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# Leo

## Dog of the Sea

1519–1521

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Leo is a hardened old sea dog. After four ocean voyages, he knows not to trust anyone but himself.

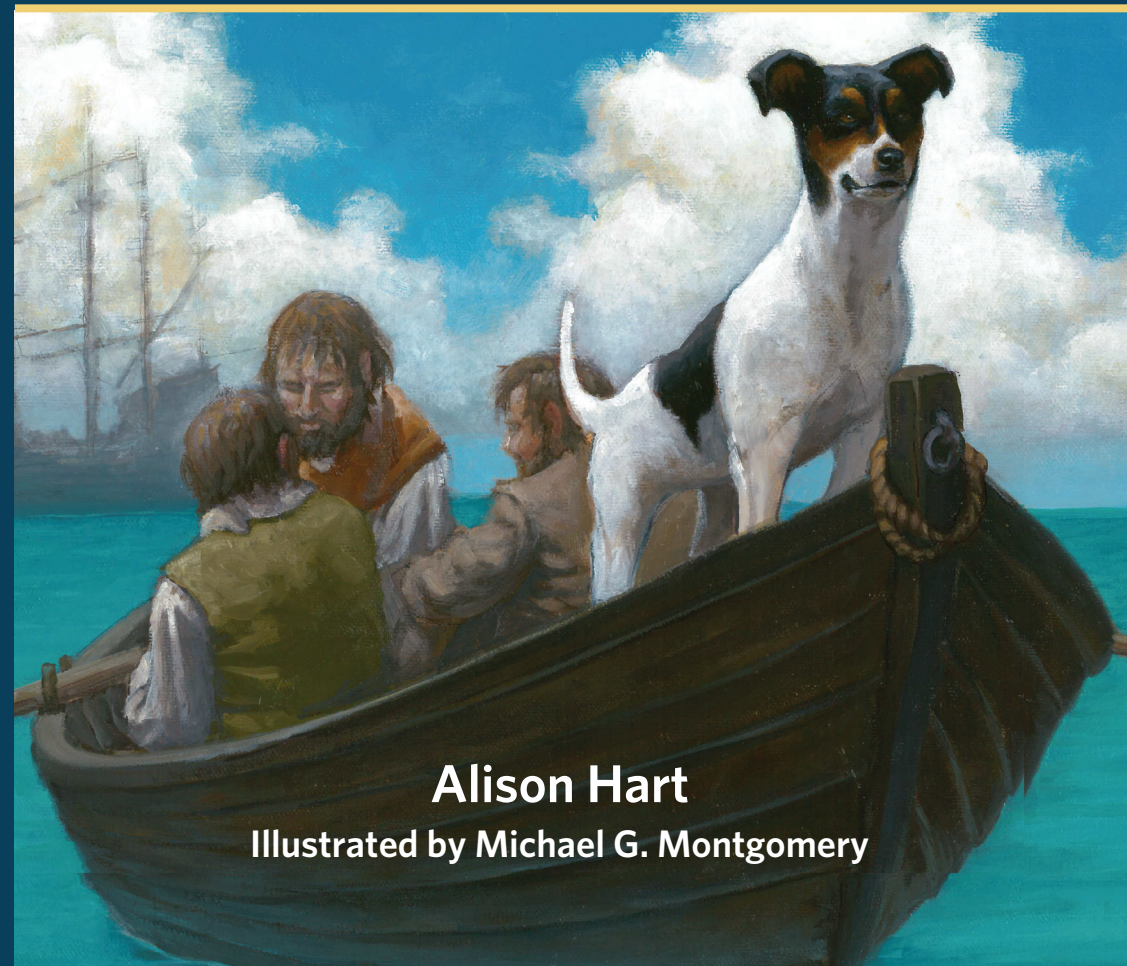
But shortly after he sets sail with Magellan on a journey to find a westward route to the Spice Islands, he discovers Marco, a young stowaway on board. Though he is determined not to get involved, Leo saves the boy's life when a storm nearly washes him overboard.

Now Leo finds himself developing friendships for the first time—with Marco, now a page, and Pigafetta, Magellan's scribe. Together, the three of them experience hunger and thirst, storms and doldrums, and mutinies and hostile, violent encounters. Will they ever find safe passage?

From the corner of my eye I spy the boy. His eyes are wide with fear. The ship lists, pitching all of us to the edge. Waves surge onto the deck, and the skinny boy is engulfed. A surge picks him up, drags him to the rail, and pitches him halfway over.

With a mighty leap I grasp the hem of his tunic and hold tightly. The ship tilts in the other direction and he flops on top of me. Together we slide to the mainmast. The boy hugs me with one arm while his other circles the sturdy beam. Frothy waves wash over us, trying to drag us into the sea, and I feel his arm tremble.

Leo  
Dog of the Sea



Alison Hart  
Illustrated by Michael G. Montgomery



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# Leo

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**Alison Hart**

**Illustrated by Michael G. Montgomery**

  
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Published by  
PEACHTREE PUBLISHERS  
1700 Chattahoochee Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318-2112  
*www.peachtree-online.com*

Text © 2017 by Alison Hart  
Illustrations © 2017 by Michael G. Montgomery

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Edited by Kathy Landwehr  
Map, ship diagram, and illustrations on pages 149 and 157 by Adela Pons  
Cover design by Nicola Simmonds Carmack  
Interior design and composition by Melanie McMahon Ives

Cover illustration rendered in oil on canvas board; interior illustrations in pencil.

Printed in October 2016 in the United States of America by LCS Communications in Harrisonburg, Virginia  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
First Edition

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Hart, Alison, 1950- author. | Montgomery, Michael, 1952- illustrator.

Title: Leo, dog of the sea / written by Alison Hart ; illustrated by Michael G. Montgomery.

Description: Atlanta, GA : Peachtree Publishers, [2017] | Summary: "Leo is a hardened old sea dog who knows not to trust anyone but himself after three ocean voyages. But when he sets sail with Magellan on a journey to find a westward route to the Spice Islands, he develops new friendships as they experience hunger and thirst, storms and doldrums, and mutinies and hostile, violent encounters. Will they ever find safe passage?"— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016017196 | ISBN 9781561459643

Subjects: LCSH: Dogs—Juvenile fiction. | Magellan, Ferdinand, d.

1521—Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Dogs—Fiction. | Magellan, Ferdinand, d.

1521—Fiction. | Explorers—Fiction. | Discoveries in geography—Fiction.

| Voyages around the world—Fiction. | Sea stories.

Classification: LCC PZ10.3.H247 Le 2017 | DDC [Fic]—dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016017196>

*To all the brave explorers who overcame adversity  
to discover new cultures and lands*

—A. H.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain

August 1519

**R**ato!" a gruff voice hollers as a toe nudges my ribs. Steward points to a dark corner. A furry ball, its naked tail twitching, scurries along the ship's wall. A chunk of bread is clamped in its mouth.

I jump from my sunny spot on deck. Steward is in charge of supplies, so he is important on the ship, and I try to obey. He uses chalk to mark and count casks and bundles as they are being brought onboard. After they are stored below, he alone has the keys, which jingle on a cord around his fat waist.

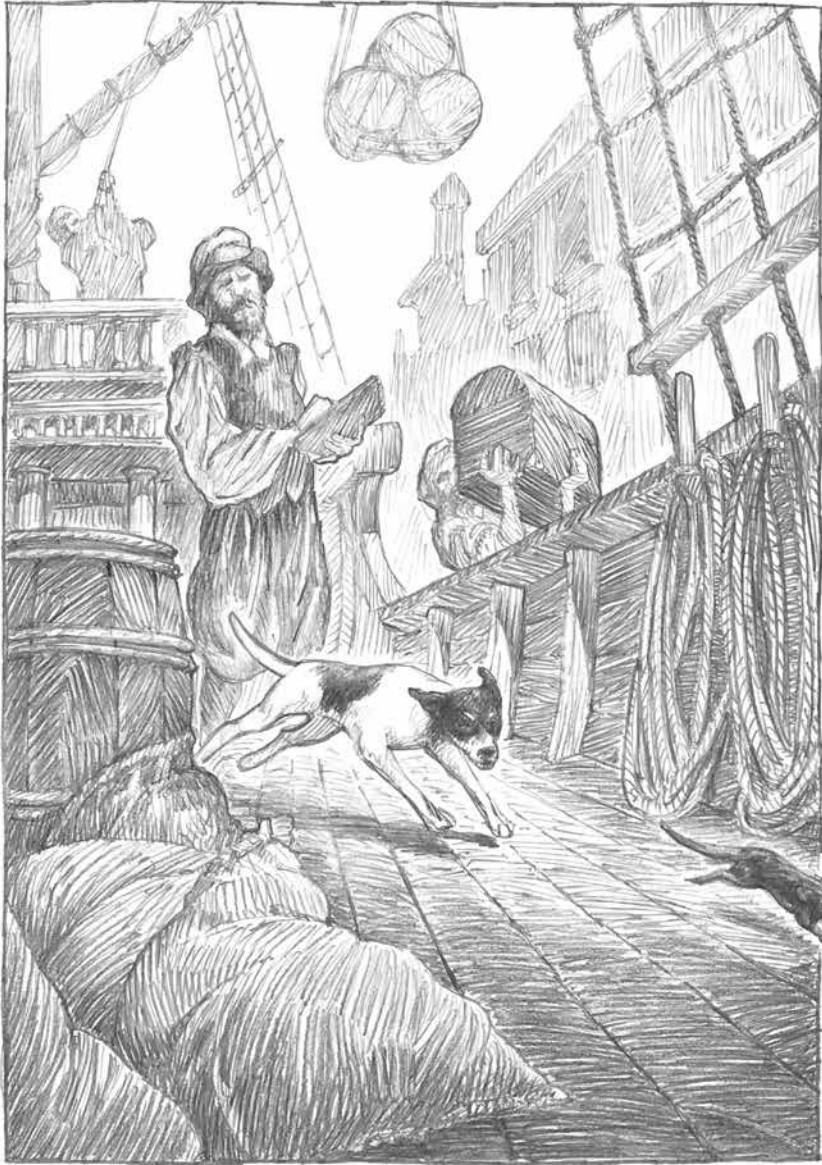
He jerks his thumb toward the rat, and I race after it. It darts around ropes and barrels, more nimble than I—no longer a pup. My claws rake the deck as I scuttle around a coil of rope.

I leap over a burlap sack. Too late: the rat slips through a hole in the wood flooring, and I bark in frustration.

A sailor stumbles over me. The crew is loading the last of the supplies. Steward shouts at the men, directing them this way and that. I duck out of their way, knowing the importance of their task. Wine, chickpeas, rice, honey, and cheese are necessary to feed the men at sea during our long journey. The supplies also act as ballast, packed carefully in the hull to keep the ship balanced.

Raising my muzzle, I breathe deeply. This is my fourth voyage, and I now have a sailor's nose. The breezes from the Ocean Sea are salty; the breezes from the Guadalquivir River are muddy. My nose also picks up the smell of chickens and pigs. They're already stashed below in cages and pens. Then I





smell *bizcocho*, the hard biscuits the crew is forced to eat when there are no fresh foods. The wheaty odor wafts from one of the bags a sailor is hauling from a smaller boat below. The rats will quickly find them, so I must keep alert.

Voices holler and sing on deck and above in the rigging. As on most voyages, the crew members of the *Trinidad* are from many countries. I don't understand their words, but that's fine with me. For truth, I stay away from humans and their sunbaked, sweaty skin.

As a pup, my home was the streets of Seville, Spain. I survived by eating garbage tossed out doors and windows. I stumbled onto my first ship by chance, following the scent of cod. I found a job killing rats and mice, and since then, my home has been different carracks and caravels. Stewards may holler at me. Sailors may curse me. But the only master I serve is the ship.

Five weeks ago, the *Trinidad* departed Seville with me onboard. Before the ship left, I explored it from bow to stern. My nose told me the contents of

each bundle and crate. My inspection told me that the ship was being loaded with ample supplies and a strong crew. All good signs, so I decided it would be my next home. Today we are docked before heading to sea, and I sense an anxious energy as well as a rise in activity, which means we will soon set sail.

Leaving the sailors to their loading, I continue my exploration. For a long journey, the *Trinidad* must be shipshape. I check the caulker, who is tarring the mast. Already the hull, deck, and riggings are black with pitch to help make them watertight.

Then I trot back to the stern, jump up to the quarterdeck, and check on the carpenter, who is nailing a loose board. Below us is the captain general's cabin. I have heard him called Magellan, but as yet I have not seen him.

On the forecastle, which is at the bow end of the ship, Hernando the barber is pulling a sailor's tooth. He grunts and wrestles, finally yelling "aha!" when he pulls out a bloody mess. Like Steward, Hernando is also important on the ship. He has charge over

body, mind, and teeth of all the crew. I avoid him and his pliers at all costs.

Catching the scent of cooking food, I detour to the crackling fire in the cookstove on the main deck. An apprentice sailor has several cod laced on a spit. When he turns his back, I grab the stick from the flame. With sharp teeth I rip off one blackened fish. It burns my tongue, but, holding it tightly, I jump though the open hatch to the gun deck. It is lined with cannons. Gunners are cleaning weapons, and several pages, the youngest crew members, are scrubbing the wood flooring. I skirt them and climb down the ladder into the dank hold, which smells of mice, mold, and feathers. Dark-skinned sailors sing as they secure the last of the supplies.

I wiggle between the barrels, placed on their sides, which follow the curve of the ship's hull. There is a narrow tunnel between them, and, carrying the cod, I worm my way to my sleeping nest, which is a space between the fragrant barrels of salted tuna and pork.