

Ghost Ship

A cold wind blew through Benjamin's hair. He stood on the bow of his ship and stared into the thick fog. A voice cried down from the crow's nest, "Land ahoy!"

This was Benjamin's first adventure. He couldn't wait to discover the lost island of Pumpernickel. He'd heard that the fabled treasure of Pumpernickel was the biggest in the world. A wide-brimmed hat sat on top of his long black hair. One of his eyes was covered by a leather patch. His pet parrot, Squawk, flew in circles around the mainsail. Benjamin smiled. He'd never been happier.

Waves crashed against the side of the ship.

Benjamin wrestled with the wheel and steered towards the faint outline of land. Edward the Quartermaster was keeping a keen eye out for any trouble. It was his job to lead them into battle.

Out of nowhere, a thunderclap shattered the silence. Benjamin fell to his knees. He watched a canon ball smash into the side of the boat. "We're under attack!" Edward cried out.

Benjamin grabbed his sword and raced to see where the attack was coming from. The fog made it difficult to see anything. A faint outline of an enormous ship drifted eerily

VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. What does the word "fabled" tell you about the treasure of Pumpernickel?
2. Find a word or phrase that tells you the Quartermaster was watching carefully.
3. What keyword or phrase tells you about Benjamin's mood?
4. What does the phrase "cried out" tell you about how Edward spoke?
5. Find a word that tells you that the white light wasn't still.



through the mist. It looked more like a reflection than a real boat. A pale flag fluttered in the breeze. Benjamin looked at the flag and gulped. Every pirate knew that flag.

A white shimmering light flickered on the edges of the new ship. Another thunderclap rocked Benjamin's boat. This time, a ghostly canon ball whistled past his head and into the sea.

Now the boat was up against theirs. A group of pirates were stood waiting to board his ship. Each one had a pale face and transparent like the fog.

"Captain Ludd would like a word," one of the ghostly pirates whispered.

Benjamin's eyes widened. His hands trembled. "But Captain Ludd died five years ago," he said.

"Then you'd better hurry up!" answered the pirate with a smile.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

E Benjamin's mood changes over the story. Find the phrases that show this.

I What makes you think the ship might have been rocking in the water?

S What clues are there that Benjamin is a pirate?

I How do you know the ship was difficult to steer?

R What was Benjamin's parrot called?

