

1. "There was a vast blue bowl which was the sky."
Why do you think the author began with this sentence?
What does it suggest about the size of the man in comparison to his surroundings?
2. How is the island portrayed in *The Side Bet*? Is it an inviting place? What words are used to describe it?
3. What did the author mean in the second of these sentences? ". . . he had calculated exactly how long he could live upon the island. **He did not ask himself why he should wish to.**"
4. What is the main conflict in the story? Describe what is at stake in *The Side Bet*. What are some other conflicts?
5. How are the main characters in *The Side Bet* described? How much information are we given about them?
6. Why didn't the man like the rat? Describe some things the rat does that causes the man to hate it.
7. Do you think the man is right to hate the rat? Why or why not?
8. How does the man's outlook change when he realizes he can eat the rat? What becomes more clear to him?
9. When did the man become convinced that he had lost the bet? What was the prize the rat was meant to collect?
10. Towards the end, shortly after the man builds the signal fire he considers throwing himself on the blaze but doesn't, saying "But that wouldn't have been fair...it-it would have been welshing". What does he mean by this?
11. Do you think the man deserved to be rescued? If he hadn't been, would he have lost the bet, as he thought? Explain with examples from the text
12. In what unusual way does the man pay his debt to the rat? What do you think of the man's actions?
13. Why is the man jealous of the rat? Why does our feeling towards the rat shift from hatred to sympathy? In other words, why do we feel sorry for the rat at the end?