

padhai | Class X

English

Notes



**Full
Explanations**



**Character
Sketch**



**Word
Meanings**



**Tone, Central
idea, devices....**

First Flight

Two Stories about Flying

Explanation:

“Two Stories about Flying” presents two different yet connected experiences of flight—one **natural and instinctive**, and the other **mysterious and suspense-filled**. In “His First Flight,” the young seagull sits alone on a narrow **ledge**, too afraid to fly even though his two brothers and sister have already done so. The vast sea below looks dangerously deep, and this imagery of the “**great expanse of sea**” increases his fear and sense of helplessness. His parents, especially his mother, realise that fear can only be overcome through action, so they use both **scolding and strategy** to push him out of his hesitation. Hungry, weak, and ignored for twenty-four hours, the young seagull watches his mother tearing at a piece of fish. The “**sight of the food maddened him**,” showing how hunger becomes the turning point. When his mother flies close to him with the fish but stops just beyond his reach, he jumps towards it in desperation and falls outward into space. For a moment, a “**monstrous terror**” grips him, a phrase that uses exaggeration to show the intensity of fear. Soon, however, he feels his wings spread and the air moving under them. This strong sensory imagery marks his shift from fear to confidence. He realises that he is not falling but flying. His family flies around him, crying in joy, and he forgets his earlier fear. Finally, when he lands on the sea and is praised and fed, his first flight becomes a symbol of **courage, self-discovery, and hidden instinct**.

In “The Black Aeroplane,” the narrator, who is also the pilot of an **old Dakota** aeroplane, is flying over France towards England on a clear night. The calm beginning, with the moon rising and stars shining above the quiet countryside, creates peaceful imagery that contrasts sharply with the danger ahead. After receiving instructions from **Paris Control**, he continues happily, thinking about reaching home and having breakfast with his family. Soon, however, he notices huge storm clouds ahead, described as “**black mountains**,” a simile that highlights their size and danger. Although he knows he should turn back to Paris, he decides to “take the risk” and flies into the storm. Inside the clouds, everything turns dark, the plane shakes violently, and the **compass, radio, and other instruments stop working**. This creates strong suspense and a feeling of isolation. Lost in the storm and running out of fuel, the pilot suddenly sees another black aeroplane flying beside him. The unknown pilot silently signals him to follow. The narrator obeys “like an **obedient child**,” a simile that shows both his helplessness and trust. The mysterious aircraft guides him safely out of the storm and towards a runway. But after landing, when he asks about the other plane, the woman at the control centre tells him that no other aircraft was flying that night. This ending creates mystery and irony: the rescuer appears at the right moment but leaves no trace. The story ends with an unanswered question, making the black aeroplane seem almost **supernatural** and turning an ordinary flight into a memorable experience of **danger, faith, and wonder**.

Reference Information

1. Setting of "His First Flight": The young seagull sits alone on a ledge on a cliff, while his family stays on a plateau across the cliff, increasing his fear and isolation.
2. Reason for the seagull's fear: He believes his wings will not support him and fears falling into the deep sea. His fear is mental rather than physical.
3. Family's attitude: His parents scold and neglect him at first, but this is a method to make him independent. They are strict yet caring.
4. His brother: He caught his first Herring and his family was prasing him.
4. Hunger as turning point: He has not eaten since the previous night, and hunger finally forces him to act.
5. Mother's method: She tempts him with a piece of fish and stops just short, forcing him to leap.
6. Sea description: The sea is called a "vast green sea" and later a "green flooring," showing change from fear to comfort.
7. End of first story: The seagull floats on the sea and is praised and fed by his family, proving his success.
8. Setting of "The Black Aeroplane": The narrator flies Dakota DS-088 from France to England at night under a clear sky.
9. Pilot's mood: He is cheerful and eager to reach home, thinking about his family and morning breakfast.
10. Storm cloud description: The clouds are compared to "black mountains," showing danger and scale.
11. Major crisis: Compass spins, radio fails, and instruments stop working, leaving him lost.
12. Fuel problem: Only enough fuel remains for a few minutes, increasing urgency.
13. Strange aeroplane: It has no lights, yet the pilot can see its movements clearly, adding mystery.
14. Ending mystery: The control centre confirms no other plane was flying, making the event unexplained.
15. Major conflicts: Fear vs instinct in the first story; man vs nature and man vs mystery in the second.

literary devices:

- Imagery: sea, sky, storm, runway.
- Simile: "black mountains," "like an obedient child."
- Hyperbole: "monstrous terror."
- Irony/Mystery: unexplained rescuer.

Narrator's Tone

In "His First Flight," the tone is sympathetic, encouraging, and slightly dramatic, focusing on the seagull's emotions. In "The Black Aeroplane," the tone starts calm but becomes tense, suspenseful, and mysterious. The ending leaves a sense of wonder and uncertainty.

Detailed Character Sketches

Young Seagull

The young seagull is fearful, hesitant, and lacking confidence at the beginning. Though capable of flying, he is mentally blocked by fear and believes his wings will fail him. His refusal to fly shows insecurity, but he is not weak by nature. When hunger forces him to jump, his instinct takes over and he learns to fly. His journey from fear to courage makes him a symbol of self-belief and growth. The line "He had made his first flight" marks his success.

Mother Seagull

The mother seagull is intelligent, practical, and caring in a firm way. She understands that fear cannot be removed by sympathy alone. By tempting her son with food and stopping just beyond reach, she forces him to act. This may seem harsh but shows wisdom and concern. After his success, she joins others in praising him. She represents disciplined care and guidance.

Pilot of the Dakota

The narrator-pilot is confident and experienced but also human enough to take risks. His desire to reach home makes him fly into the storm. Once trapped, he becomes anxious but remains alert. He trusts the mysterious pilot and follows him wisely. His comparison of himself to "an obedient child" shows his vulnerability. He reflects courage mixed with human weakness and humility.

Mysterious Pilot

The mysterious pilot is an unexplained presence who appears during the storm when the narrator is near danger. He guides the plane silently and safely out of trouble. His aircraft has no lights, and he disappears completely after helping. Since no one else sees him, he seems supernatural. He may symbolise hope, destiny, or unseen help in times of crisis.

Central Message

The chapter shows that fear can only be overcome through action, and hidden strength appears in difficult moments. "His First Flight" teaches that courage develops when one takes the first step despite fear. "The Black Aeroplane" suggests that help can come unexpectedly in times of danger. Together, they highlight confidence, perseverance, and trust.

Word Meanings

Ledge — a narrow shelf on a wall or cliff.

Expanse — a wide continuous area.

Muster — gather or collect.

Upbraiding – scolding harshly.
Skim – move lightly over a surface.
Herring – a type of sea fish.
Plateau – a flat raised area.
Preening – cleaning feathers.
Derisively – in a mocking way.
Plaintively – in a sad tone.
Whet – sharpen.
Monstrous – extremely large or frightening.
Dizzy – feeling unsteady.
Curveting – moving lightly like a horse.
Banking – tilting while turning in flight.
Dakota – a type of old aeroplane.
Runway – strip for landing and takeoff.
Compass – direction-finding instrument.
Storm cloud – cloud of bad weather.
Obedient – willing to follow orders.
Radar – system to detect objects.
Countryside – rural area.
Instrument – device for measurement/control.
Shrilly – in a high-pitched voice.
Beckoning – signalling to come closer.

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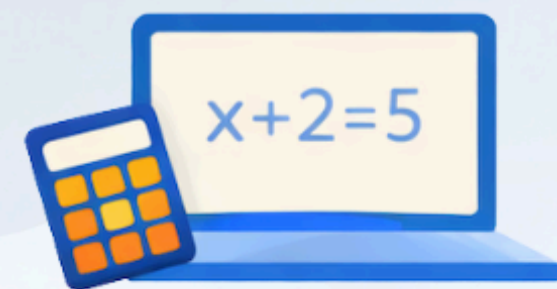
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