

DREAMS OF A GIANT LIFE

- 1 What was I once—in ages long ago?
2 I look back, and I see myself. We grow
3 So changed through changing years, I hardly see
4 How that which I look back on could be me?
- 5 Glorious and splendid, giant-like I stood
6 On a white cliff, topped by a darkling wood.
7 Below me, placid, bright and sparkling, lay
8 The equal waters of a lovely bay.
9 White cliffs surrounded it—and calm and fair
10 It lay asleep, in warm and silent air.
- 11 I stood alone—naked and strong, upright
12 My limbs gleamed in the clear pure golden light.
13 I saw below me all the water lie
14 Expecting something, and that thing was I.
- 15 I leaned, I plunged, the waves splashed over me.
16 I lay, a giant in a little sea.
- 17 White cliffs all round, wood-crowned, and as I lay
18 I saw the glories of the dying day;
19 No wind disturbed my sea; the sunlight was
20 As though it came through windows of gold glass.
21 The white cliffs rose above me, and around
22 The clear sea lay, pure, perfect and profound;
23 And I was master of the cliffs, the sea,
24 And the gold light that brightened over me.
- 25 Far miles away my giant feet showed plain,
26 Rising, like rocks out of the quiet main.
27 On them a lighthouse could be built, to show
- 28 Wayfaring ships the way they must not go.
- 29 I was the master of that cliff-girt sea.
30 I splashed my hands, the waves went over me,
31 And in the dimples of my body lay
32 Little rock-pools, where small sea-beasts might play.
- 33 I found a boat, its deck was perforate;
34 I launched it, and it dared the storms of fate.
35 Its woollen sail stood out against the sky,
36 Supported by a mast of ivory.

37 Another boat rode proudly to my hand,
38 Upon its deck a thousand spears did stand;
39 I launched it, and it sped full fierce and fast
40 Against the boat that had the ivory mast
41 And woollen sail and perforated deck.
42 The two went down in one stupendous wreck!

43 Beneath the waves I chased with joyous hand
44 Upon the bed of an imagined sand
45 The slippery brown sea mouse, that still escaped,
46 Where the deep cave beneath my knee was shaped.
47 Caught it at last and caged it into rest
48 Upon the shallows of my submerged breast.

49 Then, as I lay, wrapped as in some kind arm
50 By the sweet world of waters soft and warm,
51 A great voice cried, from some far unseen shore,
52 And I was not a giant any more.

53 'Come out, come out,' cried out the voice of power,
54 'You've been in for a quarter of an hour.
56 The water's cold—come, Master Pip—your head
57 'S all wet, and it is time you were in bed.'

58 I rose all dripping from the magic sea
59 And left the ships that had been slaves to me—
60 The soap-dish, with its perforated deck,

61 The nail-brush, that had rushed to loss and wreck,
62 The flannel sail, the tooth-brush that was mast,
63 The sleek soap-mouse—I left them all at last.

64 I went out of that magic sea and cried
65 Because the time came when I must be dried
66 And leave the splendour of a giant's joy
67 And go to bed—a little well-washed boy.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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- 1** How does the narrator look back?
- A** By using a mirror
 - B** By turning around
 - C** By remembering memories
 - D** It is not stated how
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- 2** What is the main feeling at the end of the first verse?
- A** The narrator is reminiscing about life
 - B** The narrator has changed from when they were young
 - C** The narrator has changed beyond recognition
 - D** The narrator has enjoyed changing and growing
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- 3** “*The equal waters of a lovely bay*” (line 8). What does this mean?
- A** The water level was equal height everywhere
 - B** The water was flat with no waves
 - C** The water level was the equal height of the bay
 - D** The water level was as high as the cliffs
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- 4** Which word would best replace “*placid*” (line 7)?
- A** Calm
 - B** Sleeping
 - C** Exciting
 - D** Active
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- 5** “*White cliffs surrounded it—and calm and fair/ It lay asleep, in warm and silent air.*” What poetic technique has the poet used?
- A** Simile
 - B** Metaphor
 - C** Alliteration
 - D** Personification
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- 6** What is making the giant gleam?
- A** The light of the sun
 - B** The lighthouse
 - C** Lights coming through golden glass
 - D** The golden light
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- 7** “*I saw below me all the water lie /Expecting something, and that thing was I*” What does this mean?
- A** He is looking for two fingers
 - B** He is holding two fingers up
 - C** He is missing two fingers
 - D** He has only two fingers
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- 8** Why does the poet separate “*I stood alone*” (line 11)?
- A** The meaning of the phrase matches how its written
 - B** To draw attention to something important
 - C** To make the reader feel alone
 - D** To help the reader put themselves in the giant’s shoes
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- 9** What time of the day is it in the poem?
- A** It is sunrise
 - B** It is afternoon
 - C** It is sunset
 - D** It is not stated
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- 10** “*Pure, perfect and profound*” (line 22) What writing technique is this?
- A** Repetition
 - B** Alliteration
 - C** Onomatopoeia
 - D** Exaggeration
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- 11** What word below would best replace wayfaring (line 28)?
- A** Departing
 - B** Floating
 - C** Travelling
 - D** Returning
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- 12** What does perforate (line 34) mean?
- A** Waterproof
 - B** Wooden
 - C** Able to float
 - D** Filled with holes
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13 “*And it dared the storms of fate*” (line 35) What does that mean?

- A** To attempt to sail dangerous seas
 - B** To dare the seas to do something unfavourable
 - C** The boats played truth or dare with the sea
 - D** The boats were uncertain to cross the sea
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14 “*Storms of fate*” What poetic technique is this?

- A** Simile
 - B** Personification
 - C** Metaphor
 - D** Onomatopoeia
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15 Why did the two boats sink?

- A** The giant’s force was too strong
 - B** The boats collided with one another
 - C** The boats evaded one another
 - D** The boats were not built properly
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16 Who was the voice of?

- A** Waterproof
 - B** Wooden
 - C** Able to float
 - D** Filled with holes
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17 Which of these statements are true?

- A** The boy captured a bar of soap in the cave
 - B** When the boy enters the magic water he turns into a giant
 - C** The boy spent more than 20 minutes in the water
 - D** After the bath, the boy will eat dinner
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18 Which summary best describes the poem?

- A** When we are little, we have wild and creative imaginations
 - B** Using our imagination, anywhere can become awesome
 - C** We can be anything we think ourselves to be
 - D** We should always find ways to have fun
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