



QUESTION BANK – WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO DIE ... IF WE CAN ALL BE TOGETHER

By-Gordon Cook and Alan East

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

*This lesson is an exciting account of a family's experience at sea. It not only underlines the difficulties that mariners often face at sea but also brings out, poignantly, the spirit of togetherness in a family, who are prepared to brave death together.*

**Short Answer Type Questions:**

**1. What preparations did the narrator and his wife make for their round-the-world sea voyage?**

**Answer:** The narrator and his wife wanted to 'duplicate' the round-the-world voyage made 200 years ago by Captain James Cook. They had been making formidable preparations for the last 16 years. First they got 'Wavewalker' a boat especially designed and professionally built for this purpose. They tested it for months in the roughest weather. They spent all their leisure time in strengthening their seafaring skills in British waters. They were both mentally and physically prepared to undertake their exceptionally long and challenging sea voyage.

**2. Describe the boat Wavewalker.**

**Answer:** The narrator wanted to duplicate the round-the-world voyage made by Captain James Cook 200 years ago. In order to undertake this journey, they got a boat built professionally. The boat, named Wavewalker, was a 23 meters long, 30 ton wooden-hulled sailboat. They had spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather conditions.

**3. Why did they take on two crewmen with them at Cape Town?**

**Answer:** Before heading East from Cape Town, they took on two crewmen who were experienced seamen. They were Larry Vigil, an American and Herb Seigler, a Swiss. The narrator knew that they would require expert help to tackle one of the world's roughest seas – the southern Indian Ocean.

**4. How did the voyagers celebrate their Christmas and where?**

**Answer:** On Christmas Day, the voyagers were 3500 kms East of Cape Town in the southern Indian Ocean. Though the sea was rough, they enjoyed the wonderful holiday. They celebrated Christmas singing carols complete with a Christmas tree. They expected the weather to improve but it didn't.

**5. How was the weather on the morning of 2nd January?**

**Answer:** On New Year's Day, the weather saw no improvement and was bad. On 2nd January, it

got even worse. The waves were gigantic. They were sailing with only a small storm jib but still were going pretty fast. As the ship rose to the top of each wave they could see the endless, enormous sea rolling towards them. The wind seemed to be howling.

**6. What attempts did the narrator make to protect himself and his family from the huge waves?**

**Answer:** The waves were gigantic on 2nd January. In order to protect themselves, they decided to slow down the boat. They dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stem. Then they double-lashed everything, went through their life-raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets and prepared themselves for the worst case scenario.

**7. “I had no time to worry about bumped heads”, says the narrator. What problem do you think deserved his immediate attention?**

**Answer:** The problem that deserved immediate attention was the repair of the starboard side, which had been smashed; with every wave, it was letting water enter the boat. If he did not make some repairs, the boat would have surely sunk and they would have drowned.

**8. What did Sue say when she was asked by her father about why she had not complained about her grave injuries?**

**Answer:** Sue had been injured badly when the wave had hit the ship. Her head had swollen alarmingly. She had two black eyes and she had a deep cut on her arm. When asked why she had not complained about her injuries earlier, she replied that she had not wanted to worry her parents when they were trying to save them all from sinking.

**9. What happened on the morning of 3rd January?**

**Answer:** By the morning of 3rd January, they had managed to pump out the water out of the boat to a reasonable level and the situation was under control but, they suspected a huge leak below and found that nearly all the boat’s main rib frames were damaged down to the keel. The narrator knew that Wavewalker will not be able to hold together long enough to reach Australia. So the narrator made some calculations and found two small islands a few hundred kilometers to the East. They hoped to reach one of them.

**Long Answer Type Questions:**

**1. Highlight the tremendous courage and forbearance shown by the two children during the struggle to keep the boat from sinking. What values do you learn from them?**

**Answer:** The two children, Suzanne and Jonathan, showed tremendous courage and forbearance during the epic struggle put up by their parents and the crewmen to keep the boat from sinking. Sue had been injured badly when the big wave hit the boat. Her head had swollen alarmingly and both her eyes were hurt. She also had a deep cut on her arm. But she did not complain about her injuries as she did not want to worry her parents when they were trying to save them from sinking. When the author went to comfort the children, his son Jonathan, asked him if they were going to die. When he was assured that they would all survive, he told his father that they were not afraid of dying if they could all be together. Moreover, Sue had patience and power enough to even draw the caricatures of her parents with a message of hope and gratitude to her parents. The children, thus, exhibit extraordinary patience, courage and tolerance.

**2. The hurdles of life can be challenged if we have confidence to make optimum use of our potential. Elaborate.**

**Answer:** The statement holds true in the light of the story ‘We’re Not Afraid to Die.....’. The

narrator along with his wife, children, and two crewmen overcame the worst situations and defeated death by fighting the adverse situations which cropped up during their voyage. When the big wave hit the boat, it was severely damaged and the narrator was badly injured. However, he did not pay attention to it and Mary also helped by following instruction without worrying about the destruction around. Both Larry and Herb kept pumping out water and did not stop. Moreover, when the hand-pumps stopped working and the electric pump short-circuited, he did not lose confidence and used electric pump to drive out water from the boat. Even the children had confidence in their father and they hoped to survive. They also showed great courage. Jon said that they were not afraid to die if they are all together. Sue made a card to thank her parents. It was a great example of unity and trust that they had on each other. Thus, it can be concluded that by staying optimistic like the children and making the best use of your potential like the narrator, one can fight adversities and be a winner.