

Perfect unison



Like many youngsters, they rarely walked anywhere; they named a goal and ran for it—the lemon tree, the bicycle shop, the kitchen door. A passer-by might hear a sudden shout from the one or the other, and feel a rush of wind as they both broke into a race towards the intended mark. Then both of them would lunge for the target and collapse, panting with laughter. It was as if they had wings on their heels that lifted them up and propelled them forward. But they ran together, neither one the winner, neither the loser, their friendship more profound than the mere winning of any contest.

It was the last day of the holidays and the day was heavy with a dust of fallen leaves blown by gentle breezes. As the friends ran through the little town, they clung to the passing summer in their minds. Each one's head swam with thoughts: one last dive in the deep, icy waters of the lake; one last climb up the cliff to the secret cave; one last ice-cream melting and dripping down a crisp, honey-flavoured cone.

With just a glance at each other, the pair changed direction and sprinted out of town. The bitumen gave way to dust and gravel, the houses relinquished their hold on the Earth and trees reasserted their position. They were tall, slender-trunked and smooth-barked with branches that overhung the road and darkened the sky. Elongated leaves the colour of mouldy earth hung down and brushed against their backs.

A partly-hidden track led off the road and wound through the bush. The pair silently turned, left the parched road and headed into the undergrowth, racing past thickets of small trees and bushes that reached out to grab them with thorny limbs. With a final rush, they broke through, shouting and laughing. In perfect unison, they dived onto the sandy beach that fringed that part of the lake. They were the only ones there on that late summer day and they savoured the silence and their isolation. They started exploring the shoreline, soaking up the peacefulness of the lake and the warmth of the sun. As they made their way further around the lake, a small dinghy came into view on the furthest shore. It was rocking, rocking, backwards, forwards with the wind-whipped waves. There didn't seem to be anyone around and the boat didn't seem to be anchored.

22. When they raced each other, the friends gained most enjoyment from
- (A) spending their time together.
 - (B) choosing their next goal.
 - (C) startling passers-by.
 - (D) trying to be first.
23. Which of the following is an **ANTONYM** for 'profound', as it is used in the text?
- (A) irrelevant
 - (B) superficial
 - (C) impractical
 - (D) troublesome
24. The phrase 'Each one's head swam with thoughts' indicates that the friends were
- (A) thinking about the likelihood of a swim.
 - (B) overwhelmed by their vivid thoughts.
 - (C) thinking about many things at once.
 - (D) unable to think clearly.
25. What does the quotation 'With just a glance at each other' reveal about the two friends?
- (A) They had simultaneously noticed something happening.
 - (B) They understood what the other was thinking at that moment.
 - (C) They liked to laugh at each other's facial expressions.
 - (D) They sensed something unusual was about to happen.
26. As the friends ran out of the town, they saw that
- (A) the houses were in a state of disrepair.
 - (B) there were fewer houses than in the town.
 - (C) only the foundations of the houses remained.
 - (D) the houses were being replaced by other buildings.
27. In the quotation 'bushes that reached out to grab them with thorny limbs', the writer has used personification in order to
- (A) compare the legs of the friends with the bushes.
 - (B) emphasise the dryness of the undergrowth.
 - (C) suggest that the bushes may prevent the friends from reaching their destination.
 - (D) contrast the softness of the sand with the harshness of the bush.
28. This text is part of a longer narrative. The main purpose of this text is to
- (A) provide a resolution.
 - (B) develop character and setting.
 - (C) explain how the characters became friends.
 - (D) describe the relationship of the youngsters with the town.