**The Lighthouse**

Before he pushed the loaded supply boat out into the sound, he turned his back to the wind, reached into his waistcoat pocket and delicately drew out a folded square of paper. He re-read the copper-plate writing that was so familiar. "Thy way is in the sea, and my path in the great waters." He read the words slowly and deliberately and, although he was not religious, the message carried some deeper significance which was not clear to him. He returned the paper back into his pocket, repeated the words in his mind, and pushed the bow of the boat seaward.

The lighthouse defiantly stood proud of the jagged rocks; a broken jaw of granite. He was always met by the three keepers who stood unwavering in any weather; the sealskin collars on their coats were drawn up to their chins.

The men never spoke; they had lost their words to the wind. In fact, no one could remember their names or if they had any family; letters from relatives had stopped long ago. The boat was unloaded; the keepers ignored the diving Kittiwakes, Terns and Guillemots that searched for food. Then, in procession, the boy followed the keepers up the rough, whitewashed steps into the lighthouse. The metal door, blistered with rust, thudded closed behind them.

The windowless, circular room was panelled with cedar and smelt of burning lamp-oil. At this stage, the boy always sat at the scrubbed pine table and was handed a metal mug of steaming tea, whilst the men emptied the cases of supplies. However, on this occasion, the last occasion, they joined him at the table and in solemn silence removed their boots and coarse woollen socks.

Whilst their hands and faces were ruddy and weathered from years of exposure to the elements, he was initially surprised how ebony white their legs and feet were, but, as he gazed closer, he understood the significance of their gesture. Stretched between their toes was a pearly skin, as fine as silk.

"Is you surprised boy? We don't want no help...we just wanted you to know." Then silence.

His mouth was dry, his brow was breaking out in a cold sweat and his heartbeat raced. He later regretted not asking them more; about the gills behind their ears, their hairless bodies or their scales, but it seemed almost normal and he was happy for them.

He refused to discuss their disappearance.

At night-time, he would look out to the lighthouse, its beam spun a silver path over the ocean; he believed that if he stared hard enough, perhaps it would come to him.

But it took another eighty years and a Mr Morse to turn the pattern of flashes, from the lighthouse beam, into dots and dashes. Translated they read - "Thy way is in the sea, and my path in the great waters".

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Text Title: The Dream Asylum.** | | | |
| Find and underline the words. | **Bronze (5)** | **Silver (7)** | **Gold (10)** |
| Delicately, scrubbed, gesture | Unwavering, blistered, pearly, translated | Granite, procession, solemn |
|  | Find a word that suggest that the character took the piece of paper out of his pocket gently.  What does the word ‘defiantly’ suggest about the lighthouse? | | |
|  | The characters were ‘ruddy and weathered’ - why does the author describe the keepers this way?  How did the character react to the ‘surprise’? Use evidence form the text. | | |
|  | Do you think the character hopes to see the keepers again? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. | | |
|  | The story is told as a flashback. What does this add to the story? | | |
|  | How does the character travel to the lighthouse? | | |
|  | Draw and label a picture of the men in the lighthouse based on the character description. | | |