

Summary

Part I: 3 young men are walking together to a wedding, when 1 of them is detained by the mariner. The Wedding-Guest angrily demands that the Mariner let go of him, the Mariner obeys. But the man is transfixed by the ancient Mariner's "glittering eye" and can do nothing but sit on a stone and listen to his strange tale. The Mariner says that he sailed on a ship out of his native harbor—"below the kirk, below the hill, / Below the lighthouse top"—and into a sunny and cheerful sea. Hearing bassoon music drifting from the direction of the wedding, the Wedding-Guest imagines that the bride has entered the hall, but is still helpless to tear himself from the Mariner's story. Mariner recalls that voyage quickly darkened, as a giant storm rose up in the sea and chased the ship southward. Quickly, the ship came to a frigid land "of mist and snow," where "ice, mast-high, came floating by"; the ship was hemmed inside this maze of ice. But then the sailors encountered an Albatross, a great sea bird. As it flew around the ship, ice cracked and split, and a wind from the south propelled the ship out of the frigid regions, into a foggy stretch of water. Albatross followed behind it, symbol of good luck to sailors. A pained look crosses the Mariner's face, and the Wedding-Guest asks him, "Why look'st thou so?" Mariner confesses that he shot and killed the Albatross with his crossbow.

Part II: At first, the sailors were furious with the Mariner for killing the bird that made the breezes blow. But when the fog lifted afterward, the sailors decided that the bird had actually brought not the breezes but fog; they congratulated the Mariner on his deed. Wind pushed the ship into a silent sea where the sailors were quickly stranded; winds died down, and ship was "As idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean." The ocean thickened, and the men had no water to drink; as if the sea were rotting, slimy creatures crawled out of it and walked across the surface. At night, water burned green, blue, and white with death fire. Some sailors dreamed that a spirit, nine fathoms deep, followed beneath the ship from the land of mist and snow. Sailors blamed the Mariner for their plight and hung the corpse of the Albatross around his neck like a cross.

Part III: Weary time passed; sailors became so parched, mouths so dry, they were unable to speak. 1 day, gazing westward, Mariner saw a tiny speck on the horizon. Resolved into a ship, moving toward them. Too dry-mouthed to speak out and inform other sailors, Mariner bit down on his arm; sucking the blood, he was able to moisten his tongue enough to cry out, "A sail! a sail!" Sailors smiled, believing they were saved. But as the ship neared, they saw it was a ghostly, skeletal hull of a ship and its crew included 2 figures: Death and the Life-in-Death, who takes the form of a pale woman with golden locks and red lips, and "thicks man's blood with cold." Death and Life-in-Death began to throw dice, and the woman won, whereupon she whistled 3 times, causing the sun to sink to the horizon, stars to instantly emerge. As moon rose, chased by a single star, sailors dropped dead 1 by 1—all except the Mariner, whom each sailor cursed "with his eye" before dying. Souls of the dead men leapt from their bodies and rushed by the Mariner.

Part IV: Wedding-Guest declares that he fears Mariner, with his glittering eye and his skinny hand. Mariner reassures Wedding-Guest that there is no need for dread; he was not among the men who died, and is a living man, not a ghost. Alone on the ship, surrounded by 200 corpses, Mariner surrounded by the slimy sea and slimy creatures that crawled across its surface. He tried to pray but was deterred by a "wicked whisper" that made his heart "as dry as dust." He closed his eyes, unable to bear the sight of dead

men, each who glared at him with malice of their final curse. For 7 days and 7 nights the Mariner endured the sight, yet he was unable to die. At last the moon rose, casting the great shadow of the ship across the waters; where the ship's shadow touched the waters, they burned red. Great water snakes moved through the silvery moonlight, glittering; blue, green, and black, snakes coiled and swam and became beautiful in Mariner's eyes. He blessed the beautiful creatures in his heart; at that moment, he found himself able to pray, and corpse of Albatross fell from his neck, sinking "like lead into the sea."

Part V: Mariner continues telling his story to Wedding-Guest. Free of the curse of Albatross, Mariner was able to sleep, and as he did so, rains came, drenching him. Moon broke through clouds, and a host of spirits entered dead men's bodies, which began to move about and perform their old sailors' tasks. Ship propelled forward as Mariner joined in the work. Wedding-Guest declares again that he is afraid of the Mariner, but Mariner tells him that the men's bodies were inhabited by blessed spirits, not cursed souls. At dawn, bodies clustered around the mast, and sweet sounds rose up from their mouths, sounds of spirits leaving their bodies. Spirits flew around the ship, singing. Ship continued to surge forward until noon, driven by spirit from the land of mist and snow, 9 fathoms deep in the sea. At noon, the ship stopped, then began to move backward and forward as if it were trapped in a tug of war. Finally, it broke free, and Mariner fell to the deck with the jolt of sudden acceleration. He heard two disembodied voices in the air; one asked if he was the man who had killed the Albatross, and the other declared softly that he had done penance for his crime and would do more penance before all was rectified.

Part VI: In dialogue, the two voices discussed the situation. The moon overpowered the sea, they said, and enabled the ship to move; an angelic power moved the ship northward at an astonishingly rapid pace. When the Mariner awoke from his trance, he saw the dead men standing together, looking at him. But a breeze rose up and propelled the ship back to its native country, back to the Mariner's home; he recognized the kirk, the hill, and the lighthouse. As they neared the bay, seraphs—figures made of pure light—stepped out of the corpses of the sailors, which fell to the deck. Each seraph waved at the Mariner, who was powerfully moved. Soon, he heard the sound of oars; the Pilot, the Pilot's son, and the holy Hermit were rowing out toward him. The Mariner hoped that the Hermit could shrive (absolve) him of his sin, washing the blood of the Albatross off his soul.

Part VII: Hermit, a holy man who lived in the woods and loved to talk to mariners from strange lands, encouraged the Pilot and his son not to be afraid and to row out to the ship. But as they reached the Mariner's ship, it sank in a sudden whirlpool, leaving Mariner afloat and Pilot's rowboat spinning in the wake. Mariner was loaded aboard the Pilot's ship, and the Pilot's boy, mad with terror, laughed hysterically and declared that the devil knows how to row. On land, Mariner begged Hermit to shrive him, and the Hermit bade the Mariner tell his tale. Once it was told, Mariner was free from agony of his guilt. However, guilt returned over time and persisted until Mariner traveled to a new place and told his tale again. Moment he comes upon the man to whom he is destined to tell his tale, he knows it, and has no choice but to relate story then and there to his appointed audience; Wedding-Guest is 1 such person.

Part VIII: Church doors burst open, wedding party streams outside. Mariner declares to Wedding Guest that he who loves all God's creatures leads a happier, better life; then takes his leave. Wedding Guest walks away from the party, stunned, and awakes the next morning "a sadder and a wiser man."

Part I Questions:

1. The Mariner detains one of three wedding guests.
2. We know the Mariner is strange because of his “glittering eye”
3. The Mariner hath his will because he needed to tell his story.
4. Stanza 6 explains that the ship’s voyage began in a cheerful way, with a scenic background of a church, lighthouse, and hill.
5. The wedding guest beats his breast when he hears the bassoon because he wishes to go to the party but is spellbound by the Mariner.
6. Coleridge uses the Mariner’s eye to give the indication that he has special powers because of its ability to ensnare the wedding guest.
7. The sailors hail the albatross because it is the only sign of life in their surroundings and is a bird of good omen.
8. The albatross appears to be a bird of good fortune by appearing while the ice clears and the ship can escape and survive.
9. The last stanza takes an abrupt turn by suggesting that the Mariner is plagued by something. Coleridge might have done this to contrast the jovial stanzas before and create intrigue as to what haunts the Mariner.

Part II Questions:

1. In stanzas 1-3 of part II, the mist is still present but a breeze begins to blow.
2. In Stanza 4, the crew’s attitude shifts from being worried to being accepting about the Mariner killing the albatross.
3. This change makes the crew “accomplices in the crime” because they permit the death of the albatross to go unavenged.
4. Severe conditions set in, such as the presence of “water, water everywhere” and the lack of a “drop to drink.” The water also became a “slimy sea”
5. The crew attempts to punish the Mariner by hanging the albatross around his neck.
6. We can account for the crew’s shifting attitude toward the Mariner by comparing it to their surroundings.

Part III Questions:

1. Words to describe the crew’s condition “each throat was parched” “and glazed each eye” “weary eye” “throats unslaked” “black lips baked” “utter drought all dumb”
2. The mariner suddenly sees a ghost ship approaching even though there was a lack of wind
3. The Living Hell and Death were aboard the ship
4. The ship’s crew members were at stake during the dice game. Life in Death wins the ancient mariner and all the crew members drop, one by one

Part IV Questions:

1. The Mariner finds himself skinny and brown, with heavy eyes and a difficulty speaking.
 2. Words with which shows us what the mariner sees, hears, feels, smells, tastes
- See: “I looked upon the rotting sea” “I looked upon the rotting deck”

Hear: "A wicked whisper came"

Feels: "I closed my lids, and kept them close, and the balls like pulse beat"

Smells: "Nor rot nor eek did they"

3. The curse of the Polar Spirit follows the Mariner.

Part V Questions:

1. The bodies of the dead shipmates steered the ship, hoisted the sails, etc.
2. These spirits came to help the Mariner because they were sent by the guardian spirit.
3. The elements that are both helpful and a source of penance are the bodies of the shipmates, that assist the Mariner but treat him with indifference and apathy
4. The Mariner becomes joyful when he hears the birds singing and sees the ship sailing.
5. The Polar Spirit has returned.
6. The two voices belong to two of the Polar Spirits' fellow demons.
7. We know that at the end of Part V, the Mariner is lying on the ground, awaiting penance and listening to the two demons.

Part VI Questions:

1. According to the gloss, the Mariner has been put into a trance because the angelic power that causes the ship to drive northward is faster than human life could endure
2. When he is awake, his penance resumes with the eyes of the dead shipmates staring at him. He finds that the dead man standing together on the deck. They were looking at him with stony eyes that glittered in the moon. Their faces still held the cursed look with which they died and he could not look away or pray
3. The escape felt realistic that the mariner sobbed and prayed that he was truly awake, or if not, to be allowed to remain asleep forever
4. The wind finally feels sweet and welcoming.
5. Stanzas 12-19 and 23 indicate peace and calm.
6. The nightmare that resurfaces is the murder of the albatross, when the mariner sees the Hermit, because he hopes the hermit will let him confess and absolve him from his sins
7. The Mariner sees the Pilot, the Pilot's boy, and the Hermit.

Part I Vocab

Rime: Opaque coating of tiny ice particles

Mariner: A person who directs or assists the navigation of a ship

Din: a loud, unpleasant, and prolonged noise.

Eftsoons: at once

Kirk: church

Drifts: mist

Ken: see

Swound: swoon

Albatross: Large web-footed bird of the southern hemisphere, and known of wing span and ability to fly for long periods

Minstrelsy: The practice of a medieval performer who sung and played a string instrument

Tyrannous: Oppressive

Helmsman: Person who steers a ship or boat

Crossbow: Medieval bow of a kind that is fixed across a wooden support and has a groove for the bolt and a mechanism for drawing and releasing the string

Vespers: Evening prayers

Kin: Family

Bassoon: A woodwind instrument

Masts: The structure that rises above a ship and holds the sails

Prow: The front most part of the bow that cuts through water

Shroud: A line that regulates the angle at which a sail is set

Dismal: Depressing, dreary

Omen: A sign of good or evil to come

Part II Vocab

Fathom: A unit of length equal to 6 feet usually measuring depth of water

Welladay: Alas

Woe: Great sorrow or distress

Averred: State or assert to be the case

Uprist: Rising

Furrow: Long narrow trench made in the ground by a plow, especially for planting seeds or for irrigation

Rout: Disorderly retreat or defeated troops

Reel: walk in a staggering or lurching manner, especially while drunk.

Wretch: Someone you feel sorry for

Accomplice: A person who helps commit a crime

Sails: A piece of material extended on a mast to catch the wind and move a ship

Idle: Not active

Avenged: Inflict harm in return for a wrongdoing

Utter: Complete

Part III Vocab

Glazed: lose brightness and animation.

Sprite: an elf or fairy.

Gramercy: many thanks

Weal: well

Betwixt: between

Gossameres: cobwebs

Hulk: an old ship stripped of fittings and permanently moored, especially for use as storage or (formerly) as a prison.

Twain: two

Clomb: climb

Wist: Have Knowledge

Uprist: Rising

Veer: Change direction suddenly

Unslaked: To cool or refresh

Agape: (of the mouth) wide open

Keel: Longitudinal structure along the centerline at the bottom of a vessel's hull, on which the rest of the hull is built, in some vessels extended downward as a blade or ridge to increase stability

Weary- Physically and mentally fatigued

Tacked- To change course by turning the head of a boat

Dumb- Silent

Gossameres- Cobwebs

Leprosy- A disease that makes the skin white

Spectre- A ghostly appearing figure

Steersman- A person who is steering a boat or ship

Pang- A sudden sharp pain

Part IV

Lank: long, limp, and straight.

Gusht: speak or write with effusiveness or exaggerated enthusiasm.

Sultry: hot and humid.

Hoarfrost: Grayish-white crystalline deposit of frozen water vapor formed in clear still weather on vegetation, fences, etc.

Chamel:

Dungeon: Strong underground prison cell

Expiate: Alone for (guilt or sin)

Abate: (of something perceived as hostile or threatening) become less intense or widespread
Seraph: an angelic being, regarded in traditional Christian angelology as belonging to the highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy, associated with light, ardor, and purity.
Perforce: used to express necessity or inevitability
Stroon: scatter or spread (things) untidily over a surface or area.
Rood: a measure of land area equal to a quarter of an acre
Shrieve: to free from guilt
Penance- Punishment for performing a sin
Sojourn- A temporary stay
Bemocked- To mock someone
Hoary- Ancient
Selfsame- Exact same moment

Part V

Silly: empty and of no use
Sedge: A grasslike plant that grows by water
Sere- Having lost all moisture
Sheen- A soft luster
Cleft- A long narrow opening
Wont- An established custom
Crag- A steep and rugged cliff
Jag- A sharp projection
Uprist- Rise up or resurrect
Ghastly- Shockingly repellent
Invocation- To call on
Skylark- A singing bird
Jargoning- Singing of a particular expression
Swound- Swoon or faint
Accorded- To give or grant; to be consistent with
Discerned- Detect or recognize

Part VI

Abated- Lessen or reduce
Charnel- A chamber for holding dead bodies
Dungeon- A strong underground prison cell
Expiated- Atone for or redeem
Seraph- An angel of pure light
Perforce- Necessity or inevitability

Part VII

Stroon- Scattered about
Impart- Transmit
Skiff- Small boats propelled by oars

Hark- Listen

Wist- Past tense of wit, or to know

Rood- A cross used in a crucifixion

Shrieve- To free from guilt

Hymns- A religious song

Hermit- A religious loner living in solitude

Wholly- Entirely

Fiendish- Devilish, extremely cruel

Bar- Submerged ridge in a river or shore

Entreat- Ask anxiously to do something

Maidens- Young women

Parts of the Boat

Starboard- Right side of boat

Bow- Front of boat

Stern- Back of boat

Port- Left side of boat

MAIN PARTS OF A SHIP

