

## NCERT Solutions for Class 12 English Flamingo Chapter 3

Question 1.

What was the “misadventure” that William Douglas speaks about?

Answer:

William Douglas’ traumatic experience in the sea, as a child, made him afraid of water. However, as he was learning to swim in the YMCA pool, he was thrown into the deep end by an older boy. The experience terrified him as he had almost drowned and finally lost consciousness before being hauled out of the water.

Question 2.

What were the series of emotions and fears that Douglas experienced when he was thrown into the pool? What plans did he make to come to the surface?

Answer:

When Douglas was thrown into water, he landed in a sitting position, swallowed water, and went at once to the bottom. He was frightened, but planned to jump, as his feet touched the bottom, and bounce to the surface, and paddle to the edge of the pool. His repeated failed attempts left him terrified and exhausted, till he slipped into unconscious and was pulled out of the pool. The author went from fear to exhaustion and finally submission. He showed courage when he planned to reach the surface, however the repeated attempts drained his strength and he was gripped by terror. He eventually gave up and felt resigned before losing consciousness.

Question 3.

How did this experience affect him?

Answer:

The writer’s experience of near drowning affected him greatly. He felt weak and trembled on his way back home from the pool. He spent many more days in unrest. He never went back to the pool. He feared water and avoided it whenever he could.

Question 4.

Why was Douglas determined to get over his fear of water?

Answer:

Douglas was determined to get over his fear of water as he wished to get into the water of Cascades. He felt terrorised by the memories of the pool and regretted being deprived of the pleasures of fishing, canoeing, boating, and swimming.

Question 5.

How did the instructor “build a swimmer” out of Douglas?

Answer:

The instructor put a belt around Douglas to which a rope was attached. The rope went through a pulley fixed on an overhead cable. He held on to the end of the rope, and

made Douglas swim for weeks. Three months later, he taught Douglas to exhale under water, and to raise his nose and inhale, and made him overcome his fear of putting his head under water. Next, the instructor held him at the side of the pool and made him kick with his legs. Gradually, after weeks of practice, his legs relaxed. When Douglas had perfected each hurdle, the instructor coordinated his efforts and gradually built a swimmer out of Douglas.

Question 6.

How did Douglas make sure that he conquered the old terror?

Answer:

To make sure he had conquered fear, Douglas went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived in and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. Only once when he was in the middle of the lake, did the terror return. But he confronted it and swam on. He also swam across Warm Lake to the other shore and back, to make sure that he had conquered his fear of water.

### **Deep Water Understanding the text**

Question 1.

How does Douglas make clear to the reader the sense of panic that gripped him as he almost drowned? Describe the details that have made the description vivid.

Answer:

Douglas was pushed into the deep end of the YMCA swimming pool by a strong boy. He landed up in sitting position, swallowing water. He was frightened, but as he was going down to the bottom of the pool, he decided to make a big jump when his feet would hit the bottom of the pool, come up to the surface, lie flat, and paddle to the edge. But his fall seemed unending. The nine feet felt ninety to the little boy, and before his feet touched the bottom, his lungs were ready to burst.

As soon as his feet hit the bottom, he gathered all his strength and tried to spring upwards. Unlike what he had foreseen, he came up slowly. On opening his eyes, he saw nothing but water; he was terrified. There was nothing to hold on to and he felt suffocated. He tried to scream but no sound came. His eyes and nose came out of the water but his mouth was still under the surface. He thrashed at the surface of the water, but merely swallowed more water and choked. When he tried to bring his legs up, they hung like dead weights, refusing to move. He was pulled under water and once again he felt himself sinking back to the bottom of the pool. Breathless, he hit at the water with all his strength. His lungs and head ached and he began to feel dizzy.

He decided to jump when he hit the bottom. However it made no difference. He groped around for something and felt even more terrorized, with his limbs refusing to move. He finally gave up—his legs felt limp and blackness swept his brain. He felt neither anxiety nor fear. On the contrary, he felt quiet and peaceful, but drowsy, and was finally

oblivious of everything around him. The writer makes the description vivid by giving graphic details of the situation and of his fear.

Question 2.

How did Douglas overcome his fear of water?

Answer:

Douglas overcame his fear of water through sheer determination. The experience he had, as a child of three or four, had left an indelible imprint on his mind. This was aggravated by the experience that he had when he was thrown into the pool. This made him stay away from water for many years. Later when he attempted to overcome his fear, his instructor taught him to swim, yet he felt terror-stricken when alone in the pool. He swam tirelessly up and down the length of the pool but he was not sure that the fear had left.

So he went to Lake Wentworth, in New Hampshire, and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. Only once did he feel afraid, when he was in the middle of the lake, but he confronted it and swam on. To ascertain if he had overcome his fear completely, he went up to Meade Glacier, and swam across the Warm Lake. This assured him that he had accomplished his desire to overcome his fear of water.

Question 3.

Why does Douglas, as an adult, recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? What larger meaning does he draw from this experience?

Answer:

Douglas, as an adult, recounts his childhood experience of terror and how he conquered it. He recalled his ordeal as a child about how he almost drowned in a swimming pool. He narrated his journey, under his trainer, where he learnt to swim and finally how he swims across Warm Lake. The account does not attempt to glorify his accomplishment as a swimmer, but celebrates his efforts of conquering his fear of water.

The writer shares with his readers how the experience held a deep significance for him. He writes that he had experienced both the sensation of dying and the terror it produces. He came to realize the value of life through this incident. The account also sheds light on his take on adventure. Adventure calls on all the faculties of the mind and the spirit. It develops self-reliance and independence. Adventure is, however, enjoyed when one is rid of fear. Fear cripples an individual and limits one's scope. One stays tethered by strings of doubt and indecision and has only a small and narrow world to explore. Douglas shared his experience as a useful lesson and called upon his readers to conquer their fears.