

J. M. Barrie. Peter Pan, From Chapter 14, The Pirate Ship

One green light squinting over Kidd's Creek, which is near the mouth of the pirate river, marked where the brig, the JOLLY ROGER, lay, low in the water; a rakish-looking craft foul to the hull, every beam in her detestable, like ground strewn with mangled feathers. She was the cannibal of the seas, and scarce needed that watchful eye, for she floated immune in the horror of her name. She was wrapped in the blanket of night, through which no sound from her could have reached the shore.

There was little sound, and none agreeable save the whir of the ship's sewing machine at which Smee sat, ever industrious and obliging, the essence of the commonplace, pathetic Smee. I know not why he was so infinitely pathetic, unless it were because he was so pathetically unaware of it; but even strong men had to turn hastily from looking at him, and more than once on summer evenings he had touched the fount of Hook's tears and made it flow.

A few of the pirates leaned over the bulwarks, drinking in the miasma [putrid mist] of the night; others sprawled by barrels over games of dice and cards; and the exhausted four who had carried the little house lay prone on the deck, where even in their sleep they rolled skillfully to this side or that out of Hook's reach, lest he should claw them mechanically in passing.

Hook trod the deck in thought. O man unfathomable. It was his hour of triumph. Peter had been removed for ever from his path, and all the other boys were in the brig, about to walk the plank. It was his grimmest deed since the days when he had brought Barbecue to heel; and knowing as we do how vain a tabernacle is man, could we be surprised had he now paced the deck unsteadily, bellied out by the winds of his success?

Define Each Word

squint: _____

detestable: _____

mangled: _____

putrid: _____

prone: _____

Write the Correct Word from the Vocabulary

1. The _____ stench of the rotting mangoes hung heavily in the dank, humid mist.
2. The father thought his daughter's boyfriend was _____ because of his dirty hair, unkempt appearance, and loutish disposition.
3. After being knocked out in the 12th round, the champion's opponent lay _____ inside the ring, unconscious but still breathing.
4. The elderly teacher _____ through his thick glasses as he tried to decipher the student's scribbled marks on the test.
5. Heather tearfully gathered the _____ remains of the dead bird that her cat had attacked.

Comprehension and Discussion: Answer Each Question in Complete Sentences

1. What is Captain Hook's attitude toward Smee?

2. How is the Jolly Roger described? How does the pirate ship (Jolly Roger) reflect Hook's personality?
