

Unit

1

Prose

Two Gentlemen of Verona
A J Cronin

Warm Up

Life is full of ups and downs. It has pleasant surprises as well as rude shocks. Nevertheless, every incident offers a lesson for us to learn and evolve into better individuals.

Mention some unexpected challenges or adversities one could face in life.

What qualities do you think one should possess to handle hardships and overcome them?

Here is a story about love, devotion, sacrifice, sincerity and maturity displayed by two little boys in their actions to save the life of their sister who suffers from tuberculosis of the spine. Read the story to find out how their actions give a new hope for humanity.

As we drove through the foothills of the Alps two small boys stopped us on the outskirts of Verona. They were selling wild strawberries. “Don’t buy,” warned Luigi, our cautious driver. “You will get much better fruit in Verona. Besides, these boys.....”

He **shrugged** his shoulders to convey his disapproval of their shabby appearance.

One boy had on a worn jersey and cut-off khaki pants; the other a shortened army **tunic** gathered in loose folds about his skinny frame. Yet, gazing at the two little figures, with their brown skins, tangled hair and dark earnest eyes, we felt ourselves strangely attracted. My companion spoke to the boys, discovered that they were brothers. Nicola, the elder, was 13; Jacopo, who barely came up to the door handle of the car, was nearly 12. We bought their biggest basket, and then set off toward town.