

 This text is from *Tales of King Arthur*, retold by Felicity Brooks in the Usborne Classics Retold series.

The Sword in the Stone

‘Please can I come with you?’ begged Arthur. ‘Please?’

He was watching his father and brother as they saddled their horses. They were about to go to a tournament, and Arthur was determined not to be left out. It had to be worth just one more try.

‘I promise I won’t get in the way, and I’ll sharpen your weapons and shine up your armour and look after the horses,’ he said, trying a direct appeal to his father. Sir Ector, who was busy loading the saddlebags, did not look up.

‘You can’t go,’ said Kay dismissively. ‘You’re not even a knight.’

Kay, or rather Sir Kay, as Arthur now had to call him, had just been knighted, and he took great delight in reminding his brother of this fact. Now, after years of training, he was at last allowed to take part in a real tournament. His sword was razor-sharp, his brand-new armour had been polished to perfection, and he could hardly wait to show off his jousting skills. The last thing he wanted was his little brother tagging along behind him.

‘But you’ll need a **squire**,’ said Arthur. ‘Please let me be your squire.’

Sir Ector glanced down at Arthur’s earnest, expectant face. There were good reasons why he didn’t want him to go. He wished he could explain. But then, what harm could it really do?

‘Well, Arthur, I suppose you might be useful...’

‘But father!’ protested Kay. Ector ignored him.

‘And you’ll be a knight yourself soon, so this will be a chance for you to learn how to behave. But one hint of trouble...’

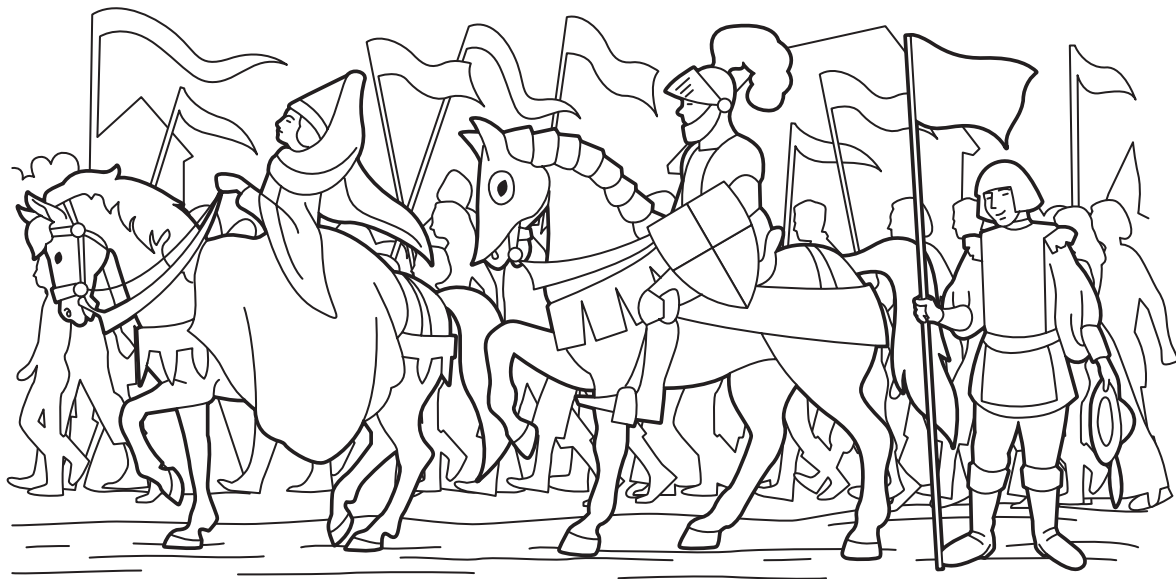
‘You won’t even know I’m there,’ grinned Arthur. He was already packing his bag. Kay shot him a filthy look and was still muttering under his breath when they set off.

The tournament had been arranged for New Year’s Day, and people were coming

Glossary

squire – a boy or young man who served a knight and looked after his armour and weapons; squires were often knights in training.

from far and wide to take part or watch. Knights with their squires, dukes and earls, ladies on horseback, barons with their servants, whole families of peasants, wandering minstrels, shepherds, beggars, butchers, bakers, candlestickmakers and hordes of other curious onlookers thronged the muddy road, all heading for the town where the tournament was to take place. Ector soon realized that they'd have little chance of finding a place to stay unless one of them went ahead.



'I'll go,' said Arthur. 'I'll try the Blue Boar Inn first, and if there's no room there, I'll leave a message to say where I've gone.'

'All right,' said Ector. 'We'll meet you there. Ride safely!'

Arthur charged off at full gallop.

As soon as he was out of earshot, Ector turned to Kay conspiratorially.

'I think you should know that this isn't just any old tournament,' he said.

'What do you mean?' asked Kay.

'Well, the story I've heard is that the Archbishop has arranged it for a particular purpose.'

'And what's that?'

'To find the new king,' said Ector.



This poem is by Gillian Clarke.

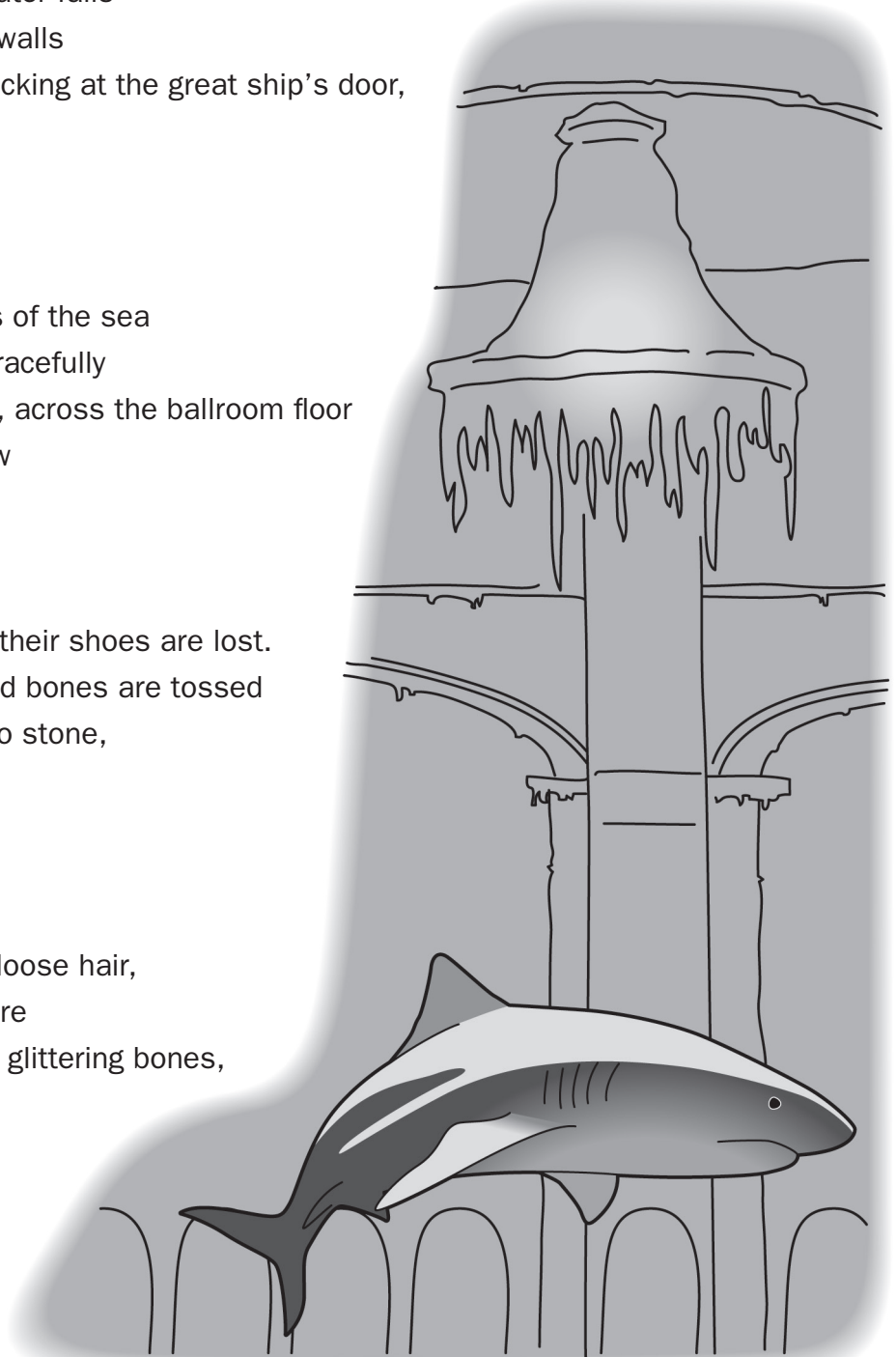
The Titanic

Under the ocean where water falls
over the decks and tilted walls
where the sea comes knocking at the great ship's door,
the band still plays
to the drum of the waves,
to the drum of the waves.

Down in the indigo depths of the sea
the white shark waltzes gracefully
down the water stairways, across the ballroom floor
where the cold shoals flow
and ghost dancers go,
ghost dancers go.

Their dresses are frayed, their shoes are lost.
their jewels and beads and bones are tossed
into the sand, all turned to stone,
as they sing in the sea
eternally,
eternally.

Currents comb their long loose hair,
dancers sway forever where
the bright fish nibble their glittering bones,
till they fall asleep
in the shivering deep,
in the shivering deep.



Name:	Class:	Date:
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The Sword in the Stone

- 1 From what you learn in the passage, tick to show whether the following are **fact** or **opinion**.

	Fact	Opinion
Kay has just been knighted.		
Kay thinks that Arthur is annoying.		
Kay is older than Arthur.		

1 mark AF2

- 2 'And you'll be a knight yourself soon, so this will be a chance for you to learn how to behave. But one hint of trouble...'

What does *But one hint of trouble...* mean? Tick **one**.

Someone has hinted that Arthur might cause trouble.

☐

Arthur will be sent home if he misbehaves.

☐

Arthur might find the tournament difficult.

☐

Ector thinks Arthur will be badly behaved.

☐

1 mark AF3

- 3 Why is Kay muttering under his breath when they set off for the tournament? Explain your answer fully, using the text to help you.

2 marks AF3

/ 4
Total for this page

- 4 Number these events to show the order in which they happen.
The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ Arthur rides ahead to the Blue Boar Inn.
- ☐ Kay tells Arthur he can't go.
- ☐ Ector explains the purpose of the tournament.
- ☐ Ector agrees to let Arthur go.
- 1** Arthur pleads with his father to let him go to the tournament.

AF4
1 mark

- 5 *Arthur charged off at full gallop.*
As soon as he was out of earshot, Ector turned to Kay conspiratorially.

What impression does the phrase *Ector turned to Kay conspiratorially* give of Ector? Tick **one**.

- He is a criminal. ☐
- He favours Kay over Arthur. ☐
- He is friendly. ☐
- He wants to tell Kay something he doesn't want Arthur to hear. ☐

AF5
1 mark

- 6 Look at the paragraph beginning: *The tournament...*
What is this paragraph **mainly** about? Tick **two**.

- The tournament is being held in a town. ☐
- It is a winter tournament. ☐
- A lot of people are going to the tournament. ☐
- The road into the town is muddy. ☐
- It may be difficult to find a place to stay. ☐

AF6
1 mark

/ 3
Total for this page

7

One of the aspects of Arthur's character is his strong will.
What evidence is there in the passage to support this opinion?
Explain as fully as you can, using the text to help you answer.

AF6
2 marks

8

Which of the following descriptions best fits this passage? Tick **one**.

- a legend ☐
- an historical account ☐
- a fairy tale ☐
- a fable ☐

AF7
1 mark

/ 10
Total for this test

Name:	Class:	Date:
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The Titanic

- 1 Write **one** word from the whole poem in each space below to complete the pairs of rhyming words. One has been done for you.

falls	walls
sea	
flow	
hair	

	AF4
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1 mark

- 2 Look at these lines from the first verse:

*over the decks and tilted walls
where the sea comes knocking at the great ship's door,
the band still plays*

In **your own words**, what do these lines tell you about the *Titanic*?
Write **two** things.

1 _____

2 _____

	AF3
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2 marks

- 3 Look at these lines from the first verse:

*the band still plays
to the drum of the waves,*

What do these lines suggest about the waves?

	AF3
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1 mark

	/ 4
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Total for this page

- 4 Why does the poet say that *the white shark waltzes*?

1 mark AF5

- 5 Look at this line from the last verse:
the bright fish nibble their glittering bones,

Think about the phrase *glittering bones*. Which of the following could replace it in the poem while keeping the same meaning? Tick **one**.

- shiny stones ☐
- skeletons clean ☐
- sparkling jewels ☐
- colourful fish ☐

1 mark AF2

- 6 This poem uses alliteration (repeated sounds).
For example:

as they sing in the sea

Find and copy **one** other line from the poem that uses alliteration.
Underline the repeated sounds.

1 mark AF5

1 / 3
Total for this page

- 7 Draw lines to match each phrase with what it shows you about the dancers.

Phrase

their jewels and beads

all turned to stone

and ghost dancers go

Their dresses are frayed,
their shoes are lost

The dancers...

have been there a long time

don't look as good as
they once did

are wealthy

are dead

1 mark AF5

- 8 The poem is very rhythmical (has a strong rhythm). Why do you think the poet chose to make the poem so rhythmical?

1 mark AF6

- 9 Think about the whole poem. What is it **mainly** about?
Tick the **best** answer.

music ☐

the ocean ☐

dancing ☐

death ☐

1 mark AF6

/ 10
Total for this test