



ST. LAWRENCE HIGH SCHOOL
A JESUIT CHRISTIAN MINORITY INSTITUTION



CLASS - IX
ENGLISH TEXT STUDY MATERIAL
TOPICS: THE NORTH SHIP **DATE:09.11.2020**

THE NORTH SHIP

AUTHOR

On August 9, 1922, Philip Larkin was born in Coventry, England. He attended St. John's College, Oxford. His first book of poetry, *The North Ship*, was published in 1945 and, though not particularly strong on its own, is notable insofar as certain passages foreshadow the unique sensibility and maturity that characterizes his later work. With his second volume of poetry, *The Less Deceived* (1955), Larkin became the preeminent poet of his generation. Like Hardy, Larkin focused on intense personal emotion but strictly avoided sentimentality or self-pity. In 1964, he confirmed his reputation as a major poet with the publication of *The Whitsun Weddings*, and again in 1974 with *High Windows*: collections whose searing, often mocking, wit does not conceal the poet's dark vision and underlying obsession with universal themes of mortality, love, and human solitude. Deeply anti-social and a great lover and published critic of American jazz, Larkin never married and worked as a librarian in the provincial city of Hull, where he died on December 2, 1985.

SUMMARY

The poem opens with the poet's own view where he saw that three ships got ready to sail over the sea. It was a pleasant weather to sail by as the wind rose in the morning sky. Each ship was fully ready to go on a journey. The poet saw, the first ship went towards the west sea and it was full of wind and waves and that is how it reached to a wealthy country.

The second ship turned towards the east direction over the sea. But the way was not quite to sail, the wind was heating the ship like a hunting beast and so the ship failed to make the journey and reach its desired destination.

The poet saw, the third ship sailed towards the north direction, through the dark sea. There was no wind to go by and the decks shone frostily. On the way, the northern sky rose high and black. The way was not helpful for the ship to sail by. The east ship and the west ship came back by facing the difficulties on their way but the north ship went far into the unpleasant sea and reached its destination and again got ready for another long journey.

Actually the poet here compares the three ships with the three types of human beings and in the same way their journey is compared to the journey of the lives of these three kinds of human beings. According to him there are three kind of people, they start their life to reach their goal but two types of people fail to reach their destination for being reluctant to face little difficulties and obstacles in their way. But the third kind of people after facing great difficulties, successfully achieves their goal. Difficulties cannot stop their way of life.

IMPORTANT WORD-MEANINGS

Rigged - a ship ready for a long journey

Running sea - the sea with waves.

Quaking- not quite/ tumbling sea

Captivity- imprisonment

Darkening sea -dark sea/ no trace of light

Frostily- looks frosty

Unfruitful- unpleasant

Unforgiving sea - In a mood not to forgive the ship

QUESTION – ANSWER

1. When did the wind rise?

Ans: The wind rose in the morning sky.

2. Where did the northern sky rise high and black?

Ans: The northern sky rose high and black over the proud unfruitful sea.

3. Why did the wind hunt the second ship like a beast?

Ans: The wind hunted the second ship like a beast to anchor it in captivity.

4. Where did the wind carry the first ship?

Ans: The wind carried the first ship to a rich country.

5. Give any two points of difference between the journey of the third ship and the other two ships.

Ans: The points of difference are:

- i. While the first and the second ships came back from their journey happily or unhappily, the third ship sailed northward fighting obstacles in the sea.
- ii. In contrast to the first and second ship, the third one was rigged for a long journey.

6. Under which star was the third ship sailing?

Ans: The third ship was sailing under the fire-spilling star.

7. How did the sea of the first ship differ from that of the second and third ship?

Ans: The sea was friendly in the voyage of the first ship, while during the voyage of the second and third ship it was quaking, unfriendly and unforgiving.

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