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Reading Notes

debris	the broken pieces left from something that was destroyed
en route	on the way
fraternity	a group of people united around a common interest or cause; a brotherhood *Latin connection: Give a Latin word that <i>fraternity</i> is derived from and its English meaning. Frater: <i>brother</i>
flotsam	the pieces of a ship and cargo floating on the water after a wreck
balustrade	a railing supported by short posts, called balusters
wire(d)	to send a message by telegraph

Vocabulary

1. "I could be worse," said Professor Sherman, rather **feebly**. _____
weakly
2. With all the **pomp** and ceremony _____
grand display
3. the details of your amazing **exploit** _____
daring deed
4. Will you please **convey** to the President _____
make known
5. send the following **unprecedented** wire _____
not done before

Comprehension Questions

1. What is the setting for this story? Include the dates during which the story takes place.
This story takes place from August to October in the year 1883.

2. Give the few details we know about Professor Sherman's trip at this point in the story.
Professor Sherman set out from San Francisco on August 15, 1883, in a giant balloon
and was found three weeks later on September 8 in the Atlantic Ocean clinging to the
wreckage of twenty balloons.

3. Why is the title of this chapter “Professor Sherman’s Incredible Loyalty”?

Professor Sherman refused to disclose the details of his extraordinary adventure to anyone except the Western American Explorers’ Club in San Francisco, as per the adventurers’ code of ethics.

4. Many people tried to get Professor Sherman to tell his story. Who made this attempt? How did they go about attempting to get him to tell it?

Captain Simon, the ship’s doctor, and the ship’s cook all tried to give Professor Sherman extra special care to encourage him to tell them his story. When that didn’t work, they resorted to trying to trick him into telling by using spirits and medicine to make him dopey. Newspaper reporters repeatedly questioned him, and the Mayor of New York gave him the key to the city and asked for the story in return. He also received an invitation to the White House to tell the story to the President.

5. How does the President help Professor Sherman?

The President cleared the railway lines from New York to San Francisco so Professor Sherman could ride in comfort on the Presidential train to the Western American Explorers’ Club.

Quotations

“But, gentlemen,” he exclaimed, “as an honorary member of the Western American Explorers’ Club in San Francisco, I feel sincerely that I owe the first accounting of my extraordinary adventure to that illustrious fraternity!” – Professor Sherman

To whom is he speaking? Captain Simon, the ship’s doctor, and the ship’s cook

“He knew the story of the rescue had news value and that he could sell it for a handsome price to this paper.”

Who sold the story? Captain Simon What newspaper bought it? New York Tribune

“And now,” said the Mayor, “would it be too much to ask you in return to give to me, to New York, to the nation, to the world, the details of your amazing exploit?”

Discussion

1. Look at your answer to Question #4 of the Comprehension Questions. These people have different responses to Professor Sherman's refusal to share his story. What do their responses reveal about their character?
2. "Had I a less fascinating story to tell, nobody, except my fellow explorers, would care where or when I gave account of it." Do you think Professor Sherman is right in saying this?
3. Do you think you would be able to remain as loyal to the Western American Explorers' Club as Professor Sherman under similar circumstances? Why or why not?
4. The setting of this book places it in a very different time from ours, particularly in regards to technology. There were no computers, no Internet, no television. How does that change the way Professor Sherman's story is circulated?

Enrichment

1. We are going to attempt to chart Professor Sherman's journey on a world map located in the Appendix. Mark his starting point with a dot and date it. Start: San Francisco, CA - August 15, 1883 (see appendix)
2. The term *balustrade* is used frequently throughout the book. Look up a picture of a balustrade and draw it on the drawing page to the right.
3. Research how messages like the President's to Professor Sherman were wired at that time in history.
4. Fill in the newspapers with the headlines from the chapter.

New York Tribune
PROFESSOR SHERMAN FOUND IN ATLANTIC WITH WRECKAGE OF TWENTY BALLOONS
Refuses to Explain How or Why

New York Tribune
PROFESSOR SHERMAN IN WRONG OCEAN WITH TOO MANY BALLOONS
Refuses to Explain How or Why

New York Tribune
KEY TO CITY FAILS TO UNLOCK SECRETS OF SHERMAN'S VOYAGE

[The newspaper clippings contain multiple columns of Latin text, including the beginning of the article from the top clipping:]

Dicitur ad quem et laet millibus...
 inum nobilitatem volebantis estia...
 nonsequamur qui doctore vercia...
 haec itit digidigolita coram...
 simolla corerit...
 inum nobilitatem volebantis estia...
 nonsequamur qui doctore vercia...
 haec itit digidigolita coram...
 simolla corerit...
 inum nobilitatem volebantis estia...
 nonsequamur qui doctore vercia...
 haec itit digidigolita coram...
 simolla corerit...