

## NCERT Solutions for Class 11 English Hornbill Chapter 2 We're Not Afraid to Die... If We Can All Be Together

Question 1.

List the steps taken by the captain.

- (i) to protect the ship when rough weather began
- (ii) to check the flooding of the water in the ship

Answer:

(i) The author, the captain of the ship and his family started an adventurous voyage by sea on their boat 'Wavewalker' in July 1976 from Plymouth, England. The first phase of their planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly. They began to encounter strong gales when they were on their second day out of Cape Town. The captain was aware of the rough weather ahead. That is why he had taken the services of Larry Vigil, an American and Herb Seigler, a Swiss. He did so to tackle the world's roughest sea, the southern India Ocean

The strong winds blew continuously for the next few weeks. The size of the waves was alarming, which was upto 15 metres as high as their boat's main mast was. They were 3500 kilometres east of Cape Town on 25th December. Though the weather was extremely bad, yet they celebrated Christmas. The waves became gigantic at dawn on January 2. They were sailing with only a small storm jib and were still making eight knots

To protect the ship from rough weather, the captain decided to slow the boat down. To do so, they dropped the storm jib and lashed heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. In order to protect themselves further, he got double-lashed everything. Then they went through their lift-raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets. This is how the captain tried to protect the ship when rough weather began

(ii) The author, the captain, his wife Mary, his six-year-old son Jonathan and his seven-year-old daughter Suzanne started their round-the-world sea voyage by their boat Wavewalker. They had planned their journey for three years and were supposed to cover 105,000 kilometres. They started their long journey in July 1976 from Plymouth, England.

They reached Cape Town safely. But just on their second day out of Cape Town, they had to encounter strong gales, which blew continuously for the next few weeks. At dawn on January 2, the waves were extraordinarily large and high. At about 6 p.m. there appeared a wave, perfectly vertical and almost twice the height of other waves. Then a tremendous explosion shook the deck. A strong fast stream of green and white water broke over the ship. The head of the captain smashed into the wheel and he was aware of flying overboard and sinking below the waves.

Then unexpectedly, the author's head came out of the water. He saw Wavewalker nearly overturning. But a wave hurled her upright. He grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into Wavewalker's main boom. His left ribs were cracked and his mouth was filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, he found the wheel, lined up the stem for the next wave and hung on.

There was water everywhere. His wife Mary told him that the decks were smashed and they were full of water. He asked her to take the wheel. Through hatch he went down and found that Larry and Herbs were pumping fastly and continuously. After finding a hammer, screws and canvas, the captain struggled back on deck. With the starboard side bashed open, they were taking water with each wave that broke over them.

Somehow the captain managed to stretch canvas and secure waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes. Some water continued to stream below, but most of it was now being deflected over the side. The hand pumps had started blocking and the electric pump was short circuited. Then the captain connected another electric pump to an out-pipe and it started working. They had been continuously pumping. He also hoisted the storm jib.

Question 2.

Describe the mental condition of the voyagers on 4 and 5 January.

Answer:

The author and his family started their adventurous sea voyage on their boat Wavewalker in July 1976 from Plymouth, England. The first phase of their planned three- year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly. However they began to encounter strong gales when they were on their second day out of Cape Town.

They faced the alarmingly high, sea waves, which broke over the ship, injuring him and his daughter Sue. A part of their ship had damaged and a lot of water had entered the ship. The author repaired the ship as far as he could do. But still they were deeply disturbed about their uncertain fate

On January 4, after 36 hours of continuous pumping, they reached the last few centimetres of water. Now they had only to keep pace with the water still coming in. The voyagers were tired, hungry and struggling hard to survive. Mary found some corned beef and cracker biscuits and they had their first meal in almost two days. But their respite was for a short time only. At 4 p.m. black clouds began building up behind them. The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night. They were probably aware of their approaching death.

On January 5, their situation was again desperate. Even the children were aware of their approaching death. But the children too showed exemplary courage. The author's son told his daddy that they were not afraid of death if they could all be together his daddy and mummy and Sue and Jonathan.

The author was so moved with these words that he was determined to fight the sea with whatsoever he had. The author and his wife sat together that evening holding hands, as the motion of the ship brought more water in through the broken planks. They both felt that their end was approaching very near. Thus their mental condition was quite positive despite the danger of death they were facing.

Question 3.

Describe the shifts in the narration of the events as indicated in the three sections of the text. Give a suitable title to each section.

Answer:

The first section of the text describes how the author and his family set sail from Plymouth England in July 1976 on their boat Wavewalker. They had spent months fitting their boat and testing it in the roughest weather. The first phase of their planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly as they sailed down the west coast of ' Africa to Cape Town. But on their second day out of Cape Town, they began to encounter strong gales, which blew continuously for the next few weeks. The size of the waves was alarming. At dawn on January 2, the waves were gigantic.

At 6 p.m. an exceptionally high wave hit the ship and a tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship. The author's head smashed into the wheel, he flew overboard and sank below the waves. But unexpectedly his head popped out of the water. A few metres away, he saw Wavewalker nearly capsizing. But a wave hurled her up right. There was water everywhere.

He asked his wife Mary to take the wheel. When he went to the children's cabin, he found that his daughter Sue's head was hurt and there was a big bump above her eyes. The author repaired the ship as far as he could do. A lot of water had entered due to which they had been pumping continuously. Their Mayday calls got no replies

The second section is about their search for an island. By morning on January 3, the water level was sufficiently under control. So they took two hours' rest in rotation. But still there was a tremendous leak somewhere below the waterline. A whole section of the starboard hull was damaged and there was nothing holding it up. They had survived for 15 hours since the wave hit. But Wavewalker would not hold together long enough to reach Australia. So, the author was looking for the nearest island.

On checking the charts, the author calculated that there were two small islands a few hundred kilometres to the east. Their only hope was to reach one of them. One of them, Amsterdam, was a French scientific base. On January 4, after 36 hours of continuous pumping, they reached the last few centimetres of water. Now, they had only to keep pace with the water still coming in. Mary found some corned beef and cracker biscuits, and they ate their first meal in almost two days. But at 4 p.m. black clouds began building up behind them. The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night. By dawn on January 5, their situation was again desperate.

When he went to comfort the children, his son Jon said, "But, daddy, we aren't afraid of dying if we can all be together you, Mummy, Sue and I." That evening Mary and the author sat together holding hands. They both felt that the end was near. But Wavewalker rode out of the storm and by the morning of January 6, with the wind easing, he tried to get a reading on the sextant. He came to know that they were somewhere in 150,000 kilometres of ocean looking for a 65 kilometre wide island.

The third section is about their cheerful landing on lie Amsterdam. The author had checked and rechecked his calculations. About 2 p.m., he went on deck and asked Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. He told Larry that he could see the island at about 5 p.m. Then he went below, climbed on his bunk and dozed off. He woke up at 6 p.m. Then he was informed by his children that he had found the island. They anchored offshore for the night. Next morning all 28 inhabitants of the island of lie Amsterdam cheered as they helped them ashore.