

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Four hours earlier the man had anchored his small towing boat off the rocky coast of the island and had climbed the steep slope. This coast was rarely frequented by visitors; for it was difficult of access and landscape was bleak and unfriendly. (Simple curiosity and the love of adventure had impelled the man to go there.) When he had set out in the morning, the sea had been very calm and clear, the sky cloudless. But now a strong wind had risen; the coast for miles around was gloomy and desolate. Dark waves set up a huge spray each time they broke on the black, uneven rocks which plunged deep down into the water. (Looking down at the choppy sea below, the man realised he would have to move quickly if he was to save his boat.) The rocks, which had previously been fairly easy to climb, were now treacherous and slippery. The man clung to the rock face to prevent himself from slipping. At one point, the slope was so sheer, that he was obliged to climb up again and come down by another route. He stopped to regain his breath by a withered overhanging tree. He was now so close to the sea that he could taste salt on his lips as the fine sea uppermost in his mind. (Below, it was bobbing on the waves like a cork and at any moment the rope which held it fast might break, the boat would either be carried out to sea or dashed to pieces against the rocks.) The man began to climb down again, but stopped abruptly when he heard the sound of splintering wood. His worst fears had been realised; he saw his boat lifted high by the waves and beaten against the rocks again and again. The man looked down helplessly, as a tangled mass of drift wood and gear floated away over the water.

For each word given below choose the correct meaning (as used in the passage) from the option provided:

1. bleak (line 4)

(A) black

(B) gloomy

(C) horrible

(D) repulsive

2. previously (line 11)

(a) earlier

(b) precious

(C) privy

(d) privately

3. withered (line 15)

(a) withdrawn

(B) decayed

(C) fruitless

(d) huge

Answer the following question briefly:

- (a) Why had the man come to this part of the island?
- (b) Why would the man have to act quickly to save his boat?
- (c) Why was the thought of the boat uppermost in his mind?