

FICTION

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TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

By A.J. Cronin

SUMMARY

The author and his companion had been driving near the city of Verona when they were stopped by two small boys, shabbily dressed, selling strawberries. The author's driver cautioned the author against purchasing the fruits. The boys were very skinny but their eyes were sincere and attracted attention. The author's companion discovered that the elder one was 13 years old, named Nicola and the younger was about 12 years old, called Jacopo. The author took an instant liking for these boys and ended up buying their biggest basket of strawberries.

Next morning, the author noticed those two boys polishing shoes of people. They appeared to be doing a good job. The boys smiled and told the author that they performed many kinds of other jobs also like escorting tourists around the city and to see Juliet's grave. Impressed, the author hired the boys immediately. Due to close interaction, the author discovered that the boys were very friendly and innocent. Beneath their cheerful smiles, however, he could discern a seriousness, a hint of sadness, that defied their age. The author did not regret his decision because the boys proved to be very resourceful. The author found their eagerness to do work really remarkable. He was surprised when he saw both the boys half asleep on a windy and deserted street, late at night. They had been waiting for the last bus to sell the newspapers. The author was struck by their desperation to do more and more work but he was surprised to note that they still wore torn clothes and hardly ate anything.

The author's trip was coming to an end. Before leaving, he asked both the boys if he could do something for them. Nicola, the elder one, refused but the younger one requested the author to drive them to Poleta, 30 km away, next day. The author was nonplussed. He had already given the day off to his driver. As a last gesture of goodwill, he volunteered to drive the two boys himself.

The following afternoon, they all drove to a tiny village, near a hill. The author was surprised to halt beside a villa. Before he could question, the boys leapt out and asked the author to pick them up from the same place, after an hour. The author couldn't restrain his curiosity. He went in and was greeted by a nurse, who ushered him inside.

Through a glass partition, the author saw that the boys were seated beside a hospital bed, with a girl of about 20 years, who appeared to be their sister. The author refused the offer to be ushered inside, as he did not wish to intrude upon a happy family reunion. On being asked, the nurse told the author that the children's father had been killed in the war and a bomb had destroyed their house and rendered them homeless. These children had kept themselves alive by building a kind of shelter with the rubble of their house. For many years the Germans ruled the city and the children had to undergo lots of suffering. Their sister, Lucia, who wanted to be a singer, could not bear the cold and starvation, so she contracted tuberculosis of the spine. The boys brought Lucia there and every week brought enough money for her treatment. Despite scarcity of work after war, the brothers never faltered in their payment. Now Lucia was showing signs of improvement and the day was not far off when she would be able to walk and sing.

The author was rejoined by the boys and they drove back to the city. The boys remain tight-lipped and the author also decided to remain quiet because he respected their privacy and secret. The author left, filled with admiration at the courage and relentless efforts of two young boys, who remained determined despite the setbacks of the war.

सारांश

जब लेखक अपने साथी के साथ, वेरोना नगर के समीप गाड़ी में जा रहे थे तब उन्हें दो लड़कों ने रोका। लड़के फटे-पुराने वस्त्र पहने हुए थे और स्ट्रॉबरीज़ बेच रहे थे। लेखक के ड्राइवर ने उन्हें सावधान किया और फल खरीदने से मना किया। दोनों बालक अत्यन्त दुबले-पतले थे, परन्तु उनकी आँखें निष्कपट थीं और अपनी ओर आकर्षित करती थीं। लेखक के साथी ने पता लगाया कि दोनों में से बड़ा लड़का तेरह वर्ष का था और उसका नाम निकोला था; छोटा लड़का केवल बारह वर्ष का था और उसका नाम जकोपो था। लेखक को वह बहुत आकर्षक लगा और उन्होंने स्ट्रॉबरीज़ की सभी टोकरियाँ खरीद लीं।

दूसरे दिन, प्रातःकाल लेखक ने उन दोनों को लोगों के जूते पालिश करते देखा। वे अपना काम बड़ी अच्छी तरह कर रहे थे। लड़कों ने मुस्करा कर लेखक को बताया कि वह और भी अनेक प्रकार के काम

करते हैं, जैसे वह पर्यटकों को जूलियट की कब्र तक ले जाते हैं। लेखक बहुत ही प्रभावित हुए और उन्हें तुरन्त अपने पास काम पर रख लिया। उनके सम्पर्क में रहकर लेखक को यह आभास हुआ कि दोनों लड़के निष्कपट और अत्यन्त स्नेही थे। पर उनके हँसमुख चेहरों के पीछे एक गंभीरता और उदासी छिपी हुई थी। परन्तु लेखक को अपने निर्णय पर कोई खेद नहीं हुआ, क्योंकि वह दोनों बहुत ही चतुर और सूझ-बूझ वाले थे। उनकी कार्यपरायणता अद्भुत थी। लेखक तब आश्चर्यचकित रह गये जब उन्होंने उन दोनों को देर रात एक ठंडी हवा से भरी, सुनसान गली में अर्धनिद्रा में पाया। वह दोनों अखबार बेचने के लिए आखिरी बस का इंतजार कर रहे थे। उनके अधिक से अधिक काम करने के उत्साह से लेखक प्रभावित तो हुए, परन्तु उन्हें आश्चर्य हुआ कि अथक परिश्रम के पश्चात भी वे फटे-पुराने कपड़े पहने हुए थे और शायद ही कभी कुछ खाते थे। लेखक की यात्रा समाप्त होने वाली थी। जाने से पहले उन्होंने लड़कों से पूछा कि वह उनके लिए कुछ कर सकते हैं। बड़े निकोला ने तो मना कर दिया, परन्तु छोटे ने कहा कि वह कल, तीस मील दूर उन्हें पोलेटा ले जाएँ। लेखक असमंजस में पड़ गये। उन्होंने अपने ड्राइवर को कल की छुट्टी दे दी थी। अन्त में सद्भावना के लिए उन्होंने खुद उन दोनों को ले जाने का निश्चय किया।

दूसरे दिन, दुपहर में वह एक छोटे से गाँव पहुँचे जो एक पहाड़ी के निकट था। लेखक के आश्चर्य का ठिकाना न रहा जब वह एक बड़े भव्य घर के सामने रुके। इससे पहले वह कुछ पूछते, दोनों लड़के कूद कर उतर गये और लेखक से एक घन्टे बाद उसी जगह पर उन्हें लेने आने को कहा।

लेखक अपनी जिज्ञासा को रोक न सके और उनके पीछे चल पड़े। एक नर्स ने उनका स्वागत किया और वह उन्हें अन्दर ले गयी। शीशे के विभाजन से उन्होंने देखा कि लड़के अस्पताल के एक पलंग के

पास बैठे थे जिस पर एक बीस वर्षीय लड़की लेटी हुई थी लड़की उन दोनों की बहिन लग रही थी। लेखक ने स्वयं उनके पास जाने से रोका। वह एक परिवार मिलन में अनामंत्रित प्रवेश नहीं करना चाहते थे।

नर्स ने पूछने पर उन्हें बताया कि बच्चों के पिता युद्ध में मारे गये थे, और एक बम ने उनके घर को नष्ट करके उन्हें गृहहीन कर दिया था। इन बच्चों ने अपने घर के अवशेषों से अपने लिए जीने का आश्रय बनाया था। कई वर्षों तक जर्मनी का आधिपत्य वेरोना में बना रहा और बच्चों को अनेक कष्टों का सामना करना पड़ा। उनकी बहिन, लूशिया, जो एक गायिका बनना चाहती थी, भूख और शीत के कारण रीढ़ की हड्डी के तपेदिक का शिकार हो गई। दोनों लड़के लूशिया को इस अस्पताल में ले आये और उसकी सेवा सुश्रूषा के लिए हर हफ्ते पैसे लेकर आते रहे। युद्ध के कारण काम की कमी थी, फिर भी दोनों पैसे देने में कभी भी नहीं चूके। अब लूशिया पहले से बहुत अच्छी है और शीघ्र ही चलने और गाने लगेगी।

लड़के बाहर आये और लेखक उन्हें शहर वापस ले आये। लड़के रास्ते में एक शब्द नहीं बोले और न लेखक ने ही उनसे कुछ पूछा। वह उनकी गोपनीयता का सम्मान रखना चाहते थे। उन दोनों बालकों के साहस, कड़े परिश्रम, किसी भी रुकावट के आगे न झुकने की हिम्मत ने लेखक के हृदय में उनके प्रति श्रद्धा भर दी और वह यही भावना लिए वहाँ से चले गये।

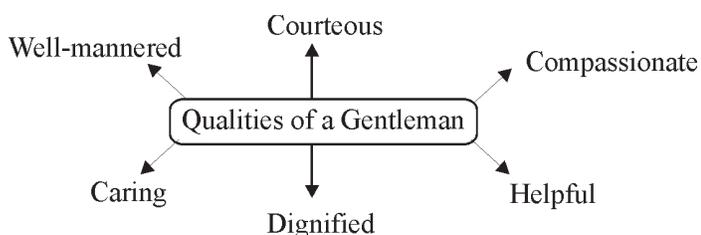
WORD-MEANINGS

cautious : careful • **shabby** : ill-dressed • **disapproval** : criticise • **brisk** : good, quick • **slackened** : reduced • **engaging** : attractive • **hawked** : sold • **errands** : odd jobs • **emigrate** : take up citizenship of another country • **vexation** : annoyance • **humble** : modest • **scarcely** : hardly • **intrude** : enter without permission

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

1. What are the qualities of a gentleman? Complete the following web-chart.



2. Based on your discussion above, what do you think the story is about?

Ans : This story is about the indomitable courage and perseverance of two young boys whom the destruction and ravages of war has not been able to crush. Their adversity

becomes their strength and they are spurred on to take up extraordinary loads of work to fend for their ailing sister.

4. Based on your reading of the story answer the following questions by ticking the correct options.

- (i) *The driver did not approve of the narrator buying fruit from the two boys because :*
- (a) the boys were untidy and poorly dressed
 (b) the strawberries were not fresh
 (c) they were asking for a heavy price
 (d) the driver did not approve of small boys who worked

- (ii) *The narrator was most impressed by the boys' :*
- desire to earn money
 - willingness to work
 - ability to perform many tasks
 - sense of fun
- (iii) *Nicola was not pleased when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta as he :*
- did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans
 - preferred going to Poleta by train so that he could enjoy the scenery
 - did not want to ask anyone for favours
 - did not want to take help from someone he did not know well
- (iv) *The narrator did not go inside Lucia's room as :*
- he did not want to intrude into their privacy
 - he thought that the boys would object
 - Lucia would not welcome a stranger
 - the boys would feel he was spying on them
- (v) *The boys were the first to join the resistance movement against the Germans because :*
- the Germans had hurt their sister
 - the Germans ruled the city
 - the Germans had ruined their family
 - the Germans had destroyed their home
- (vi) *The author did not speak to the boys on their return journey because*
- he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret
 - he thought the boys were ashamed of their sister's condition
 - he thought they won't tell him the truth
 - he thought the boys might ask him for money for their sister.

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (c) (iii) (a)
 (iv) (a) (v) (d) (vi) (a)

5. What do you understand by the following statements —

- (a) *“We do many things, sir,” Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully?*

Ans : The author was surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo polishing shoes instead of selling wild berries. Nicola told the author that they did many other odd jobs like escorting the tourists around the city. Basically he wanted the author to engage him for sightseeing, so that he could earn some more money.

- (b) *“He coloured deeply under his sun-burn, then grew pale.”*

Ans : The author is taken aback to see both the boys working so hard, day and night but they still wore torn clothes and ate nothing except black bread and figs. So he asked Nicola, what he did with so much money. Since Nicola didn't wish to reveal that the money was for his ailing sister, his face bore an embarrassed look.

- (c) *He smiled uncomfortably “Just plod, Sir” he answered in a low voice.*

Ans : The author is shocked to discover that despite working so hard, both the boys hardly spent any money on themselves. As a joke, the author said that maybe the boys wished to migrate to America. Nicola did not wish to answer that they were saving money for their ailing sister. He just smiled uncomfortably and did not wish to comment any further.

- (d) *Yet in both these boyish faces there was a seriousness which was far beyond their years.*

Ans : Both Nicola and Jacopo appeared to be friendly, innocent, and carried out each job with great fun and zest. Yet there was a hint of lingering sadness in their eyes which is generally not seen in boys of their age-group.

6. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) *Why didn't Luigi, the driver approve of the two boys?*

Ans : The author's driver was critical of the torn and dirty clothes of the two boys. Moreover, he felt that since the boys were selling wild berries, there was no need for the author to buy those, since better quality of strawberries could be procured from the market in Verona.

- (b) *Why were the narrator and his companion impressed by the two boys?*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans : The narrator was impressed with their sincerity and a strange kind of attraction drew him to the boys. Moreover, the boys demonstrated lot of zest and willingness for undertaking all kinds of work.

- (c) *Why was the author surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo working as shoeshine boys?*

Ans : The author had noticed the two boys selling wild strawberries earlier, so he was surprised to see the same boys polishing shoes, the next day.

- (d) *How were the boys useful to the author?*

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans : The boys were very eager and enthusiastic to provide all kinds of comfort to the author. Whether it was a pack of American cigarettes or name of a good restaurant

or opera, they were always at the beck and call of the narrator.

(e) *Why were the boys lying down in the deserted square at night? What character traits do they exhibit?*

Ans : The boys were lying down at the deserted square to wait for the last bus from Padua to sell newspapers, which were left unsold. This incident depicts their die-hard spirit, determination, devotion for their sister, their hardwork, and perseverance despite all odds.

(f) *The narrator asks the boys, "Must you work so hard? You both look rather tired." The boys reply, "we are not complaining, sir." What do you learn about the boys from their reply?*

Ans : The boys are too mature for their age. Their determination and zest, eagerness to undertake all kinds of work, and yet remain quiet regarding their purpose reflects upon their selfless attitude.

(g) *When the narrator asks the boys about their plans, they are evasive. Why don't they disclose their problems?*

Ans : The boys were only focussed upon providing all possible help for their sister Lucia, who was suffering from tuberculosis of the spine. They wished to retain their pride and dignity in keeping this as a secret. They didn't wish their private suffering to be made public.

7. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in your notebook.

(a) *'Appearances are deceptive.'* Discuss with reference to the two boys.

Ans : At the surface level, the boys appear to be friendly, fun-loving and childish but gradually the author discovers that they were mature enough to keep their private griefs safe. Moreover, they never showed their suffering in any way. Behind their smiles, there was a hint of sadness that could be seen once in a while.

(b) *Do you think the boys looked after Lucia willingly? Give reasons for your answer.*

Ans : The ultimate mission of the boys' life was the welfare of their sister Lucia. Day and night they slogged and starved only to provide for medical expenses for Lucia. This couldn't have been done without their will and desire.

(c) *How does the story "Two Gentlemen of Verona" promise hope for society?*

Ans : Both Nicola and Jacopo show selflessness and reflect great dignity in their behaviour. They are deeply devoted to their sister. In their earnest endeavour they become role models, epitomes of sacrifice, who can

enlighten the path for rest of the humanity to follow.

8. Match the phrases to their meanings.

Ans. Phrases	Meanings
Set up	to start
break down	to lose control over your feelings
set off	to start on a journey
put up with	to tolerate a situation
put off	to postpone
put on	to wear
come in	to enter
come across	to meet or find by chance
come up against	to be faced with or opposed by
turn down	to refuse
turn in	to inform or deliver up
turn to	to try to get help

Now use the phrases given above to complete the following sentences.

1. The landlord was suspicious of the two men staying in his flat, so he called the police and them
2. Early in the morning, we packed our bags and for a hike over the mountain.
3. Janvi some photographs of her grandfather in the old trunk.
4. My father his own business 10 years ago.
5. The Bank Paul's request for a loan.
6. The Corporation's decision to reduce the leave of the employees a lot of opposition.

Answers : 1. turned, in 2. set off 3. came across 4. set up 5. turned down 6. came up against

11. As a narrator, write an article on the lesson of love, faith and trust that you have learnt from the two young boys of Verona.

Ans : Tragedies and adversities either bring out the best or the worst among people. They prove to be great testing times which end up in glory or disaster. The bitter and indomitable struggle of Nicola and Jacopo, amidst the ravages of war, takes on epic proportions. Like the two gentlemen of Shakespeare's play, the two boys depict great maturity, wisdom and faith in the invincibility of human spirit. The die-hard nature of Nicola and Jacopo changes the lives of people around them, with their vibrant spark of humanity.

The two boys not only create a home to survive from the rubble but pitch in their best efforts to sustain their

sister Lucia, who had contracted tuberculosis. Their intrinsic vitality, zest for work encourages them to take up any work that is available—shining shoes, selling newspapers and fruits or escorting the tourists for sightseeing. They don't mind eating black bread or figs, or wearing torn clothes because they are only single-mindedly focussed upon their sister's treatment. The boys never resort to any kind of emotional blackmail or charity to provide for their sister. Their dignity and perseverance shows their extreme faith in their own ability to provide for their sister's medical treatment.

So, the relentless struggle of the two boys offers a kaleidoscopic view of love, tenderness, wisdom and trust, which even a catastrophic war failed to crush.

12. After her brothers' visit, Lucia writes a page in her diary about her past life and her present situation. As Lucia, write the diary entry in about 150 words.

Ans : Dear Diary,

Today was a sunny day in my otherwise clouded life. Both Nicola and Jacopo paid a visit and ushered in

great cheer and hope. I know I am improving everyday, but the recovery is too slow and less in keeping with my expectations. My heart bleeds when I see the deprived and ragged faces of my younger brothers who are valiantly trying to sustain me. They never tell me what work they do, but I can imagine the burden they are bearing at such a young age.

O God! How my life is so parsimoniously measured out. It was only yesterday when I had such a fulfilled life, a family and warmth of a household. I had a god-gifted asset, my voice and my training as a singer would have set me up in life comfortably. I can never forgive the war. The Germans unleashed such cruelty and terror that crippled the entire city. I was separated from my brothers and when I was reunited, I had already contracted tuberculosis of the spine. Now handicapped, helpless, I have become a painful burden and liability for my brothers. O God! when will I walk? When will I sing? When will my brothers enjoy a childhood, that they missed? When will happiness revisit us? I hope I live to see that day.

Lucia.

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

Read the following extracts and choose the correct option.

1. "Won't you go in?" "Lucia will be pleased to see you."

- (i) Identify the speaker.
 - (a) The author
 - (b) Nicola
 - (c) Jacopo
 - (d) the Nurse
- (ii) Lucia is supposed to be :
 - (a) the sister of the boys
 - (b) aunt of the boys
 - (c) narrator's friend
 - (d) the driver's niece
- (iii) Lucia would have welcomed the author because :
 - (a) she knew him well
 - (b) she was bed-ridden and would have loved stranger's visit
 - (c) he had helped her brothers
 - (d) she was friendly by nature

Answers : (i) (d) (ii) (a) (iii) (c)

2. "For months they had barely kept themselves alive."

- (i) This means that :
 - (a) they had no desire to live
 - (b) they were weak-willed
 - (c) they had great difficulties during the war
 - (d) they were lazy
- (ii) The boys had kept alive by :
 - (a) eating a lot
 - (b) begging for work
 - (c) building a house out of the rubble
 - (d) taking people for sightseeing
- (iii) The above reflects on the qualities of boys like :
 - (a) diligence
 - (c) compassion
 - (b) perseverance
 - (d) determination

Answers : (i) (c) (ii) (c) (iii) (b)

3. *They had always known a comfortable and cultured life.*

- (i) Identify 'they' :
 - (a) the narrator and his friend
 - (b) Nicola and Jacopo
 - (c) some tourists
 - (d) the guide at Juliet's tomb

- (ii) By 'comfortable life' means :
 (a) inherited money
 (b) lot of salary
 (c) parents were reasonably well-off
 (d) parents were musicians
- (iii) The effect of this upbringing was :
 (a) boys had a tough time
 (b) they couldn't survive
 (c) they had to face more struggle
 (d) their determination increased

Answers : (i) (b) (ii) (c) (iii) (d)

4. "I knew they would prefer to feel that they had safely kept their secret."

- (i) The writer had the above feeling because :
 (a) the boys behaved strangely
 (b) they did not take the writer inside to meet their sister
 (c) they sent him to the village
 (d) they refused to say anything
- (ii) The above behaviour reflected upon the boys'
 (a) cleverness (b) reticence
 (c) maturity (d) introvert nature
- (iii) The writer kept quiet because he wanted to :

- (a) keep their friendship
 (b) ignore them
 (c) be indifferent
 (d) retain their dignity

Answers : (i) (d) (ii) (c) (iii) (d)

5. "May be you'd like to go to the 'cafe' in the village for a drink".

- (i) The boys said this because :
 (a) they wanted to avoid the writer
 (b) they wanted to cheat him
 (c) they were cracking a joke
 (d) they were not bothered
- (ii) The above reflects upon the boys' character attributes like :
 (a) ignorant (b) uncivilised
 (c) tactful (d) rude
- (iii) The writer also listened to the boys because
 (a) he was not interested
 (b) he wanted to keep their secret
 (c) he did not wish to hurt them
 (d) he had no other option

Answers : (i) (a) (ii) (c) (iii) (c)

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the questions.

1. "Nicola, the way you and Jacopo work, you must earn quite a bit. You spend nothing on clothes. You eat little enough"

(a) Who said the above lines?

Ans : These lines are spoken by the narrator.

(b) Why did the speaker get the feeling that the boys were not spending any money?

Ans : The boys were always seen wearing torn clothes and they seemed to hardly eat anything except black bread and fig.

(c) What do the above lines reflect about the two boys?

Ans : The boys were of sacrificing nature and they cared very deeply for their sister. Her well-being was their sole concern.

2. I had already told Luigi he might take the day off. However I answered, "I'll drive you out myself."

(a) Who was Luigi?

Ans : He was the driver of the narrator.

(b) Why did the speaker offer to drive himself?

Ans : Luigi had been granted a holiday and the narrator did not wish to recall him and as a last gesture of good will he offered to drive himself.

(c) Where did the boys wish to go?

Ans : The boys wished to go to Poleta, 30 km away, to look up their sister.

3. When the war was over and we had peace at last, they come back to their beloved sister. And they found her

(a) Identify 'they'.

Ans : 'They' refers to the brothers – Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) Who is the beloved sister?

Ans : Lucia is the boys' sister who had not been keeping well.

(c) **In what condition did they find their sister?**

Ans : The brothers found that their sister had contracted tuberculosis of the spine.

4. *“Of course, everything is so difficult now, food so scarce and dear we could not keep going unless we charged a fee.”*

(a) **Who is the speaker and who is the listener?**

Ans : The speaker is the nurse, and the listener is the narrator.

(b) **Why was food so expensive?**

Ans : Due to war waged by Germany, starvation had resulted.

(c) **For what purpose does the speaker need to charge a fee?**

Ans : Luica had contracted TB, so money was needed for her medical expenses.

5. *“They couldn’t do it better,” I agreed.*

(a) **Who is ‘I’ and who are ‘they’?**

Ans : ‘I’ is the narrator, and ‘they’ refers to Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) **What great thing had the above mentioned people done?**

Ans : The determination of the brothers to do so many

jobs to provide for their sister.

(c) **Do you think the speaker is earnest in his saying?**

Ans : The speaker is sincere and full of admiration for the boys.

6. *‘When the resistance movement began secretly to form they were among the first to join. When the war was over and we had peace at last, they came back to their beloved sister.’*

(a) **Who are the “they” referred to here?**

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans : Here ‘they’ refers to the two brothers, Nicola and Jacopo.

(b) **Why did they join the resistance movement?**

Ans : They joined the resistance movement because the war waged by Germany had killed their father, destroyed their house and had separated them from their sister.

(c) **What had happened to their sister?**

Ans : Their sister, Lucia, who wanted to be a singer, had contracted tuberculosis of the spine due to cold and starvation.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **Nicola said to the narrator, “Waiting for the last bus from Padua. We shall sell all our papers, when it comes in.” Why were the boys waiting for the last bus?**

Ans. Both the brothers — Nicola and Jacopo were desperate to make as much money as possible to provide medical care for their sister Lucia, who was undergoing treatment for T.B. They worked late at night and were waiting for the last bus to sell the unsold newspapers.

2. **Why did the two boys survive only on black bread and figs, despite making a decent earning?**

Ans. The boys did not wish to spend any money on themselves. They just ate the minimum required for survival. Lucia’s treatment was expensive so they willingly gave away all the money they earned for her recuperation. Their own misery or poverty did not mean anything to the boys.

3. **Why does the narrator make an offer for help to the two boys? What does it entail?**

Ans. The narrator is very impressed by the hard work

and zest exhibited by the two brothers. His visit was coming to an end, so the narrator offered help as the last sign of goodwill. Jacopo requested the narrator to take them to Poleta, which was 30 km away. Since the narrator had already given the day off to his driver, he volunteered to drive the boys, himself.

4. **For what reason does Jacopo request for a lift to Poleta?**

Ans. Lucia is Jacopo’s and Nicola’s sister who was undergoing medical treatment for tuberculosis of the spine at Poleta. The boys were working very hard to provide for their sister and went frequently to look her up. Jacopo wanted to save the expenses of the trip, so he requested the narrator for a lift to Poleta.

5. **Why did the narrator enter the large red-roofed villa?**

Ans. Both the boys looked poor and bedraggled. When they halted before a beautiful villa, the narrator was surprised. Out of curiosity, he couldn’t restrain himself,

and entered the red-roofed villa to know the reason for the trip made by the two boys.

6. What scene does the narrator see through the glass partition?

Ans. The narrator saw that the two brothers were seated on a hospital bed, with a girl of about 20 years. She appeared to be their sister. There was so much love and affection visible and the scene looked like a happy family reunion.

7. What did the narrator discover regarding the family background of the two boys? How did the war affect their family?

Ans. The nurse, who was looking after Lucia, told the narrator the entire story of the two boys. All the three children belonged to a prosperous family and Lucia was training to be a singer. The war waged by Germany killed their father, their house was destroyed by a bomb and the boys were separated from their sister. Due to neglect, Lucia contracted T.B.

8. The nurse said regarding the two boys, “I don’t know what they do, I don’t ask. Work is scarce in Verona.” What does this remark reflect upon the speaker?

Ans. The nurse was very surprised how the boys managed to bring in sufficient money for the treatment of their sister, when work was scarce in the city. The nurse had no idea how hard the boys worked and how they tried to pitch in for all kinds of work that was available. The comment reveals that even the nurse respected the privacy of the boys and wanted to retain their dignity by not prodding them.

9. Why didn’t the two boys disclose their problems to the author? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. The boys were working hard to provide all possible help to their sister, Lucia, who was suffering from

tuberculosis of the spine. They did not disclose their problems to the author as they wished to retain their pride and dignity. They did not want their private suffering to be made public.

10. What traits of the boys attracted the narrator to them? How were the children helpful to the narrator? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. The narrator was attracted towards the boys due to the zest and willingness, demonstrated by them for undertaking all kind of work. The boys were also very eager to provide all kinds of comfort to the author. They were always at beck and call of the author.

11. What were the hardships faced by Nicola and Jacop?

Ans. The children’s father had died in the war, waged by Germany. A bomb had destroyed their house, their sister had contracted tuberculosis due to cold and starvation. The two boys worked day in and day out, took every possible job, starved themselves to provide for their sister’s treatment and built, from the rubble of their house, a shelter for themselves.

12. What provoked the author’s interest in the two boys of Verona? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. The author found the zest and willingness of the boys for undertaking all kind of work—selling strawberries, polishing shoes, taking tourists round the city — remarkable. The author found the boys to be very innocent and friendly.

13. How did Luigi show his disapproval on seeing the two boys and why? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. When the author and his companion Luigi saw the boys selling strawberries, they were shabbily dressed. Luigi disapproved of them due to their skinny and shabby appearance and cautioned the author against purchasing the fruit since better quality strawberries could be procured from the market.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Nicola is happy to see the improvement in his sister’s condition. He writes a letter to his friend James, expressing his feelings and satisfaction they were deriving in their valiant efforts to help their sister. Write the letter on his behalf.

Ans. Oxford Street
ABC City

Date :

Dear James,

I just wish to share my happiness with you that Lucia is really showing signs of improvement and maybe the day is not far off, when she will walk and sing again. The hard work and the struggle that Jacopo and I have put in is proving worthwhile and reaping a harvest. Believe

me, Lucia has become our prime focus, day in and day out. We are single-mindedly driven by one sole reason — Lucia’s recuperation from tuberculosis. The wounds inflicted by war would be forgotten if Lucia gets well. Our efforts have received God’s grace. Please pray for me.

Love,
Nicola

2. **Both the boys have left a deep imprint on the author’s minds. When the author gets back to his city, he writes an article titled, “PROFILES IN COURAGE”, recounting the brave efforts of the two brothers. Respecting their feelings, he uses fictitious names for the two boys. Write the article.**

Ans. Profiles in Courage

War can destabilise people, it tends to break human spirit and it is extremely difficult to bounce back and struggle again. This extraordinary feat was performed by two brothers of Verona, who with great grit and perseverance, not only saved themselves but also provided for their sister, who had contracted TB. Both slaved day in and day out, took on every possible job, worked late nights, starved themselves but still remained cheerful. They were too mature for their age and never gave vent to their misery. By saving their sister, building a house out of rubble, they have become role-models for others, by their superhuman efforts.

3. **The nurse is full of admiration for the two brothers and their sister Lucia. She is astonished at the great efforts all are making towards their future. Lucia is bravely fighting her handicap, her brothers are defying all physical barriers to aid their sister. The nurse writes a letter to her sister Mary, praising this family of fighters who are the real survivors in the great battle of life.**

Ans. Park Street
ABC City
15th October, 20.....

Dear Mary,

Sorry, I couldn’t write earlier. As you know, I am in Poleta, looking after a bedridden girl of 20, who has contracted TB. Her name is Lucia and she is very cheerful and bravely fighting her handicap. Mary, you’d not believe

how extraordinary her two brothers are! Both the brothers are very young. Their parents had died in the war and now they are slaving everyday to provide medical treatment for their sister. I have never asked what they do, but they bring sufficient money for Lucia’s treatment. The brothers face all the hardships, they are sacrificing everything to provide the best care for their sister. Even she is showing great signs of recovery. I hope I live to see that day.

Love,
Megan

4. **Answer any one of the following in about 150 words.**

“The two boys’ devotion had touched me deeply. War had not broken their spirit. Their selfless action brought a new nobility to human life, gave promise of a greater hope for human society.”

Comment upon this statement made by the narrator of the lesson, “Two Gentlemen of Verona” bringing out the reasons. **[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]**

Ans. War, tragedies and adversities shake the people to the core. They prove to be great testing times which end up in glory or in disaster. In the similar circumstances amidst the ravages of war, the two boys, Nicola and Jacopo depicted great maturity, wisdom and faith. Their diehard nature prevented them from succumbing to the cruelty of war, waged by Germany.

The children’s father had been killed in the war and a bomb had destroyed their home and rendered them homeless. They kept themselves alive by building a shelter out of the rubble of their house. Their sister, Lucia, contracted tuberculosis of the spine due to cold and starvation and had been admitted to a hospital. They pitched in their best efforts to sustain their sister, Lucia. Both slaved day in and day out, took on every possible job, worked late nights, starved themselves to earn sufficient money for Lucia’s treatment. Their own misery and poverty did not mean anything to the boys. By their earnest endeavour and selfless attitude they brought a new nobility to human life and promised a greater hope for human society.

5. **Answer the following in about 150 words.**

You are Lucia the ailing sister of the two boys. Write a letter to your friend about your past life and your present situation, as you are on the way to recovery, with the help of your younger brothers.

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. Dear Margret

I just want to share my happiness with you that I am on my way to recovery with the help of Nicola and Jacopa.

Margret, you must be astonished by what I am talking about, because you do not know what happened to me and my family after Germany waged a war on us. I could not tell you earlier as I lost your address in the rubble of our home which was destroyed by a bomb. My father was killed in the war and we three were rendered homeless. My budding career in the field of singing also came to an end. Worst of all, I contracted tuberculosis of the spine and was admitted to a hospital. It is only

the diehard spirit of two angels — Nicola and Jacopo — which has kept me alive. My heart bleeds when I see the deprived and ragged faces of my younger brothers who are valiantly trying to sustain me. They never tell me what they do, but I can well imagine the burden they are bearing at such a young age.

It was only yesterday when I had such a fulfilled life. I can never forgive war. I am eagerly waiting for the day when I will walk! when I will sing! when my brothers will enjoy a childhood they had missed.

Rest in the next letter.

Yours

Lucia

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Observe both the pictures given below. Who do you think are 'heroes' in the real sense? Who are heroes according to you? Give reasons to justify your answer.



2. Surf the Internet or find the newspaper of 26th January, 2011. Locate names and profiles of two brave children who received the bravery award on the Republic Day.
 - 1 Write them down.
 - 1 Read them aloud in the class.
3. Identify a boy of extraordinary resilience and perseverance from your circle of friends. Note his qualities. Write his brief character-sketch.
4. While going to school you see a boy about your age selling flowers. Write his story in the first person.

5. Read the following story :

A boy was drowning in a river and he shouted for help. A kind man who was passing by jumped into the river and saved the boy. As the man was about to leave, the boy said, "Thank you." The man asked, "What are you thanking me for?"

The boy replied, "For saving my life, sir." The man looked into the boy's eyes and said, "Son, if you really want to thank me, make sure when you grow up, that your life was worth saving."

"I understand what you said, sir," replied the boy, "I will try to make my life worthwhile."

Now write down the following.

1. Three things I can do to make life worthwhile.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

