

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

LO: Comprehension - Diary of Asha Larai

Dear Diary,

I sit, surrounded by people not six inches away, underneath the deck of a boat. I stare at the bodies-rows and rows of bodies. Some left us because of disease, others old age. Holding my breath is pointless, the acrid smell never goes away and even when I do get off this ship, I will still remember that distinctive scent. The groans grow so loud that I cover my ears and try to muffle the sounds with my own singing. Last night I sang until my body passed out from exhaustion and I could only hope that I would make it until the next day. I've become so accustomed to tears constantly wetting my face that it would feel odd not to cry. The cycle makes this seem normal. Maybe that is why I continue to cry- stopping would break the cycle and I would have no daily ritual to follow.

Some days I wonder why I'm kept down here. I am so young compared to the rest of us. They force us onto the deck, group by group, to dance. The winter air is refreshing at first, but then I cannot stop shivering and I don't want to move. It is so cold and my fingers hurt from frostbite. We are humiliated while at our lowest points. Our hope and dignity disappears behind the crack of a whip. The red marks are everlasting mementos of our masters' cruelty. I used to dream of mutiny, revolting against the people who kept us aboard. Then I wonder, what about the ones who die, are thrown overboard, or executed? Who shall act as our providence and save us from such a death? Only those who have endured this would side with us and surely we would lose. Why had this happened? Were they simply punishing us for our race?

Asha Larai died on December 13th 1624

### Retrieval

1. What sounds do they try to muffle with their singing?
2. What are they forced to do when they go on deck?

### Words in context

3. 'We are humiliated while at our lowest points.'

Tick the word that means the same as humiliated.

loneliness

loss of pride

loss of weight

### Inference

4. What do you think 'some left us' means? (Paragraph 1)
5. 'The red marks are everlasting mementos of our masters' cruelty'. What do you think these are?

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