

Making Inferences

Refugee

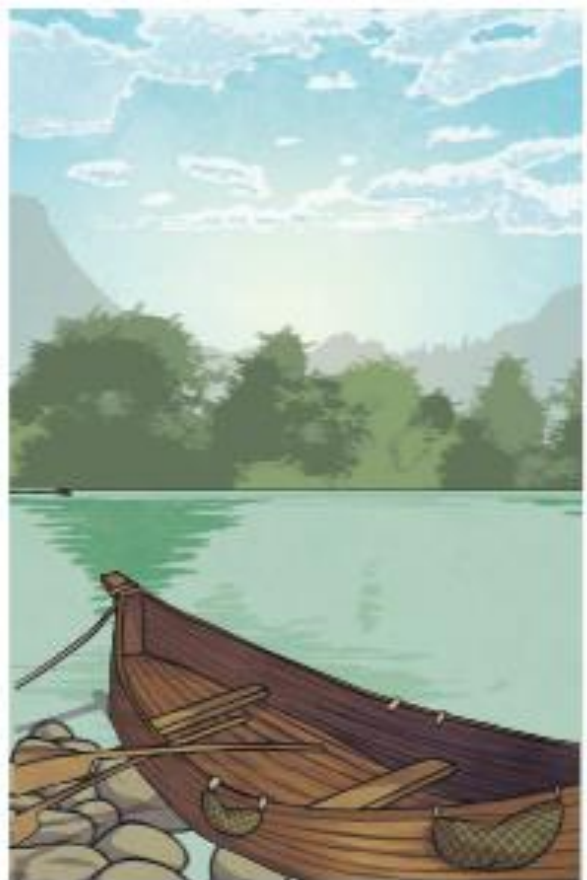
When things are not explained literally in a text, you can use clues to reach a logical conclusion. This is called inference.

Read the short story, then answer the questions in full sentences.

The kindly face in my imaginings never appeared. There was a scant cup of grimy water for each weary traveller and the wave was moved on before the township fell to the same fate as my precious village. The quality of kindness posed a danger that no one was prepared to risk.

Once through the town's guilty streets, there was talk of a boat trip. I looked up with eagerness – maybe this would be the route to safety? Without time to consider, I was bundled onto a small rowing boat with 47 others; far too many for the small vessel, but not enough to carry us all. I considered myself lucky that I secured a place, but at what cost? Until we were well out of sight of land, there was no word of payment, but as soon as the boat rowed over the horizon, the hopeful mood changed to menace. Those that couldn't (or wouldn't) pay were tossed overboard to fend for themselves – whether they could swim or not. The remainder parted with their only belongings; a watch here, a ring there, at times cash or precious belongings crossed hands. The journey to safety was tainted with greed.

Land was sighted, but the owners of the small boat refused to beach. Once more, people were thrown overboard to make their own way to shore and the little boat retreated. How I thanked the moon and stars for my wasted youth at the village pond! Helping those I could, we scabbled, bedraggled, onto dry land. Like ants from their hill, people came to greet us with waving arms and clothes and blankets. The smell of freshly baked bread filled my nose and filled with relief, hope and expectation, my legs buckled underneath me and I fell, exhausted, to the ground.



Questions

1. How would the author feel if there was no kind face to greet the travellers?

2. Explain how kindness could be dangerous.

3. Why are the streets described as 'guilty'?

4. Why do you think the boat owners waited until the travellers were well out to sea before they asked them for money?

5. Why was the author thankful for his time at the village pond?
