

Sea Hag

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

From stormy seas,
As waters churned,
A gruesome lesson
Once was learned

By a foolish sailor
One terrible day.
He risked it all,
He'd later say,

For the love of a lady,
A mermaid, it's true,
A beautiful creature
From the ocean blue.

He sailed his ship
From here to there.
Bright skies and white waves
Were everywhere.

When out of the corner
Of his sharp eagle eye,
He spotted the mermaid
As she swam by.

Smitten at once,
The sailor thought
He was in love;
She must be caught!

He dove overboard.
The skies turned grey;
The waves got wild;
He was carried away.

The current dragged him
Under the drink.
He gasped for breath;
He started to sink.

The beautiful mermaid
Swam into sight;
Her pretty face snarled
And gave him a fright.

Her eyes glowed red,
Teeth sharp as a knife,
The sailor feared
For his very life.

She was no mermaid,
But a sea hag with a wish
To lure sailors to doom
And eat them like fish.

She bit the poor man,
Pain shooting like sparks,
But from murky depths,
Came a shiver of sharks.

They surrounded the sailor
And the brutal sea hag.
They took hold of her limbs
And away they did drag

The witch, fighting and flailing
With a curse and a screech,
While the sailor, now free,
Swam fast for the beach.

He reached dry land,
Kissed its sandy shore,
And vowed from that day
To be a sailor no more.

Questions

1. What does "smitten at once mean here: "Smitten at once, / The sailor thought / He was in love"?
2. Find one example of a simile in the passage.
3. A group of sharks is often called a "shiver." What is another evocative name for a collective animal group?
4. Why did the man vow "to be a sailor no more"?