

READING COMPREHENSION:

EXCERPT FROM **THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY**

Answer the questions about the *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*.

1. **Part A:** Read the following sentence from paragraph 3.

The darkness was so profound that looking into it was painful and oppressive—like looking, without a ray of light, into a dense black bandage put as close before the eyes as it could be without touching them.

What tone does the simile help convey?

- a. hopelessness
- b. anger
- c. suspicion
- d. frenzy

Part B: What other words or phrases in paragraph 3 help convey this tone?

"I had thought it impossible that it could be darker than it had been"

2. Consider the interaction between Captain Ravender and John Steadiman on the deck before the captain goes below to rest. Identify two details in paragraph 6 that help build suspense.

- a. Captain Ravender, reluctant to leave his station on deck, insists that he go below deck for no more than three hours.
- b. When the captain describes what he hears, the chief mate implies that Captain Ravender's exhaustion is impairing his judgment.

3. Why does the captain turn in "all standing" when he goes below deck to rest, and what does this action reveal about Captain Ravender's feelings?

He wants to be ready to get up quickly if there's an accident. This reveals that Captain Ravender does not trust that the Golden Mary will encounter "smooth sailing" while he rests.

4. Reread the following excerpt from paragraph 9, and consider the author's use of repetition of the *-ing* ending in the bold words.

*Shrieks and a terrific outcry struck me far harder than the **bruising** timbers of the ship. Amidst sounds of **grinding** and **crashing**, and a heavy **rushing** and **breaking** of water—sounds I understood too well—I made my way on deck. It was not an easy thing, for the ship heeled over frightfully, and was **beating** in a furious manner.*

How does the author's word choice and repetition impact the image the author creates in this scene?

The repetition of words with -ing emphasizes the noise and chaos happening on the ship after the collision. The bold words provide a sensory experience so the reader can see, hear, and feel the event.

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Keep going! Answer the questions below.

5. How is Captain Ravender's dream related to the fate of the *Golden Mary*?

The captain's efforts to get around the church in the dream mirror his efforts to avoid the icebergs. No matter how much he tries to avoid the icebergs—by posting his men and trying to keep watch himself every night—the ship still hits an iceberg.

6. Charles Dickens uses personification to describe the ship. Record two examples.

a. "The ship did her duty admirably . . ."

b. "Though she was making great way, she was under shortened sail and had no more than she could easily carry."

7. Which of the following sentences from the passage foreshadows the collision with the iceberg?

a. "In open water, the *Golden Mary* sailed forward on a strong breeze, and we went before the wind merrily all night."

b. "I then began to enter two remarks in the ship's log and in my journal; first, that there was an unusual and amazing quantity of ice; second, that the nights were most wonderfully dark, in spite of the ice."

c. "There was a pretty sea running, but not a very high sea neither, nor at all a confused one."

d. "I had thought it impossible that it could be darker than it had been, until the sun, moon, and stars should fall out of the heavens and time should be destroyed."

