

Beloved Boles

This chapter, titled "**Beloved Boles**" by Maxim Gorky, tells a poignant story about human loneliness, the need for connection, and the danger of making superficial judgments.

Summary of the Chapter

The story is narrated by a student living in Moscow who shares a building with a Polish woman named **Teresa**. Initially, the student is repulsed by her; he describes her as a tall, muscular woman with a coarse face, bushy eyebrows, and a frighteningly deep "bass" voice. He avoids her, often locking his door and judging her when he sees her drunk.

One day, Teresa approaches him with a surprising request: she asks him to write a letter for her. She dictates a deeply affectionate letter to a man named **Boles**, whom she calls her "beloved" and "faithful lover". The student is internally mocking, finding it hard to believe that such a "coarse" woman could be a "sorrowing little dove" in love.

Later, Teresa returns and asks him to write a *reply* from Boles to her. The student becomes angry, accusing her of lying because he realizes Boles doesn't exist. However, Teresa breaks down and confesses the truth: **neither Boles nor the "other" Teresa exist**. She is desperately lonely and has no one in the world to be kind to her. She invented Boles so she could feel loved; having the letters read to her makes her feel as if he is real, making her life "easier".

The student feels deeply ashamed of his previous self-sufficiency and judgment. He realizes that behind her rough exterior was a human soul hungering for affection. He eventually begins writing letters for her twice a week until she is later sent to prison.

Malayalam Translation (മലയാളം സംഗ്രഹം)

"പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട ബോൾസ്" (Beloved Boles)

മാക്സിം ഗോർക്കിയുടെ ഈ കഥ മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഏകാന്തതയെയും, മറ്റുള്ളവരെ പുറന്തള്ളി കണ്ട് വിധിക്കുന്നതിലെ തെറ്റിനെയുമാണ് ചർച്ച ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

മോസ്കോയിൽ താമസിക്കുന്ന ഒരു വിദ്യാർത്ഥിയാണ് കഥാകൃത്ത്. അയാളുടെ അയൽവാസിയായ തെരേസ എന്ന പോളിഷ് സ്ത്രീയോട് അയാൾക്ക് ആദ്യം വെറുപ്പായിരുന്നു. അവരുടെ പരസ്പരം ശബ്ദവും കണ്ട് അയാൾ അവരെ ഭയപ്പെടുകയും അകറ്റി നിർത്തുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നു.

ഒരിക്കൽ, തെരേസ തന്റെ കാമുകനായ 'ബോൾസിന്' ഒരു കത്ത് എഴുതിക്കൊടുക്കാൻ വിദ്യാർത്ഥിയോട് ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. വളരെ സ്നേഹനിർഭരമായ ആ കത്ത് അയാൾ അവരെ പരിഹസിക്കുന്നു. കുറച്ചു ദിവസങ്ങൾക്ക് ശേഷം, ബോൾസ് തനിക്ക് അയച്ച മറുപടിക്കത്ത് എന്ന രീതിയിൽ മറ്റൊരു കത്ത് എഴുതാൻ അവൾ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ അയാൾക്ക് ദേഷ്യം വരുന്നു. ബോൾസ് എന്നൊരാൾ ഇല്ലെന്നും അവൾ കള്ളം പറയുകയാണെന്നും അയാൾ കുറപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

എന്നാൽ, താൻ ലോകത്ത് തനിച്ചാണെന്നും തന്നെ സ്നേഹിക്കാൻ ആരുമില്ലെന്നും തെരേസ കരഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ട് വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. തന്റെ ഏകാന്തത മറക്കാൻ അവൾ ബോൾസ് എന്നൊരു വ്യക്തിയെ സങ്കല്പിച്ചതായിരുന്നു. ആ കത്തുകൾ കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ ആരോ തന്നെ സ്നേഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന തോന്നൽ അവൾക്ക് ലഭിക്കുന്നു. ഇതറിഞ്ഞ വിദ്യാർത്ഥിക്ക് തന്റെ

മുൻപത്തെ പെരുമാറ്റത്തിൽ ലജ്ജ തോന്നുന്നു. പിന്നീട് അയാൾ പതിവായി അവൾക്കായി കത്തുകൾ എഴുതി നൽകുന്നു.

ഗുണപാഠം: മനുഷ്യരെ അവരുടെ രൂപം കണ്ട് വിലയിരുത്തരുത്; ഓരോ പരുക്കൻ മുഖത്തിന് പിന്നിലും സ്നേഹം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ഹൃദയമുണ്ടാകാം.

Word Meaning

- **Acquaintance:** പരിചയക്കാരൻ/കാരി
- **Coarse:** പരുക്കനായ
- **Gleam:** തിളക്കം
- **Bass:** ഗാംഭീര്യമുള്ള താഴ്ന്ന ശബ്ദം
- **Vigour:** കരുത്ത്/കരുത്ത്
- **Horrified:** ഭയപ്പെടുത്തി/പേടിപ്പിച്ചു
- **Beary:** മങ്ങിയ/കലങ്ങിയ (കണ്ണുകൾ)
- **Tousled:** ചീകിയൊതുക്കാത്ത/അലങ്കോലമായ
- **Quarters:** താമസസ്ഥലം
- **Chamber:** ചെറിയ മുറി
- **Endured:** സഹിച്ചു
- **Sprawling:** കൈകാലുകൾ വിടർത്തി കിടക്കുക
- **Resounded:** മുഴങ്ങിക്കേട്ടു

- **Confused:** ആശയക്കുഴപ്പത്തിലായ
- **Beseeking:** യാചിക്കുന്ന/അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്ന
- **Timid:** ഭീരുവായ/പേടിയുള്ള
- **Dictate:** പറഞ്ഞു കൊടുക്കുക
- **Gingerly:** വളരെ സൂക്ഷ്മതയോടെ
- **Guilty:** കുറ്റബോധമുള്ള
- **Blundering:** അബദ്ധം പിണയുക
- **Offended:** അപമാനിക്കപ്പെട്ട/മനോവിഷമം തോന്നിയ
- **Departed:** യാത്ര തിരിച്ചുപോയി
- **Pressing business:** അടിയന്തരമായ ജോലി
- **Fogged:** അവ്യക്തമായ/മങ്ങലേറ്റ (ഇവിടെ ആശയക്കുഴപ്പം)
- **Astonished:** അത്ഭുതപ്പെട്ടു

- **Terrified:** ഭയചകിതനായി
- **Distraught:** വല്ലാതെ വിഷമിച്ച/ചിന്താക്കുഴപ്പത്തിലായ
- **Spluttered:** വാക്കുകൾ കിട്ടാതെ പതറുക
- **Misjudged:** തെറ്റായി വിലയിരുത്തി
- **Abruptly:** പെട്ടെന്ന്
- **Violently:** ശക്തിയായി/ക്രൂരമായി
- **Flabbergasted:** അമ്പരന്നുപോയ
- **Miserable:** പരിതാപകരമായ
- **Ashamed:** ലജ്ജിച്ചു/നാണക്കേട് തോന്നി

- **Invented:** നിർമ്മിച്ചു/സങ്കല്പിച്ചു
- **Blockhead:** വിഡ്ഢി
- **Pensively:** ചിന്താകുലനായി
- **Self-sufficiency:** സ്വയംപര്യാപ്തം/അഹന്ത
- **Righteousness:** നീതിനിഷ്ഠ/നന്മ
- **Cruelly:** ക്രൂരമായി
- **Preconceptions:** മുൻധാരണകൾ

- **Biases:** പക്ഷപാതങ്ങൾ

1. Based on your reading of the story, prepare a character sketch of Teresa.

Answer:

Character sketch of Teresa.

Teresa is the central character in the short story "Beloved Boles" written by Maxim Gorky. Initially, she is presented through the prejudiced eyes of the narrator, "Mr. Student." Physically, she is described as a tall, strong Polish woman with bushy eyebrows and a large, coarse face. Her thick bass voice and "muscular vigour" initially horrified the narrator.

However, as the story unfolds, we see her true nature. She is courteous and humble, often thanking the student "most heartily" for his help. The most striking aspect of her character is her extreme loneliness. Being a social outcast with no one to love her, she creates an imaginary lover named Boles to find emotional comfort. She is a woman of deep imagination and sensitivity, seeking "sweet things" to balance the "bitter things" of her life. In the end, she shows her gratitude by mending the narrator's clothes, proving she is kind-hearted and nurturing despite her rough exterior.

2. After realizing that Boles and the letters were imaginary, the narrator feels ashamed of his prejudices. Draft the possible diary entry he might have written that night.

Answer:

October 14, Thursday

What a day of self-discovery! I feel so sick and ashamed of myself tonight. For months, I looked at my neighbour Teresa with horror and judgment, seeing only her coarse face and hearing only her bass voice. I thought I was superior, wrapped in my own "self-sufficiency". But Alas! today, the truth hit me like a physical blow. There is no Boles. There is no lover. It was all a beautiful, tragic lie. That poor woman, living just three yards away from me, was so lonely that she had to invent a human being just to feel a spark of affection. She wasn't "fooling" me; she was trying to survive a life that has been nothing but bitter. I have decided to write those letters for her regularly now. It is the least I can do to make her life a little easier.

3. Prepare a write-up on the theme of loneliness and human connection as depicted in the story "Beloved Boles"

Answer:

The Silent Cry for Connection

Maxim Gorky's "Beloved Boles" is a poignant exploration of human loneliness and the desperate need for companionship. The story highlights how appearances can be deceptive and how social isolation can drive a person to create an imaginary world. In this story, we are confronted with the haunting reality of human loneliness through the character of Teresa. Often marginalized by society due to her coarse appearance and "fallen" social status, Teresa's life is a landscape of "bitter things." To survive this emotional desert, she creates Boleslav Kashput—a fictional lover to whom she sends and receives letters.

This creation is not a symptom of insanity, but a **survival mechanism**. As Gorky illustrates, the human heart requires affection as much as the body requires bread. When the real world

denies Teresa companionship, her imagination becomes her sanctuary. The "sweet things" she finds in these forged letters provide the dignity and hope that her neighbors refuse to give her.

The story's emotional core lies in the **narrator's transformation**. Initially, he views Teresa with intellectual arrogance and physical disgust. However, upon discovering that Boleslav is a myth, his "horror" melts into profound empathy. Gorky uses this shift to criticize the "self-sufficiency" of the comfortable classes. He reminds us that appearances are deceptive; beneath a rough exterior often lies a soul starving for a sense of belonging. Ultimately, the story serves as a powerful testament to the universal human hunger for love

4. "Mr. Student" writes a letter to his friend in Moscow about his neighbour Teresa and what he learned from her. Prepare the letter.

Answer:

AB Villa

XY Street

Moscow- 07

29 January 2026

Dear Ivan,

How're you? Hope you are doing well. I'm writing to share a strange yet eye-opening experience I had recently with my neighbour, Teresa.

You know how I used to be terrified of her because of her masculine appearance and loud voice? Well, I was completely wrong about her. She asked me to help her write letters to a man named Boles. I eventually discovered that Boles doesn't even exist!.

Teresa created him because she is incredibly lonely and has no one in the world to be kind to her. She told me that imagining Boles makes her life "easier". It made me realize how cruelly we judge people based on their looks. I've started writing these imaginary letters for her twice a week now. It's a small price to pay for a human soul's happiness.

Do write back soon.

Yours lovingly,

Henry

(Signature)

Textual Activities: Side Questions

a. How is Teresa's physical appearance described?

Answer:

Teresa is described as a tall and strong Polish woman. She has bushy black eyebrows, dark brown hair, and a large, coarse face. The narrator also mentions her dark eyes, a thick bass voice, and muscular vigour.

b. 'I never left my door open when I knew her to be at home.' Why does 'Mr Student' say so?

Answer:

The student says this because Teresa's physical appearance and "muscular vigour" horrified him. He was also put off by seeing her drunk with tousled hair and hearing her "stupid laugh," which made him want to avoid her entirely.

c. How does Teresa's appearance and tone change when she approaches the narrator for help?

Answer:

When she asks for a favour, she appears confused and guilty rather than her usual coarse self. Her tone, which was normally a loud bass, becomes beseeching, soft, and timid.

d. What favour did Teresa expect from 'Mr Student'? How did he respond to her request?

Teresa wanted him to write a letter home for her. Although he was initially silent, he jumped up, sat at his table, and told her to sit down and dictate the letter.

e. What was the content of the letter dictated by Teresa?

Answer:

The letter was addressed to Boleslav Kashput. It contained affectionate phrases like "My dear Boles," "my beloved," and "my faithful lover," asking him why he had not written to his "sorrowing little dove, Teresa".

f. What made the narrator burst out laughing?

Answer:

The narrator nearly burst out laughing because Teresa, who was more than five feet tall and physically powerful, referred to herself as a "sorrowing little dove" in the letter.

g. Do you think that Teresa is courteous? Pick an instance from the passage.

Answer:

Yes, she is very courteous. When the student finished the first letter, she thanked him "most heartily" and even offered to be of service to him in return.

h. Why was the narrator astonished when Teresa asked him to write the second letter?

Answer:

He was astonished because she claimed the second letter was from Boles to a "friend" of hers (also named Teresa), which seemed confusing and contradictory.

i. Why did 'Mr Student' get angry with Teresa?

Answer:

He got angry because he believed she was telling him a "pack of lies" and "fooling around" with him. He felt she was wasting his time with made-up characters.

j. What did the narrator guess about 'Boles' and 'Teresa' after the conversation?

Answer:

He guessed that there were no real people named Boles or Teresa involved in a real correspondence and that she was making the story up.

k. Why do you think Teresa asked 'Mr Student' to write the letter to Boles?

Answer:

She asked him to write it so she could have someone read it back to her, allowing her to "fancy" or imagine that Boles actually existed and loved her.

l. Why does the narrator go to Teresa's apartment?

Answer:

He went there because he felt an "unpleasant feeling" and realized he might have misjudged her. He wanted to invite her back to write whatever she needed.

m. 'Am I then not a human creature like the rest of you?' What does Teresa mean by this?

Answer:

She means that despite her rough appearance, she has the same emotional needs for affection and connection as everyone else. She is defending her right to seek happiness through imagination since she has no one in reality.

n. When does the narrator begin to feel empathy for Teresa?

Answer:

He feels empathy (and shame) when he finally understands that Boles is entirely invented because she has nobody in the world to treat her kindly.

o. Why does 'Mr Student' decide to continue writing letters for Teresa?

He continues because he realizes that these imaginary letters make her life "easier" and satisfy her hunger for "sweet things" in a bitter life.

p. How did Teresa repay the narrator?

Answer:

She began to mend the holes in his socks, shirts, and other clothes.

q. Why, in your opinion, does Teresa cry when she listens to the letters?

Answer:

She cries because the words of affection in the letters provide her with the only emotional warmth she experiences, even though she knows they are imaginary.