The Lighthouse

In the pubs and inns of the headland, there was a buzz of activity. Beer flowed, much food was consumed and great frivolity ensued! There was a truly wonderful atmosphere in the village, for the fishermen's catch was truly overflowing that day. The village was alight with laughter and good will.

Nevertheless, there was one who did not think that the time was right for such antics. For his purpose was much greater. He was not just the keeper of the lighthouse, he was the keeper of lives too.

The noise from the inn was becoming too much for him to bear. Slamming the window shut, he continued about his business and grumbled to himself. The light from the candle barely lit the workspace: a simple desk in a bare, stone room. But that was the way he liked it. An uncluttered room for an uncluttered mind.

And all the while, the lamp in the lighthouse burned brightly.

Outside, the wind was getting up: a storm was brewing. The ocean, which had been a still as a millpond, was now beginning to whip up waves against the shore.

"White horses…", he thought to himself. He allowed himself a slight smile. He knew they'd be safe that night.

Almost at once, there was a grind, a whirr….and then silence. From high above him, he knew that there would be trouble – and as if to confirm it, a gust of wind blew the window wide open and the candle went out.

A sign.

Up the stairs he stumbled and fell, climbing higher and higher up the stone steps. And what he discovered concerned him greatly. For the great lighthouse lamp was lit no more; its gears and cogs failed to turn and its searchlight was blind.

And outside, the wind was blowing. A torrent through the darkness.

By now, a dozen ships could have crashed upon the rocks – their hulls smashed to pieces like splinters; their sailors lost to the ocean depths.

Recovering his tool box from the floor below, he attempted to solve this terrible problem.

Carefully removing the lens cover from atop the lamp, he stepped back.

And fell.

A crash…and suddenly the lens was in hundreds of tiny pieces!

In the distance, the long, deep moan of a ship's foghorn sounded.

Urgency was his most consuming feeling!

A look out of the window confirmed his worst fears! There it was! A ship…looming and large…was inbound and almost upon the rocks!

And at that very moment, a miracle.

Dozens upon dozens of lamps lit the way: they gathered on the shoreline and upon the lighthouse tower. The headland was a mass of tiny fireflies, signalling 'Danger! Stay clear! Don't come near!'

And not a moment too soon.

1) What was 'the fishermen's catch'?

2) Why were the fishermen celebrating?

3) Find an example of a metaphor in paragraph one.

4) What do you think 'antics' are ?

5) Why does the lighthouse keeper slam the window shut?

6) What do you think the 'white horses' were that the keeper thought of?

7) Why does he smile to himself?

8) Find the ***first phrase*** that suggests there is danger coming in the story.

9) What was 'the sign' that the lighthouse keeper witnessed?

10) What phrase in the story means the same as ' all the mariners died'?

11) Why did the lighthouse keeper feel a sense of 'urgency'?

12) What was the miracle? Explain fully.

13) What is the metaphor in the penultimate paragraph?

14) How do you know – ***from the text*** – that the ship must have been saved? Explain.

15) Explain how you think the lighthouse keeper felt at the end of the story – explain fully, referring to the text. (3 marks)