

Oranges in No Man's Land

Elizabeth Laird

- 1 It was a bright morning in Beirut ... No, I can't begin there. I must think back a bit further, to the place we found to live in after Mama died. I don't want to remember the first few days, the panic and confusion and the aching, aching loss.
- 5 It was Latif who found the flat for us. Little brothers do have some uses, I suppose, although I didn't often think so then.
- 7 The four of us were sitting on a doorstep in a ruined street, feeling hungry and hopeless, after two days of wandering from place to place. All we'd thought about was how best to get away from the fighting. We had no food left, and no idea where we'd spend the night. Granny looked so old and worn and beaten I could hardly bear to look at her. I think she'd given up hope. Ahmed was crying.
- 13 "There are people up there in that window," Latif suddenly said, pointing across the road to the first floor of the building opposite. "Look, Granny, they're waving to us."
- 16 It was the first kind, good thing that had happened to us since the disaster, and it was how we met Samar (who was ten years old like me) and Samar's mother, dear Mrs Zainab, who was the best mother in the world, after mine.
- 19 A few minutes later, we'd crossed the road, pushed open the broken street door of the building, gone up the dusty steps and found ourselves in what must once have been a beautiful flat where rich people had lived.
- 22 I can remember standing in the doorway looking round in amazement. I'd never been in such a place before. The windows had all been blown out, and there were gaping holes in the walls where shells had blasted through, but you could still see how magnificent it had been in the old days.



1 Is the narrator older or younger than Latif?

Write a quotation from the text that supports your answer.

2 List the people who were sitting on the doorstep in the ruined street.

3 What do you think Mama died from?

4 Number these events (from the first three paragraphs) to show the order in which they happened.

Latif saw people in the flat.	☐	They wandered from place to place.	☐
Mama died.	☐	Ahmed was crying.	☐

5 "Granny looked so old and worn and beaten" (paragraph 3).

Which of the following words is closest in meaning to the word "beaten" in this sentence?
Tick **one**.

flattened ☐ bruised ☐ outperformed ☐ defeated ☐

6 How did the narrator meet Samar and Mrs Zainab?

7 These events happened during a war. **Find and copy three** words or phrases that help you to understand what that must have been like.

8 Which of these predictions is most likely to be correct? Tick **one**.

The family will continue to wander the streets.	☐
The people in the flat will welcome them and be kind to them.	☐
They will fight the people in the beautiful flat and take it away from them.	☐
The people in the flat will show them a different place to live.	☐

Write a quotation from the text that you used to make your prediction.

9 What has changed between the beginning and end of this extract?

Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2d

☐

1 mark

2b

☐

1 mark

2d

☐

1 mark

2c

☐

1 mark

2a

☐

1 mark

2b

☐

1 mark

2f

☐

2 marks

2e

☐

2 marks

2h

☐

3 marks