
Chapter - 3 DEEP WATER

By William Douglas

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 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. Stark terror seized him.

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. Will to live is stronger than fear of death.
