

Comprehension 2

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

After a time I saw a little old man making signs to me to carry him on my back over the brook. Having pity on his age I did so, but when I would have put him down on the other side he twisted his legs so tightly round my neck that I fell to the ground half choked.

Though he saw how faint I was, he made no sign of getting off, but, opening his legs a little to let me breathe better, he dug his feet into my stomach to make me rise and carry him further. Day after day, and night after night he clung to me, until by good luck I got rid of him in the following way.

Coming to a spot where, a few days before, I had left the juice of some grapes in a calabash, I drank the juice which, in the meantime, had become very good wine. This gave me fresh strength, and instead of dragging myself wearily along, I danced and sang with right goodwill. The old man, seeing how lighthearted the wine had made me, signed to me to give him some. He took a deep drink and soon became so merry that he loosed his hold on my shoulders, when I tossed him off and killed him with a big stone, lest he should make me his victim once more.

Some sailors whom I met shortly afterwards said I was the first person they had known to escape from the old man of the sea, who for years had been a terror to those obliged to visit the island.

(Sinbad the Sailor—The Arabian Nights)

1. What did the old man want the writer to do?
2. Why did the writer have pity on the old man?
3. What did the old man do when the writer (Sinbad) wanted to put him down?
4. Why did the old man dig his feet into Sinbad's stomach?
5. What did the old man do to let Sinbad breathe more easily?
6. How had the wine in the calabash been made?
7. What effect did the wine have on Sinbad?
8. What did Sinbad do after drinking the wine?
9. What did Sinbad do after tossing the old man off his back?
10. What did the sailors tell Sinbad?

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

1. The old man wanted the writer to carry him over the brook.
2. The writer had pity on him because of his age.
3. He twisted his legs tightly round Sinbad's neck.
4. He dug his feet into Sinbad's stomach to make him rise and carry him further.
5. The old man opened his legs to let Sinbad breathe more easily.
6. Sinbad had left some grape juice in the calabash and it had become wine.
7. The wine gave him fresh strength.
8. After drinking the wine he danced and sang with right good-will.
9. Sinbad killed the old man with a big stone.
10. The sailors told Sinbad that he was the first person they had known to escape from the old man of the sea.