



SUMMARY- HIS FIRST FLIGHT

The story “His First Flight” is written by Liam O’Flaherty and is based on a young seagull who was afraid to take his first flight because he feared that his wings wouldn’t support him while flying. All his siblings took the plunge to fly fearlessly in the open air despite having shorter wings than him. On the contrary, the young bird could not muster up courage to take the plunge due to distrust on his wings. Whenever he tried to come forward towards the brink of the ledge while attempting to fly, he became afraid and went back. His parents constantly upbraided and threatened him that unless he flew away he would have to starve alone on the ledge, but all their efforts went in vain. He would just watch his parents teaching his siblings how to skim the waves and dive for fish.

One fine day, the whole family flew to a big plateau and taunted the young seagull for his cowardice. As the sun rays blazed on his ledge, he could feel the heat and was starving since the previous nightfall. The young bird begged his mother to bring him some food. He uttered a joyful scream when his mother quickly picked a piece of fish and flew across to him. He leaned out eagerly and jumped at the fish exasperated by hunger. Suddenly he fell outward in the open space and a monstrous terror seized him as he could feel that he was falling downward. The next moment he felt his wings spread outwards and he was able to fly fearlessly. Finally, the young seagull took his first flight and soared higher and skimmed through the waves and dived along with his siblings.

SUMMARY- BLACK AEROPLANE

“Black Aeroplane” is a mysterious story written by Fredrik Forsyth that revolves around a pilot. The narrator of the story is a pilot who wanted to be with his family and enjoy a wholesome breakfast with them in England. He had to fly from France to England to spend time with his family. The plane was Dakota DS-088 and was flying at night. After the journey of 150 Km, suddenly the pilot came across the storm clouds that looked like black mountains. It was just in front of him and he was in a confusion whether he should return back or should face the storm. However, he flew through the clouds and soon realized that everything around him had turned completely black. Nothing was visible to him outside the aeroplane. He noticed that the cloud was looking so dangerous, but finally he entered the clouds and found that the compass and the radio had stopped working. He was completely helpless.

Suddenly he noticed that a black aeroplane was flying just beside his aeroplane. It had no lights on its wings. The pilot of that aeroplane waved his hands and signalled him to follow. He began to follow him just like an obedient child. After sometime he noticed that the fuel in the second tank was left only for the Journey for 5 to 10 minutes. He began to feel frightened but was following the other aeroplane continuously. Suddenly he noticed that he was out of the storm and the runway of an airport was being seen. After watching that he got relaxed and landed his aeroplane. He was trying to find out the other pilot and the black aeroplane, but couldn't see them. After landing his aeroplane, he went to the woman who was sitting in the control center and asked her about the black aeroplane. He wanted to thank him for saving his life. But the woman in the control center told him that there was no other airplane in the night sky other than his aeroplane. Then surprisingly, he began to think continuously about the incident and finally couldn't reach to any conclusion whether the black aeroplane was his imagination or did any other miracle occur?

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS:

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. The moon was coming up in the east, behind me, and stars were shining in the clear sky above me. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. I was happy to be alone high up above the sleeping countryside.

(a) Who does 'I' refer to here?

I refers to the pilot of the Dakota plane.

(b) Where was he going?

He was going to England from France.

(c) What made him happy?

The pilot was looking forward to spending his holiday with his family and to have a good, big English breakfast.

(d) Which words in the above extract indicate that the weather was fine?

The words like Rising moon and cloudless sky indicate that the weather was fine.

2. He waited a moment in surprise, wondering why she did not come nearer, and then maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. With a loud scream he fell outwards and downwards into space. Then a monstrous terror seized him and his heart stood still.

(a) Who does 'he' refer to here?

He refers to the young seagull.

(b) Who is 'she' here?

She refers to the seagull's mother.

(c) What did he think she would offer him?

He thought that she would offer him a fish to eat.

(d) Find a word from the extract which means the same as 'dreadful'

Monstrous.

- 3. Only his mother was looking at him. She was standing on a little high hump on the plateau, her white breast thrust forward. Now and again, she tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet and then scrapped each side of her beak on the rock. The sight of the food maddened him. How he loved to tear food that way, scrapping his beak now and again to whet it.**

**(a) The young seagull's mother was standing on a little high-----
on the plateau.**

hump

(b) The sight of the food ----- him.

maddened.

(c) Now and again, the young seagull's mother tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet. (True/ False)

True.

(d) Find a word from the extract which means same as 'sharpen'

Whet

- 4. Inside the clouds, everything was suddenly black. It was impossible to see anything outside the aeroplane. The old aeroplane jumped and twisted in the air. I looked at the compass. I could not believe my eyes: the compass was turning round and round. It was dead. It would not work. The other instruments were suddenly dead, too.**

(a) Why could the writer not see anything outside the aeroplane?

The writer could not see anything outside the aeroplane because it was dark outside due to dark clouds.

(b) Why was the aeroplane twisting in the air?

All the instruments of the plane were not working and due to stormy night, the plane could not be kept under control.

(c) Why could the writer not believe his eyes?

The writer could not believe his eyes because the compass was turning round and round.

(d) Find a word from the extract which means the same as ‘and curved in different direction’.

Twisted.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

- 1. What happened when the young seagull dived at the fish picked up by his mother?**

When the young sea gull dived at the fish, he fell outwards and downwards with a scream. A monstrous terror seized him and his heart stood still. Soon his wings spread outwards and he could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air.

- 2. How did the seagull feel when his belly touched the green sea?**

When the seagull’s belly touched the green sea, he was scared that he would sink. He tried to fly but could not. He was exhausted and weak due to hunger.

- 3. Why was the young seagull afraid to fly?**

The seagull was afraid to fly because he thought his wings would not support him and he was afraid of the vast expanse of sea. He could not muster courage.

- 4. What did the young seagull do to attract his mother’s attention?**

In order to attract his mother’s attention, the young seagull stood on one leg and pretended to be falling asleep on the brink of the ledge.

- 5. Describe the sky when ‘Dakota’ took off from Paris.**

When ‘Dakota’ took off from Paris, the sky was quite clear. The moon was coming up in the east and the stars were shining. There were no clouds in the sky.

- 6. ‘I’ll take the risk? What is the risk? Why does the pilot of the old Dakota take it?’**

The risk was of flying the old Dakota aeroplane into the storm. The pilot took it as he wished to reach home as soon as possible and to be present at the breakfast table.

- 7. What difficulties did the narrator face while flying in the storm?**

The difficulties that the narrator faced were that all the instruments of his aeroplane had stopped working. He could not see any thing as there were dark clouds all around.

- 8. When did the seagull’s flight begin? And where did it end?**

The young seagull's flight started when he dived trying to snatch the piece of fish from his mother's beak. He fell down but instinctively his wings spread out, he flapped them and started flying. His flight ended after half an hour when he landed on the green sea with his family.

9. What happened when the author turned the aeroplane twelve degrees west towards England?

When the author turned the aeroplane twelve degree west towards England, he saw the huge storm clouds that looked like black mountains standing in front of him across the sky.

10. What made the woman in the control center look at the narrator strangely?

The woman in the control room was surprised when the narrator asked her about the other aeroplane and its pilot. She said that there were no other aeroplanes detected on the radar.

11. How did the seagull's parents try to make him fly?

They screamed/ scolded/ threatened to let him starve on the ledge unless he flew away (value points)

12. "The sight of the food maddened him"? What does this suggest?

Desperate due to hunger/had not eaten anything for twenty-four hours/afraid to fly/fearful of death (Value points)

13. Why did the pilot think of going back to Paris?

Black clouds made his way invisible due to stormy weather/didn't have enough fuel to fly around the clouds. (Value points)

14. Why was the pilot of Dakota aeroplane frightened again?

Insufficient fuel to reach the destination/a frightening prospect/fuel to fly for five to ten minutes more. (Value points)

15. Why and when did the narrator say that 'everything' was going well, it was an easy flight?

Enjoyed smooth gliding in the air/easy flight/thought everything was going well/was dreaming of holiday with his family/contacted Paris control room/checked the map/compass/switched over to second and last fuel tank/turned twelve degrees towards England/thought of good English breakfast/enjoyable and safe journey/thought everything was going on well/an easy flight. (Value points)

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:

- 1. Fear and lack of confidence stop one from learning new things. Do you agree? How did these two traits of the young seagull make him coward? How did he overcome these shortcomings?**

Yes, it is true that fear and lack of confidence stop one from learning new things as in the story, the young seagull lacked courage and confidence in his character. He was too scared of flying. His family tried hard to make him fly but he refused to do so because of his fear of sinking in the seawater.

They even scolded him for his cowardice. They tried to tempt him with food but he was not willing to learn flying. Once he dived, his fear disappeared and he enjoyed his first flight.

It is a fact that unless we try for something and overcome our fear, we can't learn anything. Confidence and motivation are two most important traits that make any learning possible.

- 2. Describe the methods used by the seagull's family to help the young seagull overcome his fear and fly.**

This story is about a young seagull. The time had come when he should fly like his parents and brothers and sister. But he was afraid to fly. His parents tried their best to teach him how to fly. But he refused to fly. They left him alone on his ledge. They threatened him that he would starve. Even then he was too afraid to fly. His brothers and sister made fun of him. They laughed at his cowardice. At last, his mother thought of a plan. She took a piece of fish in her beak and flew towards him. She came near him but did not land on the ledge. The young seagull was very hungry. He came to the brink of the ledge. In order to get food, he dived at the fish. But he fell from the rock. He became terrified. But it was only for a moment. The next moment, he flapped his wings and started flying. In this way, his mother was able to make him fly.

- 3. The narrator had two options of avoiding the terrible storm clouds. Why didn't he use them? Was his decision of flying straight into storm clouds a sound decision?**

The narrator could see black mountains of clouds all around him. They were storm clouds. He had two options and by using them he could avoid the terrible storm clouds. He could go back to Paris. He had left Paris 150 kilometers behind. He wanted to go back but the temptation of having an

early breakfast at home stopped him. He couldn't fly up and above the storm clouds either. He didn't have enough fuel to fly around them to the north or south. It seems that flying back to Paris would have been the best option in those circumstances. He couldn't fly north or south of the storm as he hadn't enough fuel in the second tank. His decision of flying straight into the storm clouds was motivated by his desire to have an early breakfast with his family. It was rather a bold but risky decision. He would have been in deep trouble, had the pilot of the strange black aeroplane not helped him to land safely.

4. Overcoming fear is the first step to success. how does this saying stand true in context of the story 'his first flight'?

The story is about a young seagull who is yet to learn to fly. Unlike his younger brothers and sister, he is unable to overcome the fear of falling down into the sea, hence he remained sitting on the cliff. His younger siblings despite having shorter wings overcame fear and took a plunge as directed by their parents.

The seagull continues to be left in isolation without any sympathy from his parents. No amount of his cries, arising out of starvation, is able to melt his parents' hearts. Finally, the seagull undergoes a mental transformation which helps him to muster courage. By flapping his wings and overcoming fear he takes a plunge. In the process he discovers his ever-present talent to fly which till now was not known to him. Hence the seagull proved that overcoming fear is the important key to success.

5. Was the mother successful in helping the seagull overcome his fear and teach him the art of flying?

Yes, the mother was successful in helping the seagull overcome his fear. when the young seagull was left alone on the ledge, he began to starve. He saw his mother pick up a piece of fish and fly towards him. She halted just close to the ledge. The young seagull was mad with hunger and dived at his mother for the fish. He fell downwards into space and cried in fear. But then his wings spread outwards. he flapped his wings there and began to fly. All his fear was gone.it was his first flight.

Additional Questions

- 1. They were beckoning to him, calling shrilly.” Why did the seagull’s father and mother threaten him and cajole him to fly?**

Seagull's parents had tried everything but he was reluctant to fly due to fear of falling down. He looked at his brothers and sister but wouldn't make any efforts. That is why the whole family had left him alone and threatened and cajoled him to come but every effort went in vain.

2. Why didn't the young seagull go with the rest of his family?

The young seagull did not go with the rest of his family because he was afraid to fly.

3. When did the seagull get over his fear of flying over the sea?

The seagull was afraid of flying over the sea because he thought that he would drown. His family decided to teach him a lesson. They left him unattended. The mother tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet now and then in his front. Since the seagull was hungry too much, he was compelled to attempt his first flight in order to get food. He was successful. This is when he got over his fear flying over the sea.

4. What did the writer feel inside the clouds?

When the writer entered the clouds, it became impossible to see outside the aeroplane. The aeroplane jumped and twisted in the air and all the instruments like compass etc. stopped working due to the weather conditions.

5. Why did the writer follow the pilot of another aeroplane?

The writer followed another aeroplane because he had lost the way in the storm and was unable to see anything. The pilot of another aeroplane was helping him to get out of the storm and land safely.

6. Why was the writer happy when he decided to fly in the night?

The writer was very happy when he decided to fly that night because he was going home to his family to enjoy his holiday. When he started, everything seemed to be perfect. The sky was clear, no clouds could be seen and the stars were shining. It all made it an easy task for the writer to fly that night over the sleeping countryside of Paris. His assumption of everything being in place made him happy.

7. The pilot wanted to thank another pilot after his safe landing. Why?

What values of the writer are reflected from his action?

The pilot of the old Dakota was caught in the storm. He lost his contact with the control room. In this troubling situation, his fuel tank was also empty. He lost all his hopes but suddenly a black strange plane appeared. The pilot of the black plane asked writer to follow him. The writer landed safely. After his safe landing, he wanted to thank the pilot of the black plane. This shows his gratitude towards the pilot of the Black Plane. He was thankful to him for saving his life. It shows that the pilot of Dakota had a value of gratefulness in his character.