

The Iron Man by Ted Hughes

End of chapter 1

The two gulls sat on their ledge, high on the cliff. They watched the immense man striding to and fro over the rocks below. Between them, on the nesting ledge, lay a great iron ear. The gulls could not eat it. The baby gulls could not eat it. There it lay on the high ledge.

Far below, the Iron Man searched.

At last he stopped, and looked at the sea. Was he thinking the sea had stolen his ear? Perhaps he was thinking the sea had come up, while he lay scattered, and had gone down again with his ear.

He walked towards the sea. He walked into the breakers, and there he stood for a while, the breakers bursting around his knees. Then he walked in deeper, deeper, deeper.

The gulls took off and glided down low over the great iron head that was now moving slowly out through the swell. The eyes blazed red, level with the wavetops, till a big wave covered them and foam spouted over the top of the head. The head still moved out under water. The eyes and the top of the head appeared for a moment in a hollow of the swell. Now the eyes were green. Then the sea covered them and the head.

The gulls circled low over the line of bubbles that went on moving slowly out of the deep sea.

Retrieval

- 1) What colour do the Iron Man's eyes change too after they are cooled by the sea?
- 2) Where did the gulls sit?

Words in context

- 3) WORD WALL! Describe what 'immense' could mean?
- 4) Can you think of a word to replace 'walked' in the text?

Inference

- 5) Why do you think the gulls watched the Iron Man?
- 6) Where do you think the Iron Man is going?

immense



- extremely large or great, especially in scale or degree