SAILING

by Robert L. Crowe



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WALKER: (*at open, Walker is standing on a dock by a sailboat*)

LANDIS: (*enters*) Hello. I'm thinking of buying a sailboat. Is this one for sale?

WALKER: Why would you think that this boat is for sale?

LANDIS: Well ... it has that big sign that says, "For Sale."

WALKER: You're much sharper than you look. Seeing that sign, I, too, would think it is for sale.

LANDIS: I don't know anything about sailing but I always thought it would be fun. Can I ask you some questions?

WALKER: Sure.

LANDIS: I know the parts of the sailboat have some unique names. To help me word any questions would you tell me what some of the parts of the ship are called?

WALKER: For openers, this is not big enough to be a ship. It has to grow a lot before it becomes a ship. Let's call it a boat.

(*points*) This is the deck. This is the main mast and that is the main sail. This long pole attached to the bottom of the mast is called the boom, and this ...

LANDIS: Wait. Why do they call it a "Boom?"

WALKER: Let's say you are out sailing. It's a beautiful day and you are running before a stiff wind. You are standing on the deck admiring the beautiful day when the wind shifts and ...

Boom. That's the pole that knocks you in the water.

LANDIS: (*imagines the scene, then*) Boom!

WALKER: Exactly. This is the tiller that is fastened to the rudder that steers the boat. Think of it as the steering wheel. The front is the bow; the back is the stern. In giving directions, the front is fore ... the back is aft.

LANDIS: That's odd.

WALKER: What is?

LANDIS: Calling it four and aft. Why not call it four and two, or four and one, or just one and two?

WALKER: (*pause*) I don't know. I have never asked anyone that question. And I doubt that anyone has ever asked anyone that question.

LANDIS: And those orange things are life jackets?

WALKER: Yes, sometimes called Mae Wests.

LANDIS: Why are they called that?

WALKER: It has to do with padding. I don't think I should explain more than that. There must be a life-vest for every passenger. If the boat sinks, the floatation device will keep you above water long enough to be run over by another rescue craft.

LANDIS: What?

WALKER: Just kidding.

LANDIS: Oh, yeah. Ha-ha. Do boats like this sink very often?

WALKER: No. Usually just once.

LANDIS: Have you ever had a boat sink?

WALKER: Yeah, Once. It was kinda strange.

LANDIS: What happened?

WALKER: I was sailing one night off the Massachusetts coast. It was at night so I had running lights on the mast. I saw this light in the distance. A voice came over the radio and told me to change my course. I told him to change *his* course. He repeated that I should turn. I told him I wasn't going to ... and I didn't.

LANDIS: What happened?

WALKER: He was right. I should have turned. The guy was calling from the Boston Lighthouse. Rocks really messed up the boat. I did get in the last word though.

LANDIS: What was it?

WALKER: Mayday!

LANDIS: When someone needs help, why do they yell, "Mayday?" Why not June-day or October-day?

WALKER: Where do you get all these dumb questions?

LANDIS: I don't know. Do you know why you yell Mayday?

WALKER: No.

LANDIS: Should I not ask you any more questions?

WALKER: Naw. It's all right. I just don't know all the dumb answers. Ask away. Let me ask you one. What do you do, like, for employment?

LANDIS: I was with a government agency called the Watchdog Commission. The initials are W.C. ... stands for Who Cares.

WALKER: You said you *were* with them. Not any longer?

LANDIS: Victim of downsizing. And they weren't very subtle about it. My last paycheck was wrapped in a roadmap.

WALKER: When you downsize some sailors from a ship it's called a crew cut.

LANDIS: Oh. (*doesn't get the joke, continues ...*) When I got cut, I thought I'd just drift for a while and a sailboat seems like a good idea. What about you?

WALKER: Real estate. But I quit. The boss wasn't very honest with people. For example, he advertised a house for sale that ... "had a thousand little extras." Yes ... they were termites. And another ... "This house has a certain air about it." Yep. It was next to a pig farm. So, I quit. It seems to me that sailing is a good way to get away and look for treasures.

LANDIS: Oh ... Oh ... I got a joke for you. How much did the pirate pay for his piercings?

WALKER: Piercings?

LANDIS: Yes, piercings. How much did the pirate pay for his piercings?

WALKER: I don't know.

LANDIS: A buck-an-ear! (*Walker does not react, just stares at him.*) Get it ... Pirate Buccaneer. A buck ... an ... ear?

WALKER: Yeah, I got it.

LANDIS: I thought maybe you didn't understand. You just ...

WALKER: I got it.

LANDIS: Hey. Can I sit in the boat?

WALKER: Sure. Have a seat. (*Landis sits.*) Comfy?

LANDIS: Oh, yeah. I could adjust to this. Maybe go fishing.

WALKER: "Give a man a fish and it feeds him for a day; teach him how to fish and he will waste 6 hours every day."

LANDIS: Yeah, at least 6 hours. Doesn't even matter if you catch anything. The inside of this boat is really squeaky clean. What's the best soap to use?

WALKER: Tide.



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