



QUESTION BANK – DEEP WATER
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

Class: XII

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 fear.
 - The instructor engaged his feet and hands into swimming.

Getting Rid of Fear

- After the instructor was done, Douglas started a 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 forever.

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?
2. What made the YMCA pool a safe place to learn swimming?
3. What was the author's early childhood fear of the water? How did it affect him in the rest of his life?
4. What was the misadventure that happened while William Douglas was making his attempt to learn swimming in the YMCA pool?
5. 'I was frightened, but not yet frightened out of my wits.' What does this mean?
6. What were Douglas' plans when he went down the water the first time?
7. Douglas presents before us the true experience of dying which is not frightening but peaceful. Explain.
8. Love for water could never die in Douglas. How did this statement come true to Douglas in the years that followed?
9. This handicap stayed with me as the years rolled by. Which handicap does the author refer to?
10. How did Douglas decide to overcome his fear of water?
11. But I was not finished. What was unfinished for Douglas?
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?

13. “Only once did the terror return.” When did the terror return? How?

More 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?
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’.
4. How did the trainer make Douglas a swimmer?

Value Based Questions:

1. “Few things are impossible through diligence and skill...great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance” – Samuel Johnson
2. Doing well in any activity, for example a sport, music, dance or painting, riding a motorcycle or a car, involves a great deal of struggle. Most of us are very nervous to begin with until gradually we overcome our fears and perform well.
3. Write a paragraph of about 100 words recounting such an experience. Try to recollect details of what caused the fear, your feelings, the encouragement you got from others or the criticism.
4. You could begin with the last sentence of the essay DEEP WATER – “At last I felt released, free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear.”
5. Taking references from the story ‘Deep Water’, write a paragraph on ‘Practice Makes a Man Perfect’.

6. Reading all these and the lesson 'Deep Water' you decide to write a paragraph for your school magazine on 'How to overcome trouble'.
- 7 "All we have to fear is fear itself", the narrator in the lesson 'deep water' Quotes Roosevelt while narrating his experience of going deep in water and all the rest of it. Narrate another story about conquest of fear and how courage helped one to survive under the stress.
8. 'All we have to fear is fear itself'. The story 'Deep Water' is about Douglas' fear water and how he finally overcomes it. After reading the text, you strongly feel that there is nothing to be afraid of. One can adapt virtues like courage, strong determination, hard toil, strong will power and the desire to learn, to reach the highest peak in life. Write a speech in about 1000 words to be delivered in the morning assembly of your school on the topic 'Fear Does not let One Conquer'.
9. William Douglas tried hard to learn swimming, but every time something happened to deter him. However, he never gave up and showed great perseverance. With these thoughts in mind, write an article on the topic 'Patience and Perseverance Always Pays' in 100 words.
10. The importance of tests is a necessary step towards any kind of success. Tests to determine one's ability and knowledge. William Douglas was declared to be an expert swimmer by his professional trainer, but he was not satisfied. He wanted to test himself in different situations and he did test himself in different situations. Only then he was satisfied that he had learnt swimming. With these thoughts in mind write an article on the 'Importance of Tests' in 100 words.
11. Cases of older children bullying younger ones have become alarmingly common, especially in the school environment. How would you connect to it? To Douglas' experience at the YMCA pool? What is the mindset of the modern youth that is reflected through such incidents?