

Stephen crane the open boat



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Photo by Robert Quackenbush ' The Open Boat' by Stephen Crane tells of the story of four men stranded in the middle of the ocean after their boat sunk. The first paragraph opens with the gloomy description of the setting as the men are positioned at the mercy of the sea. Early on we see the use of color to depict the emotions of the characters as they are situated in the middle of nowhere. " These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea" (Crane 728). The second, third, fourth and fifth paragraph introduces the reader to the cook, oiler, correspondent and captain, the crew members who are the primary and almost only characters of the story. Told objectively by an ominous narrator, it sets out through the innermost thoughts of the characters in relation to their surrounding and their fight for redemption. The beginning of the story gives off the danger the men are in as they are marooned in a dingy for a vessel as they continue to sail the hostile waters hoping that rescuers will find them soon. Even though the situation is such, there is still no sign of uncontrollable panic or trepidation amongst the men though there is that tinge of helplessness as they continue on with a plan to look for a refuge house or a lighthouse or any other boat that will save them. In part III, there remains a sense of brotherhood among them in the darkest of times which none of them was able to articulate. " They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common" (Crane 730). They shared in near-death an intimacy they would have never known in another circumstance. The first sign of infallible hope was a sight of land, described again in vivid colors, " From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand" (Crane 731). This is when the realization that they

will be alive and rescued was at its peak. Later on to be shed as there was no attempts from those at shore to actually rescue them. Here the men grasped the full on irony of their condition. There were mixed emotions of anger, bargaining and confusion among them and the aura of cheerfulness from the beginning was completely shattered. " If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes... She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work" (Crane 732). From this last straw of hope there was also sarcasm from them, referring to rescue people as peaches and regarding it funny that they were not seen by them. They had no choice but to move on which indicated a great sense of their yearning for survival in order to be rescued soon enough before they die. Again the men cling on to the idea that they are still alive for a reason and that the ultimate irony would be in them putting in so much on themselves to stay alive only to be drowned. The hope remains and a new plan was put in place. Their camaraderie was still ever so present as they look out for one another while slowly drifting and simultaneously entertaining each other. The narrator lets us perceive the conversation that are actually happening and those which occur during silence. Empathy was also regarded through the lyrics of a song which are in fact in ironic contrast as it is his own fate. It is the highest form of helplessness that they can blame no one but nature and the forces that they could not control. Nature or a higher being regards man as dispensable. But in their journey there was still safety in the end. There are still men who are generous and willing to help. A deeper reason for every misfortune and hardship perhaps still subsists. The sea was able to let them be in one of its stories. They became closer to it far more than they could have imagined just as the shore served

most of them comfort in its steady pace. Quackenbush, Robert. The Open Boat. Color Woodcut. Rquackenbush. com. 16 June 2011. Crane, Stephen. "The Open Boat." Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library. 1894. 16 June 2011.