

The background is a dramatic painting depicting a shipwreck. In the upper right, a large, dark ship is partially submerged and tilted, with its masts and rigging visible against a stormy, grey sky. In the foreground, a small, dark wooden boat is filled with people, likely survivors, as they navigate through turbulent, white-capped waves. The overall mood is one of peril and struggle against nature.

The Shipwreck

By: Emily Dickinson

Background On Emily Dickinson.

- **Emily Dickinson (December 10, 1830 – May 15, 1886) was an American poet who is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential poets in American literature.**
- **Born in Amherst, Massachusetts, she lived much of her life in relative seclusion, rarely leaving her family home, and only a few of her poems were published during her lifetime.**
- **She died at the age of 56.**
- **known for her innovative style and profound exploration of themes such as nature, love, and death.**
- **Despite living in relative seclusion, she wrote nearly 1,800 poems.**

Background on The Poem: The Shipwreck.

- **The poem reflects the death of 40 people and the tone changes from celebratory (stanza 1-2) to sombre (stanza 3-4).**
- **The term "celebratory" refers to something that is associated with celebration, joy, or expressing happiness and triumph.**
- **The term "sombre" (also spelled "somber") refers to something that is gloomy, dark, or solemn in mood or tone. It conveys a feeling of seriousness, sadness, or a lack of brightness and cheerfulness.**

The Shipwreck

Glee! The great storm is over! 1
Four have recovered the land;
Forty gone down together
Into the boiling sand.

Ring, for the scant salvation! 5
Toll, for the bonnie souls,--
Neighbour and friend and bridegroom,
Spinning upon the shoals!

How they will tell the shipwreck
When winter shakes the door, 10
Till the children ask, “ but the forty?
Did they come back no more?

‘Then a silence suffuses the story,
And a softness the teller’s eye;
And the children no further question, 15
And only the waves reply.

Punctuation.

Exclamation Mark:

Suggests strong feelings, passion and excitement by creating a celebratory tone in stanza 1 and 2.

Line 8 shows the readers that the poet feels traumatized by the death of forty community members!

Question Mark:

Stanza 3 begins with a question, and this changes the mood to one of sadness as line 12 asks the question, “Did they come back no more?”

This gives the reader the feeling that a tragedy has occurred.

Structure and Form.

- **The poem has 16 lines and is broken into four stanzas, each stanza consists of 4 lines.**
- **The poem follows the Ballad structure a-b-c-b d-e-f-e g-h-i-h j-k-l-k and it informs us about the dramatic tale of death.**

Word Play.

Emotive Language.

- **The language used is both positive and Negative.**
- **‘Glee’ ‘great’ ‘recovered’ salvation’ – Stanza 1 and 2 – CELEBRATORY**
- **‘Shakes’ ‘come back no more’ ‘shipwreck’- Stanza 3 – SOMBRE**
- **‘Only the waves reply’- Stanza 4 – no longer any communication - SOMBRE**



Title.

“The Shipwreck”

- **A risky vessel that is not sturdy yet has to endure and make it through storms.**
- **The ocean destroys the ship, and this is fatal.**
- **Shipwrecks may be used as stories told by children and create a sombre mood.**

Stanza 1.

Glee! The great storm is over!

Happy/Cheerful that there are survivors.

Four have recovered the land;

Exclamation mark to punctuate the positive /celebratory effect that the storm is over.

Forty gone down together

**Four of the passengers have lived through this trip.
While 40 passengers have lost their lives.**

Into the boiling sand.

Rapid change of mood

Stanza 2.

Ring, for the scant salvation!	Celebratory sound once again and this turns into an indication (toll) when someone had died. Alliteration of S. Scant-not enough. Salvation –redemption
Toll, for the bonnie souls -	Happy existence (bonnie souls) – The realisation that the survival of only 4 people is not enough to remain happy. Dash introduces an explanation.
Neighbour and friend and bridegroom	Examples of people the community lost
Spinning upon the shoals!	Rough sea, problems which have led to the shipwreck. Connation- loss of control

Stanza 3.

How they will tell the shipwreck

Reference to the sad events which have occurred.

When winter shakes the door,

**Conveys a bad winter's storm.
Personification**

Till the children ask, 'But the forty?'

Focus on those who have not survived.

Did they come back no more?'

Asks about their survival a second time.

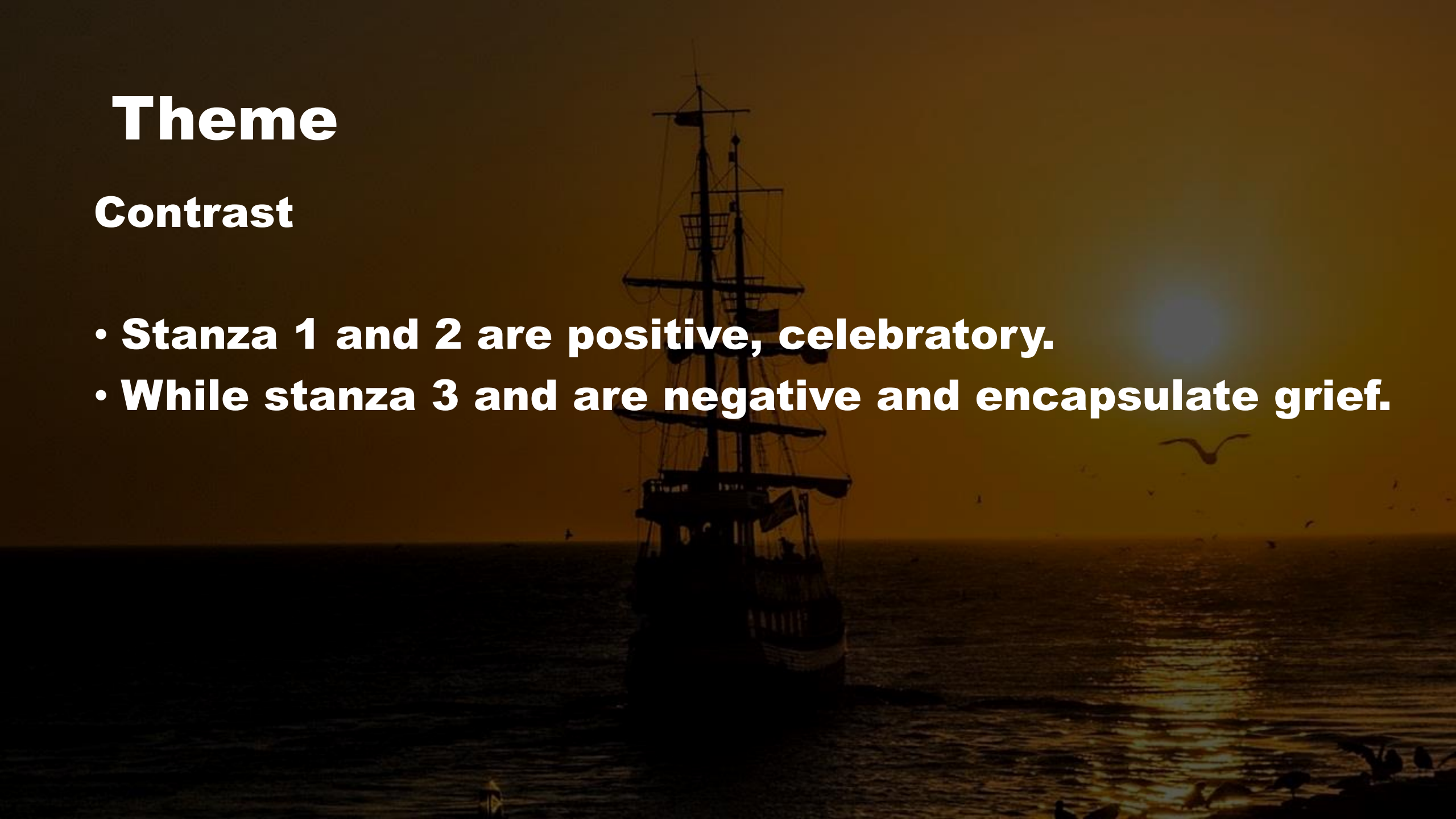
Stanza 4.

Then a <u>s</u> ilence <u>s</u> uffuses the <u>s</u> tory,	Alliteration S (Sibilance) emphasizes the sorrow as it slows the pace.
And a softness the teller's eye;	Sadness and sorrow (line 1 and 2)
And the children no further question,	The children realise that ,although 4 have survived, 40 have passed away.
And only the waves reply.	Realisation has occurred. No communication with dead.

Theme

Contrast

- **Stanza 1 and 2 are positive, celebratory.**
- **While stanza 3 and are negative and encapsulate grief.**



Tone



- **Exclamation marks display a celebratory tone.**
- **This becomes sombre as the 40 who have lost their lives creates sorrow.**

Mood.

- **Emotive language used is both positive and negative.**
 - **The first 2 stanzas are celebratory 'Glee!' yet they announce the rough and violent ocean, 'Spinning upon the shoals.'**
 - **Stanza 3 and 4 prove that there is heartache and grief felt that 40 people have died and therefore the fact that 4 have survived does not cause happiness.**
 - **There is a definite change from a celebratory mood to a melancholic one.**