

3

Deep Water

Fastrack« Revision

Main Points

- ▶ **Douglas' first aversion to water**
 - Age – 3-4 years
 - Beach in California
 - Waves knocked him down and swept over him
 - Frightened – breath stopped
- ▶ **Misadventure at YMCA pool**
 - A big bruiser boy picked him up and tossed him into deep water
 - Frightened – thought of strategy
- ▶ **Strategy**
 - To make a big jump once he touched bottom
 - Reaching the surface and swam out
- ▶ **Failure of the plan**
 - Legs rigid and paralysed
 - Lost breath
 - Lungs ached and head throbbed
 - Dizziness
 - Unable to scream
- ▶ **Effect of misadventure**
 - Fear of water
 - Lost pleasure in activities related to water such as canoeing, boating, swimming
- ▶ **Douglas' efforts to overcome the fear of water**
 - Got instructor and started learning swimming
- ▶ **Instructor's role**
 - Made him cross the pool with a rope attached to a belt
 - Putting face under water; exhale and Inhale
 - Kicking with legs
 - Put all these exercises together into an integrated whole
- ▶ **Douglas' experience at Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire**
 - Return of terror
 - Laughed and challenged – fear disappeared

Summary at a Glance

- ▶ 'Deep Water', by *William Douglas*, is taken from his book *Of Men and Mountains*. It is an autobiographical account of his childhood experiences. It reveals how as a young boy William Douglas nearly drowned in a swimming pool. He talks about his fear of water and thereafter, how he finally overcome it. The entire account is written in the first person which takes the readers along through his experience. When Douglas was ten or eleven years old he decided to learn swimming. Yakima river had cases of drowning, so it was decided to go to YMCA pool to learn. He is reminded of his experience in water when he was three or four years old and his father took him to the beach in California and a strong wave knocked him down and swept over him, his breath was gone for a while. His heart harboured a terror of the overpowering force of waves.

His introduction to YMCA pool revived unpleasant memories of the beach. But he gathered confidence and tried to learn with the help of water wings. But one day a strong boy picked him and tossed him into the deepest end of the pool (9 feet). Douglas sank to the bottom. He planned to touch the bottom and come up on the surface with a big jump. But failed. Fear gripped him and he was nearly drowned. All his efforts to come to the surface proved useless. He tried to breathe but he swallowed water. He could experience death. Now there was no fear but only peace. When he opened his eyes, he found himself on the brink of the pool. This horrific experience shook Douglas badly. Its memories haunted him. He felt sick. This experience robbed his pleasures of swimming, fishing, boating and all other water sports. But the swimmer in him was still alive. He decided to hire a coach who trained him and built a swimmer bit by bit. He worked hard himself and defeated the terror of water.

Theme

- The lesson leaves a message for the readers that it is not death but the fear of it that instils terror and anxiety in our minds. Yet another message that the story conveys to the

readers is that clinging to the past experiences of fears and defeat can spoil one's present. So persistent efforts are needed to shake off the past bad experiences to live life to its fullest.



Practice Exercise



Extract Based Questions

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

1. The next I remember I was lying on my stomach beside the pool, vomiting. The chap that threw me in was saying, "But I was only fooling." Someone said, "The kid nearly died. Be all right now. Let's carry him to the locker room."

Several hours later, I walked home. I was weak and trembling. I shook and cried when I lay on my bed. I couldn't eat that night. For days a haunting fear was in my heart. The slightest exertion upset me, making me wobbly in the knees and sick to my stomach.

I never went back to the pool. I feared water. I avoided it whenever I could. (CBSE 2023)

- (a) With reference to the extract, Douglas was vomiting because:

- (i) he had got severe food poisoning.
- (ii) he had just been rescued from nearly drowning in the pool.
- (iii) he was frightened when he saw the big man.
- (iv) he had gone for a swim on an empty stomach.

- (b) Rewrite the sentence by replacing the underlined phrase with its inference.

For days a haunting fear was in my heart.

- (c) On the basis of the extract, choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below:

I. The boy did not know how to swim.

II. The boy took a long time to recover from his fear.

- (i) I can be inferred from the extract but II cannot.
- (ii) I cannot be inferred from the extract but II can.

(iii) I is true but II is false.

(iv) Both I and II are true.

- (d) Identify the textual clue that allows the reader to infer that the chap threw the boy into the pool just for fun (clue: a phrase).

- (e) Complete the sentence with an appropriate explanation as per the extract.

The slightest exertion upset the boy because

- (f) Replace the underlined word with its synonym from the extract.

The boy felt unsteady in the knees.

Answers

- (a) (i) he had just been rescued from nearly drowning in the pool.
 - (b) For days a feeling of fear that cannot be forgotten was in my heart.
 - (c) (iv) Both I and II are true.
 - (d) "But I was only fooling." This allows the reader to infer that the chap threw the boy into the pool just for fun.
 - (e) The slightest exertion upset the boy because it made him wobbly in the knees and sick to his stomach.
 - (f) The boy felt wobbly in the knees.
2. I went to the pool when no one else was there. The place was quiet. The water was still, and the tiled bottom was as white and clean as a bathtub. I was timid about going in alone, so I sat on the side of the pool to wait for others.
- I had not been there long when in came a big bruiser of a boy, probably eighteen years old. He had thick hair on his chest. He was a beautiful physical specimen, with legs and arms that showed rippling muscles. He yelled.

"Hi Skinny! How'd you like to be ducked?"

(CBSE 2021 Term-I, Modified)

- (a) What impression do you form about the narrator?
 - (i) He is a beginner in swimming lessons
 - (ii) He has made friends during his swimming lessons
 - (iii) The big boy was well built and handsome
 - (iv) The narrator lacks courage and confidence to enter the pool alone
- (b) The description of the big boy by the narrator is one of
- (c) Give a probable reason for the big boy's behaviour towards the narrator.
- (d) Name the figure of speech in the expression 'as white and clean as a bathtub'.
- (e) The writing style of the narrator indicates that the passage can be classified under a/an
 - (i) Interview
 - (ii) autobiography
 - (iii) fiction
 - (iv) short story
- (f) Where did the above incident take place?

Answers

- (a) (iv) The narrator lacks courage and confidence to enter the pool alone

- (b) admiration
 - (c) The narrator was skinny and alone.
 - (d) Simile.
 - (e) (ii) autobiography
 - (f) The above incident took place at YMCA swimming pool
3. Tiny vestiges of the old terror would return. But now I could frown and say to that terror, "Trying to scare me, eh? Well, here's to you! Look!" And off I'd go for another length of the pool. This went on until July. But I was still not satisfied. I was not sure that all the terror had left. So, I went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. I swam the crawl, breast stroke, side stroke and back stroke. Only once did the terror return. When I was in the middle of the lake, I put my face under and saw nothing but bottomless water. The old sensation returned in miniature. (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1, Modified)

(a) Why did Douglas go to swim at Lake Wentworth?

(b) Select the option that lists the correct inference based on the information in the extract.

- (i) Triggs Island and Stamp Act Island are both located in Lake Wentworth
- (ii) Lake Wentworth is a part of Triggs Island
- (iii) Stamp Act Island is two miles away from New Hampshire
- (iv) Lake Wentworth is connected via docks to New Hampshire

(c) What was the reason for the 'return' of terror?

(d) Douglas mentions that the old sensation returned in miniature.

He means that he felt the familiar feeling of fear

(e) How did Douglas handle the 'old sensation'?

- (i) Addressed It (ii) Avoided It
- (iii) Submitted to it (iv) Stayed Indifferent to it

(f) Give an antonym of 'tiny'.

Answers

- (a) To know for sure that he had overcome his fear of drowning in water.
 - (b) (i) Triggs Island and Stamp Act Island are both located in Lake Wentworth
 - (c) The reason for the 'return' of terror was prior drowning experiences.
 - (d) on a small scale
 - (e) (i) Addressed it
 - (f) An antonym of 'tiny' is huge.
4. It had happened when I was ten or eleven years old, I had decided to learn to swim. There was a pool at the YMCA in Yakima that offered exactly the opportunity. The Yakima River was treacherous. Mother continually warned against it, and kept fresh in my mind the details of each drowning in the river. But the YMCA pool was safe.

(a) What does 'it' refer to in the first sentence?

(b) Whom does 'I' refer to?

- (i) Coach at the swimming pool
- (ii) School boy
- (iii) The narrator
- (iv) None of the above

(c) Why is Yakima River referred to as treacherous?

- (i) It had dangerous water animals
- (ii) Several drownings took place in it
- (iii) Its water was poisonous
- (iv) All of the above

(d) An antonym of 'continually' is

(e) How deep was the YMCA pool at the shallow end?

(f) What is the name of the lesson?

Answers

- (a) 'It' refers to decision to learn swimming.
 - (b) (iii) The narrator
 - (c) (ii) Several drownings took place in it.
 - (d) occasionally
 - (e) The YMCA pool was two or three feet deep at the shallow end.
 - (f) The name of the lesson is 'Deep Water'.
5. He yelled, 'Hi, Skinny! How'd you like to be ducked?' With that he picked me up and tossed me into the deep end. I landed in a sitting position, swallowed water, and went at once to the bottom. I was frightened, but not yet frightened out of my wits.
- (a) 'He yelled'. Who yelled in the first line?
- (i) The coach
 - (ii) The father
 - (iii) An eighteen years old boy
 - (iv) None of the above
- (b) Who is addressed as 'skinny'?
- (i) The other swimmer
 - (ii) The narrator's friend
 - (iii) The narrator
 - (iv) The eighteen years old boy
- (c) What did the boy do with the narrator?
- (d) How did the narrator land?
- (e) The word 'swallow' means
- (f) Give an antonym of 'skinny'.

Answers

- (a) (iii) An eighteen years old boy
- (b) (iii) The narrator
- (c) He tossed the narrator into the deep end of the pool
- (d) The narrator landed in a sitting position.
- (e) to make something go down your throat to the stomach
- (f) An antonym of 'skinny' is obese or plump.

6. The yellowish light going out. Then all effort ceased. I relaxed. Even my legs felt limp and a blackness swept over my brain. It wiped out fear; it wiped out terror. There was no more panic. It was quiet and peaceful. Nothing to be afraid of. This is nice... to be drowsy... to go to sleep... no need to jump... too tried to jump... it's nice to be carried gently... to float along in space.

- Where is the narrator in the above lines?
- 'Then all effort ceased' why?
 - He was too exhausted
 - He was feeling elated
 - He was awoken
 - None of the above
- What happened to the narrator after his efforts ceased?
 - He successfully swam out
 - He died
 - He was taken out by someone
 - None of the above
- The word 'drowsy' means
- Who is the author?
- Give an antonym of 'panic'.

Answers

- The narrator is in the middle of the pool.
- (i) He was too exhausted
- (iii) He was taken out by someone
- tired and wanting to sleep
- William Douglas is the author.
- An antonym of 'panic' is composure or calmness.

7. I laughed and said, 'Well, Mr. Terror, what do you think you can do to me?' It fled and I swam on.

(CBSE SQP 2019-20, Modified)

- Who is 'I' here?
- Who is being addressed to as Mr. Terror?
 - Coach
 - Young boy
 - Water
 - The big boy
- Why did the narrator laugh?
 - Happy-go-lucky nature
 - Admiring Mr. Terror
 - Confident of defeating Mr. Terror
 - All of the above
- Mr. Terror left as
- Where is the narrator in the above lines?
- What does 'Fled' mean?

Answers

- William Douglas is 'I' here.
- (iii) Water
- (iii) Confident of defeating Mr. Terror
- It could not frighten the narrator
- The narrator is in the middle of Lake Wentworth.
- Fled means left the place very quickly.

8. It seemed a long way down. Those nine feet were more like ninety and before I touched bottom, my lungs were ready to burst. But when my feet hit bottom. I summoned all my strength and made what I thought was a great spring upwards. I imagined I would bob to the surface like a cork. Instead, I came up slowly, I opened my eyes and saw nothing but water—water that had a dirty yellow tinge to it.

- Explain the reason of the narrator's experience in the lines above.
- What happened before he touched the bottom?
 - His lungs were ready to burst
 - He was playing with waves
 - Fish came across him
 - None of the above
- Why did he feel panicky under water?
 - He saw nothing around, except water
 - He couldn't find a rope
 - He couldn't shout loud enough
 - None of the above
- What did the narrator imagine?
- The word 'seem' means
- Give a synonym of 'Instead'.

Answers

- He was pushed into the deepest end of the pool and didn't know how to swim ashore.
- (i) His lungs were ready to burst
- (i) He saw nothing around, except water
- The narrator imagined that he would bob to the surface like a cork.
- to appear in a particular way
- A synonym of 'instead' is in place of.



Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What is the misadventure that William Douglas speaks about?

Ans. The experience which he had at the YMCA swimming pool, when a big bully of a boy tossed him into the deepest end of the pool, is the misadventure that William Douglas speaks about. Not knowing how to swim, he became scared of getting drowned.

Q 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?

Ans. When Douglas was thrown into the pool he was extremely frightened but he didn't lose his senses. He started going down slowly into water. He decided to jump as soon as he touched the bottom of the pool. But instead of coming up he started going downward. He was seized by terror. He shouted for help but in vain. There was water all around him. He felt paralysed and ultimately became unconscious.

Q 3. How did this experience affect him?

Ans. This experience had a lasting effect on Douglas. He became the victim of hydrophobia, which deprived him of all the joys of water sports like fishing, boating and swimming. The fear of water held him firmly in its clutches. He was deeply shaken by this experience.

Q 4. Why was William Douglas determined to get over his fear of water?

Ans. William Douglas was very much frustrated being deprived of the water sports like fishing, boating and swimming. His urge to enjoy all these activities and a strong yearning to regain his lost self-confidence impelled him to try every possible means to shed his fear of water.

Q 5. How did the instructor 'build a swimmer' out of Douglas?

Ans. The instructor 'built a swimmer' out of Douglas bit by bit. First he held him high on a rope attached with his belt. He went back and forth across the pool. Then, he taught him to put his face under water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. Next he instructed him to kick his legs for several weeks. Then after seven months he was told to swim the length of the pool.

Q 6. How did Douglas make sure that he conquered the old terror?

Ans. When Douglas' instructor left him for practising alone in water, the old terror would return. But he wanted to make sure that he was free from fear. He went to Lake Wentworth and dived off a dock at Triggs Island. He swam for two miles. Only once did the terror return and then it fled and he swam on. At last he conquered the 'old terror'.

Q 7. Why did Douglas' mother continually warn him against the Yakima River?

Ans. Douglas' mother continually warned him against the Yakima River because she thought it was 'treacherous'. It had claimed several lives. So, the mother was very apprehensive and didn't want her ten/eleven years old child to go near it.

Q 8. In what way, do you think, was the YMCA pool safe for the beginners of swimming?

Ans. The YMCA pool must have been built keeping in view the learners. It was only two or three feet deep at the shallow end and nine feet deep at the other end. Its slope was a gradual one. In this way the learners learnt swimming at the least risk.

Q 9. Douglas had an initial aversion to water. Give reason.

Ans. When Douglas was three or four years old, his father took him to the beach in California. The waves knocked him down and swept over him and he was buried under water. His breath has gone for a while. He was much frightened and developed a terror, in his heart, of the overpowering force of the waves.

Q 10. What impact did the incident at the California beach have on little Douglas?

Ans. Douglas was frightened out of his wits and choked by the gushing water at California beach. He fell down

with the waves sweeping over him. Thus, he developed a long lasting aversion to water which resurfaced once again at the YMCA pool.

Q 11. Why did Douglas' father take the incident at California beach so lightly when the child was buried in water?

Ans. Though Douglas was frightened on being knocked down by the gushing waves of the California beach his father simply laughed it out because no big harm was going to happen to the child. So, he found the sight quite amusing and took the incident lightly.

Q 12. How did Douglas overcome his childhood aversion to water in YMCA pool?

Ans. Though his visit to the YMCA pool revived all the unpleasant memories of Douglas' childhood, he was determined to learn swimming. He began by paddling with his new water wings. His keen sense of observation assisted him to learn by aping others. Soon he gathered confidence and began to feel at ease in water.

Q 13. Why did Douglas refrain from going into the pool all alone on the fateful day?

Ans. When Douglas arrived at the pool, there was no one there. The water was so still and quiet. So, feeling scared of plunging into the water all by himself, he refrained from going into the pool all alone. He waited for someone to come.

Q 14. Describe the big bully who tossed Douglas into the pool? Why do you think he threw Douglas into the pool?

Ans. The boy who threw Douglas into the pool was a 'big bruiser of a boy'. He was around eighteen years old with a hairy chest and rippling muscles. Being proud of his special physique, he made fun of Douglas' skinny physique. Just out of fun he threw him into the pool.

Q 15. What impression do you have in mind about Douglas as a young boy from the misadventure?

Ans. Douglas was a thinly built boy of ten/eleven years of age. Being determined he decided to learn swimming even though he had an aversion to water. He had a wonderful presence of mind, as when he was thrown into the deepest end of the pool. He was thinking of a strategy to come to the surface.

Q 16. How did the narrator fight his terror while struggling to come out of water?

Ans. When the narrator was forcibly pushed into water, he kept his presence of mind quite intact. Instead of getting disheartened he focused his mind on finding a solution. He tried to work out a strategy to save himself and concentrated on it. This is how he fought his terror while struggling to come out of water.

Q 17. Describe Douglas' downward journey to the bottom of the pool for the second time.

Ans. When Douglas failed to bob to the surface like a cork, as he had imagined, he came up slowly and saw nothing but water. He was suffocating. He tried to kick with his legs but they seemed to be paralysed. He screamed as a great force was pulling him down. He had started on the long journey back to the bottom

of the pool. He had lost his breath, his lungs ached and head throbbed. He was feeling dizzy. It was a nightmarish experience.

Q 18. What sort of terror seized Douglas as he went down the water with a yellow glow? How could he feel that he was still alive?

Ans. When Douglas went down the water, he had a nightmarish terror. He screamed for help but only water heard him. He was out of breath. His legs went rigid and paralysed as he failed to move them. The beating of his heart and pounding in the head were the only things which made him feel that he was still alive.

Q 19. Mention any two long term consequences of the drowning incident on Douglas. (CBSE SQP 2016)

Ans. After the drowning incident, so called his misadventure, Douglas became a victim of hydrophobia. He felt nervous at the sight of water. Secondly, he was deprived of all his water activities like, boating, fishing, canoeing, swimming and so on.

Q 20. What deep meaning did his experience at YMCA swimming pool have for Douglas? (CBSE 2016)

Ans. The great misadventure at YMCA pool had a great meaning for William Douglas of course he had developed a fear for water and couldn't enjoy the pleasure of water sports. He decided to learn swimming by conquering his fear. He gathered self-confidence and learnt a great lesson that 'all we have to fear is fear itself'.

Q 21. Why did Douglas go to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire?

Ans. Douglas had taken training from a coach in swimming pool. Of course, the coach trained him well but Douglas felt that his fear of water is still there. So, to test himself, he went to Lake Wentworth in Hampshire. There he swam all by himself. He swam two miles in the lake. This was his self trial to fight his fear.

Q 22. How did Douglas make his terror flee?

Ans. William Douglas went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. When he was in the middle of the lake, the terror returned. He laughed and said, "Well, Mr. Terror, what do you think you can do to me?" It fled and he swam on.

Q 23. "All we have to fear is fear itself". When did Douglas learn this lesson? (CBSE 2016)

Ans. When Douglas had won over his fear of water, he had learnt this lesson. His total experience in YMCA pool had a deep meaning for him. He learnt that there is peace in death as had experienced it. There is terror only in the fear of death. As he had experienced both the sensations of dying and the terror that fear of it can produce.

Q 24. What handicap did Douglas suffer from? How did he overcome that? (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The handicap that Douglas suffered from, was 'fear of water'. Douglas developed this fear during his childhood and it stayed with him as he grew older. But he made a firm decision to overcome it. He got an

instructor who taught him how to swim. He practised alone in water. Then, he went to Lake Wentworth, dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. Only once did the terror return and at last he overcame his fear of water.

Q 25. Douglas uses sensory details to create a vivid image of the unfortunate experience in the pool. What might be the impact on the reader if the narration were more informative than sensory?

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

Ans. If the narration had been more informative than sensory, the impact on the reader would have been less emotional and engaging as sensory details allow readers to visualise the scene in their minds and feel like they are a part of it. Informative details may provide more factual information but can sometimes feel detached and impersonal, and leave readers feeling not connected to the story.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. The story Deep Water talks about Douglas' attempts to overcome his fear of water. The story can also be viewed as a figurative manifestation of life's many challenges. Elaborate with reference to the text.

(CBSE SQP 2021)

Ans. William Douglas had an aversion to water since he was only three or four years old when his father took him to California beach. When he was ten/eleven he faced the misadventure in YMCA pool which landed him in hydrophobia. He couldn't enjoy his water sports. Somehow, William Douglas overcame his fear of water and learned swimming. Though in this process he had to face several challenges but he conquered them all with his firm determination and will power. The way William Douglas overcame his fear of water leaves a great message for all of us. Here the reference of Deep Water is not only restricted to water in the water bodies but it is a metaphor also for human fears and anxieties that one experiences in due course of life. The message is that it is not death but the fear of death that creates terror in our mind. So, fear needs to be shaken off. It was Douglas' steadiness and tenacity which empowered him to fight and shed away the fear from his mind.

Our life is replete with challenges. Instead of escaping from them, we must face them with our strong will power and firm determination.

Q 2. How did the swimming instructor built a swimmer out of Douglas? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The swimming instructor built a swimmer out of Douglas piece by piece. For three months he held him high on a rope attached to him with a belt. He went back and forth across the pool. However, Douglas was caught by panic every time. But the instructor taught Douglas to put his face under water and exhale and to raise his nose and inhale. Then, he taught him to kick with his legs for many weeks till his legs relaxed and he could command them. Then, after seven months the instructor told him to swim the length of the pool.

Douglas still felt terror stricken when he was alone in the pool. The traces of old terror returned but he would face them boldly and go for another length of the pool. He was still not satisfied. So, he went to the Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake. Then, he dived into the Warm Lake and swam across to the other shore and back. Thus, he made sure that he had conquered the old terror and now he was a complete swimmer.

Q 3. Douglas has a near-death experience in his childhood which has a negative as well as a positive outcome. Justify the statement with evidences from the text.

(CBSE 2019)

Ans. Douglas has a near-death experience in his childhood which has a negative as well as a positive outcome. His misadventure at the YMCA swimming pool results in his acute fear of water which took complete possession of him whenever he was anywhere near water. It ruined his fishing trips and deprived him of the joys of canoeing, boating and swimming. Then, Douglas decided that he had to overcome his fear of water. He showed great determination and with his perseverance he made sure that he accomplished what he thought could not be possible. It also made him courageous and developed a positive attitude which helped him in achieving his goals.

Q 4. Childhood fears are deeply entrenched in our mind. Determination, hard work and right training are needed to get rid of them. Comment on the statement in the light of Douglas efforts to overcome his fear of water.

(CBSE 2019)

Ans. Generally speaking, the personality of an individual is largely based on his childhood experiences and exposures. Complexes and fears which are ingrained in the mind of a child continue to stay with him for a long time and sometimes for the rest of his life. Therefore, by recounting a childhood experience of terror and his winning over it, Douglas intends to give his readers a glimpse of the inner working of his mind. His childhood misadventure kept alive the icy horror that grabbed his heart for years to come. Even when he grew up he found himself inflicted by the same disability that handicapped him during his childhood. His facing the adversity and conquering it with undeterred single mindedness and firm determination reflects upon the possibility of man's conquest over his destiny. The incident stirred in him a sense of intrepidity and ignited in him a spark of dauntless courage. The larger meaning that he drew from this incident is that it is not death but the fear of it, that terrorises us more. There is peace in death. Moreover, brooding over the past sucks our confidence one should face the challenges with courage and defeat them.

Q 5. Fear is something that we must learn to overcome if we want to succeed in life. How did Douglas get over his fear of water?

(CBSE 2018)

Ans. Douglas had an aversion to the water since he was three or four years old. His misadventure at the YMCA

pool further increased his hydrophobia. He was unable to enjoy fishing and boating trips. Finally, he decided he had to overcome his fear. He tried but he could not do it. So, he appointed an instructor who gradually made him an excellent swimmer. The instructor put in serious efforts to 'build a swimmer' out of Douglas. He understood Douglas' hydrophobia. He devised a unique way to teach him how to swim. Thus, piece by piece, he built a swimmer out of Douglas. Still Douglas was not satisfied. He went to Lake Wentworth and Warm Lake thus challenging his fear. He was able to overcome his fear completely and this led him to make the statement, "All we have to fear is fear itself."

Q 6. 'Deep Water' centres around some 'misadventure'. What is the misadventure and how does William Douglas deal with it?

Ans. The 'misadventure' around which the story 'Deep Water' revolves, is the deadly experience which William Douglas has as a young boy of ten or eleven, when he was tossed into the deepest end of YMCA pool by an irresponsible lad of eighteen and he was just a beginner in swimming with little experience. Before he was rescued, he experienced several emotions of terror and dying. But Douglas didn't lose hope. He rather dealt with the situation quite boldly while going deep into the bottom he made a plan to touch the bottom and make a jump to the surface. However, this strategy didn't work. He kept on struggling till his legs became stiff and refused to move. Stark terror paralysed him. The vast expanse of water suffocated him. His shrieks were quite inaudible. With pounding heart, throbbing head and bursting lungs he went up and down several times till he was completely in the grip of terror and fainted. Fortunately, he was rescued by some one in the nick of time.

Q 7. 'Deep Water' is an autobiographical account of the writer's personal experience. How does the writer make clear to the readers the sense of panic that gripped him as he almost drowned?

Ans. Douglas says he was sitting beside the pool one day, waiting for someone to come as he was timid about going in alone, when a big bruiser of a boy picked him up and tossed him into the deepest end of the pool. He landed in a sitting position, swallowed water and went at once to the bottom. Of course, he was frightened but didn't lose his wits. Rather he planned on his way to the bottom, to make a big jump as his feet touched the bottom. But before he touched the bottom, his lungs were ready to burst. He opened his eyes but couldn't see anything except the yellow water. He grew panicky and groped for a rope but his hands only clutched at water. He flailed at the surface, swallowed and choked. He tried to bring his legs up, but they hung as dead weights. He screamed but only water heard him. He had started on the long journey back to the bottom. It was a nightmarish experience. He lost his breath, his lungs ached, head throbbed and he was getting dizzy. He again tried the strategy but again went down endlessly. He opened his eyes. He

couldn't see through because the water was dark. A stark terror took hold of him. Even the screams in his throat had frozen. The beating of his heart made him feel that he was still alive. He ultimately stopped struggling, he felt relaxed with his legs limp and blackness swept over his brain. He went into Stupor. The next thing he remembered was that he lay on his stomach beside the pool. So, no description can be more vivid than the one made by the narrator himself.

Q 8. What impression do you form about the narrator's personality after reading his autobiographical account?

Ans. The detailed autobiographical account of the narrator's close encounter with death and his fruitful struggle to conquer terror that took him in its clutches for years, definitely throws enough light on the sterling traits of his personality. As a child he was a shy guy who was so very conscious of his lack of muscular development, but when he was tossed deep into the water, his mental strength popped up to the surface. Besides being in the tight grip of terror he did not let his presence of mind leave him. He rather tried hard to handle the crisis with a cool mind. His struggle to fight the force of water speaks volumes of his positive approach. He did not give up till the end. Later in life after the misadventure, his firm determination to learn swimming highlights his passionate side and a strong will power. The way he defeated terror in Lake Wentworth, is the result of his perseverance and single-mindedness. The larger message that he drew out of the entire episode reflects his philosophical bent of mind.

Q 9. Justify in your own words the relevance of the title 'Deep Water'.

Ans. The title 'Deep Water' is quite relevant, as the story from beginning to the end revolves around water.

In the beginning of the story the narrator's mother warns Douglas against the deep water of River Yakima which she calls treacherous. When Douglas was three or four years of age he developed an aversion to water because of the overpowering force of the waves at California beach which knocked him down. When he was tossed into the YMCA pool the nine feet deep water of the pool seemed more than ninety to Douglas. His struggle with the deep water of YMCA pool to come to the surface and failure each time, his hiring a coach and learning swimming all this suggest the title of the story 'Deep Water'. When in the end he comes out victorious he goes to the deep water of Lake Wentworth where he can live and swim defeating Mr. Terror.

Q 10. Desire, determination and diligence lead to success. Explain the value of these qualities in the light of Douglas' experience in Deep Water.

Ans. When Douglas was three or four, he had harboured an aversion to the water after having been knocked down by the strong waves of California beach. But later when he was ten or eleven, it was his strong desire to learn swimming that he went to YMCA pool where he had a terrible 'misadventure'. The misadventure rendered Douglas unable to enjoy water sports because he was in the hold of hydrophobia. But as a swimmer was still alive in him, he made a firm determination to fight his fear. He hired an instructor to perfect him in swimming. He taught him various exercises. The practice went on for months and Douglas was able to counter terror. In order to make sure he went to Lake Wentworth and Warm Lake where he swam all by himself to gain confidence. This shows his diligence. He had now completely lost fear of water. So, his desire, determination and diligence resulted in building a swimmer out of Douglas.



Chapter Test

Extract Based Question

Q 1. The next I remember I was lying on my stomach beside the pool, vomiting. The chap that threw me in was saying, "But I was only fooling." Someone said, "The kid nearly died. Be all right now. Let's carry him to the locker room."

- In what condition did the narrator lay beside the pool?
- Why did the boy throw him into the pool?
 - He was jealous of the narrator
 - He was boasting to be a muscular boy
 - Just out of fun
 - None of the above
- Name the lesson and its author.
 - The Last Lesson/Alphonse Daudet
 - Deep Water/Anees Jung
 - Lost Spring/William Douglas
 - Deep Water/William Douglas
- The word 'chap' means

- Who is 'I' in the first line?
- Whom does 'the kid' refer to?

Short Answer Type Questions

- Describe Douglas' initial aversion to water.
- What were the negative effects of the drowning incident?
- How did the instructor help Douglas?

Long Answer Type Questions

- Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering it?
- Give an account of Douglas' traits with reference to the text.