

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

- SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

SUMMARY

Lines 1-20

In the poem's first line, we meet the first character, an ancient mariner. He stops one of the three people who are on their way to a wedding celebration. The wedding guest tries to resist being stopped by the strange old man but he is held by his captivating eyes. He explains this he is on his way to the wedding place and that he is close relative of the groom, and the festivities have already begun. Still, the ancient mariner takes his hand and begins his story. Although the guest is reluctant, he is mesmerized by the old man. The wedding guest had no choice but to sit down on a rock to listen.

Lines 21-40

The ancient mariner explains that one clear and bright day; he set sail on a ship full of sailors. The sailors were all in a happy mood. The ship sailed by the lighthouse and then sailed further. The sun came down from the sea and it was shining brightly. They sailed along smoothly until they reached the equator. Suddenly the sounds of the wedding interrupt the ancient mariner's story. The wedding guest beats his chest impatiently as the blushing bride enters the reception hall and music plays. However, he is compelled to continue listening to the ancient mariner who goes on with his tale. The ancient mariner seems to have hypnotized the sailor. As soon as ship reached the equator, a terrible storm hit and forced the ship southwards. The wind blew with such force that the ship pitched down in the surf as though it were fleeing an enemy.

Lines 41-62

He says that as soon as the ship reached the equator, a terrible storm hit and forced the ship southwards. The wind blew with such force that the ship was forced to move in the southwards direction. The storm was chasing the ship like a strong enemy. It was like hunter chasing its prey. Then the sailors reached a part of the sea that was 'wondrous cold', full of snow and glistening green icebergs as tall as the ship's mast. It was the land of mist and snow. Huge icebergs surrounded the sea. The snow cliffs provided a sad shine and the mariners were struck in the sea. There was no place to steer the ship. There was no life around. The ice cracked, growled and howled and it held the ship at one place.

Lines 63-82

Finally, an Albatross emerged from the land of mist, and the sailors considered it to be the sign of good luck as it give an indication that there was some life around. They hailed it in the name of Christ and considered it to be a bird of good omen. The sailors fed the albatross and played with it. The albatross also hovered around the ship. With the arrival of the albatross, a good south wind started to blow and ice cracked making way for the ship. The mariner after this becomes hysterical and the wedding guest is dead terrified on seeing his pale face. Then, the mariner tells the wedding guest that he that he took his cross bow and killed the Albatross.

Lines 83-102

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The ship started moving forward .The sun shone during the day and the wind also blew in the right direction but there was mist all around . The sailors were angry with the mariner for killing the innocent albatross , which according to them holy spirit sent by the Christ to save them . It was a bird of good omen . Then the mist disappeared and the sun shone particularly brightly. On seeing the weather changing , the sailors also changed their opinion . They were fickle minded people and they said that the mariner did a good job by killing the albatross as it had brought the mist.

Lines 103-142

The ship sailed along merrily as favorable winds blew were blowing but soon the winds died down and they were in the parts of the sea where there was nothing all around. They were stranded in the middle of the sea .There was no wind at all and sails dropped and the water was calm and the ship could not move , and sat “As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean “. Then the sun become unbearably hot just as the sailors ran out of water. They were dying of thirst though they were surrounded by water from all sides .Even the boards of the ship began to shrink because of the heat.

Lines 123-142

The ocean became a horrifying place; the water cover was covered with ‘slimy’ creatures at night. The water at night seemed to change colour because of so many slimy creatures which appeared on the water at night. Some of the sailors dreamed that the spirit had followed them from the icy world, and they all suffered from a thirst so terrible that they could not speak. The sailors blamed the ancient mariner for their woes and put the blame on him alone as a constant reminder to the wrong he had done, the sailors hung the Albatross dead around his neck.

DIFFICULT WORDS

HAILED –TAKING AS A SIGNAL OF GOD

WOES – TROUBLES AND PROBLEMS

HYSTERICAL- EXTREME CRYING OR LAUGHING

MIST – A CLOUD OF VERY SMALL DROPS OF WATER IN THE AIR JUST ABOVE THE GROUND THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO SEE

MESMERIZED- FASCINATED