



True Spirit: The Aussie Girl Who Took On The World

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The personal story of the youngest person to sail around the world single handedly from October 2009 to May 2010 - at the age of 16: 240 days and 23,000 nautical miles.

True Spirit: The Aussie Girl Who Took On The World Details

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Jill says

What an awesome story! You may remember last year when there was a bit of controversy over a young (16years old) Australian girl wanting to sail solo, round-the-World. Well, True Spirit is her story. Watson and her family lived on a boat for several years and this was when she developed her love of sailing. She loved to read about sailors and their solo journeys around the World. At around age 14, she decided that she would like to become the youngest person to sail solo and unassisted around the World. This was her dream and for the next two years, her main focus. She spent all her spare time reading books, talking to the sailors, crewing for local yachties, and generally mentally preparing herself. Single-minded, determined and ultra focussed, Watson won many supporters who not only helped her to organise sponsorship but also to prepare and equip her yacht.

Watson's parents certainly copped some flak, both in the media and from strangers on the street, but they had brought all their children up to be responsible and independent - and I don't think that they could have stopped her from her round-the-World attempt even if they tried!

True Spirit is an awe-inspiring, exhilarating read for boaties and non boaties of all ages. It includes excerpts from her blog, a chart of her circumnavigation, a glossary of sailing terms, lots of photographs as well as a detailed list of the equipment and supplies required for a round-the-World trip.

Paula says

I really enjoyed this book. As someone who has done a bit of sailing, I thought this was really interesting. Jessica is an amazing and inspiring young woman.

Kimberly says

True Spirit: The Aussie Girl Who Took on the World by Jessica Watson

Reviewed by: Kimberly Reikow

Have you ever dreamed of going on an adventure to a far off land all by yourself? What if that adventure took you throughout the major oceans in the world? From October of 2009 to May of 2010, 16 year old Jessica Watson circumnavigated the globe, making herself the youngest person to sail non-stop, solo, and unassisted around the world. Throughout her seven month journey, Jessica wrote in her blog about all the amazing and terrifying things she encountered; like being hit by a giant barge, measuring at over 700 feet long (compared to her 34 foot long boat), and seeing waves over 22 feet tall. She also writes of the lightning storms she sails through and the multiple knockdowns she lives through while the enormous ocean waves knocked her sailboat around like a rubber duck in a bathtub.

Jessica gives her readers a taste of what being on the ocean is like through her descriptive and exciting blog entries (which were eventually made into this book). Though Jessica faced some near-death situations during her 210 days at sea, she learned a lot about self-motivation and the importance of believing in one's self.

Jessica's story is one that I will always remember while sailing on my family's sailboat. Knowing how much work it is to sail our boat (which is the same size as Jessica's) with four people crewing, I hold a high

amount of respect for Jessica and her knowledge of sailing—especially with her being so young while taking on such an enormous adventure.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who yearns for adventure, especially those who may believe they are too young to live their dreams; Jessica's motivation and strength will quickly change your mind.

Katherine Hopkins says

True Spirit was a great story told by a truly inspirational girl. This book showcased an amazing life goal being achieved. It showed a great life lesson that when you set a goal you can work hard to get there.

Jill says

This book sat half-finished for too many years. I am glad I read the digital version as it had embedded links to her videos made during her voyage. Seeing videos of her onboard during the circumnavigation was an enjoyable addition to the text.

I appreciated her perspective on her goal, shared throughout the book and on the last chapter: she said she was no hero, just an ordinary girl who proved working hard and having great support can make a dream a reality.

The glossary of terms at the end of the book was appreciated, but I wish they had been linked throughout the book, maybe at the end of a chapter? Overall a good testament of the power of a goal at any age.

Laura bayfield says

I chose to read 'True Spirit' an autobiography written by Jessica Watson about her journey circumnavigating the world single handed at the age of 16 because my Grandparents decided to get me a copy of her novel for my Birthday. I really enjoyed reading about her journey because i to love to sail. This inspiring novel falls into the category of a dairy, autobiography or biography. Jessica Watson wrote her autobiography as she was sailing around the world and published it a year after she returned.

Jessica Watson's journey was interesting to read about because of her determination to complete her dreams. She set this goal when she was turning 13 and kept persevering and convincing her family and fiends she was capable. During her preparation their was a lot lot media reporting on her. Majority of the media were saying the Jessica's parents were mad for letting her attempt such a life threatening journey at the age of 16. 210 days after departing from Sydney Jessica returned in her trusty boat the pink lady proving the media wrong and making her family proud. Jessica showed true courage and perseverance. This is why she is one of my role models.

My favorite quote that Jessica wrote in one of her diary entries was "You are only as big as the dreams you dare to live." This is a really good quote that inspires me to set goals because she has proven to me that if you work hard enough they can come true. This quote was one of her many words of wisdom but for me i can relate to this one most.

The part I liked most about the novel was that she was always so positive. Throughout the book Jessica faced life threatening events but with her positive nature and incredible sailing ability she managed to push through it. As she sailed she also updated a blog which she recorded all her events. When i read some of them it felt like i was out their with her!She was a very good, detailed writer.

This autobiography was really inspiring because I enjoy sailing at my batch. Jessica's story is a great example of dreams coming true.

Rusty Henrichsen says

Great story of a 16 year-old girl who took on the high seas in a 34 foot sailboat. She started out as a little girl afraid of everything and gradually changed as she learned to sail (among other things). She began pestering her parents when she was 12 and by the time she was 14, they not only had given her permission to follow her dream but were actively working to make it a reality.

Sailing solo, non-stop around the world is easier these days with all the various electronic equipment available but it is certainly no picnic. She outlasted storms, doldrums, knockdowns, loneliness, tears, torn sails, damaged equipment and more to make her dream come true. One of the things she had to overcome was negative publicity about a 16 year-old setting off on such an adventure. Her parents took a lot of heat on this, but they went ahead.

Knockdowns - that is when the wind/waves knock the ship over to where the mast actually touches the water. She weathered several of these, some in just the last few days of sailing. The most dramatic one was when the boat was knocked totally upside-down - the mast pointing straight down rather than up. I can't imagine going through something like that and living to tell about it.

This is an inspiring story (in her own words) of focus and determination. You will enjoy the book - won't be able to wait to see what happens next.

Fredrik says

It was a joy to finally read Jessica Watson's book, after first discovering her through the tv documentary about her circumnavigation a couple of years ago. She still comes across as both an ordinary and extraordinary young woman. It probably helps to have an interest in sailing, but an interest in people is just as good a starting point if you want to read this boon.

Shallee McArthur says

I followed Jessica's journey while it was happening through her blog, and was inspired with every post. So it's no surprise I bought her book as soon as I heard it was out. Seriously, folks, AMAZING. The book was written by Jessica herself, pulling from her blog posts, and I loved that the story came out in Jessica's own voice.

The book is so full of hope, enthusiasm, and encouragement, I feel like it's practically a self-help book on achieving your dreams. Only so much better, because you get an incredible story into the bargain. It's well

written, engaging, and TRUE. I was tugged along for an emotional, exciting ride with Jessica and felt lucky I got to share even a little bit in something I'd never be able to do: sail solo around the world.

I highly recommend this book to anyone looking for a fun, enlightening, and enthusiastic read.

Sarah W says

When I was 15 I remember following Australian's Jesse Martin on his solo nonstop and unassisted circumnavigation of the globe from the comfort of my classroom. At 16 I remember taking an interest in sailing, perhaps partly inspired by Jesse's adventure, but mostly it was due to the influence of friends. When I was 17 I recall reading the story of Jesse Martin's journey, his book *Lionheart* and I could not help but wondering how a 17-year-old could be so determined, brave and so willing to face so much time isolated from everything and everyone.

Jessica Watson grew up hearing of Jesse Martin's adventure. Yet in distinct contrast to my own experience, when Jessica Watson was 15 she was in the midst of preparations to sail the world. At 16 she was experiencing intense media scrutiny in the face of her planned journey, dealing with major trials before even setting out, and then actually completing her long awaited journey, returning home to a colossal welcome on Sydney Harbor. At 17 Jessica released her book, *True Spirit*, completed a documentary narrated by Sir Richard Branson, and acted with a maturity that many people twice her age still do not possess. Perhaps it could be said that this is only the beginning of her journey.

From her website: "Sailing more than 24,000 nautical miles in seven months, Jessica battled sleep deprivation, gale-force winds, mountainous seas and solitude most of us can only imagine on her quest to become the youngest person to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around the world."

True Spirit is a compilation of edited blog posts, details of the planning and preparation, in addition to a host of information that provides an insight to Jessica's experience. Those familiar with Jessica's journey, and who have followed her blog, may be familiar with some of the content – however, the manner in which the information is presented provides the reader with greater context. Jessica's ability and determination to make her dream a reality has been an inspiration for many young (and not so young) people both in Australia and around the world.

True Spirit is at no point a heavy non-fiction sailing related read. It is a story of a journey to make a dream reality, and that dream just happens to be an adventure on water. For those who are not familiar with sailing, a glossary has been provided, however most things are clearly explained regardless in the body of the text. Of particular interest is the very detailed list of items that were taken on board for the journey – everything from food to fuel quantities is listed in detail. My only regret was Jessica not actually listing the titles of the trashy novels she frequently mentions!

Emily Anne says

Not the greatest writing but the actual story and experience is great! Makes me want to learn more about boats!!

Dorothy says

The beginning of the book is quite inspiring, showing at what lengths a person can go to reach the desirable things, then it got too monotonous and uneventful (which is understandable and suitable for sea-lovers)

In general, I enjoyed it.

Dana says

I loved going along for the adventure. The day to day details were wonderful and had me longing for the freedom of the open sea. The message she conveys outside of the journey itself ("I am strong and I can do anything!") is a good one, although it does get repetitive. She had to spend a lot of time defending herself against those who thought she was too young or who shamed her parents for letting her go, which was distracting and frustrating. Fortunately, the people who know her best knew she was more than capable.

Stephen says

An absolutely fantastic, and awe inspiring, book. Not sure how else to describe it, really. It starts from her earlier childhood, just before she gets the idea to sail around the world solo. The amount of planning was incredible. All the way through the book, though, her upbeat attitude, and looking at the world through 'happy glasses', is quite infectious.

If you have a yearning for adventure, then this book definitely has it. Even though I can't see myself going around the world by sailing boat (I intend to do it by bicycle), it has strengthened my resolve to at least cross the South Atlantic by one (South America to South Africa).

Taylor says

I was enthralled with 16-year-old Australian Jessica Watson's sail around the world and followed her progress on her blog as she went. I was happy to see she was writing a book about her adventure but unsure about how quickly she wrote it once home--it didn't leave much time for reflection, which seems essential for a journey of this magnitude.

I enjoyed reading how she came to sail and what sort of family she grew up in. Once she hits the water, it's mostly her blog posts but she does add additional insight to some, which was interesting. Some things she kept from readers, some from her family and entire team, as she didn't want to worry people. Mostly it had to do with her general mental health--crucial when you're sailing alone for so long and at such a young age. Reading her blog posts again but in quick succession really made me feel like I was right there in Ella's Pink Lady. Jessica's voice comes through loud and clear in the book as it did in the blog--and for detractors, that same voice is in her video diaries as well.

I was anxious to read about her homecoming and how she felt about the overwhelming response--not just from Australians but from the world. Unfortunately, that was the part that felt skimmed over. I think she basically got home, had a few days to rest, then had to get to work on the book. I'm sure if she wrote those

homecoming pages today, still only five months later, it'd be a much different story. She does, however, talk briefly about having completed her goal that she'd worked so long and so hard for, and wondered, "What now?"

Still, I was so impressed by this young girl's determination to go after her dream and not let anyone stop her. She learned that you can do anything you put your mind to--no matter your age, background or gender. She also talks a lot about patience, which I found refreshing and an important quality to have. After all, she was constantly at the mercy of the weather so patience was essential!

I'm not a sailor but I still enjoyed this book and think Jessica Watson is amazing. I just would have liked a bit more insight at the end.
