

## The Inchcape Rock by Robert Southey: Summary

*Robert Southey (1774 to 1843) He was born in Bristol, England. He was the son of a draper, educated at Westminster School and Balliol College, Oxford.*

*He was a Poet Laureate of England from 1813 to 1843. Some of his short poems like 'The Scholar', 'The Battle of Blenheim', 'Bishop Hatto', 'The Inchcape Rock' etc. are very popular with the school children.*

*'The Inchcape Rock' is a ballad. It's the story of the 14<sup>th</sup> century attempt by the Abbot of Aberbrothok to install a warning bell on Inchcape, a notorious sandstone reef about 11 miles (18km) off the east coast of Angus, Scotland, near Dundee and Fife, occupied by the Bell Rock Lighthouse.*

*Southey was inspired by the the legendary story of a pirate who removed the bell on the Inchcape Rock placed by the Abbot of Aberbrothok. The poem gives us a message that those who do wrong things will meet with due punishment.*



### The Inchcape Rock: About the Poem

The Inchcape Rock by Robert Southey is a ballad (a song or poem that tells a story, or a slow love song) that tells us about the legends of the Inchcape Rock, a rock in the North Sea about 18 km off the east coast of Angus, Scotland.

The story is about the good Abbot of Aberbrothok and the devilish Sir Ralph the Rover. The Abbot achieved the great feat of installing a bell on the dangerous Inchcape rock that had previously caused many shipwrecks. (Ship accidents) His bell rang during the storms and issued an alert for the passing ships. So, the seamen knew where the rock is and could avoid the danger of an accident. They blessed the Abbot for his good work. But it was the Rover who felt jealous at the fame of the Abbot and planned to cut down the bell from the Inchcape rock. And so he did. This Ralph the Rover was actually a sea-pirate समुद्री डाकू. So he needed to destroy the bell to accomplish his desire to rob more ships by putting them in danger. But finally he himself was the victim of the Inchcape rock. One day his ship was left in the midst of storms, lost the direction and crashed against the rock. Thus the Rover was punished for his sinful work. Here the poet Robert Southey delivers a message through his poem: As you sow, so shall you reap. जैसी करनी वैसी भरनी।

### The Inchcape Rock: Stanza-wise Summary & Explanation

#### Stanza 1

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,

हलचल/ movement

The Ship was still as she could be;

staying in the same position; not moving:

Her sails from heaven received no motion,

जलयाना voyage, sail

Her keel was steady in the ocean.

जहाजाचा लाकडी किंवा पोलादी कणा

In the first stanza of the poem the poet describes the calmness of the sea. The air, the sea, the ship – all were still. The sails of the ship were getting no motion from the wind. Its keel was steady in the ocean. In the first stanza, the poet describes the calmness of the sea and sets the natural setting. The sea was calm and there was no movement in the air. That is why the ship stood still. The sails of the ship were not getting any thrust from the air and were erect. Its keel which is a metallic or wooden piece that offers support to the whole structure of the ship was also steady in the ocean.

#### Stanza 2

Without either sign or sound of their shock, झटका blow, shock, jerk, flick, jolt, jostle

The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;  
So little they rose, so little they fell,                      moved upwards  
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The second stanza describes the mild(not violent, severe, or extreme:)sea waves. The waves were rising and falling so little that they did not make any sign or sound. The waves were gently flowing over the Inchcape Rock without moving or ringing the bell. The second stanza describes the drowsy/mild sea waves. The ocean waves flowed over The Inchcape Rock very smoothly. The movement was so slow that it could make The Inchcape Bell ring. The waves were not rising up high to hide the dangerous Inchcape Rock and had no power to rock the bell. Therefore, the bell could not make any sound.

### **Stanza 3**

The worthy Abbot of Aberbrothok                      deserving respect, admiration, or support:  
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;                      स्थापित established, installed  
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,                      बांधना fasten, gird, tie;                      डोलना vacillate, swing, sway,  
And over the waves its warning rung.

The third stanza is about the bell. The 'good old Abbot of Aberbrothok' positioned the Inchcape bell there on the Inchcape Rock. During the storms it floated on a buoy बांधना fasten and rang wildly swung by the high tides to alert everyone that the dangerous rock was there. The word Abbot means the head monk in a monastery. The Abbot of Aberbrothok was a spiritual man and he was knowing the danger posed उत्पन्न by the submerged जलमग्न rock for the passing ships. A collision टक्कर between the keel and the rock could made the ship to sink. His intention was to warn the sailors about a possible collision so, he positioned a large bell atop a buoy बांधना fasten and had it anchored लंगर डालकर जहाज ठहराना to the rock with a chain.

### **Stanza 4**

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,                      छिपना hide  
The Mariners heard the warning Bell;                      a person who works on a ship; a sailor  
And then they knew the perilous Rock,                      खतरनाक hazardous, Dangerous,  
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok                      धन्य blessed,

In the next four lines, the poet tells us how the bell guided the mariners in the bad weather. The seamen could not see the Rock as it stayed hidden under the high waves during the storms. But they could hear the ringing bell and went away from the perilous (dangerous) rock. So the bell saved their lives. Then the seafarers blessed the Abbot for his good job. During the storms, the seamen could not see the rock as it stayed hidden under the high waves. These waves relentlessly लगातार rocked the bell back and forth and the sound from it reverberated गूँजना all around warning the passing ships to steer इशारा clear of the rock thereby averting टालना disasters. Mariners used to praise and bless the Abbot for this kind act of placing the warning device on the rock.

### **Stanza 5**

The Sun in the heaven was shining gay,                      happy,  
All things were joyful on that day;  
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,  
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The fifth stanza delivers a cheerful atmosphere, as it generally happens before every disaster. On a particular bright day everything looked joyful. The sea-birds were whirling over the sea and screaming in joy. In the above stanza, the poet describes a cheerful atmosphere. It was very sunny and bright. The sun was shining in the sky and making the other creatures on planet earth happy. That particular day, everything looked so

joyful. The sea-birds were whirling over the sea and screaming to express their happiness while there remained certain buoyancy in the step of the ship's men.

### **Stanza 6**

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen      बांधना fasten  
A darker speck on the ocean green;      blackish spot  
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,  
And fix'd his eye on the darker speck.

In the sixth stanza of the poem Sir Ralph is introduced for the first time. On that fine day, the buoy (an anchored floating sign to show the reef चट्टान rock, cliff) on the Inchcape Rock was clearly visible, as it was a blackish spot in the green ocean. Sir Ralph the Rover went onto the deck of his vessel /ship and gazed at dark spot of the buoy. In this stanza, Sir Ralph is introduced for the first time. On that fine day, the anchored floating sign (buoy) was clearly visible as a blackish spot in the green ocean. The Captain of the ship, Sir Rover stood on the deck of his vessel and at the dark spot of the buoy.

### **Stanza 7**

He felt the cheering power of spring,      feel happier  
It made him whistle, it made him sing;  
His heart was mirthful to excess,      happy, merry, joyful,/ too much:  
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.      Happiness/ दुष्टता

The next stanza deals with Ralph's feelings and thoughts. He was delighted at the good spring atmosphere. He was making whistling sounds and singing in joy. He was actually overjoyed. But no one knew that a sinful thought in his mind was behind this happiness. This stanza describes Ralph's thoughts and feelings. The magic of the cheerful weather gripped his mind and he felt unusually joyous. He was making whistling sounds and singing in delight as his heart swayed in joy. However, this joy was not pure and got generated from his wickedness. He had something devilish in his mind.

### **Stanza 8**

His eye was on the Inchcape Float;  
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,  
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,  
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

In the eighth stanza the Rover himself speaks and reveals his desire. His eyes were fixed on the floating buoy on the Inchcape Rock. Sir Ralph the Rover ordered his crew to take the boat to the Inchcape Rock. Then he says that he is going to plague (kill or destroy) the good work of the Abbot of Aberbrothok. The devilish thoughts lurking inside the dark mind of the captain made him to cook up a very nasty plan. His intentions were to destroy the good work of the Abbot by destroying the bell and wreak havoc on the passing ships with the hidden treacherous rock.

### **Stanza 9**

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,      making a boat move through water  
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;  
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,  
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape Float.

The ninth stanza describes that the Rover's men took the boat to the Inchcape Rock. There he bent over the boat and cut the bell from the Rock. The captain ordered his men to lower a boat and hopped on it so as to get close to the buoy to uproot it.

### **Stanza 10**

Down sank the Bell with a *gurgling* sound,                      *to make a bubbling sound like water flowing*

The bubbles rose and burst around;  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock,  
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The next stanza pictures how the bell was sinking down making the bubbling sound. Bubbles rose and burst around. Sir Ralph was happy thinking that the bell would save no more ships and the seamen would no longer bless the Abbot. *As soon as Ralph cut the rope, the bell of Inchcape sank down into the deep water creating a gurgling sound causing bubbles to rise and burst on the surface. Deriving immense pleasure from what he did, he felt satisfied that the bell would save no more ships and the seamen would no longer bless the Abbot.*

### **Stanza 11**

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,  
He scour'd the seas for many a day;                      *a new journey*  
And now grown rich with plunder'd store,                      *looted*  
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.                      *Going towards*

Sir Ralph the Rover then sailed away from the rock. Thereafter he had robbed and looted many ships which met accidents crashing to the Inchcape Rock. He is now a rich man with all the looted treasures. And today he is going to the Scotland shore with his ship. *Proud of his deed, Sir Ralph set the sails on a new journey across many seas and over many days. He was a pirate and robbed many ships which met accidents crashing to the Inchcape Rock and became a rich man. After collecting enough treasure and booty, he was heading back to the Scotland shores.*

### **Stanza 12**

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,                      *thick fog*  
They cannot see the sun on high;  
The wind hath blown a gale all day,  
At evening it hath died away.                      *stopped*

The twelfth stanza describes the gloomy atmosphere on the day the Rover is sailing to Scotland. The sun is hidden behind the thick fog. Strong winds were blowing all the day, and now, in the evening it has stopped blowing. *The day when Sir Ralph was returning turned out to be dark. The thick fog filled atmosphere spread far and wide making the sun invisible. The strong winds that were blowing throughout the day, seized in the evening.*

### **Stanza 13**

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,  
So dark it is they see no land.  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,  
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

The next four lines continues the *gloom*. (lack of hope :) The Rover is now on the deck of his ship. They can't see land as it is very dark. Sir Ralph assures that the moon will appear soon and so there will be light. *Sir Ralph stood on the deck but couldn't see the land due to the foggy atmosphere. The crew was panic-stricken but Ralph assured them that there would soon be some light in the sky as the moon was about to appear.*

### **Stanza 14**

“Canst hear,” said one, “the breakers roar?  
For methinks we should be near the shore.”  
“Now, where we are I cannot tell,  
But I wish we could hear the Inchcape Bell.”

In the fourteenth stanza one of Ralph’s men says that he hears the roaring sound of the waves breaking against something. So, he hopes they should be near the shore. He also regrets that the Inchcape Bell is no more, as it could guide them in this situation. One of the crew members said that he could not locate the position of the ship and coastland as the waves were receding into a mute conspiracy. He was also lamenting that there was no Inchcape bell to warn them of the nearing rocky coast and to ease their fears.

### **Stanza 15**

They hear no sound, the swell is strong,                    tides  
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along;  
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,  
“Oh Christ! It is the Inchcape Rock!”

But no sound was there. The tides were strong. The Rover and his team are drifting along with the ship. Suddenly the vessel gets a jerking. They all realize that the vessel has hit the Inchcape Rock. The sea got more turbulent and feisty and they could hear no sound as there was no alarm bell ringing. The wind also dropped to a standstill and the ship was now in the grip of the waves and they continued rowing here and there. Suddenly, the ship got the jerk and they understood and uttered in disappointment that their vessel had hit the Inchcape Rock.

### **Stanza 16**

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,  
He curst himself in his despair;                    to say rude or offensive words  
The waves rush in on every side,  
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

Sir Ralph the Rover pulls his hairs in frustration. He curses himself for his evil deeds. Meanwhile the water fills in every corner of the vessel and it starts sinking in the sea. The Rover, Sir Ralph in frustration pulled his hair and cursed himself for his evil deeds. He fell into a pit of his own making and the rock turned into his tombstone. Meanwhile, the water started rushing-in from all sides and started sinking the ship.

### **Stanza 17**

But even in his dying fear,  
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear;  
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,  
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

In the last stanza of the poem as the Rover is dying, he hears a sound like the ringing of the Inchcape Bell. It was actually his *death knell* एक मौत that the Devil himself was ringing beneath the water. Thus the Rover gets punishment for his sinful works. Robert Southey is a poet who always delivers a teaching through his poems. This too is not an exception. As the ship was sinking down in the sea, Sir Ralph heard a sound like that of the Inchcape Bell that seized him with terror. It was actually his death knell that the Devil himself was ringing beneath the water reminding him of his approaching death due to his misdeeds done.

**PART: 1**

# 2.3 The Inchcape Rock

## ICE BREAKERS

- Prepare a word register related to marine life.

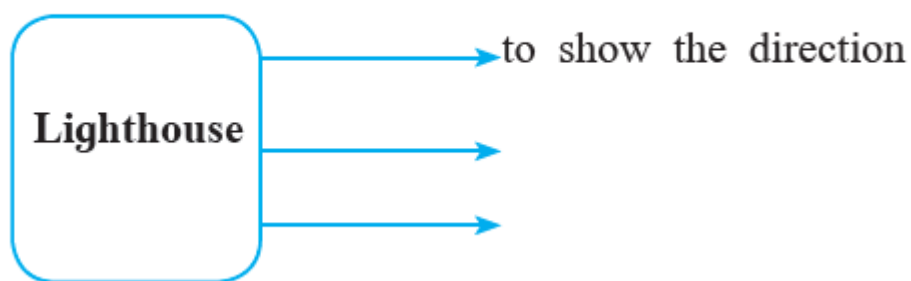
Sailors .....  
.....

Ans:

### Word List

hermit crab	eel	oyster
shark	hammerhead shark	stingray
seahorse	viperfish	fangtooth fish
fish	dragonfish	anglerfish
sea jelly	octopus	turtle
kelp	coral	plankton
sea snake	dugong	sponge
mollusc	sea urchin	crab
sea star	whale	seal
dolphin	shell	sand
ocean	sea	water
salt water	Pacific Ocean	Indian Ocean

- The functions of a lighthouse are -



- Ans:
- 1) To serve as a navigational aid for maritime pilots at sea or on inland waterways.
  - 2) Lighthouses mark dangerous coastlines, hazardous shoals, reefs, rocks, and safe entries to harbour
  - 3) They also assist in aerial navigation.

- Discuss in pairs the various famous rocks in the world and mention the places where they are.

Famous Rock	Place
Balancing Rock	Mahabalipuram
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

Ans:

Famous Rock	Place
1. Wave Rock	Australia
2. Moeraki Boulders,	New Zealand
3. Man-Pupu-Nyor,	Russia
4. Yana Rocks	India
5. Coron	Philippines

- Narrate in the class a story about someone who destroyed or spoilt someone else's good work.

Ans: The reputation that people spend years building can be destroyed by just one unfortunate post online. The real stories that we want to tell you about are just another lesson for all of us: we have to be very careful about what we post online and think before we act. Because even something that was posted years ago can still do significant damage to your career and reputation.

**Here is the one of** real cases when the careers and reputations of different people were jeopardized because of some published posts on social media. And at the end of the article, there is a recommendation on how to restore your reputation if you've already made a mistake.

Brooke Amelia Peterson is the daughter of an Apple engineer and her father let her test the new iPhone X when she went to visit him. The girl made a video of the new phone and showed what a few applications looked like on it and uploaded the video to YouTube.

Soon after the video was published, Apple representatives contacted the girl and asked her to delete the video. Her father had to explain to the company what his daughter did and apologize on her behalf. But the engineer was still fired for the violation of the corporate Apple policies. Later, Peterson said that she wasn't aware of the fact that she was breaking any rules.

- Discuss in pairs and groups the following expressions. Take the help of your teacher.

- As you sow so shall you reap
- Crime gets its own punishment
- What goes around comes around
- Tit for tat
- Evil digs a pit for others but falls into the same

**Ans:** (a) The meaning of "**as you sow, so you shall reap**" is: if you did bad things in the past, you will get bad results in the future if you did good things in the past, you will get good results in the future.

**Example**—that man was a criminal a few years ago, and now he's in jail. As you sow, so you shall reap.

**a) Crime gets its own punishment:**

It is universal truth that crime gets its own punishment. Let's see latest example of Vikas Dube a criminal who shoot 8 police officers. After 6 days Vikas Dube was shot by police.

**b) What goes around comes around:**

My daughter just sent me a photo of her daughter playing in a homemade tee-pee tent in the back yard. I sent her a photo of ME, at the same age, playing in homemade tee-pee tent with friends in my back yard, 65 years ago!

**c) Tit for tat:**

*Tit for tat* is really more like "blow for a blow." If you give someone a cupcake and she gives you one back, that's not tit for tat, that's just sweet. Tit for tat is meaner — it's when someone does something like hit or steal something from someone, and the other person does something equally nasty back. This phrase is related to the saying "Let the punishment fit the crime."

**d) Evil dig a pit for others but falls in to the same:**

It means that the bad thinkers or the people with bad mentality of our society do some bad thing harmful for society in order to harm others but at last due to their bad deeds they themselves got bad effect on themselves or any loss in their life due to only and only their own bad deeds.

**MARGIN QUESTIONS:**

*Give reasons for the sailor's appreciation of The Abbot.*

**Ans:** The bell guided the mariners in the bad weather. The seamen could not see the Rock as it stayed hidden under the high waves during the storms. But they could hear the ringing bell and went away from the perilous (dangerous) rock. So the bell saved their lives. Then the seafarers blessed the Abbot for his good job.

*Describe the state of mind of Sir Ralph.*

**Ans:** Sir Ralph was a rover or sea pirate. He was a wicked and jealous man.

*When the Rover spotted the bell, he cut the bell from the buoy. This was an act of-*

- i. hatred*
- ii. anger*
- iii. jealousy*
- iv. frustration*

**Ans:** iii) This was an act of **jealousy**.

**gurgling sound :**  
Find the figure of speech.

**Ans: Onomatopoeia:** The word 'gurgling' is used to hint the sound of the drowning bell.

*'O Christ ! It is the Inchcape Rock' - What made Ralph the Rover to exclaim this line?*

**Ans:** The tides were strong. The Rover and his team are drifting along with the ship. Suddenly the vessel gets a jerking. They all realize that the vessel has hit the Inchcape Rock. So he exclaimed this line.



## BRAINSTORMING

(A1) Narrate in groups the scene described in the beginning of the poem.

**Ans:** In the beginning, the poet describes the calmness of the sea and sets the natural setting. The sea was calm and there was no movement in the air. That is why the ship stood still. The sails of the ship were not getting any thrust from the air and were erect. Its keel which is a metallic or wooden piece that offers support to the whole structure of the ship was also steady in the ocean.

(A2) (i) Complete the following statements.

- (a) The Abbot of Aberbrothok placed a bell on the Inchcape Rock because..
- (b) The mariners were grateful to the Abbot of Aberbrothok because.....
- (c) The result of the thick haze that covered the sky was that.....
- (d) The Rover in frustration pulled his hair and cursed himself because.....

**Ans: a)** The Abbot of Aberbrothok placed a bell on the Inchcape Rock because **during the storms it floated on a buoy बांधना fasten and rang wildly swung by the high tides to alert everyone that the dangerous rock was there.**

**b)** The mariners were grateful to the Abbot of Aberbrothok because **during the storms they could hear the ringing bell and went away from the perilous (dangerous) rock. So the bell saved their lives.**

**c)** The result of the thick haze that covered the sky was that **they cannot see the sun**

**d)** The Rover in frustration pulled his hair and cursed himself because **of his evil deeds**

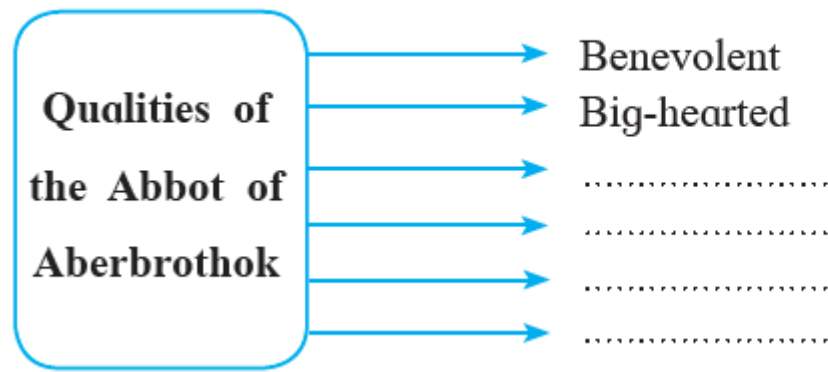
(ii) Given below are the events that give the theme of the poem in a jumbled form. Arrange in a proper sequence as per their occurrence.

- (a) The waves were so small that they did not move enough to ring the bell at the Inchcape Rock.
- (b) The Abbot of Aberbrothok had placed the bell on a buoy on the rock.
- (c) There was a thick haze spread over the atmosphere.
- (d) Ralph bent over from the boat.
- (e) Sir Ralph cursed himself in despair and in his frustration tore his hair.

Ans:

1. The Abbot of Aberbrothok had placed the bell on a buoy on the rock.
2. The waves were so small that they did not move enough to ring the bell at the Inchcape Rock.
3. Ralph bent over from the boat.
4. There was a thick haze spread over the atmosphere.
5. Sir Ralph cursed himself in despair and in his frustration tore his hair.

(iii) Describe the qualities of the Abbot of Aberbrothok in your own words.



Ans:

**Qualities of the Abbot of Aberbrothok:**

1. Benevolent (परोपकारी)
2. Big-hearted
3. kind
4. Good
5. Helpful