

## Prose - Chapter 3

### Deep Water

**Think as you read :** Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 27

**Question: 1.**

What is the "misadventure" that William Douglas speaks about?

**Answer :**

Douglas refers to the incident at the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool where he almost drowned as a "misadventure."

The author was about ten or eleven years old at the time and had barely begun to learn swimming, primarily by aping others. As he was thrown suddenly into the water by someone and he couldn't swim, he started drowning. The struggle to come to surface and to avoid getting drowned left him with a deep fear of water which deprived him from enjoying water-related activities for many years.

**Question: 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?

**Answer :**

The sudden realization of being thrown into the pool did not make him lose his wits immediately. Although

frightened, he thought of a trick to come up to the surface but couldn't execute it successfully. He panicked and felt suffocated by the water. His sense-perceptions gave way, his heart pounded loudly, his limbs became paralyzed with fear, his mind became dizzy and his lungs ached as he gulped water while making desperate attempts to come out of the water. Finally, he lost all his strength and willingness to keep struggling and blacked out.

Douglas planned to allow himself to go down till his feet hit the bottom so that could make a big jump to come back to the surface like a cork. Then, he would lie flat on the surface of water and paddle to the edge of the pool.

**Question: 3.**

How did this experience affect him?

**Answer :**

The near death experience of drowning had a very strong impact on his psychology. He was deeply perturbed emotional balance for many years. As he couldn't bear being surrounded by water, he was deprived of enjoying any water-related activity.

**Question: 1.**

Why was Douglas determined to get over his fear of water?

**Answer :**

Douglas regretted being deprived of enjoying water activities like canoeing, boating, swimming, fishing, etc. The wish to enjoy them and the craving to regain his lost confidence, while being in water, made him try every possible way to get rid of his fear. He was finally able to overcome this mental handicap by getting himself a swimming instructor and further ensuring that no residual fear was left.

**Question: 2.**

How did the instructor "build a swimmer" out of Douglas?

**Answer :**

The instructor worked gradually on Douglas' psychology, moved on to his physical movements and then integrated each part to build a swimmer out of him. Initially, he made Douglas swim back and forth across the swimming pool so that he could get used to it. He used an elaborate mechanism with a rope, belt, pulley and an overhead cable to help them stay connected while Douglas was in the pool. Then, one- by-one, he made Douglas master the individual techniques of swimming, like putting his head in the water, exhaling and inhaling while in water, movements of his hands, body, legs, etc. Finally, he integrated these perfected steps into a whole experience of swimming for Douglas.

**Question: 3.**

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

**Answer :**

Even after the swimming training was over, Douglas wasn't confident about his swimming or that he had overcome the fear. He was determined to completely get rid of it forever. He swam alone in the pool. He went to Lake Wentworth to dive. There, he tried every possible stroke he had learnt. He fought back the tiny vestiges of terror that gripped him in middle of the lake. Finally, in his diving expedition in the Warm Lake, he realised that he had truly conquered his old terror.

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## Understanding the text

### Question: 1.

How does Douglas make clear to the reader the sense of panic that gripped him as he almost drowned?  
Describe the details that have made the description vivid.

### Answer :

Douglas takes us through his near death experience at the Y.M.C.A. pool by detailing every little aspect associated to it. He details minutes of his emotional, mental and physical struggle with the paralyzing fear of being drowned in the water. The first person narration of the incident also helps us to associate with his experience more deeply.

Though he did not lose his wits initially, he panicked when his strategy didn't work. His feeling of suffocation, fear and losing hold on sense perceptions make the readers experience what he does. His eyes couldn't see beyond the dirty yellow water. His voice did not assist him. His nose and mouth could only manage to take water to the lungs. His limbs became paralyzed with fear and his mind dizzy. His desperation to save himself kept him struggling until he went down the third time and blacked out. All these details make the description vivid.

**Question: 2.**

How did Douglas overcome his fear of water?

**Answer :**

At first, he tried to overcome his fear of water on his own. But when this failed, he got an instructor for himself who worked on Douglas' fear very methodically. With his help, Douglas began by learning to be at ease in water. After this, he practiced exhaling- inhaling in water to eliminate the fear of putting his head inside the water. Then, he moved on to master individual steps of swimming which were, finally, integrated into a complete experience of swimming, by his instructor. After about six months, Douglas could not only swim well but was, also, free of his fear to a great extent. At this stage, Douglas' journey of truly overcoming his fear to its tiniest vestiges began. He swam alone in the pool. He went to Lake Wentworth to dive. He tried every possible stroke he learnt. Finally, in his diving expedition, in the Warm Lake, he conquered his fear completely.

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**Question: 3.**

Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? What larger meaning does he draw from his experience?

**Answer :**

Douglas recounts his childhood experience at the Y.M.C.A. pool to enable the readers to understand the exact nature and intensity of the terror. The fear of being surrounded by the water, the fear of putting his head in the water, the fear of choking and the fear of his limbs going numb couldn't have been explained to a reader unacquainted with Douglas' childhood experience. In that case, the elaborate strategy adopted by the author (and his instructor) and the time-taken by him to learn or master even simple things, though put in the perspective of his fear of water, couldn't have been understood properly.

By quoting Roosevelt, "All we have to fear is fear itself," Douglas indicates the larger meaning that he draws from his experience. For him, the importance of life became evident when he encountered death or rather its proximity threatening his life.

**Talking about the text : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 30**

**Question: 1.**

"All we have to fear is fear itself". Have you ever had a fear that you have now overcome? Share your experience with your partner.

**Answer :**

**Directions:** Everyone has some or other fear that has been overcome. Think about one such experience from your life. It may be anything associated to activities that you now engage in with ease but were scared earlier. Driving, skating, public-speaking, participating in a competition or overcoming stage fear are some examples. After you have found one such example from your life, recollect the reason it bothered or frightened you. Recollect the efforts you and/or other people put in to help you get rid of it. Discuss the detailed experience with your partner in the class. Also, discuss your feelings when you realised that you have overcome the fear entirely.

*(Guidelines/directions have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)*

**Question: 2.**

Find and narrate other stories about conquest of fear and what people have said about courage. For example, you can recall Nelson Mandela's struggle for freedom, his perseverance to achieve his mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor as depicted in his autobiography. The story We're Not Afraid to Die, which you have read in Class XI, is an apt example of how courage and optimism helped a family survive under the direst stress.

**Answer :**

Hrithik Roshan - one of the highest paid and greatly admired actor suffered from stammering - used to bunk school during oral exams - was skinny - couldn't dance well - decided to establish well in his career and get rid of negatives - took speech therapy every day - worked as assistant director - training at the gym for hours - practiced dancing - after years of patience and perseverance, he is now one of the most admired actor and dancer.

*(Pointers have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)*

## **Thinking about language**

### **Question: 1.**

If someone else had narrated Douglas' experience, how would it have differed from this account? Write out a sample paragraph or paragraphs from this text from the point of view of a third person or observer to find out which style of narration would you consider to be more effective? Why?

### **Answer :**

If a third person had narrated Douglas' experience, the impact of the story would have lost the reader's deep connection with the main protagonist and his fear of water. The narrator then would be passively telling the

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story from the perspective of an observer. The incident of drowning in water could never have successfully communicated the feeling of the "stark terror" that Douglas underwent. In third person narrative, the 8th and 9th paragraph of the story would be as follows:

"He flailed at the surface of the water, swallowed and choked. He tried to bring his legs up but they hung as dead weights, paralyzed and rigid. A great force was pulling him under. He screamed, but only the water heard him. He had started on the long journey back to the bottom of the pool." "He struck at the water as he went down; expending his strength as one in a nightmare, fights an irresistible force. He had lost all his breath. His lungs ached. His head throbbed. He was getting dizzy. But he remembered the strategy - he would spring from the bottom of the pool and come like a cork to the surface. He would lie flat on the water, strike out with his arms, and thrash with his legs. Then he would get to the edge of the pool and be safe."

So, it is only the first person narrative that keeps the reader gripped to the story. It makes the experience more relevant and tangible for the reader. It engages him by making him go through the experience along with the protagonist. The desperation and helplessness of being in water, which has almost become fatal, the mental and physical agony of trying to survive the crisis, the long struggle of overcoming the fear bit-by-bit and the

jubilation of conquering it at the end; all make the reader feel part of the experience. The first person narrative makes the story a fast-paced and urgent reading for the readers. All this would have been lost had it been a third person narrative or from the point of view of an observer.

## **Writing**

### **Question: 1.**

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.

Write an essay of about five paragraphs recounting such an experience. Try to recollect minute details of what caused the fear, your feelings, the encouragement you got from others or the criticism.

You could begin with the last sentence of the essay you have just read - "At last I felt released - free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear."

### **Answer :**

**Directions:** You may follow the given steps for the essay:

Paragraph 1: Begin with "At last I felt released - free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear. Fear, when conquered, becomes victory. And a victory, emerging from the bitterness of failures and hardships of enduring them for a long period of time, has its own meaning and charm. When I look back, it

appears to be a long and arduous journey that has now successfully culminated in its destination."

Paragraph 2: Talk about the beginning of the incident that was the root cause for your fear. Try to pen down what you saw, what you felt and what you thought. Recollect and write the details of the surrounding environment, people and things.

Paragraph 3: Here, you can continue talking about how the incident progressed in terms of the subsequent events or happenings. Detail the exact proceedings in the logical order of their happening. You may talk about what you think went wrong and how the incident could have ended differently.

Paragraph 4: In this paragraph, you may write how the fear proved a handicap or how it affected other activities of your life. And then write about when you decided that you will get rid of it. Talk about your plans, strategies and things that you may have considered to ensure that you succeed in your attempt.

Paragraph 5: In the last paragraph, you can detail all your efforts (and that of others) and end with an analysis of why you won over your fear.

*(Guidelines/directions have been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)*

**Question: 2.**

Write a short letter to someone you know about your having learnt to do something new.

**Answer :**

Examination Hall New Delhi

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Dear Garima,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. I've something interesting to share this time. I have learnt skating, this summer. Being able to skate is a wonderful feeling and it fills me with loads of confidence. There is an odd sense of power in knowing that every technique and skill required to master has been learnt. With a little more practice, I would feel my spirits flying high. Initially, I was very scared of even wearing my skates. But all the bruises, injuries, frustrations and pessimistic ideas that gripped me during some of the initial training sessions now seem nothing in front of what I feel. It gives me immense satisfaction to see myself almost flying in the air. Skating also helps me stay fit. Even my parents are happy to see me investing my time constructively.

Do let me know about your hobby classes. Convey my kind regards to uncle and aunt. Yours affectionately,

Nishtha

*(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)*

## Things to do

### Question: 1.

Are there any water sports in India? Find out about the areas or places which are known for water sports.

### Answer :

<b>WATER SPORTS</b>	<b>PLACES</b>
River Rafting	Zanskar river in Ladakh, Rishikesh, River Teesta
Water Skiing	Asan Barrage, Goa, Dal & Nagin Lake, Manasbal Lake, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.
Canoeing and Kayaking	Mumbai, Dal Lake, Nagin Lake, Wular Lake, Rishikesh, Teesta River, Goa
Scuba Diving	Mumbai, Dal Lake, Nagin Lake, Wular Lake, Rishikesh, Teesta River, Goa
Scuba Diving	Lakshadweep Islands, Andaman Islands, Dugong Reef, Havelock Island,
Snorkelling	Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.
Angling and Fishing	Deep Water Exercise Answers & Summary

*(The list is only indicative. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.)*