

## RETURN TO AIR

1. What were the ponds, in the author's village generally used for?

The ponds in the author's village were very big, so at the one end people bathed, and at the other end they fished.

2. Why did the author not want to dive?

The author did not want to dive because she had to take her glasses off to go into the water and she couldn't see without them. She did not want to dive without being able to see clearly.

3. What is duck -diving? How were the children taught, by the instructor, to duck dive?

Duck-diving is diving nose first into the water. The swimmer swims on the surface of the water and suddenly up-ends herself/ himself just like a duck, and dives down deep into the water, swims about a bit underwater and then comes up again. The swimming instructor taught the children to duck-dive by throwing a brick in the water. It was a brick with a bit of old white flannel around it, to make it show up underwater. The children had to swim down to the bottom of the pond, pick up the brick and bring it up again.

4. What did the swimming instructor throw in the pond? What were the instructions?

The swimming instructor threw a brick in the pond. It was a brick with a bit of old white flannel around it, to make it show up under water. The instructions were to swim down to the bottom of the pond, pick up the brick and bring it up again.

5. How does the narrator describe the changing colour of water? Why do you think the colour changed?

The author says, that at first the water was like a thick greenish-brown lemonade. Further down, it became just a dark blackishbrown. The colour changed on going deeper because less sunlight reached this depth.

6. What were the narrator's fear?

The narrator feared that she might get lost underwater. Perhaps she had swum underwater too far. Perhaps she would come up at the far end of the pond, amongst all the fishermen and perhaps get a fish hook caught in her, or perhaps she just wasn't going to find the top and the air again.

She also feared that she was swimming up too slowly and wouldn't reach the surface in time.

7. How was the narrator greeted when she reached the surface?

On reaching the surface, the narrator was greeted with shouting from the bank. The children were cheering and shouting and the instructor was hallooing with his hands around his mouth.

8. What had she got from the bottom of the pond?

The narrator had picked up a tin from the bottom of the pond. It was just about the size and shape of a brick. It was an old tin box with no paint left on it, with brown-black slime from the bottom of the ponds. It was as heavy as a brick because it was full of mud. There was nothing in it but mud.

## Reading 2

1. The narrator was a very sporting person. How do you know?

We know that the narrator was a sporting person because she says that she didn't mind when others teased her.

2. Do you think the narrator was fond of a good life? Give reason.

Yes, the narrator was fond of a good life. We know this when the narrator, with a sense of relief at completing the dive successfully, tells us about all the things that might happen in her life. She says that now that she was alive after the dive, she might live to be a hundred. A person who wants to live to be a hundred presumably has a lot of ambitions in life and a good life is one wherein you fulfil your ambitions.

3. The story of the narrator's learning diving more about her conquering her fear. Do you agree? What were her fears? How do you know she had conquered her fear?

Yes, the story of the narrator's learning diving is more about her conquering her fear. The narrator was scared of diving since she couldn't see without her glasses. She was also scared that she wouldn't be able to up end her legs for the duck-dive or that she would get lost underwater or that she would not be able to reach the surface back in time to catch her breath. But the narrator overcomes her fears by giving the duck-dive a try. She reaches the bottom of the pond and resurfaces successfully.

This is how she conquers her fear of diving. We know that the narrator had conquered her fears because she says that the next time she tried duck-diving, she could do it without being frightened at all.

4. Why do you think did the narrator want to preserve the tin, always?

The narrator wanted to preserve the tin always because it was a reminder of her first duck-dive. It was a memento of the time when she conquered her fear.