

First Flight :Textbook in English for class X

F 3 Two Stories About Flying

PART 2 : Black Aeroplane By- Frederick Forsyth Module 2/2

- Introduction

Students, in the first part of the lesson we saw that the young seagull was afraid of falling down. So it hesitated to fly. However, it's not that only a young chick can have problems with flying. At times even a trained pilot may encounter serious problems after a successful take off.

We often hear on TV or read in newspaper about plane crash or mysterious plane disappearances. When we talk about mysterious plane disappearances one name easily comes to our mind and that is Bermuda Triangle (**PPT**). It is a loosely defined region in the western part of the North Atlantic Ocean where a number of aircrafts and ships are said to have disappeared under mysterious circumstances. However, reputable sources dismiss the idea that there is any mystery.

A pilot sometimes has to face unexpected problems while in the middle of his flight. Air turbulences caused by a storm can be one of the most serious challenges faced by any pilot. It may be because all the equipment provided to him to carry out his duty safely may not be of any use to him(**PPT**). What should a pilot do in such case? Does he stand any chance to get rescued by a mysterious power ? The lesson 'The Black Aeroplane II' by Fredrik Forsyth in 'F 3 : Two Stories About Flying' provides the most mysterious answer to the second question.

- About the author:

Frederick Forsyth, born on 25 August 1938, is an English author, journalist, former spy, and occasional political commentator. He is best known for thrillers such as 'The Day of

the Jackal', 'The Odessa File', 'The Fourth Protocol', 'The Dogs of War', 'The Devil's Alternative', 'The Fist of God', 'Icon', 'The Veteran', 'Avenger', 'The Afghan', 'The Cobra' and 'The Kill List'.

The story under discussion narrates how a pilot gets caught in a storm while on his way to England in his Dakota aeroplane and how he is helped by a mysterious black aeroplane (**PPT**).

- The story in brief:

It was night time when the sky was clear and the stars could be seen twinkling. The narrator, who was flying his Dakota aeroplane, felt happy while he was flying over France to England. It was half-past one in the morning and he was fantasizing about holidaying with his family.

When the aeroplane was in France, the pilot thought of informing the Paris Control personnel about its presence and for instructions. He informed the Control Agency and they responded with further instructions on directions. The control room at Paris instructed him to turn 12 degrees towards the west.

After receiving the instructions, the narrator geared up and followed the instructions of the control room and switched over to the second and the last fuel tank. All this time, he was dreaming about his time with his family and then, he started thinking about having a satisfactory breakfast at home. He was calm as everything was going as planned.

Now, the plane had crossed Paris when he started seeing clouds in the sky. The presence of clouds made him feel uneasy because there were chances of a storm. They were so huge and dark that he compared them with "black mountains". He knew he couldn't pass them as it was impossible to go above them or

escape them with the amount of fuel that was left in the last tank. The right decision would have been to fly back to Paris safely. But he was overwhelmed by his wish to meet his family. He so desperately wanted to be with his family and have that English breakfast he had been dreaming of all day. So he decided to take the risk of not going back. Thus, he headed the plane right into the storm.

It was so dark because of the storm that nothing was visible outside the plane. He started losing control of the aeroplane. The compass and other instruments had also stopped working because of the bad weather. He became helpless.

He tried calling the Paris Control Agency who had helped him earlier but couldn't connect because of the weather. When everything failed, he saw a ray of hope when he saw another aeroplane. He felt relieved when he saw another pilot's face and willingness to help him escape the storm. He thought to himself that the other pilot was very kind as he knew that he was lost and was trying to help him.

The other pilot took his plane ahead of the narrator's aeroplane to make it easier for the narrator to follow him. The narrator followed him like an "obedient child". He was also panicked because there was very less fuel left. It was only then that he started coming out of the storm and could see the runway to land his plane safely. When he turned to thank the other pilot, he realised that the plane that helped him, had disappeared as soon as he came out of the storm.

The author did not know where he had landed. After landing, he left his plane and headed straight into the control room to ask about the other pilot. To his utmost surprise, the lady informed him that there was no other plane in the sky except his because of the bad weather. He was left astonished with a lot of questions unanswered in his mind.

- The story has mysterious elements. The narrator is caught up in the storm clouds. All his instruments have stopped working. To make the matter worse he has lost contact with Paris Control room. No other aeroplane can be expected around in such a bad weather. Suddenly a black plane appears on the scene from somewhere. Strangely enough it has no lights on its wings. The pilot of the black plane is guiding the narrator through the storm as if he knew that the narrator was lost in the storm. However as soon as the narrator comes out of the storm, the black plane is nowhere to be seen in the sky. It has disappeared as mysteriously as it had appeared. When he asks about the pilot and the plane at the control room, he is informed by the lady there that there was no other plane in the sky except his flight that night because of the bad weather. The corresponding extract from the lesson reads as:

“She looked at me very strangely, and then laughed. Another aeroplane? Up there in this storm? No other aeroplanes were flying tonight. Yours was the only one I could see on the radar.”

The astonishment in the mind of the narrator demonstrated in the following extract further deepens the sense of mystery. It reads:

‘So who helped me to arrive there safely without a compass or a radio, and without any more fuel in my tanks? Who was the pilot on the strange black aeroplane, flying in the storm, without lights?’

- Another important aspect of the story is the way in which the narrator handles the dangerous situation. Though he was little panicked to see himself in the middle of the storm with the fuel tank running out of fuel, he shows tremendous presence of mind and follows the black plane. He successfully comes out of the storm clouds. It also shows that a brave person gets help

from somewhere or somebody. It tells us that we shouldn't lose the calm in difficult situation and should try to come out of it bravely. It is because fortune always favours the brave. I hope you have understood the story students.

Now on the basis of your understanding of the story solve the questions in the worksheet attached with this module.

Thank you!