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Class 12 English (Flamingo) Notes

DEEP WATER



Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

3. DEEP WATER

Deep water opens the way for all to achieve the impossible. Focusing the target, staying determined and consistent efforts can help to fight the challenges and tough situations of life.

—William Douglas

Points to Remember

William Douglas

- feared water
- 3 or 4 years old, went to beach with father, knocked down, swept over by waves, suffocated, frightened.
- decided to learn swimming at Y.M.C.A. pool, Yakima.
- pool safe 2/3 feet at shallow end, 9 feet at deep end.
- got water wings
- beginning to feel comfortable.
- Another incident / misadventure
- big boy threw him into deep end, frightened, lungs ready to burst
- decided to hit feet on the bottom and return as a cork.
- came up slowly, opened eyes but found water everywhere.
- terrified, tried to scream, no sound
- legs paralyzed, rigid
- went down second time
- hit bottom, felt dizzy, lost - his command on legs
- groped for support, called for help, no result
- went down third time.
- stopped struggling, legs limp
- blackness swept over his brain - was quiet, peaceful, drowsy.

Once out of unconsciousness, he

- found himself, lying on stomach, vomitting
- reached home felt weak, trembled

- wept, couldn't eat, frightened, avoided water.

Years Later

- felt terrified
- feared water, spoiled holidays
- one October, decided to overcome fear
- hired swimming instructor
- practised swimming, five days a week, one hour daily took three months to relax.
- learnt to put face in water, exhale, raise nose and inhale.
- learnt to kick with legs.
- instructor gave practice with a rope and a pulley.
- taught for six months
- made swimmer out of him, no longer feared water.
- Douglas got confidence
- no longer afraid, managed to conquer fear.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. How and when did Douglas develop an aversion to water?

Ans. His aversion to water began when he was three or four years old. He went with his father to a beach where the waves knocked him down and overpowered him. He was buried under the waves. This created the phobia in his mind and left him in a state of fear.

2. Why has the Yakima river been referred to as treacherous?

Ans. There had been several cases of drowning in the river. It was not considered safe because of its rough water and fast current. Douglas mother used to remind him the drowning cases there.

3. In order to escape drowning what strategy did Douglas adopt while in the deep end of the pool?

Ans. When Douglas was thrown into water, he was terribly frightened but still mentally alert. He planned that when his feet hit the bottom, he would make a big jump, come to the surface lie flat on it and paddle to the edge of the pool.

4. How did the insturctor 'build a swimmer' out of Douglas?

Ans. The instructor built a swimmer out of Douglas piece by piece. For three months, he held him high on a rope attached to his belt. Douglas practised moving back and forth across the pool. Then he was taught to put his face under water and exhale, then raise his nose and inhale. Next, the instructor told him to kick with his legs. Finally his legs relaxed and he could command over them.

Questions for Practice

1. Why was Douglas determined to get over his fear of water?
2. What kind of terror seized Douglas as he went down the water with a yellow glow?
3. How did the incident at YMCA pool affect Douglas later in his life?
4. What does Douglas mean when he says, "The instructor was finished, but I was not"?
5. How did the writer experience the truth of Roosevelt's statement – "All we have to fear is fear itself"?
6. Though the mother did not allow Douglas to go to Yakima river, she allowed him to go to the swimming pool at YMCA. Why?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Give an account of the fears and emotions of Douglas as he made efforts to save himself from drowning in YMCA pool.

- When the author was flung into the deep end of the pool, he was overcome with fear.
- Fortunately, he was able to think rationally.
- So, he planned that as soon as he hit the bottom, he would make a big jump.
- He hoped that he would be able to come to the surface.
- but his efforts went futile.
- Panic groped him when he realised that he had gone deep inside nine feet of water.
- He thought he would bob to the surface like a cork.

- His limbs were almost paralysed.
- He failed to find anything to hold on and he was again being pulled under.
- His lungs ached and his screams went unheard.
- The mass of yellow water gripped him which produced stark terror.
- When three attempts to rise to the surface failed, he fainted. He experienced a terror which never left him.

2. If we surrender to our fears, they overpower us; If we face them, they fade away. Do you agree? Explain with reference to the lesson. 'Deep Water'.
3. 'Life is not bed of roses'. We need to stay calm, determined and focused to accomplish our goal. Explain.