



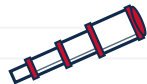
THE BRIDGE

The Admiral

The name on every bottle belongs to him. Agwe is the master of the sea: admiral of the waters and patron of everyone who makes a living on them. His colors are blue and white. He is greeted with salutes and offered coffee, cake and champagne on a small boat set out on the water. What we carry is our reading of him: a host, a standard, a calm hand on the wheel.

HOLD YOUR COURSE.

Wind E 8 kn · Sea calm · Visibility excellent



THE LOOKOUT

The Watchkeeper

Four in the morning and he is already on deck, coffee in hand, eyes on a horizon nobody else is awake for. He sees the weather turn an hour before it does. He sees who is tired, who is lying, who needs a minute. He keeps it to himself and keeps the watch. His face says he slept fine. His eyes do the real work, so he looks after them.

SEE IT FIRST.

Wind ESE 12 kn · Sea slight · Before dawn



THE RIGGING

The Bosun

Every line on the ship answers to the bosun. He knows which rope will fray before it frays, and he keeps the deck so tight you could eat off it. His beard is the same: oiled, shaped, nothing loose. He carries a silver pipe on a chain and never raises his voice; he doesn't have to. A well-kept man is a quiet instruction to everyone around him.

KEEP YOUR LINES CLEAN.

Wind NE 14 kn · Sea moderate · Decks scrubbed



THE CROW'S NEST

The Topman

*He climbs while the rest of the crew is still talking about the climb.
Up past the yards, into the crow's nest, wind in his hair and the
whole sea laid out below. Up there the noise stops. He takes care
of the top because that is where he lives: the scalp, the crown, the
head that has to stay clear. When the ship rolls, he doesn't.*

KEEP YOUR HEAD ABOVE IT.

Wind N 16 kn · Swell from the north · Clear aloft



DEEP WATER

The Diver

*Brass helmet, lead boots, a line to the surface and nothing else.
The diver goes under where the light gives out and the world goes
quiet. He comes back up slower than he went down, because that
is how you come back up. At home it is a long shower or a hot bath,
the door shut, the phone in another room. Everything below the
collar gets its due.*

GO UNDER. COME UP NEW.

Wind light · Sea glassy · Diver down



PROVISIONS

The Steward

Nothing sails until the steward says the stores are aboard. Water, coffee, the good salt, soap and a tin of balm in the right drawer. He keeps the officers' table: pressed cloth, a pot always warm, a bottle on ice for the night someone comes home. He doesn't cook for show. He cooks so the ship can go a long way. A well-found ship is a provisioned one.

A WELL-FOUND SHIP.

In port · Stores coming aboard



THE LAMP ROOM

The Keeper

His whole job is a light for people he will never meet. Every evening he climbs the stairs, trims the wick, polishes the lens and turns the lamp toward the dark. Somewhere out there a ship sees it and knows where the rocks are. At home it is the candle in the window, the porch light, the text that says you're up if they need you.

LEAVE A LIGHT FOR THE FLEET.

Wind SW 10 kn · Dusk · Light exhibited



SEA CHEST

The Navigator

Charts, dividers, a pencil worn to the nub. The navigator plots the course before anyone casts off, then checks it every watch. He doesn't trust feeling; he trusts the fix. Three bearings and you know exactly where you stand. A routine works the same way: a few steps, in order, checked against the morning. Pack what you need into one chest and sail with it.

PLOT THE COURSE.

Sun on the meridian · Position fixed



PILOT

The Harbor Pilot

Every harbor has a pilot: the man who comes out in a small boat to bring the big ship in past the shoals. He knows the channel by heart. He climbs the ladder, takes the wheel for twenty minutes and is gone before anyone thanks him. Our pilot is a few questions long. Answer them and we will bring you in to the right berth.

TRY THE WATER FIRST.

Approaching harbor · Pilot boarding



THE MASTHEAD

The Colors

At eight bells of the morning watch the ensign goes up, and every ship in the harbor does it at the same moment. Nobody is told twice. It is the first thing done right that day, and it sets the tone for the rest. Hoist your own colors: every letter of your name is a flag, and every flag has something to say.

COLORS AT 0800.

Ensign hoisted · All hands on deck



THE WATCH

Eight Bells

A watch is four hours, struck on a bell every half hour: one bell, two bells, up to eight. Eight bells ends the watch; the next man takes over and you go below. Sailors kept time this way for centuries, not for want of clocks but because a bell is a promise everyone can hear. You stood your watch. The ship is in better shape than you found it.

EIGHT BELLS, AND ALL'S WELL.

All's well



THE COMMISSION

The Fleet

One ship is a story. A fleet is a standard. Every man who joins the Commission flies the same colors and keeps the same watch, from the islands to Brooklyn to Montréal to wherever he docks tonight. Bring another man aboard and you move up in rank; bring a crew and you sit at the Captain's Table. Nobody sails alone for long.

WELCOME ABOARD.

Ships in company · Signals exchanged



THE SHIP'S LOG

Collect all twelve.