

## At Sea

well well well,

so the time comes for a sea tale.

as of this moment we are motoring along through the Red Sea, just east of Sudan. we will be rounding the Arabian Penn. and docking in Jebal Ali, U.A.E on monday morning. it's absolutely beautiful to go outside at night in the Red Sea. the stars are almost as nice as being out in the middle of the ocean seeing as we have po-dunk- nowhere, Sudan on one side and a span of water with po-dunk- nowhere, Saudi Arabia on the other. occasionally the view is torched with fires that burn like the eyes of Allah (sorry, stupid joke), on the offshore oil platforms that are scattered everywhere.

so here is my story of Port Said, Egypt:

we pulled in to the anchorage around 1 PM on monday and awaited word on when our convoy would be passing through the Suez Canal. we finally got word around 9 PM that we would be leaving at 10. with that being said, about 12 speed boats come along side and start dropping off all sorts of people to come on board and "help" us through the canal. the most memorable though was one of the canal pilots. he got off the pilot boat and climbed onto the platform of the gangway (we lowered the gangway to the water so he wouldn't have to climb up the pilot (rope) ladder), a rather kind gesture if you ask me. anyways, he just stood there and started screaming at the chief mate to bring him up. these gangways are not meant to be used as elevators, and would probably have killed him had the Mate agreed with his infuriated demands. the Mate screamed back that he would, indeed, have to walk up the gangway. by the time the pilot reached the top he was so livid that i thought he might just have an aneurism right there. the funny part is that he calmed down once he started talking to my sea partner, a deck cadet, because Garret made up a story about being Egyptian. he's half black and half white and really looks like he could be egyptian, and of course when he told the pilot this fib, he got all excited and calmed down.

the maneuver that night was not too exciting so they let me go get a few hours sleep and return after breakfast.

on my way to the control room i was greeted by four Egyptian men who all gave me the same greeting: "Hello, my friend! have a nice day!" i'm not sure if they knew more english or if that was it, but i found it rather entertaining. about 10 minutes later i walked out of the control room to find the entire passage way on the main deck piled up with trinkets. they were onboard to sell stuff to us as we made the 16 hour passage through the canal. most of the stuff was totally worthless. things like 4-function calculators, really bad smelling perfume and incense, demonic looking dancing camel toys, etc... i did, however, manage to buy a turban! woo hoo!

so i'm pretty awesome now.

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anyways, so as we're going through the canal and these guys are peddling their wares, i start browsing. i racked up a giant pile of things i wanted to get from them. they told me it would cost \$120 USD. i said, "not a chance, i'll give you \$30." the guy in charge told me no so i handed him back the pile of goods and went back to the control room empty handed. he was rather upset at this move but i knew what i was doing. they start packing up to get dropped off as we're nearing the end of the canal and i poke my head out and look at the boss. he looks at me with a rather depressed look on his face and says "what about for \$50 USD?" and i said, "nope, \$35 is as high as i go" then one of his guys reminds him (i'm assuming, it was all said in Arabic) that i liked one of the nicer casio watches they were selling, but didn't have that in my pile. so i said "yeah, i'll take it... everything for \$45 total. final offer." he went for it...

mainly i think because he didn't want to have to lug it home from the ship.

let's just say they were not so friendly as they went to get off as they were when they got on. hehe. that means i got good deals. they hate it when you talk them down, but that's the fun part of a barter-system economy that they live in.

so yeah, i picked up a few things for the family and tried to keep it cheap, as i know Dubai and Singapore shall hit the pocket book rather hard. such is life.

it's getting really hot outside and in the engine room but i suppose that's what happens when you go to the middle east.

hope all is well with you and please write back!

much love,

-T

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ahoy there matey!

so here's just a quick update on my life. last night was the first time we saw land in about a week. we went through the straits of gibraltar starting at about 8:30 PM local time (1:30 PM mountain time). it was pretty cool seeing two continents at the same time, even though i didn't get to set foot in either of them. currently we are motoring past the tunisian coast, we were very close to the coast all afternoon which made for some nice scenery at lunch and dinner.

we will be in Port Said, Egypt on either sunday or monday and will proceed from there through the Suez Canal and on to Jabel Ali, U.A.E. (about a 45 minute drive from the city of Dubai) where we'll get an overnight stay. from Dubai we will be headed towards the famed city of Singapore! i'm very excited for singapore. i've heard so many great things about the country and haven't heard anything negative. anyways, that's still a few weeks away.

work for me is going ok i suppose. had a bit of a tiff with an engineer today. it got resolved rather quickly though once things were cleared up. it was one of those things where the point got lost somewhere between what i meant and what he interpreted. but all is well there now, no worries.

my sea projects are crawling very slowly at this point, but show signs of speeding up soon.

all in all life is pretty peachy aboard the President Jackson. i hope all is well and look forward to hearing from you soon!

much love,

Tyler

P.S. you want to know the difference between a fairy tale and a sea story?

- a fairy tale starts "once upon a time"
- a sea story starts "this ain't no s\*\*\*"

i found it funny. maybe you will too or maybe you won't.