

Chapter 3: Two Stories about Flying - The Black Aeroplane

Thinking about the Text

Question: 1

"I'll take the risk". What is the risk? Why does the narrator take it?

Answer:

A huge storm was brewing up and the author was keen to reach his home to spend his holiday with his family. So, he decided to fly through the storm as he did not want to miss the chance to meet his family at breakfast. Thus he took the risk even when the visibility was almost zero in the storm.

Question: 2

Describe the narrator's experience as he flew the aeroplane into the storm.

Answer:

As the pilot (author) entered the storm, his plane started jumping and twisting. He could not see anything outside the plane as it was black. When he looked at compass and other instruments they had stopped to function due to storm. It was a terrible and fearsome experience for him. The fuel tank was almost empty and he could not fly more than ten minutes. Then he saw another black aeroplane by his side and the pilot of the plane signalled him to follow. It was a surprise for the narrator as the other black plane was having no light. He followed him without any choice and landed safely on the runway.

Question: 3

Why does the narrator say, "I landed and was not sorry to walk away from the old Dakota..."?

Answer:

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's why the whole family had left him alone and threatened and cojoked him to come but every effort went in vain.

Question: 4

What made the woman in the Control Centre look at the narrator strangely?

Answer:

The woman in the Control Centre looked at the narrator strangely because the narrator asked her about the black aeroplane and she saw no one except the narrator's in the sky during the storm. Even the radar showed only the narrator's plane that night in the sky.

Question: 5

Who do you think helped the narrator to reach safely? Discuss this among yourselves and give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

It is very difficult to say about the unknown pilot who helped the narrator. But probably it was the narrator himself that helped him to overcome the fear in the storm as no other plane was seen in the radar except the narrator's Dakota plane. In that fearsome situation, he might have been hallucinating. He himself was a good pilot and brave enough who helped himself land safely.

Thinking about the Language

Question: 1

'Black' has a variety of meanings in different contexts. For example:

(a) 'I prefer black tea' means 'I prefer tea without milk'.

(b) 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is black' means 'With increasing pollution the future of the world is very depressing/without hope'.

Now, try to guess the meanings of the word 'black' in the sentences given below. Check the meanings in the dictionary and find out whether you have guessed right.

Questions:

1. Go and have a bath, your hands and face are absolutely black____ .
2. The taxi-driver gave Ratan a black look as he crossed the road when the traffic light was green____.
3. The bombardment of Hiroshima is one of the blackest crimes against humanity____.
4. Very few people enjoy Harold Pinter's black comedy____.
5. Sometimes shopkeepers store essential goods____.
6. Villagers had beaten the criminal black and blue____.

Answers:

1. A. The meaning of 'black' in this sentence is that the face and hands are dark because of dust and dirt.
2. A. Here, 'black' refers to an angry look.
3. A. "Here, 'blackest' refers to the darkest and cruellest crime against humanity.
4. A. Here, 'black' refers to dark and gloomy comedy.
5. A. The meaning of 'black' in this sentence is that the shopkeepers sell the described goods 'at a higher price'.
6. A. Here, 'black' means that the criminal suffered excessive beating at the hands of the villagers.

Question: II

Look at these sentences taken from the lesson you have just read:

(a) I was flying my old Dakota aeroplane.

(b) The young seagull had been afraid to fly with them.

In the first sentence the author was controlling an aircraft in the air. In the second sentence the seagull was afraid to move through the air, using its wings.

Match the phrases given under Column A with their meanings given under Column B:

	A		B
1.	Fly a flag	(a)	Move quickly/suddenly
2.	Fly into rage	(b)	Be successful
3.	Fly along	(c)	Display a flag on a long pole
4.	Fly high	(d)	Escape from a place
5.	Fly the coop	(e)	Become suddenly very angry

Answer:

1. (c),
2. (e),
3. (a),
4. (b),
5. (d).

Question: III

III. We know that the word 'fly' (of birds/insects) means to move through air using wings. Tick the words which have the same or nearly the same meaning.

swoop	flit	paddle	flutter
ascend	float	ride	skim
sink	dart	hover	glide
descend	soar	shoot	spring
stay	fall	sail	flap

The words which have the same or nearly the same meaning are -

Swoop, flit, float, dart, soar, hover, sail, skim, glide, flutter.

Champpstreet