

2 The Captain

based on a story by Leo Tolstoy

Before You Read

Before you read "The Captain," study the words below. Make sure you know what each word means. This will help you understand the story.

ship: a large boat

sailor: someone who works on a ship

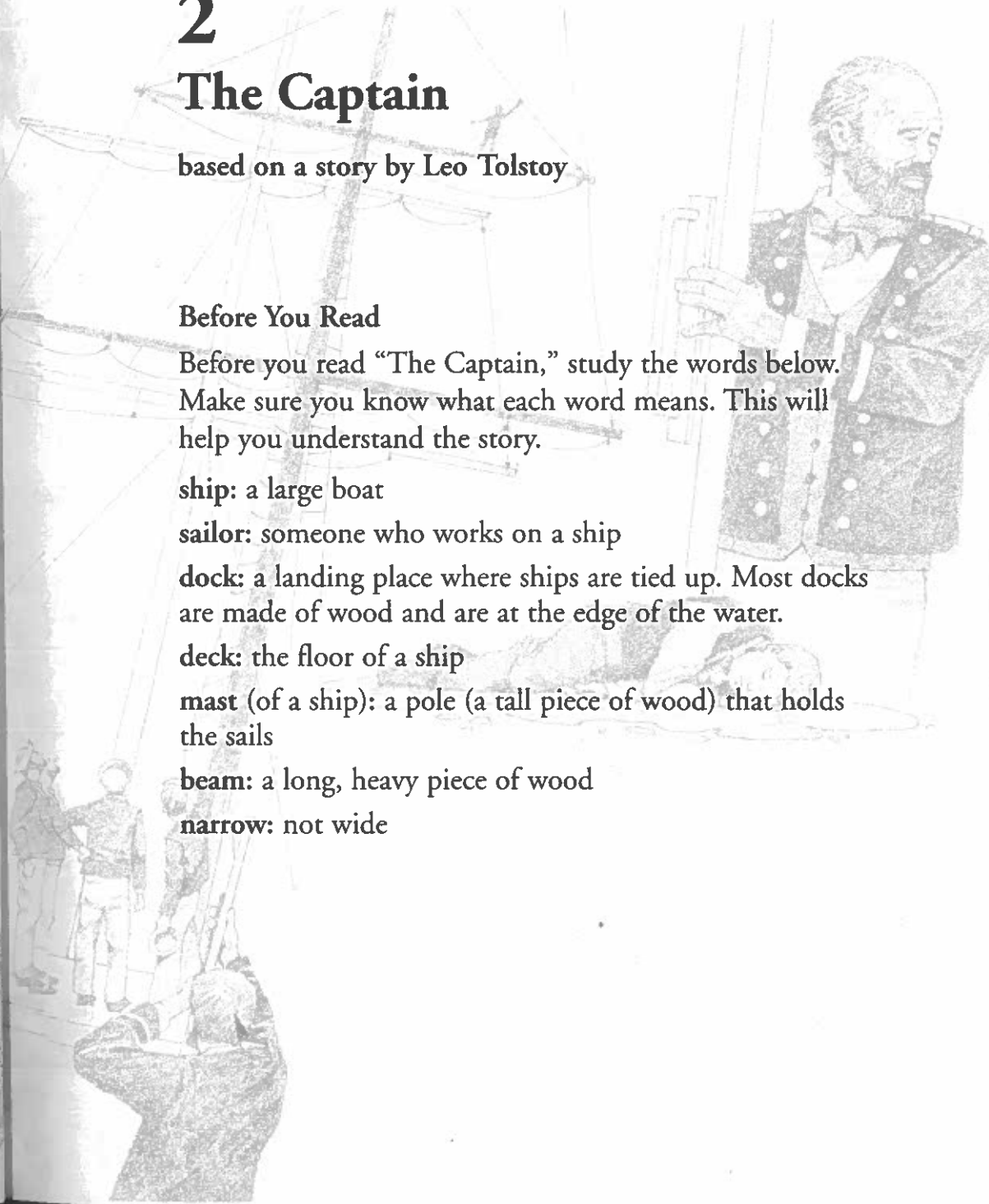
dock: a landing place where ships are tied up. Most docks are made of wood and are at the edge of the water.

deck: the floor of a ship

mast (of a ship): a pole (a tall piece of wood) that holds the sails

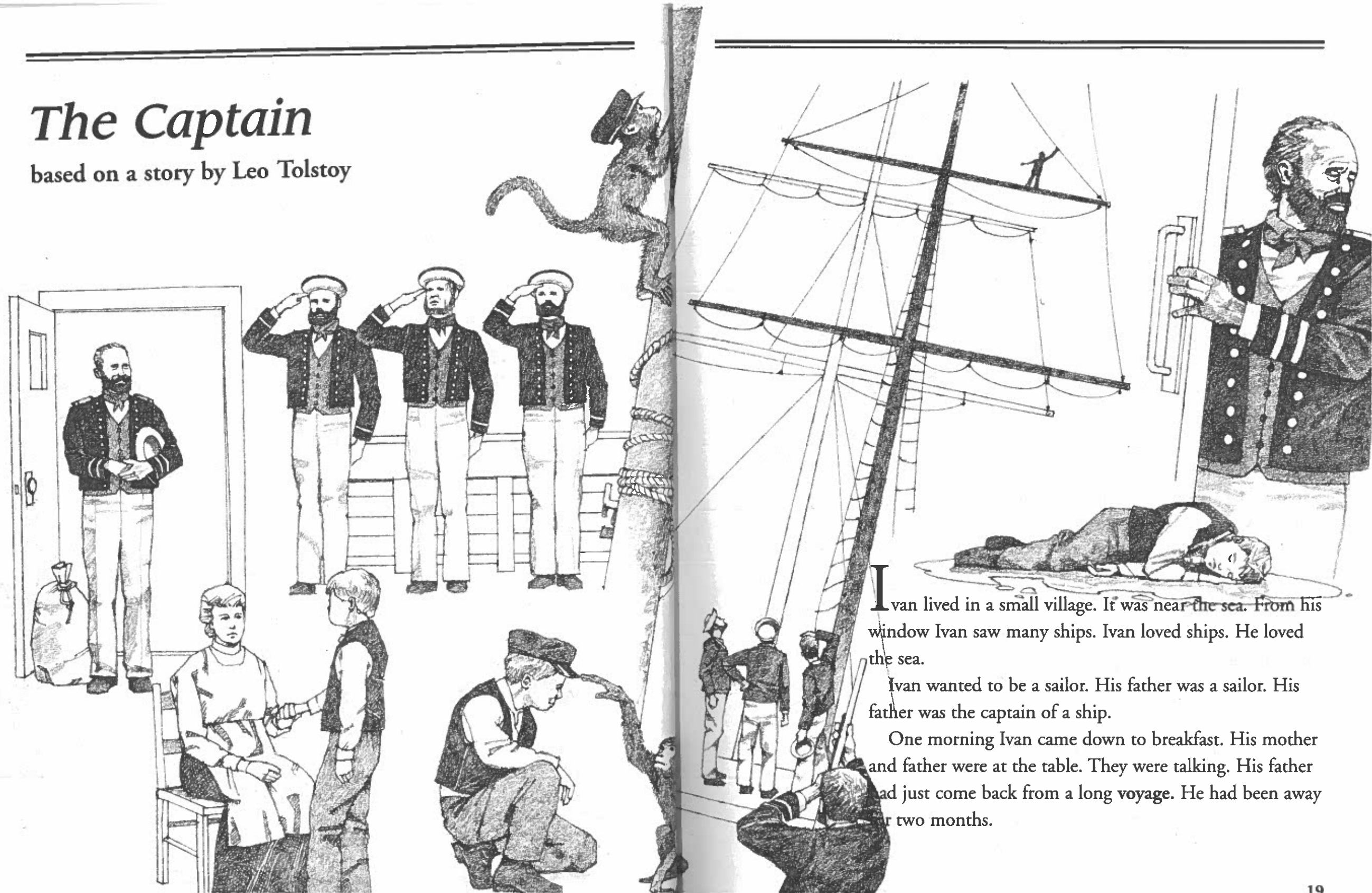
beam: a long, heavy piece of wood

narrow: not wide



The Captain

based on a story by Leo Tolstoy



Ivan lived in a small village. It was near the sea. From his window Ivan saw many ships. Ivan loved ships. He loved the sea.

Ivan wanted to be a sailor. His father was a sailor. His father was the captain of a ship.

One morning Ivan came down to breakfast. His mother and father were at the table. They were talking. His father had just come back from a long voyage. He had been away for two months.

His father said, "Sonia, I have been thinking. In two weeks Ivan's school will be closed. It will be vacation time. I must go back to sea then. Perhaps Ivan could come with me. This will not be a long trip."

Ivan's heart leaped with joy. He wanted to go with his father. He wanted to go very much. He hoped that his mother would say yes.

But Ivan's mother did not answer. She looked worried. She said, "I do not know. Ivan is still a boy. The sea is no place for a boy."

Ivan's father laughed. He said, "That is so. But Ivan is twelve years old now. He can take care of himself. He will be fine."

"I do not know," answered his mother. She was quiet for a long time.

Ivan spoke up. "Please, mother," he said.

She looked at her son. "All right," she finally said. "You may go."

Ivan could hardly wait. At last the big day came. Ivan and his father took their things. They went down to the dock. They got on a big ship.

Ivan felt very proud. His father was not a tall man. But he was very strong. And he had a loud voice. He told the sailors what to do. The sailors listened to him.

They said, "Yes, Captain. Right away, Captain. I will do that at once." Then they hurried away.

At home Ivan's father often laughed. But on the ship he never smiled. He was *the captain*. He marched around



the ship. He made sure that the sailors did their jobs. He made sure that everything went well.

It was a very pleasant trip. Ivan liked it very much. The sailors knew he was the captain's son. Everyone was very nice to him.

The ship was on its way home. It was a sunny day. Many sailors were on deck. They were feeling good. They knew that they would be home soon.

A monkey jumped onto the deck. The monkey was a sailor's pet. The sailors clapped their hands. The monkey danced around.

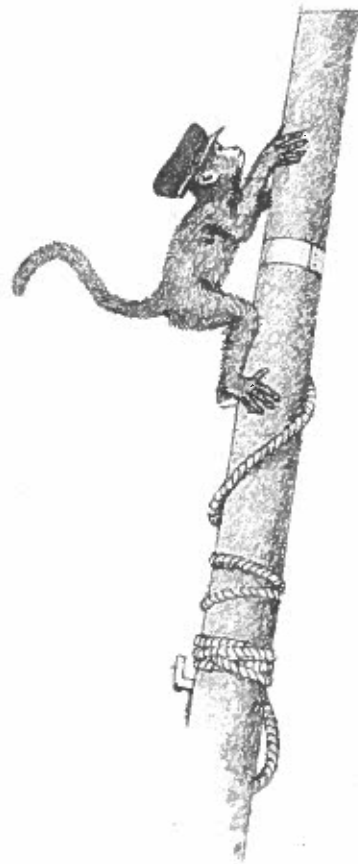


The monkey suddenly grabbed Ivan's hat. She put it on her head. All of the sailors laughed. The monkey ran across the deck.

Ivan shouted, "Give me back my hat!" The monkey took off Ivan's hat. She waved it in the air. The sailors laughed again. The monkey hopped over to the mast.

Ivan was angry. He ran toward the mast. The monkey jumped onto the mast. She began to climb up the mast. It was very tall. The monkey climbed up to a wooden beam. She sat down on the beam. Then she smiled down at the boy.

A rope ladder hung down from the mast. Ivan grabbed the ladder. He began to climb. He climbed up to the wooden beam. He reached out to grab his hat. But the monkey jumped away. She hopped onto the mast.



The monkey began to climb again. She climbed up to the second beam. She sat down on the beam. Again she smiled at the boy.

All of the sailors watched. They were having a good time. They thought this was fun.

Ivan climbed up to the second beam. He reached out to grab his hat. Again the monkey ran away. She hopped onto the beam. Quickly she began to climb. The monkey climbed and climbed. She climbed up to the top of the tall mast.

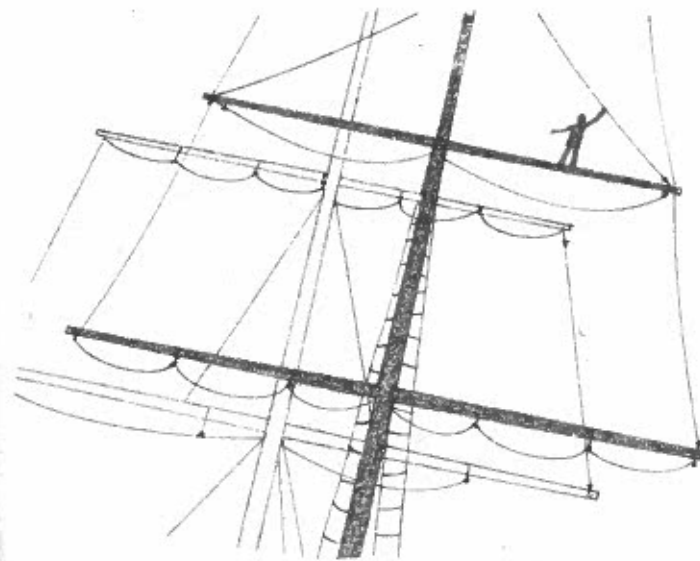
Then the monkey dropped the hat. It landed a few feet away. It landed on a beam. The beam was very high! It was sixty feet above the deck!

Ivan looked up. He saw the hat on the beam. It was far above his head.

Ivan kept looking at the hat. Then he saw the monkey on the mast. She was smiling down at him. Slowly, Ivan began to climb.

Ivan climbed up to the beam. Then he stepped onto the beam. He took two steps. The hat was at the end of the beam. It was twenty feet away.

Ivan walked very slowly along the beam. The beam was only one foot wide!



The sailors on the deck looked up. They watched the captain's son. They were no longer having fun. Their hearts were filled with fear. The beam was narrow. It was very high. The boy might slip. What if he fell? He would hit the deck below! He would be killed at once!

The sailors did not move. They did not speak. All eyes were on the captain's son.

The boy took another step. One sailor could not stop himself. He suddenly yelled, "*Watch out! Look out!*"

Ivan heard the call. His eyes were on the hat. But now he looked down. He saw how high he was. He did not know he was that high! The boy began to shake. He could not move!

Just then the captain came onto the deck. He saw the sailors. They were looking up. The captain saw his son. The boy was shaking. He might fall to the deck!

The captain turned at once. He hurried to his room. He came back with a gun. It was a hunting rifle.

He pointed the rifle at his son. "*Jump into the water! Jump! Jump or I'll shoot!*" the captain shouted.

Ivan looked down. He did not understand.

"Jump into the water—or I'll shoot!" the father called again.

The boy kept shaking on the beam.

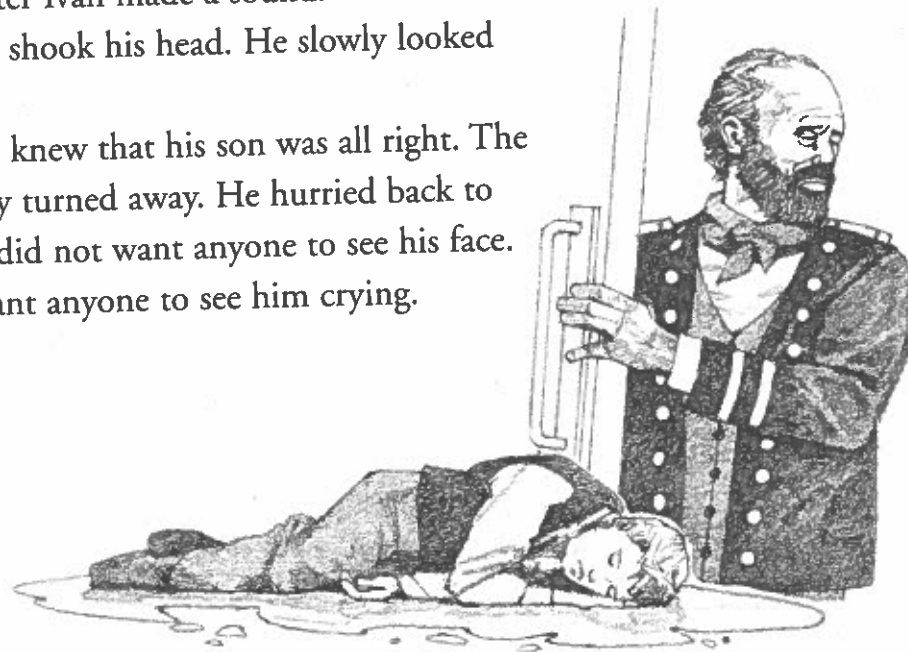
"I will count to three!" the father yelled.

As he was saying "Three," the boy jumped out into the sea.

Ivan hit the water. He went down. Ten sailors jumped into the sea. They pulled Ivan out. They dragged him to the ship.

A minute later Ivan made a sound. Water came out of his mouth. He shook his head. He slowly looked around.

The captain knew that his son was all right. The captain quickly turned away. He hurried back to his room. He did not want anyone to see his face. He did not want anyone to see him crying.



TELL ABOUT THE STORY.

Put an x in the box next to the right answer. Each sentence tells a *fact* about the story.

- Ivan was
 a. ten years old.
 b. twelve years old.
 c. fourteen years old.
- Ivan lived in a village that was
 a. on top of a mountain.
 b. in a valley.
 c. near the sea.
- The monkey grabbed Ivan's
 a. hat.
 b. gloves.
 c. coat.
- The captain told Ivan to
 a. be careful.
 b. come down at once.
 c. jump into the water.

ADD WORDS TO SENTENCES.

Complete the sentences below. Fill in each blank with one of the words in the box. Each word can be found in the story. There are five words and four blanks. This means that one word in the box will not be used.

The *Titanic* was once the biggest _____₁ in the world. Everyone thought it could _____₂ sink. But on its first _____₃, it hit a large piece of ice. Three hours later, the ship fell to the bottom of the _____₄.

never ship
 sea
climb voyage

NUMBER
CORRECT

$\times 5 =$

YOUR
SCORE

NUMBER
CORRECT

$\times 5 =$

YOUR
SCORE

LEARN NEW WORDS.

The vocabulary words are printed in **dark type** in the story. You may look back at the words before you answer these questions. Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

1. His father came back from a long sea voyage. A *voyage* is a
 a. boat.
 b. meal.
 c. trip.
2. Ivan's heart leaped with joy. The word *leaped* means
 a. jumped.
 b. stopped.
 c. wondered.
3. It was a pleasant trip. Ivan liked it very much. Something that is *pleasant* is
 a. hard.
 b. slow.
 c. fun.
4. The sailors were afraid that Ivan might slip. The word *slip* means
 a. to laugh.
 b. to fall.
 c. to yell.

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED.

Here is how to answer these questions. First think about what happened in the story. Then *figure out* (work out) the right answer. This is called *critical thinking*.

1. Which sentence is true?
 a. Ivan was afraid to go to sea.
 b. Ivan did not like boats.
 c. Ivan's mother thought Ivan was too young to go to sea.
2. Ivan probably kept climbing after his hat because
 a. the sailors made him do it.
 b. the hat cost a lot of money.
 c. he was angry with the monkey.
3. The story shows that Ivan's father
 a. did not care about Ivan.
 b. could think very quickly.
 c. did not like his job.
4. Why did the captain make Ivan jump into the water?
 a. to show that Ivan would listen to him
 b. to keep Ivan from falling onto the deck
 c. to teach Ivan to swim

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

SPOT STORY ELEMENTS.

Some story elements are **plot**, **character**, and **setting**. (See page 3.) Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

1. What happened first in the *plot*?
 a. Ivan jumped into the sea.
 b. Ivan had breakfast with his parents.
 c. The sailors watched Ivan climb the ladder.
2. What happened last in the *plot*?
 a. The captain pointed the rifle at Ivan.
 b. Ivan ran after the monkey.
 c. Ivan and his father got on the ship.
3. Which sentence best *characterizes* (tells about) Ivan's father?
 a. He was very tall.
 b. He was not strong.
 c. He was strong and had a loud voice.
4. The story is *set*
 a. in a school.
 b. on a ship.
 c. in Ivan's room.

x 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

THINK SOME MORE ABOUT THE STORY.

Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- At home Ivan's father often laughed. But on the ship he never smiled. Why do you think he was different on the ship?
- The captain did not want anyone to see him cry. Why? Do you think he was right to feel that way? Explain.
- Suppose that Ivan's father had not made him jump into the water. How do you think the story would have ended?

Write your scores in the boxes below. Then write your scores on pages 138 and 139.

TELL ABOUT THE STORY
+
 ADD WORDS TO SENTENCES
+
 LEARN NEW WORDS
+
 EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED
+
 SPOT STORY ELEMENTS
=
 TOTAL SCORE: Story 2