

10th Standard - English

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Part I

Introduction

The poem is about sin and repentance or crime and punishment. It describes how the ancient mariner kills the Albatross. The Polar spirit takes revenge on him and other mariners. Their sufferings are described in these parts vividly.

Ancient Mariner stops a Wedding-Guest

An elderly Mariner stopped one of the three Wedding-Guests. The Mariner had a long grey beard and brightly shining eyes. The Guests were going to the wedding feast. The Wedding-Guest asked him why he had stopped him. But the Mariner held him with his skinny hand. He, then, started at once narrating his strange tale..

Resistance by the Wedding-Guest

The Wedding-Guest told him that he was a close relative of the bridegroom and was required to be there. But he could not resist the Mariner's spell of his glittering eyes. He sat on a stone as he had no choice but to hear the Mariner. The Mariner with bright eyes started narrating his tale like this.

Mariner's story starts

He said that their ship was cheered off the harbour. They went farther and farther into the sea. The Wedding-Guest asked him to let him go because the marriage ceremony was at its climax. However, he could do nothing except hear the Mariner (now he was enjoying the story). The Mariner told that soon there came a severe sea-storm. It drove them southwards like a powerful enemy pursuing them.

Mariner's ship in the icy region

Then it became very cold with both mist and snow. The ice, green like emerald, rose and came floating mast-high. They could see no living being amidst the ice all around the ship. The ice* cracked, roared and growled. There was ice only all around. Their ship stood trapped in it.

Coming of an Albatross

One day there came an Albatross to their ship through the fog. All welcomed it. It ate the food given by the mariners. It flew round and round near the ship. Soon the ice split and the south wind started. The ship was steered through the ice. The Albatross continued following them. It came there daily at 9 o'clock. It sat on the mast. It ate the food given to it by them. The night shone white in the moon-light. One day, the Mariner shot the Albatross dead with an arrow without any reason.

Part II

Weather improves—reaction by Mariners

The sun rose from the right. The south wind continued blowing. The weather improved. His fellow-mariners cursed him for killing the bird which made the wind blow. After some time, the wind began to blow again. There was sea-foam. The sun rose in the sky like God's own head. It looked very beautiful and glorious. At this, the fellow-mariners said firmly that the Mariner did the right thing in killing the bird. It had brought the fog and mist. The weather became clear. It looked as if they were the first into that silent sea.

Weather goes worst

But soon the wind stopped blowing. The sails dropped down. Sadness prevailed all around. They spoke only to break the silence of the sea. The sun started blazing. The sky became red like copper. The sun stood bloody above the mast. The ship with them also stuck there. It looked as if it was all a painted thing.

Sea becomes fearful

For days together, they couldn't move. Soon, the boards of the ship began to shrink. They had not a drop of water to drink. However, the water was all around them. The ocean looked like boiling yet the creatures in it were crawling. At night, the Mariner felt that death-like fires were dancing. He remembered Lord Christ at such a strange scene. The sea water was burning green, blue and white like a witch's oils.

Polar spirit's revenge—mariners' sufferings

The mariners saw in dreams that a Spirit was plaguing them. It had been following them nine fathoms under the sea from the land of the mist and snow. The Mariner and his other fellow-mariners felt dry in their mouths. They could not speak. They felt as if they had been choked with soot. They held him responsible for their ills. They stared at him with evil looks. Then, one day, his fellow-mariners hung the dead Albatross round his neck as a punishment.