



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2025-26)
CLASS – X
TOPIC- TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

CHARACTER SKETCH

Nicola and Jacopo are two brothers who are 13 and 12 years respectively. They belong to Verona a city in Italy. They are engaged in different works to earn money. like-selling fruits (like strawberries), polishing shoes. guiding tourists, selling newspapers etc. They are too small for doing these small works but they all do this in pursuit to earn money. This shows that they are so hardworking. They don't see whether it is day or night, they just focus on the amount of work they have to complete that day (like selling newspaper's part, even in the night they were travelling from one place to another to sell the bunch of newspaper they had) they are mature enough to understand the situation. They were collecting money to pay fees for their sister's treatment of tuberculosis and to make their sister well they don't even spend money on themselves (neither they wore proper clothes as they were shabbily dressed nor they ate enough food. They only ate black bread). this shows that they are too understanding and they too care for their sister. The whole story revolves around these two boys and their hard work and by seeing their matureness they are considered as Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Nicola - The Leader:

Nicola, the elder brother, is portrayed as a natural leader with a strong sense of responsibility. He takes care of his younger brother Jacopo and the group of homeless children they live with. Nicola is described as intelligent, resourceful, and mature beyond his years. His leadership qualities are evident in his ability to make quick decisions and devise clever plans.

Nicola is highly protective of those he cares about and is willing to go to great lengths to ensure their safety. He is depicted as brave and selfless, always putting the needs of others before his own. Nicola's character is also characterized by his deep loyalty, particularly towards his brother Jacopo and the other children in their group.

Jacopo - The Innocent Dreamer:

Jacopo, the younger brother, is a contrasting character to Nicola. He is portrayed as innocent and dreamy, often lost in his own imaginative world. Jacopo has a childlike wonder and curiosity about the world around him, which serves as a source of inspiration for the other children.

Despite his dreamy nature, Jacopo is also shown to be kind-hearted and caring. He has a strong bond with his brother Nicola and looks up to him as a role model. Jacopo's loyalty to his brother is unwavering, and he often relies on Nicola for guidance and protection.

The Dynamic Duo:

Together, Nicola and Jacopo form a dynamic duo. Nicola's leadership qualities complement Jacopo's innocent nature, creating a balanced relationship. They rely on each other for emotional support and guidance throughout their adventures in Venice.

The contrasting traits of Nicola and Jacopo add depth to their characters and contribute to the overall narrative of the novel. Their bond as brothers is a central theme in the story, emphasizing the importance of family and loyalty.

Overall, Nicola and Jacopo are well-developed characters with distinct personalities that captivate readers. Their journey through the streets of Venice showcases their resilience, determination, and unwavering brotherly love.

SUMMARY-

The narrator who is a very sensitive and kind person is driving down towards the foothills of the Alps with his driver. On the outskirts of Verona, he meets Nicola and Jacopo, selling wild strawberries. Nicola is 13 years of age and Jacopo is 12 years of age and both are brothers. The two young boys are in shabby clothes. Thus, the driver is not interested in buying the strawberries from them. But, in spite of that, the narrator buys the biggest basket from them and drives towards the town.

Next morning, the narrator and his driver again find the boys doing the shoe-shining work. The narrator being amazed asks them and finds out that they do a lot many things to earn a living. They also tell them that they work as guides. Thus, the narrator asks them to show them Juliet's tomb. Here, the narrator feels that they are sincere, innocent, pleasant, earnest and honest young boys. Also, they were ready to help the narrator in all ways.

On one night, the narrator finds the boys selling newspapers. He could not stop himself from asking them why are they working so hard. Nicola tells him that there is some need but he does not elaborate. While Jacopo requests him to drop them to the village 'Polenta' in his car. The narrator being kind agrees to drop them to the village that is around 30 kilometres away. After reaching the village, the boys ask the narrator to wait for them for an hour. But, he could not resist his curiosity and follows the boys. To his surprise, the narrator finds out that the boys have gone to a hospital. In spite of being reluctant to go inside, he sees the boys talking to a girl resembling them.

He thus decides to find out what is happening from the nurse. She tells him that the girl's name is Lucia and she is their sister. Their father who was a widower was killed in a war, their home was destroyed by a bomb and they were left to starve. The boys hated the Germans as they came to rule the village and also joined the resistance movement against them. After the war ended, Lucia got ill with Tuberculosis. They thus had to admit her to the hospital. Hence, they work hard in order to pay for all the hospital bills.

The story ends with the narrator waiting outside the hospital room and saying nothing so as to not give them the impression that he knew their secret. The story teaches us the virtues of honesty, sincerity, courage, determination, and sacrifice that are vital to the existence of humanity.

KEY POINTS

- This is the story of two young boys named, Nicola and Jacopo, who lived in Verona, Italy. They were brothers. They were 13 and 12 years respectively.
- The narrator met the boys at the outskirts of Verona and he bought a box of wild strawberries from them.
- They were dressed in odd clothes and looked shabby.
- The narrator found them undertaking different jobs to earn a living.
- The boys polished shoes, sold newspapers, and did many other jobs to earn money.
- They also took the tourists to the places of their interest-to Juliet's tomb in and around Verona.
- They were very helpful to the narrator and his driver Luigi as they could buy a packet of American cigarettes or arrange seats for the opera.
- The narrator and his companion were impressed at the attitude of the boys to take up any job without any complaint.
- He and his partner wondered what these boys must be doing with all the money they earned.
- When the narrator was leaving Verona on Monday, he asked if he could do anything for them before going.
- The younger brother Jacopo asked the narrator if he could drive them to their village which was 30 miles from Verona.
- The narrator's driver Luigi had the Sunday off but the narrator drove them himself to Poleta.
- They leaped out from the car before a large red-roofed villa and promised to come back within an hour.
- The narrator could not resist his curiosity, so he followed the boys and there he discovered that the villa was actually a hospital. A nurse briefed him the story of the two boys which was equally surprising.
- Nicola and Jacopo lived a comfortable and cultured life with their father and elder sister.
- Their widower father was a well-known singer and was killed in the war against Germany.
- During the war, a bomb blast made them homeless and they were left in the streets with their only elder sister Lucia.
- The children had a tough time reestablishing their house and when they heard about the Resistance movement, they secretly joined the same, leaving their sister behind.
- After the war, they returned home and found that their sister suffering from tuberculosis of the spine.

- They did not give up. They decided to admit their sister in a nursing home and take care of her in every possible way.
- The narrator did not want to intrude into the privacy of the boys hence, he did not meet the boys and their sister in the hospital. He waited for them outside till the boys rejoined him.
- He was all the more impressed by the integrity, dedication and diligence of the boys. He preferred not to embarrass them by questioning about their private life which they never shared with outsiders.
- He ended up the story with the hope that the selfless action of the boys brought a new nobility to human life and it was a greater hope for the entire humanity.
- He liked the gentlemanly qualities of the boys and called them the two gentlemen of Verona.

THEME OF THE STORY “TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA”:

The story “Two Gentlemen of Verona” written by A.J. Cronin is about the sacrifices made by the two young boys to treat their sister who is suffering from tuberculosis. It strongly marks the point that humanity exists till the people face hardships for the better living of their loved ones. The two gentlemen face ups and downs but never complained about a single thing. This portrays their level of courage and dedication. Their sense of maturity is totally commendable. The author draws inspiration from the lives of these gentlemen.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE TITLE

In the story ‘Two gentlemen of Verona’, the two orphan boys Jacopo and Nicola work immensely and exhaustively. They shine shoes, sell newspapers, run errands, and show tourists around the city. They take only figs and black tea as food. They save every penny for the medical treatment of their sister Lucia who is suffering from tuberculosis of the spine. The narrator himself admits that their willingness to work impressed him. They demonstrate an unusual devotion to their work. The objective of their hard work and purpose behind their half-starved daily routine is not known to many in Verona. Anyone may polish shoes or hawk newspapers but it is the magnanimity of heart and nobleness of purpose that actually determines whether one is a real gentleman or a hypocrite. Hence the title “Two Gentlemen of Verona” is justified.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

i. “Well,” I said, “We’re leaving on Monday. Is there anything I can do for you before we go?”

What trait of the narrator is exhibited in the following lines?

a) **Kindness** b) Pride c) Timidness d) Courage

ii. “We could not think of troubling you, Sir.”

Who is the speaker of the following lines.

a) Narrator b) Driver c) **Nicola** d) Jacopa

iii. Why did Luigi discourage the narrator from getting fruits from the boys?

a) they were well dressed

b) their shabby appearance

c) they had too much fruit in stock

d) they were not hungry.

iv. What does the phrase ‘make the rounds’ mean?

a) visit a series of places

b) travel in a circular motion

c) play in a merry go round

d) none of these

v. The narrator was struck by which trait of the boys.

a) shabby appearance

b) willingness to work

c) humility

d) kindness

vi. Nicola and Jacopa used their earnings to

a) buy fancy things

b) devour their favourite dishes

c) provide medical treatment for their sick sister.

d) go for a vacation

vii. “I’ll drive you out myself.” Which was their destination?

a) Poleta b) Germany c) London d) Paris

viii. The narrator assumed the boys to be saving money for

a) buying a car

b) emigrating to America

c) buying a home

d) medical treatment of their sister

ix. 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
- x. Find the word that means the same as agitation.

a) vexation b) vestibule c) demeanour d) tunic

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

- i. Although Nicola and Jacopo are young boys, the narrator refers to them as Gentlemen. Why did he do so?

The boys were homeless and orphaned. Their sister was suffering from spinal tuberculosis. They put in a lot of effort to pay for her therapy. Their spirits were not broken and they remained committed and selfless. They were independent and avoided any sort of obligation.

- ii. State one reason why Nicola wanted to decline the narrator's offer?

Nicola was matured and committed. He and his younger brother Jacopo ran errands to meet their ends. Nicola was independent and hesitant to take any offer from anyone.

- iii. Who is Lucia? What is she suffering from?

Lucia was Nicola and Jacopo's older sister. She had Tuberculosis of the spine and was receiving treatment in a hospital.

- iv. Didn't the two boys disclose their problems to the narrator?

Nicola and Jacopo were both too polite to bother a stranger with their personal concerns. They didn't want anyone intruding into their personal space. As a result, they kept their difficulties hidden.

- v. Which qualities of the boys impressed the narrator in the story 'Two Gentlemen of Verona'?

The boys impressed the narrator by their diligence and commitment. Moreover, the narrator noticed that they possessed a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion while trying to help their sister get cured from her ailment.

- vi. Why did Nicola and Jacopo develop hatred for the Germans?

Their house had been attacked, and the Germans had killed their father. They were orphaned and had nowhere to go after the war. As a result, they hated the Germans.

- vii. Enlist the multiple works done by both the brothers to serve their purpose.

They polished shoes, sold fruit, hawked newspapers, conducted tourists round the town, sold tickets and ran errands.

- viii. What were the narrator's feelings for the boys at first? What change did he undergo and why?

The narrator was initially surprised to notice the boys working round the clock. He wondered though they earned enough money, they scarcely spent on themselves. Later,

on discovering the truth about their ailing sister and her treatment, he admired the boys' selfless sacrifice and felt over whelmed by their dedication.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

i. He smiled uncomfortably. 'Just plans sir'. He answered in a low voice.

- a) Who is 'he' in the above lines?
- b) Why did 'he' smile uncomfortably?
- c) What are the 'plans' being talked about?

Ans.i. a) 'He' is Nicola in above lines.

b) He smiled uncomfortably because he didn't want to share his plans with the narrator.

c) The 'plans' being talked about are those of emigrating to America.

ii. The following afternoon we drove to the tiny village set high upon the hill side.

- (a) Who went on a trip to the tiny village?
- (b) Which village had they driven to?
- (c) Why was the narrator surprised when Jacopo directed him as to where he should stop?

Ans. ii. a) The narrator and the two brothers, Nicola and Jacopo went on the trip.

b) They had gone to Poleta.

c) He thought they would stop at some humble dwelling, but Jacopo guided him to a large villa.

iii. "The two boys were seated at the bedside of a girl of about 20, who propped up on pillows wearing a pretty lace jacket, was listening to their chatter, her eyes soft and tender."

- a) Who are the two boys referred to here?
- b) Where are the boys at present?
- c) Who is the girl? Why was she propped up on the pillows?

Ans. iii. a) Nicola and Jacopo.

b) In a hospital at Poleta, visiting their ailing sister, Lucia.

c) The girl was their sister, Lucia. She was suffering from tuberculosis of the spine and was undergoing treatment.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

i. 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.

The tale of Nicola and Jacopo imparts a moral lesson about trust, faith, and love. God, the Almighty, endows humans with these traits. We might refer to these as divine attributes, without

which it would be difficult for us to live in harmony with others. We shouldn't act egotistically or without regard for others. We must be careful not to offend people's sensibilities. We ought to trust other people. We need to have mutual understanding, love, and concern for one another. The best thing that God has made is us. Compared to animals, we are unique. Only the human virtues of love, faith, and trust set us apart from other animals.

ii. After her brothers' visit, Lucia writes a page in her diary about her past life and her present situation.

Dear Diary,

Though I am sick, I find solace when I think of my devoted brothers. I am extremely grateful to God for giving me two responsible brothers who have sacrificed every bit of their lives for treating me. Today my brothers paid me a customary visit. They brought me fruit, flowers, and wonderful books. We talked about the good old days when we shared a lovely home with our parents. After that, the vile Germans stormed our village, burned down our home, and killed our father, a talented singer. When he played at the opera house, the audience's jubilant applause filled the entire space. Unfortunately, today all this remains just as a dream. My brothers put a lot of effort into getting me here. I am relieved that I will soon be allowed to stand after hearing from my physicians. Once out of this place, I will succeed as a singer and get my brothers enrolled in a reputable institution and provide them quality education.

I am sincerely praying for my quick recovery so that I can no longer remain as a burden on my brothers.

Lucia

iii. How does the story Two Gentlemen of Verona by A.J. Cronin promises hope for society?

The significance of human connection and responsibility to one's family are emphasised throughout the story. The two brothers were rendered homeless due to the war. They lost their parents and were orphaned. Nicola and Jacopo took up a variety of jobs and carried out errands to earn money for their sister's treatment who was suffering from Spinal Tuberculosis. The two youngsters' spirits were unbreakable despite the hardships in their lives. The boys and their dedication towards hard work offer a new hope for society in this world. The sacrifice and their devotion shown by them at their tender age is praise worth and commendable. Their deeds stand as a positive hope for the society although their daily lives were not a bed of roses.

iv. The journey to Poleta changed the narrator's previous impression about the boys. He was deeply moved by their story. He could not sleep that night. He wrote about them in his travelogue. Imagine you are the narrator and write his experiences with the boys.

Today I met two boys who work incredibly hard. I observed them performing several tasks. They were thrifty people, and it showed in both the way they looked and the way they ate. I assumed they were setting aside money to emigrate to America. Before I left Verona, I drove them to Poleta and discovered how difficult their existence was. I learnt of their father's death and the devastation of their home. I came to know of the fact that their sister was suffering from Spinal tuberculosis and they were saving to pay her medical bills. I was quite moved by their sense of responsibility. The two boys' dignity in standing up for themselves and not allowing themselves to be pitied by others impressed me.

I believe that very few people on Earth have such sterling qualities of sacrifice, responsibility and act as role models.

v. Both the boys at Verona were full of grit, determination and hope. At a young age they exhibited qualities that are difficult to come even in adults. This story teaches us not to lose hope and courage even in adverse situations. Elaborate.

Jacopo and Nicola, at a very young age faced the hardships of life, their parents' death rendered them homeless and they suffered starvation and the cold winter. The family struggled for life, they lived in the shelter made of broken building walls and bricks. After the war, they got back to their sister, and found her suffering from tuberculosis of spine, which was another shock to these poor kids. As they were the only family of their sister, they had to work and arrange money for her medical treatment. Despite facing so many problems in their early life, the boys did not lose hope. The brothers' positive approach and determination to get their sister cured compelled them to work hard. In order to pay their sister's hospital bills, they sold fruits, newspapers, chauffeured tourists around town, cleaned shoes, and ran many such chores. Their spirits were not broken by the adversity, and they remained committed and selfless. As a result, the two boys stand as an epitome of sacrifice and hope. The message conveyed through this is we should face life as it comes. Running away from problems is not the solution but finding ways to come out of the problems showcases the real determination, grit, and strength of an individual.

ii. Imagine you are Nicola. You are touched by the empathy and the kindness of the narrator towards you and your brother. Thinking that such good people are rare to find in otherwise hostile world, record your sweet encounter with the narrator in the form of a diary entry putting down your experiences from the day you met him.

Dear Diary,

Every day begins with a new promise of life, a hope for a better tomorrow. It is with this attitude that we wake up every day. Every day we meet countless customers. Some are forgotten, while some leave a permanent imprint on the mind. Let me tell you about the experience Jacopa and I had a few days back. We met a very honourable gentleman, whom we addressed as 'Sir'. I still remember the day when we first met him. He bought the biggest basket of strawberries from us and we were delighted. He kept on observing us while we were doing various jobs. During his stay in the town, we enjoyed helping him in many ways. He readily drove us to Poleta without any hesitation. I felt guilty as my brother and myself had not disclosed about our sister's ailment. The experience of meeting such a person was very rare and I felt obliged for his kindness and care that he poured on us. Suddenly I felt protected as it had been a very long time since we were bereft of happiness. I wondered why good people stay for such a short time in our lives!

My heart felt heavy and I wish I had expressed my love and regard for him before he left.

Nicola.