



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: XII	Department: ENGLISH	2023-24
Question Bank	Topic: DEEP WATER	Note:

Summary

William Douglas, one of the most popular and powerful American Supreme Court Chief Justices in the history, had an enemy since the childhood. He tried to defeat this enemy in all possible ways. First he tried to overcome this enemy all by himself and later with the help of a trainer. Though he took years to defeat the enemy, finally Douglas killed his enemy. He was not arrested or sentenced for this murder, not because he himself was the chief justice, but because his murdered enemy was his fear of water!

Important Points:

- William Douglas had great passion for water.
- He longed to learn swimming.
- When he was three or four years, he was taken to a Beach in California.
- While surfing on the shore, a huge wave knocked him. He feared water. That was his childhood fear.
- After some years he longed to swim in the Yakima River but his mother warned against that idea.
- Then he found the YMCA Pool the safest place for swimming. Its deepest end was six feet deep.
- He went to the pool and started swimming by imitating other boys.
- One day, while waiting for the other boys to come, a big boy threw him into the deepest end of the water.
- Douglas had the courage to face the situation. He went down and down with a hope to reach the bottom to make a big leap upward.
- Three times he went down and on the third time, he lost consciousness and almost died!
- Douglas gives a vivid description of death which is peaceful.
- Douglas' 'body' floated on the surface. Someone dragged him out of the water and provided first aid.
- After this incident, Douglas tried to avoid water and water sports as much as possible.
- When he grew up, water began to tempt him again.

Instructor

- In October Douglas got an instructor for swimming.
- In three months, his fear began to fade.
- Bit by bit he shed his fears.
- The instructor engaged his feet and hands into swimming.

Getting Rid of Fear

- After the instructor was done, Douglas started self training.
- He went to the following rivers and lakes:
 - Lake Wentworth (New Hampshire)
 - Triggs Islands
 - Stamp Act Island
 - Tieton - Conrad Meadows
 - Conrad Creek Trail – Meade Glacier
 - Warm lake
- He conquered the fear of water for ever.

SOLVED QUESTIONS

1. Why was Douglas’ mother particular that he should not go to the Yakima river? How did she manage to keep the son away?

The Yakima River was treacherous. Drowning was common in it. By reminding him of each drowning incident, Douglas’ mother kept him away from the Yakima River.

2. What made the YMCA pool a safe place to learn swimming?

The YMCA pool at Yakima was not so deep. At the shallow area it was only three feet deep and at the deepest end it was nine. Moreover, the bottom of the pool was tiled the pool was tiled and the water clear.

3. What was the author’s early childhood fear of the water? How did it affect him in the rest of his life?

The author and his father once went to the beach of California when the former was three or four. While playing in the surf of the sea, the author was knocked down by the water and was buried under it. His breath was gone and a deep fear developed in his mind. From then on, he dreaded water.

4. What was the misadventure that happened while William Douglas was making his attempt to learn swimming in the YMCA pool?

Douglas was attempting to learn swimming in the YMCA pool. He was sitting on the side of the pool waiting for other boys to come. Unexpectedly a big burly boy arrived there, and, seeing Douglas sitting timidly, grabbed him and threw him into the deepest part of the pool and left him to drown. He had nearly died and this incident further cemented his fear of water.

5. ‘I was frightened, but not yet frightened out of my wits.’ What does this mean?

It was quite unexpected that Douglas was thrown into the deepest part of the YMCA Pool. The fact that he didn’t know swimming increased the risk and danger. But Douglas was not ready to be overtaken by the sheer fear of sinking. On the contrary he strengthened his mind and had a clear plan to get to the surface when his feet would touch the bottom of the pool.

6. What were Douglas’ plans when he went down the water the first time?

Douglas was frightened at being hauled into the deep water but was strategic even at such a crucial stage. While sinking, he planned to make a leap once his feet touched the tiled bottom of the water and consequently reach the surface and swim to the side and escape.

7. Douglas presents before us the true experience of dying which is not frightening but peaceful. Explain.

Douglas' experience of nearly dying in the YMCA pool taught him an untold mystery about death. He says it is a peaceful experience to die. People generally think of death as a frightening experience. When all efforts to escape from death fail, one is left with no other choice than dying, a sort of peace envelopes him. It wipes out fear, it wipes out terror. There is no more panic. It is quiet and peaceful. Nothing to be afraid of. One feels it nice to be drowsy, and to go to sleep. It is a feeling of being carried gently, to float along in space, with tender arms around us, tender arms like a Mother's.

8. Love for water could never die in Douglas. How did this statement come true to Douglas in the years that followed?

Water was very cruel to Douglas since his childhood. Even though he had been frightened twice, Douglas' love for water was everlasting. After having undergone a fatal experience at the YMCA pool Douglas didn't give up his desire to learn swimming. He waited for his time and overcame the fear of water and made himself a good swimmer.

9. This handicap stayed with me as the years rolled by. Which handicap does the author refer to?

The fear of water that possessed him first on the California Beach and later at the YMCA Pool crippled Douglas. This was an additional handicap for him other than his polio.

10. How did Douglas decide to overcome his fear of water?

After the misadventure at the YMCA Pool, Douglas found his fears for water assuming an alarming height. He decided to overcome this fear by getting effective training from a professional trainer.

11. But I was not finished. What was unfinished for Douglas?

At the end of his rigorous training to swim, Douglas' trainer informed him that his job was completed. Yet Douglas was not entirely satisfied. He had his own fears and anxieties regarding his swimming skills. He wanted to overcome the last bit of fear from his mind.

12. What did Roosevelt mean when he said, 'All we have to fear is fear itself?' How did Douglas realize this in his own life?

President Roosevelt believed that it is only fear we have to fear. People are afraid of fear. Even when the mind wills to do certain acts, fear stops us from doing that. In the case of Douglas, too, he never feared water. On the contrary he had great attachment to water. What he feared was the fear of water. He was determined to get rid of that fear and he did so with perseverance and unrelenting effort. Even when the terror tried to surface, he scorned it and laughed it off.

13. "Only once did the terror return." When did the terror return? How?

When William Douglas was just three or four years, his father took him to a beach in California. While playing in the surf/waves, Douglas was knocked down by a huge wave. Though his father laughed at it, little Douglas caught a fear of water. When he was a teenager, he tried to learn swimming in the YMCA Pool at Yakima but got almost drowned in the pool, instead. He was but not ready to accept his defeat. With the help of an instructor he learnt swimming and finally kept his fears aside.

Additional Questions

1. "Thus, piece by piece, he built a swimmer." How does this statement describe the trainer's amazing skills in training a person like Douglas? OR For the trainer, Douglas was an

extraordinarily difficult task. Explain.

2. “Trying to scare me, eh? Well, here is to you.”
 1. Who was trying to scare whom?
 2. How did Douglas retaliate?
 3. What is the significance of Douglas monologue here?
3. “The instructor was finished but I was not finished.” Explain the significance of this line in connection with the great determination that Douglas possessed.
4. What did Douglas learn about death while drowning in the YMCA pool?
5. What made the YMCA Pool at Yakima appear to Douglas the most suitable swimming spot for him?
6. What was the fear that haunted Douglas after the drowning incident at YMCA Pool?
7. Why did Douglas go on training himself after the instruction was completed?
8. What untold fact did Douglas learn about death in the YMCA drowning experience?
9. What did President Roosevelt mean when he said, “all we have to fear is fear itself?”

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What light does the autobiographical account throw on the narrator’s personality?

Value points: Though physically not very strong, his strength of mind comes to the surface. Entire incident of Douglas’ close brush with death and his conquering of terror brings out his character traits—presence of mind, tried to manage crisis with cool mind- his struggle to defy the force of water speaks of his positive attitude, did not give up till the end – later in life, his efforts to get over the phobia of water highlight his patience and strong will-power – absolutely determined to shed this fear, he emerged victorious on account of his perseverance and single-mindedness – the larger message that he drew from the misadventure reflects upon his philosophical bent.

2. The narrative ‘Deep Water’ is a saga of perseverance and courage. Elucidate.
3. ‘Often the test of courage is not to die but to live.’ Comment with reference to ‘Deep Water’.

1. Q. Taking references from the story ‘Deep Water’, write a paragraph on ‘Practice Makes a Man Perfect’.

Ans. Life teaches us many things. We are not well trained or learned person since our birth. Life provides us opportunities to learn. We break the shackles of myths and prejudices to learn more and more. Due to one incident or other, many phobias start ruling one’s heart. This is really a pathetic condition. Terrors and fears are a part of life but their phase must be temporary. One needs to practice over and over again till he gets mastery over the issue. This is all about hope, struggle and determination and nothing else. As it is rightly said, ‘Faith can move mountains.’ So practicing hard for a thing brings fruitful results.