

Reading extract and questions:

Year 3/4

Son of the Sea

Set A/B

For two long, silent hours, Duncan slouched beside his Dad as their battered old car bumped and bounced along the dark track. All the time, the wind howled like a hungry phantom as it hurled an endless supply of frozen rain at their windscreen.

Not exactly how Duncan had planned on spending his tenth birthday.

He had wanted to hang out with Callum, Rajesh and Skye, but no – Dad had said he had ‘*something special planned*’. This was weird, even for Dad. Not that Duncan didn’t love his father dearly, of course he did.

Since his mum had left them when he was just a baby, the pair of them had stuck together. He still wished he was with his friends though.

“Maybe next year,” he muttered to himself as the car finally stopped.

“Stop your mumblin’ and get yourself out of the car son,” grunted Dad.

“Where are we?” asked the boy.

“I’ll tell ya when we’re out of the wind,” said Dad. “Now don’t forget your hat.”

Stepping out of the car was like disappearing into a pitch-black tornado. Like an iron fist, his father’s hand appeared from the gloom and guided him around the car. They kept pushing forwards against an invisible pressure like a night dragon’s breath but eventually Dad had guided Duncan to safety. They crouched out of the wicked wind’s reach.

“You’re ten now son,” Dad called into his ear. “In your culture, that means you’re an adult. So she wants to congratulate ya!”

“An adult?” spluttered Duncan. “My culture? Who’s *she*?”

“Hush now!” his father yelled excitedly, pointing. “Look – there she is!”

The full moon had painted everything in its silvery light so Duncan could see the beach quite clearly. There, on a rock just out to sea, sat a seal. A magnificent, glimmering seal but still just a seal.

“It’s a seal,” said Duncan, flatly.

“Go on, go on!” cried Dad. “Take your boots and socks off and paddle out to her!”

Duncan’s mouth opened and closed silently a few times before he managed to respond. “What?”

It was true that Duncan did love swimming. It was also true that he loved spending time in the sea so much that his Dad called him ‘The son of the sea.’ But paddling in a stormy sea in the middle of a February night? No way!

“Ya trust me, don’t ya son?” asked Dad, placing his big hands on his son’s shoulders. Duncan gulped then nodded. “Then go to her!”

Duncan found himself doing as he was told. He was soon waddling like a penguin onto the freezing sand.

The seal just stared at him. What was he doing? Somehow, he kept going.

Then, as soon as his numb toes touched the icy waters, the seal glowed silver, then white. It was a blinding, blazing white that was too bright to look at. Duncan stumbled backwards and collapsed onto the sand.

When he looked up, all he could see was an empty seal skin lying on the rock in the water. Then he noticed the silent silver figure beside him. She laid a misty hand on his shoulder and smiled.

“Happy birthday, my son,” she whispered.



Questions for *Son of the Sea* Set A

Vocabulary

1. Look at the first paragraph. **Find** and **copy** the word that means *ghost*.

2. Which word below could have been used to describe Duncan's car?

new

shabby

Tick one.

smart

crispy

3. *He had wanted to hang out with Callum, Rajesh and Skye...* What does the phrase '*hang out with*' mean in this sentence?

Retrieval

4. What did Duncan say when the car stopped?

5. What does Duncan's dad ask him to remember?

6. In which month was Duncan's birthday?

Inference

7. When Duncan got out of the car, why was it like *disappearing into a pitch-black tornado*?

8. After Dad says '*Then go to her*', how do we know that Duncan does as he is told without thinking?

9. *Then he noticed the silent silver figure beside him.* Who is this figure? _____

Explain how you know. _____

Summarise

10. Using the whole text, **tick one box** in **each row** to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Duncan wanted to go on a long drive for his birthday.		
It was a wet, stormy night.		
Duncan usually loved spending time in the sea.		

Predict

11. Predict why Duncan's mother left him when he was a baby.

Compare

12. Read this passage:

"Hush now!" his father yelled excitedly, pointing. "Look – there she is!"

"It's a seal," said Duncan, flatly.

"Go on, go on!" cried Dad. "Take your boots and socks off and paddle out to her!"

Duncan's mouth opened and closed silently a few times before he managed to respond. "What?"

Duncan and Dad react differently to seeing the seal.

How does Duncan react?

He is more excited.

He is more scared.

He is happier.

He is less excited.

Tick one

Questions for *Son of the Sea*

Set B

Vocabulary

1. Write down three words to describe what kind of evening it was.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. ...*eventually Dad had guided Duncan to safety.* Explain what *guided* means in this sentence.

3. *She laid a misty hand on his shoulder and smiled.* What does the word *misty* tell you about the figure?

Tick **two**.

She is solid.

She is pale.

She is see-through.

She smells damp.

Retrieval

4. What did the wind howl like at the beginning of the story?

5. What did Dad say he had planned for Duncan's birthday?

6. What did Duncan walk like when he was barefoot on the cold sand?

Inference

7. Look at the first paragraph. What kind of journey did Duncan have to the beach? Tick **one**.

short

boring

exciting

fun

8. Look at the section that begins: 'Then, as soon as his numb toes touched the icy waters...'
Why was there only an empty seal skin lying on the rock now?

9. Think about how Dad acts through the story then look at the statement below. Tick whether you think it is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Dad looks after Duncan well.		

Explain why you think this.

Meaning as a whole

10. Retell the story in your own words.

Authorial intent

11. Give two reasons why the story is called *Son of the Sea*.

1. _____

2. _____

Compare

12. How does Duncan's mood change throughout the story?

Answers for *Son of the Sea*

Set A:

Vocabulary

1. phantom
2. shabby
3. spend time with / hang around with / relax with / be with / play with

Retrieval

4. "Where are we?"
5. his hat
6. February

Inference

7. Pupils' answers should reference that it was really dark and windy outside.
8. Because Duncan 'found himself doing as he was told' / he went to her.
9. His mother – pupils should make reference to the figure calling Duncan her son. Some may reference Dad's comment about Duncan's culture and someone wanting to congratulate him on turning ten.

Summarise

10. Using the whole text, **tick one box in each row** to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Duncan wanted to go on a long drive for his birthday.		X
It was a wet, stormy night.	X	
Duncan usually loved spending time in the sea.	X	

Predict

11. Answers should link to the text, e.g. she belonged in the ocean / she was a water spirit / she needed her seal skin / she wanted to spend time in the sea / she missed the sea / she missed other seals / she couldn't survive on dry land.

Compare

12. He is less excited.

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Answers for *Son of the Sea*

Set B:

Vocabulary

1. Three from these or similar words: dark, wet, wild, cold, windy, stormy
2. shown him the way, led him to safety
3. She is pale. She is see-through

Retrieval

4. a hungry phantom
5. something special
6. a penguin

Inference

7. boring
8. Accept reasonable answers that refer to the magic and mystery in the story, e.g. the seal skin was just a disguise / the real spirit was inside / the skin opened and a spirit or figure came out / it was a magical seal skin and a mysterious figure came out of it.
- 9.

Tick one

	True	False
Dad looks after Duncan well.	X	

- Dad drives Duncan a long way on a stormy night to meet his mother.
- Dad reminds Duncan to wear his hat.
- Dad guides Duncan safely to the beach.
- Dad is excited for him to meet his mother.

Some pupils may feel that Dad does not look after Duncan well, which is acceptable

	True	False
Dad looks after Duncan well.		X

- Dad doesn't let Duncan spend time with his friends on his birthday.
- Dad makes Duncan go outside into the stormy night.
- Dad tells Duncan to paddle in the cold sea.
- Dad doesn't explain what is happening.

Meaning as a whole

10. Retellings should include all of the key elements and explain that Duncan meets his mother at the end of the story.

Authorial intent

11. Pupils should give two of the following reasons:
 1. (Because) Duncan's dad calls him 'Son of the Sea'
 2. Duncan enjoys spending time in the sea
 3. Duncan's mother is a magical sea creature / sea spirit

12. At the beginning Duncan is disappointed not to be spending his birthday with his friends and could be bored because of the long, silent car journey. In the middle he feels confused then surprised. At the end pupils may describe him as feeling scared because of the magical flash or fed up because of falling over then happy to see his mum.

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