

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner Summary

Writer: Samuel Taylor Coleridge | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a Romantic poem that focuses on nature, sin, and the idea of repentance. The main character is the Ancient Mariner, who shares a strange experience from his life that teaches a deep moral lesson.

Beginning of the Poem: At the start of the poem, the Ancient Mariner stops a Wedding Guest using his "glittering eye" and forces him to listen to his story. Although the guest tries to leave, the Mariner continues speaking. He begins by telling how his ship left the harbor and sailed south. A violent storm pushed the ship further toward the South Pole, where they were surrounded by snow, ice, and large glaciers. The crew started to feel hopeless.

The Albatross Incident: During this time, an albatross came to the ship, and the sailors saw it as a good sign. A gentle wind began to blow, and the bird followed the ship every day. But for no clear reason, the Mariner killed the bird with his crossbow. At first, the sailors were angry, but when the fog cleared and the wind continued, they believed the killing was a good thing. The ship started moving north again.

Punishment and Suffering: Suddenly, the wind stopped, and the ship got stuck in the middle of a calm sea. The sailors began to suffer from extreme thirst. They believed that an evil spirit was following them, and they hung the dead albatross around the Mariner's neck to make him carry the burden of his sin.

Beginning of Supernatural Events: Then something strange happened—a ghostly ship appeared. The Mariner wanted to warn the others, but was so thirsty as if he had to drink his blood to find the strength to speak. On the ghost ship were two figures: Death and Life-in-Death. They played a dice game and won the souls of the crew. The sailors died one by one, each cursing the Mariner with their eyes.

Spiritual Realization: In deep despair, the Mariner wanted to pray but could not. It was a full moon night. He saw water snakes in the sea and suddenly realized the beauty of nature. He understood that everything in this world—big or small—deserves love and respect. As soon as he felt this, he was able to pray. The albatross fell from his neck and sank into the sea.

Freedom and Return: Later, he saw the dead sailors' bodies stand up and work as lifeless tools controlled by spiritual forces. They helped sail the ship. In the end, a small boat with a pilot, the pilot's boy, and a holy hermit came to rescue him. The Mariner's ship drowns with 200 dead sailors. The pilot's boat rescues the Mariner and brings him to the land. The Mariner asks the holy hermit to clean him from his sin.

End of the Poem: At the end, the Mariner says he always finds the right person who needs to hear his story. He teaches that real prayer comes from love and respect for all of God's creations. That kind of prayer brings true joy in life.

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