

## Class XII – Flamingo

# DEEP WATER

By - William Orville Douglas

### About the author



**William Orville Douglas**  
(1898 –1980)  
Born in USA

Douglas was a leading advocate of individual rights. He was a judge at the Supreme Court of USA, retired in 1975 with a term lasting thirty-six years and remains the longest-serving Justice in the history of the court.

The following excerpt is taken from *Of Men and Mountains* by William O. Douglas.

### Introduction

In this story, Douglas talks about his fear of water and how he finally overcomes it with strong will power, courage, hard work, and firm determination. Once he took courage, the fear vanished. That Shows most of our fears are baseless. Fear creates dangers where there is none. The writer’s Experiences further confirm the proverbial truth, “Where there is a will, there is away.”

### Characters & Places

- Douglas: Narrator of the story
- YMCA Pool: A swimming pool runs by Young Men’s Christian Association

- Yakima: Yakima is a US city located about 60 miles southeast of Mount Rainier in Washington.

## **Deep Water - Summary**

Deep Water is about the writer's journey of overcoming the fear of water, which is deeply rooted in him since childhood. The author started fearing water since the age of four. It starts when he was visiting California with his father. He visits a beach where a wave knocks him down and sweeps over him. This terrifies the author, although the father laughs at this knowing, suggesting that it was not dangerous. However, this experience terrifies the author and develops a fear of water. After that, when the author is 11 years old, he experiences another incident which escalates his fear.

He is at a swimming pool in Yakima, trying to learn swimming. On one fine day, a bully decides to pull a dangerous prank. He pushes him in the deep end of the pool which frightens the author. He reaches nine feet into the water and starts struggling desperately to hold on to something.

Moreover, he yells for help but he starts feeling paralyzed and only his heart was moving now. Thus, he gives up and readies himself to die but wakes up at the side of the pool. However, the terror he experiences while drowning never goes away. It continues to haunt him for many years and even spoiled his future expeditions concerning canoeing, swimming, fishing and more.

He even visits Marine Lakes, Columbia, New Hampshire and more but is not able to enjoy it. Thus, he decides to overcome this fear by every possible way. He enrolls himself in a swimming class and tries to learn from the instructor. The instructor teaches him many tips and tricks for swimming. He begins with the inhaling and exhaling part then he practices it for many weeks.

Further, he moves on to the kicking the legs on the side of the pool. Finally, he combines all this with the final move of swimming. Although the author knows how to swim, he is still terrified of water. Thus, in order to get rid of the fear, he decides to confront it. He mocks it by thinking what can it really do? Consequently, he plunges in to the water and to his surprise, his fear goes away. He faced it in many places and at last, manages to conquer it.

## ***Conclusion of Deep Water***

To sum up, Deep Water summary, we learn that if we are determined enough and have the courage, we can overcome any fear that comes our way without letting the fear overpower us.

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## Deep Water: Text & Explanation

It had happened when I was ten or eleven years old. I had decided to learn to swim. There was a pool at the Y.M.C.A. in Yakima that offered exactly the opportunity. The Yakima River was treacherous.

Y.M.C.A. – Young Men’s Christian Association

Yakima – a place in Washington, USA

Treacherous – dangerous

*The writer narrates his experience. He was ten or eleven years old when he had joined the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool to learn swimming. He did not go to the Yakima river to swim as it was considered dangerous. This shows that he had a prior fear of water.*

Mother continually warned against it, and kept fresh in my mind the details of each drowning in the river. But the Y.M.C.A. pool was safe. It was only two or three feet deep at the shallow end; and while it was nine feet deep at the other, the drop was gradual. I got a pair of water wings and went to the pool. I hated to walk naked into it and show my skinny legs. But I subdued my pride and did it.

Drop – slope from the shallow area to the deep area

Water wings - A pair of inflatable waterproof bags designed so that one can be attached to each arm, especially of a child learning to swim

Skinny – thin

Subdued – to overcome

Pride – self-respect

*William’s mother would warn him not to go near the Yakima river and would discuss the various incidents of drowning. He felt that the pool at Y.M.C.A. was safer. The shallow area of the pool was only two to three feet deep while the deep area was nine feet in depth. The slope from the shallow area to the deep area was not steep. He also got a pair of water wings to prevent drowning. He did not like to wear the swimming costume which exposed his thin legs but as he was keen to swim, he gave up his self-respect and wore it.*

From the beginning, however, I had an aversion to the water when I was in it. This started when I was three or four years old and father took me to the beach in California.

He and I stood together in the surf. I hung on to him, yet the waves knocked me down and swept over me. I was buried in water. My breath was gone. I was frightened.

Father laughed, but there was terror in my heart at the overpowering force of the waves.

Aversion – dislike

Surf – wave of the sea

Knocked me down – threw him down

William says that he had always disliked water and recounts an older experience when he was three or four years old. He went to the beach in California with his father. They stood as a wave leapt towards them. William stuck to his father to save himself, but the strong wave threw him down and he was covered in water. He was scared as he could not breathe. His father laughed and tried to make him feel comfortable, but the little child was scared when he realized that the waves were so powerful.

My introduction to the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool revived unpleasant memories and stirred childish fears. But in a little while I gathered confidence. I paddled with my new water wings, watching the other boys and trying to learn by aping them. I did this two or three times on different days and was just beginning to feel at ease in the water when the misadventure happened.

Revived – brought back to mind

Aping - copying

To feel at ease – to feel comfortable

*When William joined the swimming pool at the Y.M.C.A., the fear of water resurfaced in his mind. He gathered confidence by watching other boys swim and tried to copy them. He had done this twice or thrice at different occasions and had started gaining confidence when the incident happened. He had a narrow escape from death.*

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.

*When William reached the pool, no one was there and so he sat on the edge waiting for other boys to arrive. He was afraid to swim all alone in the pool. As the swimming pool was empty, William could see the bottom also. It had white coloured tiles on it and looked white and clean like a bath tub.*

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?”

Bruiser - a person who is tough and aggressive and enjoys a fight or argument

Specimen – example

Skinny – a thin person

Ducked - push or plunge someone under water

*It had not been long since William had been sitting by the pool when a boy arrived. He was around eighteen years of age, had a well – built body with rippling muscles. He seemed to be a bully. He asked William if he wanted to be thrown into the pool.*

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. On the way down I planned: When my feet hit the bottom, I would make a big jump, come to the surface, lie flat on it, and paddle to the edge of the pool.

Tossed – threw

Wits – intelligence

*The boy picked William and threw him into the deep end of the swimming pool. William landed on the surface of the pool in the same position as he had been sitting in. His mouth was open and as he did not know swimming, he swallowed water as he sank into the pool. He was frightened, but he used his intelligence and on his way down the pool, planned to push himself up when he reached the bottom. He thought that he would make a big jump to the surface, lie on his back and swim to the edge of the pool.*

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. I grew panicky. I reached up as if to grab a rope and my hands clutched only at water. I was suffocating. I tried to yell but no sound came out. Then my eyes and nose came out of the water — but not my mouth.

Summoned – gathered

Spring – push

Bob – jump

Tinge – touch of colour

Suffocating – unable to breathe due to lack of air

Yell – scream

*William took a long time to reach the bottom of the pool. It seemed that the depth was ninety feet instead of nine feet. He could not hold his breath and felt as if his lungs would burst. When his feet touched the bottom of the pool, he gathered all his strength and jumped upwards. He had thought that the next moment, he would come out of the pool, but the opposite happened. His movement upwards was slow and when he opened his eyes, he saw water all around which was yellowish in colour. William got scared and tried to grab something – a rope which would help him reach the edge of the pool, but he got nothing other than water. William was at a loss of breath and tried to scream for help, but no sound came out of his mouth. His nose and eyes came out of the water, but his mouth remained in it.*

I flailed at the surface of the water, swallowed and choked. I tried to bring my legs up, but they hung as dead weights, paralysed and rigid. A great force was pulling me under. I screamed, but only the water heard me. I had started on the long journey back to the bottom of the pool.

Flailed – waved his hands

Choked – unable to breathe

Rigid – hard

*William waved his hands at the surface of the water for help, but he swallowed water and choked himself. He tried to pull his legs up, but they were very heavy and lifeless. He felt that something was pulling him towards the depth of the pool. He screamed but his voice did not go out of the water. Once again, William started going down towards the bottom of the pool.*

I struck at the water as I went down, expending my strength as one in a nightmare fights an irresistible force. I had lost all my breath. My lungs ached, my head throbbed. I was getting dizzy. But I remembered the strategy — I would spring from the bottom of the pool and come like a cork to the surface. I would lie flat on the water, strike out with my arms, and thrash with my legs. Then I would get to the edge of the pool and be safe.

Expending – losing, giving out

Ached – pained

Throbbled – felt pain in a series of beats

Dizzy – faint, unsteady

Strategy – plan of action

Strike out – extend

Thrash – hit with force

*William tried to save himself from drowning in the pool and tried to grab something, but as there was water all around, he could not do so. He compares his situation to a person who sees a nightmare and fights against the dreadful dream but is unable to ward it off. William was breathless. He felt pain in his lungs and his head felt a sensation of beating. He was getting unconscious, but he could recollect the plan to save himself – as his feet touched the bottom, he would take a leap and jump up to the surface in a jiffy. Then he would lie on his back, hit the strokes with his limbs and reach to the edge of the pool to safety.*

I went down, down, endlessly. I opened my eyes. Nothing but water with a yellow glow — dark water that one could not see through. And then sheer, stark terror seized me, terror that knows no understanding, terror that knows no control, terror that no one can understand who has not experienced it. I was shrieking under water. I was paralysed under water — stiff, rigid with fear. Even the screams in my throat were frozen. Only my heart, and the pounding in my head, said that I was still alive.

Stark – severe

Seized – gripped

Shrieking – screaming

Paralysed – incapable of movement

Pounding – repeated beating

*William sank into the pool and the journey downwards seemed endless. He opened his eyes. There was water all around. It had a yellowish glow and he could not see through it. This terrorized William. He says that his feeling can not be explained but it can only be understood by those who have experienced a similar situation. He was screaming in the water, he was unable to move due to the fear. His screams also froze. Only his heart beat and the beating in his head indicated that he was alive.*

And then in the midst of the terror came a touch of reason. I must remember to jump when I hit the bottom. At last I felt the tiles under me. My toes reached out as if to grab them. I jumped with everything I had.

In the midst of – between

*In between the phase of terror, William recollected the plan that he had to take a jump as he touched the bottom of the pool. As he felt the tiles of the bottom of the pool, his feet used all the strength he had, and he jumped up.*

But the jump made no difference. The water was still around me. I looked for ropes, ladders, water wings. Nothing but water. A mass of yellow water held me. Stark terror took an even deeper hold on me, like a great charge of electricity. I shook and trembled with fright. My arms wouldn't move. My legs wouldn't move. I tried to call for help, to call for mother. Nothing happened.

*The effort went in vain. He was still submerged in the water. He looked around for help, for any rope, ladder or water wing with the help of which he could rescue himself. He could only see water all around him. It was as if a chunk of yellow water had grabbed him. The terror grew intense. It was like an electric shock that ran through the whole body. He trembled with fright. He could neither move his limbs nor call out for help.*

And then, strangely, there was light. I was coming out of the awful yellow water. At least my eyes were. My nose was almost out too.

Then I started down a third time. I sucked for air and got water. The yellowish light was 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 tired to jump... it's nice to be carried gently... to float along in space... tender arms around me... tender arms like Mother's... now I must go to sleep...

Ceased – ended

Limp – lifeless

*Something strange happened, and William saw light. His eyes came out of the water. His nose was almost out of it.*

*Then he started going downwards into the pool for the third time. He tried to breathe but gulped water instead. The light went out as he drowned again. Then he stopped making efforts to save himself. William relaxed, his legs became lifeless and his brain experienced a black – out. The fear ended, he did not panic. He became quite and experienced peace. He was not afraid of drowning any more. He felt sleepy, was tired to jump up, felt nice to be carried in his mother’s arms as he felt sleepy.*

I crossed to oblivion, and the curtain of life fell.

Oblivion - the state of being unaware or unconscious of what is happening around one

Curtain of life fell – life came to an end

*William became unconscious as he drifted away towards death.*

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.”

*When William gained consciousness, he was lying on his stomach, beside the pool and was vomiting. He heard someone scolding the boy who had pushed him into the pool. The voice said that William had almost died, and the boy replied that he was fooling with him. The voice asked the boy to carry William 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.

Wobbly – weak

*After many hours, William walked home. He felt weak and shivered. He kept on crying as he lay on the bed. He was unable to eat food. The fear kept on haunting him for many days. The incident made him physically upset. The slightest work made him feel that his knees were unable to bear his weight. He would feel like vomiting.*

I never went back to the pool. I feared water. I avoided it whenever I could.

*William did not go to the swimming pool as he feared the water. He remained away from water.*

A few years later when I came to know the waters of the Cascades, I wanted to get into them. And whenever I did — whether I was wading the Tieton or Bumping River or bathing in Warm Lake of the Goat Rocks — the terror that had seized me in the pool would come back. It would take possession of me completely. My legs would become paralysed. Icy horror would grab my heart.

### Cascades – waterfall

*After some years, William came to know of a waterfall and wanted to go in it. Whenever he went for swimming in different rivers like the Tieton, Bumping river, Warm lake of the Goat Rocks, the fear of water returned. It would grab him completely, disable his limbs and grab his heart.*

This handicap stayed with me as the years rolled by. In canoes on Maine lakes fishing for landlocked salmon, bass fishing in New Hampshire, trout fishing on the Deschutes and Metolius in Oregon, fishing for salmon on the Columbia, at Bumping Lake in the Cascades — wherever I went, the haunting fear of the water followed me. It ruined my fishing trips; deprived me of the joy of canoeing, boating, and swimming.

Handicap - a circumstance that makes progress or success difficult

Canoes – small boats

Ruined – destroyed

Deprived – to take away

*The fear of water remained with William as he grew up. On the boating trips to different lakes in the Maine region, New Hampshire, Deschutes, Metolius, Columbia, Bumping lake - where he fished different varieties of fish, namely – salmon, bass and trout, the fear followed him. His fishing trips were destroyed as he did not enjoy boating and swimming due to the fear.*

I used every way I knew to overcome this fear, but it held me firmly in its grip. Finally, one October, I decided to get an instructor and learn to swim. I went to a pool and practiced five days a week, an hour each day. The instructor put a belt around me. A rope attached to the belt went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the end of the rope, and we went back and forth, back and forth across the pool, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. On each trip across the pool a bit of the panic seized me. Each time the instructor relaxed his hold on the rope and I went under, some of the old terror returned and my legs froze. It was three months before the tension began to slack. Then he taught me to put my face under water and exhale, and to raise my nose and inhale. I repeated the exercise hundreds of times. Bit by bit I shed part of the panic that seized me when my head went under water.

Cable – thick rope

Slack – to reduce

Shed – removed

Panic – fear  
Seized – gripped

*William tried to ward off the fear but was unable to get rid of it. Finally, in the month of October, he hired an instructor to teach him swimming. He would practise for an hour each day, five days a week. William describes the learning process. The instructor put a belt around William's waist. The belt was attached to a thick rope. The rope went through an overhead pulley and was held by the instructor. It ensured that in case William drowned, the instructor would pull him out. William swam across the length of the pool for several weeks. Whenever the instructor loosened the rope, he went down into the water and the fear would return. It would immobilize his legs. It was after three months of practise that William got comfortable. Then the instructor taught him to breathe in the water. He taught him to put his face under the water and exhale his breathe. He was taught to raise his nose out of the water and inhale. William practiced several times. Gradually, he got rid of the panic that would grab him when he put his head under the water.*

Next he held me at the side of the pool and had me kick with my legs. For weeks I did just that. At first my legs refused to work. But they gradually relaxed; and finally I could command them.

Command – order

*In the third phase of the learning process, the instructor taught William to kick the water's surface with his legs. He did this for many weeks. Initially, his legs did not move but gradually, they relaxed and finally, William could order them to kick in the desired way.*

Thus, piece by piece, he built a swimmer. And when he had perfected each piece, he put them together into an integrated whole. In April he said, "Now you can swim. Dive off and swim the length of the pool, crawl stroke."

Stroke - a particular style of moving the arms and legs in swimming.

*Finally, the instructor made a swimmer out of William in phases. When William had perfected each phase, he compiled them. In the month of April, the instructor told William that now he could swim. He asked him to dive into the pool and swim the length of the pool in a particular style called the crawl stroke.*

I did. The instructor was finished.

*William swam and the classes came to an end.*

But I was not finished. I still wondered if I would be terror-stricken when I was alone in the pool. I tried it. I swam the length up and down. 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.

### Vestiges – traces

*William had not overcome the fear yet and wondered if the terror would grab him when he would be alone in the water. He tried to swim alone in the pool. The terror returned in small phases but now, as he knew how to swim, he faced the terror with confidence. He swam 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. I laughed and said, “Well, Mr Terror, what do you think you can do to me?” It fled and I swam on.

### Miniature – small size

*William swam like this till the month of July but was not satisfied. He wanted to be sure that all of the fear had left him. So, he went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived into it from Triggs island and swam for two miles, up to Stamp Act island. He swam in different styles – crawl, breast stroke, side stroke and back stroke. The terror returned only once when he was in the middle of the lake. When he put his head under water, he saw water all around and the fear returned. This time, William laughed at the terror and said to it that it could not harm him. He saw that the terror vanished, and he resumed swimming.*

Yet I had residual doubts. At my first opportunity I hurried west, went up the Tieton to Conrad Meadows, up the Conrad Creek Trail to Meade Glacier, and camped in the high meadow by the side of Warm Lake. The next morning I stripped, dived into the lake, and swam across to the other shore and back — just as Doug Corpron used to do. I shouted with joy, and Gilbert Peak returned the echo. I had conquered my fear of water.

*William still had some doubt about the fear. So, he hurried towards the western direction. He went up the Tieton, reached Conrad meadows, walked up the Conrad creek trail to Meade glacier. He camped at the meadow by the Warm lake. The next morning, he wore the swimming costume and dived into the lake. He swam across it to the other end and returned just like the famous American Doug Corpron used to do. William shouted with joy as he had overcome his fear. His voice resounded as the mountain peak named Gilbert peak reverberated it. He had overcome the fear.*

The experience had a deep meaning for me, as only those who have known stark terror and conquered it can appreciate. In death there is peace. There is terror only in the fear of death, as Roosevelt knew when he said, "All we have to fear is fear itself." Because I had experienced both the sensation of dying and the terror that fear of it can produce, the will to live somehow grew in intensity.

At last I felt released — free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear.

*The experience had a great importance in William's life. He realized that death was peaceful and only the fear of death was fearful. He recollects the words of one of the Presidents of America – Roosevelt. Roosevelt had said that all we have to fear is fear itself. As William had experienced death and the fear of death, his desire to live grew immensely. He felt released from fear and was free to walk up the trails and climb up the mountains fearlessly.*

### **Gist of the lesson:**

- William O. Douglas had a desire to learn swimming since childhood.
- At the age of three or four, he was knocked down and buried by a wave at a beach in California.
- He developed a great aversion to water.
- At the age of ten or eleven he decided to learn to swim with water wings at the Y.M.C.A pool since it was safe at the shallow end.
- A misadventure:- while sitting alone and waiting for others to come at the Y.M.C.A pool, a big boy came and threw Douglas into deep end of the pool.
- Douglas swallowed water and went straight down to the bottom of the pool.
- While going down he planned to make a big jump upwards but came up slowly. Tried to shout but could not.
- As he went down the pool second time, he tried to jump upwards but it was a waste of energy.
- Terror held him deeper and deeper.
- During the third trial he sucked water instead of air.
- Light was going out and there was no more panic.
- So he ceased all efforts and he became unconscious.
- He crossed to oblivion.
- When revived he found himself vomiting beside the pool.
- He was in grip of fear of water and it deprived him of the joys of canoeing, boating swimming and fishing.

- Hired an instructor to learn swimming.
- The instructor taught him swimming piece by piece.
- He went to different lakes to swim and found tiny vestiges of fear still gripped him.
- He challenged the fear and swam.
- Swimming up and down the Warm Lake he finally overcame his fear of water.
- He realized that in death there is peace and there is terror only in fear of death.

## **Deep Water: Question and Answers**

Q1. 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.

A. William describes his experience where he had a close brush with death at the Y.M.C.A. Swimming pool. As it a first-person account, he has described it deeply. The emotional, mental and physical struggle and the paralyzing fear of drowning have been discussed in detail. William retained his intelligence and had a plan to come to the surface. He tried it but I did not work and after a few trials to save his life, death dawned upon him. All these details make the description vivid.

Q2. How did Douglas overcome his fear of water?

A. William Douglas was not able to come out of his fear. So, he hired a swimming instructor. Once he had learned swimming, he wanted to check if he had overcome the fear as well. He would swim in lakes and found the fear to return in small phases. William was no longer scared as he knew that he could swim. Hence, he overcame the fear.

Q3. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? What larger meaning does he draw from this experience?

A. William Douglas gives a detailed description of his childhood experience so that the reader gets familiar with the kind of fear that he had as a child. When he quotes Roosevelt ““All we have to fear is fear itself” he tries to draw a larger meaning from this experience. He wants to highlight the fact that life became meaningful and the desire to live grew intense once he had conquered his fear.

## **Frequently asked Important Questions:**

Q1: Answer the following question in 120 – 150 words: (10)

How did Douglas develop an aversion to water?

A: Since the age of three or four, when the author accompanied his father to the beach, he realized that he disliked water. He would get frightened by the power of the waves which threw him, swept over and he was buried in water.

Later, at the age of ten – eleven years, he decided to learn swimming. He joined swimming classes at a swimming pool at the Y.M.C.A. He felt that the swimming pool was safe. Also, the pair of water wings would help him stay on the surface but more, they instilled a sense of confidence in him. It was just when he had started feeling comfortable that an incident took place. A big boy picked up the author and threw him in the pool at the deep end. He got water in his mouth and sank to the bottom. He was frightened but kept his mind working and devised a way out but things did not turn out as planned. His lungs felt as if they would burst, he was overpowered by fear, reached out, as if to grab something, but could only get his hands on the water. He got suffocated due to lack of air, could not scream, moved his arms desperately but all his efforts failed and he once again sank to the bottom of the pool. An unexplainable terror seized him. His limbs were lifeless, rigid due to fear and he could not even scream, the only sign of life was his heart beat. He sucked in water and then suddenly all his efforts to save himself stopped. He was relaxed, peaceful, fearless and sleepy, almost dead.

It was due to these experiences that the author developed an aversion to water.

Q3: Answer in 30 – 40 words: (2)

How did the instructor turn Douglas into a swimmer?

A: The instructor made him practice swimming step by step and gradually, piece by piece, turned him into a swimmer. When he had perfected each piece, he put them together into an integrated whole.

Q4: Answer the following question in 120 – 150 words: (6)

Describe the efforts made by Douglas to overcome his fear of water.

A: Douglas was in the tight grip of a fear of swimming in water bodies and finally decided to get rid of it. He hired an instructor who taught him swimming piece by piece and when he had learnt it all, he combined all the pieces together and made Douglas a swimmer. Still, he was not confident, and the terror would seize him time and again. Douglas wanted to get rid of all the fear, he wanted to conquer it. So, he went to various lakes, dived and swam across them. He reverted sarcastically to the tiny vestiges of fear that would grip him time and again until all of it vanished away. Douglas realized that fear was merely a crop of the mind and once he had conquered it, he felt released, free to walk arduous terrains, climb peaks and brush aside fear. Douglas had faced stark terror and then by conquering it his desire to live life grew intensely.

Q5: Answer the following question in 30 – 40 words: (2)

How did his experience at the YMCA swimming pool affect Douglas?

A: Douglas' experience of drowning and almost being dead instilled a fear of water in him. He shook and cried, couldn't eat, for days a haunting fear engulfed him, the slightest exertion upset him. He never went back to the pool, feared water and avoided it whenever he could.

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