

**Chapter III from “The Open Boat”**

by Stephen Crane

- 1 It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him.
- 2 They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dinghy. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.
- 3 “I wish we had a sail,” remarked the captain. “We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest.” So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.
- 4 Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed color, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.
- 5 At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. “We must be about opposite New Smyrna,” said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. “Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago.”
- 6 “Did they?” said the captain.
- 7 The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dinghy, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.
- 8 Shipwrecks are apropos of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dinghy none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dinghy, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.
- 9 For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.
- 10 “Take her easy, now, boys,” said the captain. “Don’t spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you’ll need all your strength, because we’ll sure have to swim for it. Take your time.”
- 11 Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. “That’s the house of refuge, sure,” said the cook. “They’ll see us before long, and come out after us.”

- 12 The distant lighthouse reared high. “The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he’s looking through a glass,” said the captain. “He’ll notify the life-saving people.”
- 13 “None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck,” said the oiler, in a low voice. “Else the lifeboat would be out hunting us.”
- 14 Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. “We’ll never be able to make the lighthouse now,” said the captain. “Swing her head a little more north, Billie,” said he.
- 15 “A little more north, sir,” said the oiler.
- 16 Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.
- 17 Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dinghy like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scatheless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

1. Choose *two* ways that the harsh conditions and remote location of the setting contribute to the theme of the passage.
- They symbolize the characters' desire for freedom and adventure.
  - They provide conflict that propels the action and character development in the story.
  - They allow the author to focus on the environment rather than character development.
  - They permit the author to illustrate the basic principles used to navigate the sea.
  - They help explain the need for cooperation among the men.
  - They illustrate why some members of the crew struggle more than others.

2. **Part A**

In paragraph 17, what does the phrase "impending rescue" mean?

- A. A rescue occurring against many odds
- B. A rescue organized according to rules
- C. A rescue involving many people
- D. A rescue happening soon

**Part B**

Which sentence from the passage provides the best clue for the meaning of the phrase "impending rescue"?

- A. "For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time." (Paragraph 9)
- B. "'We'll never be able to make the lighthouse now,' said the captain." (Paragraph 14)
- C. "In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore." (Paragraph 16)
- D. "Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dinghy like circus men." (Paragraph 17)

3. **Part A** From the list of possible conclusions below, choose three conclusions that can be drawn from evidence in the passage and write them in Column 1. Next, in Column 2, write the number of the paragraph that provides evidence for each conclusion you've written in Column 1.

Column 1: Conclusion	Column 2: Evidence
	Paragraph _____
	Paragraph _____
	Paragraph _____

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A</b> The oiler has taken charge of the dinghy.                             | <b>E</b> The men had become friends before embarking in the dinghy.   |
| <b>B</b> The men have established a deep respect for the others in the dinghy. | <b>F</b> Rations are limited but shared equally.                      |
| <b>C</b> The captain knows his crew thinks they will die on the sea.           | <b>G</b> The men offer encouragement by promoting thoughts of rescue. |
| <b>D</b> The men are weakened from a lack of water.                            |   |

**Part B** Which theme is best supported by the three conclusions in Part A?

- A. Humans often form stronger relationships with one another when facing adversity together.
  - B. The hardest task anyone can face is to overcome fear.
  - C. People cannot know or guess what the future holds for them.
  - D. Unexpected physical hardship will test the ability of even the strongest friendships to survive.
4. Paragraph 1 includes these two sentences: “No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.” Paragraph 2 then includes the same sentences. What is the most likely reason that these sentences are repeated in both paragraphs?
- A. The sentences show that there is a limited amount of conversation among the crew members.
  - B. The sentences show that there is an unspoken level of tension among the crew members.
  - C. The sentences show that the crew members feel similarly about their situation, and they have formed a strong bond that allows them to leave some thoughts unspoken.
  - D. The sentences show that although the crew members are outwardly optimistic, they have serious doubts about their survival and keep their doubts to themselves.

5. In Paragraph 9, the correspondent reflects on how he views rowing as opposed to how others may view the activity. What is the intended impact of this reflection?
- A. It is meant to make the reader pity the correspondent and his current physical state.
  - B. It is meant to add humor for the reader by injecting the correspondent's wit.
  - C. It is meant to enlighten the reader about what the correspondent's life was like before.
  - D. It is meant to encourage the reader to appreciate the correspondent more than the other characters.
6. Which two sentences from the story add suspense by showing that some characters have doubts that they will be rescued?
- "The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dinghy." (Paragraph 2)
  - "We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest." (Paragraph 3)
  - "Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago." (Paragraph 5)
  - "The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar." (Paragraph 7)
  - "Of the four in the dinghy none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dinghy, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily." (Paragraph 8)
  - "None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck," said the oiler, in a low voice." (Paragraph 13)
7. Describe the relationship among the four men in the boat and explain how this relationship is central to the theme and plot of the passage. Be sure to include evidence from the text to support your response.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Problem-Attic format version 4.4.386**

© 2011–2018 EducAide Software  
Licensed for use by EducAide Software  
Terms of Use at [www.problem-attic.com](http://www.problem-attic.com)

Practice #1 for EOC      3/28/2020

- |         |                                  |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1.      |                                  |
| Answer: | 2,5                              |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 2.      |                                  |
| Answer: | D; C                             |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 3.      |                                  |
| Answer: | B, G, F; 1 or 2, 11 or 12, 17; A |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 4.      |                                  |
| Answer: | C                                |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 5.      |                                  |
| Answer: | A                                |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 6.      |                                  |
| Answer: | 3,6                              |
| Points: | 1                                |
| 7.      |                                  |
| Answer: | [answers vary]                   |
| Points: | 1                                |