Session 1

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

Story told by John Howland

At last we came to our ship.

She was being loaded by lamplight now. Casks of beer, sacks of onions and cabbages, boxes of salted herring, and barrels of corned beef. Tasty stuff. Some of the passengers were still getting their bits of furniture on board. The sheep, goats and chickens were waiting till last.

My master shook William Brewster’s hand fit to shake it off, then hurriedly guided us across the gangway.

‘Thank the Lord you are safe, William,’ he said. ‘Welcome aboard the *Mayflower*.’

**The Mayflower**

Outside Master Carver’s cabin, I unrolled my mattress and tried to get some sleep. I don’t think I’d slept even an hour before I heard the great clanking of the windlass as they hoisted the anchor.

I ran up on deck for a last look at London. Only a few lights were lit, and the ship made hardly a sound drifting down on the tide away from the sleeping city.

One of our sailors bellowed a farewell across the river to a woman on the wharf. A coarse shout came back: ‘*Godspeed*!’

And I thought of my mother’s gentle voice: ’Godspeed, John.’

The sun was up by the time we reached Gravesend, where the river widened. The crew was busy unfurling the sails to catch the morning breeze. I was enjoying the fresh air when a burly sailor came over to me.

‘You’re the boy that runs the messages, ain’t you?’

‘Yes, sir, I am…John Howland’s my name…’

‘Never mind that! Just get below and tell your boss that Bob Coppin – that’s me, the first mate – orders that the passengers are to keep down ‘tween decks now we’re under way. We’ll let you know when you can come up for air. And keep it quiet with all that praying!’ With that, he stomped off, laughing.

‘I’ll be pleased to take your message, Master Coppin,’ I called after him. ‘You will find, sir, that we are civil people, and we hope to give no offense to God or man. We hope only for a measure of civility in return!’

The first mate stopped laughing. He turned around and looked long and hard at me. Then he gave me a nod and said, ‘Right you are…Master Howland.’

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** |
| cask |  |
| herring |  |
| gangway |  |
| windlass |  |
| hoisted |  |
| bellowed |  |
| coarse |  |
| Godspeed |  |
| unfurling |  |
| burly |  |
| first mate |  |
| stomped |  |
| civil |  |
| civility |  |

Session 3

1. How can you tell it was dark when the ship was being loaded?

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1. *My master shook William Brewster’s hand fit to shake it off.*

What does this tell you about the handshake?

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1. Write two synonyms of the word ‘hurriedly’

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1. What awoke John from his sleep?

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1. How do you think John felt leaving London? Use evidence from both of the texts to support your answer.

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1. Describe Bob Coppin and his character. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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1. *‘We hope only for a measure of civility in return!’*

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

size

value

plan

amount