

## Ballad of the Tempest

### Comprehension I:

#### Question 1.

'We were crowded in the cabin,  
Not a soul would dare to sleep.

a. Who does the word 'we' refer to here?

#### Answer

The word 'we' refers to the sailors and the people aboard the ship.

b. Not a soul would dare to sleep – why was it so?

#### Answer:

No one dared to sleep because a fierce storm was raging at sea, causing fear and uncertainty among them.

#### Question 2.

Usually, storms are formed in the deep sea. What precautions have the sailors got to take before a voyage?

#### Answer:

Precautions before a voyage

Before setting sail, sailors must:

- Check weather conditions and forecasts.
- Ensure the ship is well-maintained and stocked with emergency supplies.
- Secure the mast and sails properly.
- Have life-saving equipment like life jackets and lifeboats ready.
- Follow navigation and safety protocols.

#### Question 3.

The poet says, "Tis a fearful thing in winter..." According to the poet, what is referred to as a fearful thing in winter? What

would be the condition in the deep sea during winter on the sea?

**Answer:**

‘Tis a fearful thing in winter...’

The fearful thing referred to is being caught in a storm during winter at sea.

- The sea in winter is especially dangerous due to freezing winds, rough waves, and strong storms.
- The cold makes survival harder, and icy conditions make the ship vulnerable.

**Question 4.**

How does ‘it’ affect the sailors? (Read the first two stanzas)

**Answer:**

Effect of the storm on the sailors

- The storm fills the sailors with fear and helplessness.
- The rattling trumpet and the command to “Cut away the mast!” show the urgency of the situation.
- The breakers talked with death, meaning the powerful waves seemed to threaten their lives.

**Question 5.**

The speaker and his crew-mates sat in darkness and prayed. What did they hear?

**Answer:**

- They heard the roaring sea and the crashing waves (breakers) that seemed to bring death.
- The storm’s fury made them believe they were on the verge of destruction.

**Question 6.**

When the captain shouted “We are lost”, how did his daughter react?

**Answer:**

Reaction of the captain’s daughter

- When the captain cried, “We are lost!”, his little daughter remained calm and faithful.

- She held his cold hand and reminded him that God is present on the ocean just as on the land.
- Her words gave hope and strength to the frightened sailors.

### **Question 7.**

The crew-mates kissed the maiden and spoke in better cheers. What made them feel cheerful?

#### **Answer:**

The girl's faith in God reassured them that they were not alone.

- Her innocence and trust inspired the sailors to regain their courage.
- The next morning, they reached safety, proving that their faith and patience helped them through the crisis.

### **Question 8.**

'A ship is always safe at the shore, But it was not built for that'. What does this mean?

#### **Answer:**

- This means that safety and comfort are not the only purposes of life.
- Just like a ship is meant to sail and face the dangers of the sea, humans must take risks and overcome challenges to fulfill their purpose.
- Staying in a safe place may prevent danger, but growth and success come from facing difficulties courageously.

## **Read and appreciate**

### **Question 1.**

The poet uses the phrase 'the hungry sea'. What can the reader imagine from this? What is the figure of speech employed in lines 11 and 12?

#### **Answer:**

'The Hungry Sea' – Meaning and Figure of Speech

- The phrase '*hungry sea*' creates an image of the sea as a living creature that is devouring everything in its path. It emphasizes the sea's power and danger during the storm.
- The figure of speech used here is personification, as the sea is given human-like qualities (hunger).

**In lines 11 and 12:**

- "While the hungry sea was roaring / And the breakers talked with death"
- Personification is used because the sea and waves (breakers) are given human actions—the sea "roars" and the breakers "talk" with death.

**Question 2.**

The poet uses expressions which are unusual, evocative and rhythmic. Some examples are given with an explanation.

expression	why the expression is unusual
a. 'not a soul would sleep'	use of synecdoche(part for the whole) and emphasis
b. 'rattling trumpet'	use of alliteration
c. 'hungry sea roaring'	personification
d. 'shuddered in silence'	imagery (of fear)

**Answer:**

Unusual, Evocative, and Rhythmic Expressions

- b. 'rattling trumpet' – The use of **onomatopoeia** (rattling) gives the sound of the storm's violent winds, adding to the tension.
- c. 'hungry sea roaring' – Uses **alliteration (h-sounds)** and **personification**, making the sea seem like a roaring beast.
- d. 'shuddered in silence' – Creates **imagery of fear**, showing the crew's silent terror.

Now, describe how the following expressions impress you.  
Clues are given in brackets. Match them and exchange your impressions.

- i. (shattered by blast) - \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. (midnight on the waters) - \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. (breakers talked with death) - \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. (captain staggered down the stairs) - \_\_\_\_\_
- v. (icy hand) - \_\_\_\_\_

(image of movement, image of one imposing (covering) on the other, onomatopoeia, (tactile) sense of touch, personification)

**Answer:**

### Matching Expressions with Literary Devices

Expression	Literary Device Matched	Explanation
'shattered by blast'	<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	The word <i>blast</i> suggests a loud, sudden sound, making the storm more intense.
'midnight on the waters'	<b>Image of one imposing (covering) on the other</b>	Midnight suggests <b>darkness covering</b> the waters, adding to the mystery and fear.
'breakers talked with death'	<b>Personification</b>	The waves (breakers) are given the human ability to "talk," showing their destructive power.
'captain staggered down the stairs'	<b>Image of movement</b>	The word <i>staggered</i> shows the captain's struggle to move due to fear or exhaustion.

<i>'icy hand'</i>	<b>Tactile (sense of touch)</b>	<i>Icy</i> suggests extreme cold, highlighting the fear and helplessness of the captain.
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Each of these expressions adds **rhythm, vivid imagery, and emotional depth** to the poem, making the reader experience the fear and relief of the sailors.

## Ballad of the Tempest Summary



"Ballad of the Tempest" is a poem written by James Thomas Fields, depicting a terrifying storm at sea and the sailors' struggle for survival. The poem is a ballad, a narrative poem with a dramatic storyline. The speaker of the poem is a sailor, recounting the terrifying experience aboard the ship.

The voyage begins as an adventurous journey, but soon turns into a nightmare when a violent storm strikes the ship at midnight. The sailors, crowded in the cabin, are too frightened to sleep. The storm is particularly dangerous because it is winter, and the gusts of wind threaten to shatter the ship. The rattling trumpet sounds an urgent warning, and a voice thunders, instructing them to cut away the mast to save the ship.

Even the bravest sailors are paralyzed with fear as the roaring sea threatens to devour them like a hungry beast. The waves crash violently, bringing them closer to death, and the darkness of the night deepens their terror. In this moment of despair, everyone prays for survival.

Suddenly, the captain, overwhelmed by fear, stumbles down the stairs and exclaims that they are lost. But at this moment, his little daughter, with innocent faith, whispers to him. She takes her father's cold, trembling hands and reassures him, saying, "Isn't God upon the ocean, just the same as on the land?" Her simple yet profound words fill the sailors with hope.

The crew, inspired by the little girl's faith, prays more earnestly. Moved by her words, they kiss the little maiden in gratitude. Miraculously, the storm passes, and the ship reaches the harbour safely. As morning breaks, the sky is clear and calm, as if the danger had never existed.

The poem conveys the powerful message that faith in God can bring hope even in the darkest moments. It also emphasizes that fortune favours the brave, and no matter how great the danger, it can disappear like sand when faced with courage and trust in the Almighty.

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