

THE ROOKIE SAILOR

PREFACE

Robby Fleming was a lively and often mischievous child, he lived for adventure and was seemingly, born to be wild. He began his time on earth in the east of London in the late 40's, and was soon giving his parents palpitations with his death defying, and often foolhardy antics. He began "flying lessons" at the tender age of just eighteen months when he managed to fall from the first floor of his grandparent's fire escape. Despite landing on concrete, the supple bones of a baby proved to be his saviour and no real damage was done. By the age of four, he was often slipping out of the back door of the family's council house and spending his time fishing from the banks of some local ponds. In those early days, not having access to any money, he improvised with the use of an old bamboo stick, a cotton reel, a length of twine and a bent safety pin. He would scratch around in the grass searching for worms which he used for bait and he soon became skilled in the art of catching small perch and roach

Disaster struck when he managed to fall into one of those ponds, the wayward little lad was extremely fortunate that a passerby had noticed his plight and had dragged him from those murky waters. The events of that almost fatal day remain etched in his memory, the sensation of being under water, the quietness, the green brown water, the bubbles, the aquatic plants and the strange feeling of disorientation. He also recalls riding home, perched on the handlebars of his rescuer's bicycle, and the look on his mother's face when she learned of the day's events...

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