

Chapter 1 : Two Gentlemen Of Verona

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

1. 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

Answer

(a) the boys were untidy and poorly dressed

2. The narrator was most impressed by the boys'

- (a) desire to earn money
- (b) willingness to work
- (c) ability to perform many tasks
- (d) sense of fun

Answer

(b) willingness to work

3. Nicola was not pleased when Jacopo asked the narrator to drive them to Poleta as he

- (a) did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans
- (b) preferred going to Poleta by train so that he could enjoy the scenery
- (c) did not want to ask anyone for favours
- (d) did not want to take help from someone he did not know well

Answer

(a) did not want a stranger to become involved with their plans

4. The narrator did not go inside Lucia's room as

- (a) he did not want to intrude into their privacy
- (b) he thought that the boys would object
- (c) Lucia would not welcome a stranger
- (d) the boys would feel he was spying on them

Answer

(a) he did not want to intrude into their privacy

5. The boys were the first to join the resistance movement against the Germans because

- (a) the Germans had hurt their sister
- (b) the Germans ruled the city
- (c) the Germans had ruined their family
- (d) the Germans had destroyed their home

Answer

(c) the Germans had ruined their family

6. The author did not speak to the boys on their return journey because
- (a) he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret
 - (b) he thought the boys were ashamed of their sister's condition
 - (c) he thought they wouldn't tell him the truth
 - (d) he thought the boys might ask him for money for their sister

Answer

- (a) he thought the boys would prefer to keep their secret

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5. What do you understand by the following statements?

- (a) "We do many things, sir," Nicola answered seriously. He glanced at us hopefully.

Answer

This statement shows that the two boys were not ashamed of doing menial jobs such as shoe polish or fruit-vending. When the narrator saw them working as shoe shine boys he was surprised as he had seen them selling wild strawberries the previous day. He asked them about it. Then Nicola, the elder brother spoke that they did many things. Nicola said that they also did a lot of other things for a living. The boys hoped that the narrator would ask for their services and in return would earn some good money.

- (b) He coloured deeply under his sunburn, then grew pale

Answer

This statement shows the uneasiness of the speaker, Nicola. The narrator was astonished to see that boys worked hard day and night and yet lived meagerly. He wanted to know what the boys did with the money they earned. When he questioned Nicola, he appeared uncomfortable. Perhaps the boys were not used to anybody questioning them regarding their earnings, and the narrator's question embarrassed them.

(c) He smiled uncomfortably. "Just plans, sir," he answered in a low voice.

Answer

When the narrator suggested that the boys were saving to emigrate to the States. Nicola responded that how much ever they wished to do that, currently they had other plans, which he was unwilling to and uncomfortable sharing with the narrator.

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

Answer

This statement reflects that both the boys Nicola and Jacopo were mature enough to face the hardships of life. They were only 13 and 12 years yet they looked and behaved wonderfully remarkable. They were childish and innocent yet they were wise, responsible and mature.

6. Answer the following questions briefly.

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

Answer

Luigi, the driver didn't approve of the shabby appearance of Nicola and Jacopo. They were wearing old and worn out clothes.

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

Answer

They were very impressed by the boys because they were highly committed and devoted towards work at such a young age. They were ready to do all sorts of odd jobs to earn money. They exhibited dedication, determination and sincerity while working.

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

Answer

The narrator was surprised to see Nicola and Jacopo shining shoes because he thought that selling fruits was their only occupancy.

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

Answer

The boys were useful to the author in many ways. They showed them city as guide, helped them in getting a pack of American cigarettes, bought tickets for the opera for them, told them about good restaurants and ran all their errands.

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

Answer

The two boys were selling newspapers in the windy, deserted square at night. They were waiting for the last bus from Padua. They would sell their newspapers when it came in.

It shows their sense of hardwork and patience. They could work till midnight.

(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?

Answer

When the narrator saw them selling newspapers till midnight, he asked them if they must do work so hard as they both looked tired. . At this, Nicola replied that

they were not complaining about it. It means that both the boys had a lot of courage and patience of working hard. It shows their willingness and readiness to work.

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

Answer

The boys don't disclose their problems to the narrator when the latter asks them about their plans because they do not want to lose their dignity and self-respect by not asking anyone for sympathy or financial help.

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

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

Answer

'Appearances are deceptive'. It is very much true in the case of two boys but in the positive sense. In spite of their appearance, the narrator bought fruit from them. In the following days, the narrator discovered that the boys did a lot of other things apart from selling fruit: they sold newspapers, they were shoeshine boys, tourist guides and ran errands. All this made the narrator think that the boys were working so hard to save money to emigrate to America. However, it is revealed during the course of the story that their only motive was to be able to pay for their sister's treatment. War had destroyed most of their family and yet it had not filled them with despair. The boys were working day and night to save whatever was left. Behind their shabby appearances were hidden two noble souls whose dedication and selflessness promises a new hope for mankind.

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

Answer

The boys loved their sister. She was the only family left after the war was over. When they realized that their sister had tuberculosis of the spine, they got her admitted to a hospital. The ultimate mission of the boys' life centered on 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?

Answer

Both Nicola and Jacopo show selflessness and reflect great dignity in their behaviour. They are deeply devoted to save 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. Look at the Italic words in the following examples.

- (a) We bought their biggest basket, then set off toward town.
- (b) One night we came upon them in the windy and deserted square.
- (c) He bit his lip, then in a rather put out tone he said, 'Very well.'
- (d) I shook my head and turned away.

Here are a few more. Match the phrases to their meanings.

Phrases	Meanings
set up	to start on a journey
break down	to tolerate a situation or a person
set off	to lose control of your feelings and start crying
put up	with to enter
put off	to be faced with or opposed by
put on	to start/ establish a company
come in	to refuse/ reject
come across	to postpone
come up against	to try to get help/advice/ sympathy from someone
turn down	to wear
turn in to	meet or find by chance
turn to	to inform on or deliver up

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.

Answer

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2. Early in the morning we packed our bags and set off for a hike over the mountain.

3. Janvi came across some photographs of her grandfather in the old trunk.

4. My father set up his own business 10 years ago.

5. The Bank turned down Paul's request for a loan.

6. The Corporation's decision to reduce the leave of the employees come up against a lot of opposition.

10. The narrator realises why Nicola and Jacopo work so hard. Yet he does not go in to meet their sister nor does he speak to them about what he learns from the nurse. Working in groups, discuss the following aspects of the story and share your views with the class.

(a) The love and devotion, and the family values Nicola and Jacopo display.

Answer

Nicola is only 13 years old and Jacopo is 12. Yet, they have a man's heart each. They work hard day and night, never mind doing petty jobs like vending strawberries, hawking newspapers, polishing shoes. They show tourists round the town and run errands. They do all this to earn money which is used for the treatment of their sister who has been suffering from tuberculosis of spine. It vividly depicts their love, devotion and the family values.

(b) Their pride in themselves and their family

Answer

Nicola and Jacopo are not ashamed of doing petty jobs to earn money for the treatment of their sister, Lucia who is afflicted with tuberculosis. War has not broken their spirits. They are proud of themselves and their family. Though children, they do not want any help or favour from anyone. It shows their pride in themselves and their family.

(c) The trust they place in the narrator

Answer

Before leaving, the narrator asks if he would be of any help to them, Jacopo requests the narrator to send them to Poleta in their car which they might not have asked anybody. After initial disagreement between the brothers and

reassurance from the narrator they agree to go with him. They are very comfortable and trust him completely.

(d) The reason the narrator does not disclose to them that he knows their secret.

Answer

Nicola initially is not comfortable with the narrator driving them to Poleta. After some thinking they agree. The moment they reach their destination they jump out of the car and do not ask the narrator to come with them. On the other hand, they suggest him to spend time at a café in the village. The narrator understands their reluctance to share their purpose of visit with him and, therefore, does not disclose to them that he knows their secret.

Writing

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

Answer

IT DOESN'T TAKE YEARS TO GAIN MATURITY

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. The two young boys depict great maturity, wisdom and faith in the invincibility of human spirit. The die-hard nature of two boys changes the nature 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. Their intrinsic vitality encourages them to take up any work that is available i.e. 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're single-mindedly focused on their sister's treatment. The boys resort to any kind of emotional blackmail or charity to provide for their sister. Their dignity and perseverance show their extreme faith in their own ability to cater to their sister's medical treatment.

So, the relentless struggle of 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.

Answer

30th November

Dear Diary

I am very happy today because my brothers Nicola and Jacopo came to see me. They told me that they had come with a kind man by car. Jacopo was chirping. You know, he is as lively as a squirrel. Nicola is mature like a man. He looks after me as parents. How loving and affectionate they are!

I feel very lonely when they are not here. I know, they have to go to city to find some work thee. After all, they have to pay the hospital charges every week.

The demon of war has snatched our comfortable and cultured life. Dear Father, I remember, dear father was a famous singer. I, myself, had been training as a singer. But the Germans came with their bombs and destroyed our home. We are homeless, starbing and suffering. It was a bad winter.

For months, we had to keep ourselves alive in a sort of shelter we built with our own hands amidst the rubble. For three years, the Germans ruled the city. We grew up to hate the Germans. Both of them joined the resistance movement. last year when the war was over, we had peace at lat. they came back. They found me ailing. I was diagnosed suffering from tuberculosis of the spine.

They brought me in the hospital. Now, I am showing steady recovery. One day I will walk and sing again.

This is all due to their efforts. I understand that they at this young age. Normally, an elder siblings looks after the younger ones, takes care of them. In my case, it is

opposite. I will be grateful to them for the sacrifice they are making for me. They are embodiments of love, devotion and sincerity. They are my family. Moreover, they are my God on this earth. I am indebted to them for what they are doing forever. I owe them my gratitude.

May God bless these noble souls long and happy life!

Amen!

Lucia