Session 1

Extract from *The Boy Who Fell Off The Mayflower* by P.J. Lynch

Story told by John Howland

London

London was a fine city when I was there. Greatest city in the whole world. Smelled bad, I must say, but it was huge and busy and exciting for a young lad like me.

It was all because of the king that we had to leave England. Him and his bishops didn’t like the way our people chose to worship. None of their business, I said. They jailed our leaders and harassed us till we had to leave our homeland to live in Holland. But the youngest among us now seemed more Dutch than English, and, with the fear of a new war with the Spanish coming, our elders decided we’d take our chances in the New World.

We came to London to rent ourselves a ship with a Captain Jones and his crew. We were loading her up with provisions for the long voyage to America. I had hoped for a day and a half to go and see my mother and brothers, but my master said we were too pressed for time.

When I wasn’t running all around London ordering barrels of this and bales of that, my master, John Carver, had me copying out lists of supplies and letters to the businessmen who were lending us money to fund our voyage. Many years we’d be working to pay them off.

When our ship was nearly loaded, Master Carver sent me to find the Warwick Inn, up by the city wall beyond the cathedral. I was looking for a certain gentleman.

In the noisy throng of Londoners, a tall white-bearded man stood out.

“Elder William Brewster?” I whispered to him. “Master Carver sent me for you. We leave London with the dawn tide.”

“I remember you well from Holland, John,” he replied. “Take me to the ship, lad, and let’s be quick. There is danger for us here.”

Sure enough, there were shifty-looking characters all about, and dozens of the king’s militiamen were in the streets. If they had known that I was with one of the leaders of the Separatists, the very man who published all those pamphlets against the king and his bishops, we would have been done for. They would have chopped off Elder Brewster’s head and mine and stuck them up on spikes on London Bridge for sure.

We stuck to the back lanes and alleyways, and by the time we made it down to the wharf, it was already dark. The taverns nearby were noisy with sailors and longshoremen, but the quays were quiet. At last we came to our ship.

Session 2

**Glossary**

Find the meanings of the following words. Add any additional words and their meanings of those you are unsure of.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | **Definition** |
| bishop |  |
| harassed |  |
| Dutch |  |
| elders |  |
| provisions |  |
| throng |  |
| dawn |  |
| shifty-looking |  |
| dozens |  |
| militiamen |  |
| pamphlets |  |
| wharf |  |
| taverns |  |
| longshoremen |  |
| quay |  |

Session 3

1. *London was a fine city when I was there.*

Which word is closest in meaning to fine as used in this sentence?

outstanding

thin

light

ordinary

1. Why did they go to London?

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1. Who was lending them money to pay for the voyage to America?

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1. How can you tell that John Howland was very busy getting ready for the voyage to America?

Write **two** reasons.

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1. When were they planning on leaving London?

In the morning

In the afternoon

In the evening

At night

1. Describe John Howland’s character. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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1. Why did they stick to the back lanes and alleyways on the way to the ship?

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