



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2020-21)

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

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Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

**Summary**

The couple Gordon Cook and Mary wanted to duplicate the 1776 around—the-world sea voyage of famous Captain James Cook. The couple along with their two children, Suzanne aged 7 and Jonathan aged 6, set out in their boat '*Wavewalker*' in July 1976, exactly 200 years later. They had planned and prepared well ahead of their voyage putting in all their leisure hours, for 16 years training at sea and polishing their sea faring skills in the roughest of British waters. Starting from Plymouth England, they sailed along the east coast of Africa. Stopping at Cape Town they picked up two experienced seamen, Larry, an American and Herb, a Swiss to help them cross one of the roughest seas in the world- the southern Indian Ocean. On January 2, gigantic waves rolled towards the boat and the crew waited in readiness to face approaching storm. A towering wave hit the boat damaging it critically. The writer's head smashed into the wheel. He was thrown overboard and nearly drowned. Suddenly, his head popped out of water and he saw *Wavewalker* capsizing. Another wave hurled the ship upright and he was pulled into the boat by his lifeline. In spite of getting badly injured, he manned the wheel and lined up the boat to face the oncoming waves. Sue sustained a big bump on her forehead. Larry and Herb madly pumped out water to keep the boat from sinking Their May Day calls (S.O.S) went unanswered. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, after continuous pumping, the rising water level inside the boat was brought control. On January 4<sup>th</sup> the sailors had some rest in shifts and had a meal in 2 days. But again, at 4 pm black clouds appeared, winds rose and weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night. They couldn't hoist sail because of the fear of damaging the boat further. Their situation became desperate on January 5. The writer had decided to steer the boat in the direction of a small island- Ile Amsterdam using an improvised anchor made of two medium-sized plastic containers. The weather improved on January 6<sup>th</sup>. After making careful calculations the writer directed Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. At 6 pm that evening they could sight 'Ile Amsterdam' which to them was 'the most beautiful island in the world!'. They anchored offshore for the night and in the morning were welcomed by 28 inhabitants of the island.

**Characters:**

**Gordon Cook:** The writer narrator is an experienced seaman. He trained hard for the around—the-world sea voyage. A great captain who in spite of getting badly injured carried out his responsibilities very well. He had great survival skills, repaired the boat immediately, and improvising to make a sea anchor. He made clever calculations on a not-so-accurate compass,

taking into account the drifts and currents at that time of the year and captained his crew to reach everyone to safety. Enquired after his children's health. Did not get nervous, kept his cool.

**Mary:** Wife of the writer & narrator, gave her best by way of steering the boat while the others were busy repairing or emptying it of excess of water. A great support to the writer in those times of extreme trial.

**Suzanne:** 7-year-old daughter, got injured during the wave-hit, did not complain or try to make more of her injury. She knew Daddy had more responsible job of saving every one's life. Retained her sense of humour. Made caricature of Mom and Dad and presented in the form of a card, pouring her feelings of love for her parents.

**Jonathan:** 6-year-old son, showed remarkable courage and bravery during the moment of crisis. He said that he was no longer afraid of dying as long as he is together with the whole family.

**Larry & Herb:** Two experienced seamen. Gave their 100% to save the boat and were of great help. Their help was acknowledged by the writer.