

Revision Notes

CHAPTER – 2

We are Not Afraid To Die.....If we can all be together

It's a first person account of an adventurous ordeal that a family experiences. There are three sections of the text. The narration of events matches with the mood of the voyage. The narration of the events mirrors the hectic efforts of the captain and the crew to protect Wave Walker. The second section describes their struggle for survival for the last fifteen hours. In the last section the narration shifts back to the relaxed style.

It is a description of a sea adventure experienced by the narrator and his family. The narrator, his wife Mary, son Jonathan and daughter Suzanne were accompanied by two experienced sailors American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler. On July 1976 they set sail from Plymouth, England in Wave Walker, a specially built boat. The first part of the journey was pleasant and everything went on smoothly up to Cape Town.

Unfriendly weather and gigantic waves of Southern Indian Ocean compelled the sailors to slow their speed, drop storm jib and take other precautions. The danger was so implicit that the sailors completed life raft drill and attached life lines and life jackets. On 2 January 1977 waves hit Wave Walker and caused much damage to it. The sailors got injured and the narrator was thrown overboard but he managed to get hold of Wave Walker's guard rails. In spite of his multiple injuries, he took hold of the wheel.

In an atmosphere of fear and panic Mary took charge of the wheel whereas Larry and Herb started pumping out water. The narrator managed to stretch and cover canvas across the gaps to prevent water from entering the ship. Their hand pumps stopped working and electric pumps short circuited.

They were distressed and busy in pumping, steering, repairing and radio signaling. They studied charts and calculatively decided to reach a nearby island. They all were too busy in rescue work and did not take any meal for two days. Children were injured too but they did not draw attention of their parents and just allowed them to save Wave Walker. The children said that they were not afraid to die if they could all be together. The narrator became more

determined and strong seeing children's courage. Finally they reached. Ile Amsterdam, a volcanic island where they were welcomed by 28 inhabitants. Thus, the collective strength and never failing optimism of the sailors made it possible to come out of the jaws of death. Though, Jonathan and Suzanne did not do anything to save Wave walker but their courage, forbearance, faith and optimism gave extra strength and persistence to the narrator and his team.