

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Louis de Bernières



## About the author

Louis de Bernières was born in London in 1954 and his name comes from a French Huguenot ancestor. He shot to fame with this, his fourth novel, in 1993. There had been an inkling of things to come a year before, when he was named as one of the twenty Best Young British Novelists in 1993, but little sign that de Bernières would become a household name in his early years. He had a varied education, including a period at the military training academy of Sandhurst. Before going to university to study Philosophy, he worked in Colombia as an English teacher for a year where, in his own words, he spent the days 'lounging around in rivers'. After doing a series of short-term jobs, he decided at the age of 28 to become a full-time writer. As he put it, 'I could sink or swim, and if I was going to swim I had to start writing. You can only rely on yourself in the end.' He used his experiences in Colombia to help him with the fictional background to a trilogy which he published between 1990 and 1992. One of the books won the award for Best First Book in Eurasia in 1991, and another won the Best Book in Eurasia prize. Then came *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, which won the Sunday Express Book of the Year 1994 and the Lannan Award in 1995. The novel has been made into a Hollywood blockbuster, starring Nicholas Cage, John Hurt and Penelope Cruz.

## Summary

It is 1941, and a young Italian officer, Captain Antonio Corelli, arrives on the beautiful Greek island of Cephallonia as part of an occupying force. He is billeted in the house of the local doctor, Iannis and his daughter Pelagia. He quickly wins the heart of Pelagia through his

humour and his sensitivity, not to mention his stunning ability on the mandolin. But Pelagia is engaged to Mandras, a local fisherman who is away fighting with the Greek army. Despite her growing affection for Corelli, Pelagia continues to write to Mandras, but he does not answer. It transpires that he could not, since he is illiterate. But Pelagia takes this as a sign that their love is dead and she gives herself to Corelli. Then there is the betrayal. Everyone, it seems, in a short space of time, is betrayed. In the autumn of 1943, the Allies liberate Sicily instead of the Greek islands, and, in the eyes of the islanders, betray Greece; the Italian commander, General Gandin, betrays his men; the Germans betray the Italians; perhaps Corelli even betrays Pelagia by leaving her. The full horror of war, international and then civil, comes home to all the characters, then is swept away by the tide of history. Pelagia and Corelli are apart and destined to remain so for half a lifetime. Pelagia thinks Corelli is dead; Corelli, visiting Pelagia secretly every year, thinks she is married. Then, in 1953 a new horror hits the island – the earthquake. The events of that time replace the war in the islanders' collective memory. In some ways, they are more shocking than those in the war, because children abandon their parents, parents abandon their children as they rush from collapsing houses, and live with the guilt for ever after. Pelagia grows old, thinking of her dead lover, but, in an ending of tremendous bathos, she discovers that he is not dead, just mistaken about her marital status. They have each lost a life, or simply lived one.

**Chapters 1–4:** When Megalo Velisarios, a man with a reputation for being extremely strong, visits the island of Cephallonia in Greece to give a performance, he accidentally hurts Mandras, a local fisherman. Mandras will later thank him because his wounds lead him to the house of the local doctor, Iannis, and to the doctor's daughter, Pelagia. Mandras and Pelagia fall in love and become engaged. But soon the war reaches Greece, Mandras leaves to the front and Pelagia receives no answer from him to her letters and thinks that he doesn't love her anymore. When Mandras returns, so dirty and hurt that she does not recognize him, Pelagia learns that he has not answered her letters because he can't read or write.

Meanwhile, Italian troops are sent to Albania as part of a plan to attack Greece. Carlo Guercio is a homosexual who doesn't dare admit his sexual condition for fear

## Captain Corelli's Mandolin

of rejection. He joins the army and falls in love with Francesco, a soldier from Genoa, who will never know about Carlo's love. Together, they march from Albania to Athens, suffer extreme cold and hunger and are defeated by the Greeks. Francesco dies, and some of the soldiers are saved when a German invasion forces the Greeks to fight on two fronts.

**Chapters 5–8:** While the islanders wait for an imminent invasion, Mandras recovers and Pelagia feels increasingly guilty. On 30 April 1941, the Italians arrive in Cephallonia and the villagers are ordered to provide them with accommodation. Captain Corelli stays at Dr Iannis's house. He is an Italian officer with a sense of humour, a mandolin that he calls Antonia and with plans to become a professional musician when the war comes to an end. His character, his music and his sensitivity gradually win Pelagia's love. During his stay at Iannis's house, Corelli organizes an opera group, La Scala. Günter Weber, a German soldier with a Nazi conviction of superiority, joins the group. Mandras, in the meantime, joins ELAS, a Communist group of freedom fighters under the leadership of Hector. With this group, his resentment finds expression and he becomes a cruel murderer and rapist in the name of historical necessity.

Both Pelagia and Corelli are aware of the cost that an affair with a member of an occupying force could have for a Greek girl engaged to a local fisherman who is away fighting the invasion. So their love stays platonic while they make plans for an after-war marriage. It is during this period that Bunny Warren, a British spy, turns up and is helped by Dr Iannis.

**Chapters 9–10:** When the Allies invade Sicily and Italy surrenders, the Italian soldiers in Greece are abandoned to their fate. Corelli knows what to expect and tries to prepare his soldiers for the fights that will come. He leaves his mandolin in Dr Iannis's house, parts with Pelagia and stays with his men. Gandin, the leader of the Italian troops, decides to negotiate with the Germans a way out of Greece for the Italians, a mistake that costs the lives of many Greek civilians who die under German bombing, most Italian soldiers who are executed, and his own. The order to execute the Italians is given to Weber, who tries to refuse it but is informed that disobeying an order is punished by death. When the Italian soldiers are being shot, Carlo protects Corelli's body with his own, and when Weber finds that Corelli is alive under Carlo's body, he lets him live.

**Chapters 11–13:** Velisarios brings Corelli to Dr Iannis's house, where bullets are removed from his body. Velisarios, the doctor and Pelagia find Carlo's body and bury it with a simple ceremony. When he recovers, and with Bunny Warren's help, Corelli escapes from the island in a boat. In spite of Corelli's promise to come back, Pelagia feels empty and devastated.

In 1944 the Germans are ordered to leave the island. The Greek Communists, known as the EAM (the former ELAS), advance against the fascists and say that anybody who is not with them, is against them. Dr Iannis, suspected of having fascist ideas, is kidnapped, and Pelagia, now alone, shares her days and sorrows with Drosoula, Mandras's mother.

Mandras, who is now a member of the EAM, returns to the island, resentful and aggressive. In his anger, he tries to rape Pelagia, and she shoots him in his shoulder. When Drosoula arrives, she curses him for what he has become. Shattered, Mandras drowns himself in the sea.

Dr Iannis returns two years later, broken and speechless, and finds a girl in his house, Antonia. She had been abandoned at his door during his absence, and Drosoula and Pelagia had adopted her. She could have been the daughter of a German, Italian or Greek father, but she never finds out.

When in 1949 the national government regains power, Pelagia and her father have switched roles and now he helps her assist the sick and wounded. The villagers find them an odd family, and Pelagia develops a belief in ghosts, since she sees Antonio come every year and disappear before her eyes.

**Chapters 14–17:** In August 1953 a strong earthquake hits the island. Houses are destroyed; many people die and survivors feel guilty for not having helped their dead. Pelagia can't forgive herself for not having helped her father. Antonia and Drosoula encourage her to finish writing her father's history book, which gives her some comfort. Time goes by. Pelagia receives anonymous postcards from different cities in the world. Antonia marries Alexi, a 32-year-old lawyer, and has a baby that Pelagia calls Iannis. Drosoula opens a taverna where her old house used to be. At her death, Pelagia takes charge of the taverna and, after some time, hires a musician to work there. Iannis becomes interested in music and starts playing Corelli's mandolin.

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Corelli finally comes back and tells Pelagia he thought she had married. In spite of her fury because she feels he has betrayed her and they have lost a life together, she finally holds to him as they go to visit the hut where they had secretly met many years before.

## Background and themes

**Love and war:** *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* is about two classic subjects – blighted love and the horror of war. By setting the scene on a beautiful unspoilt island, the writer is able to counterpoint the tragedy more starkly. How, he seems to invite us to ask, could such terrible things happen in such an idyllic place?

**A history of invasions:** The particular island the writer has chosen is special in that it has been invaded many times in its long history. As the doctor points out, horrors have often come from outside. In the first part of the novel, we see how the islanders come to terms with invasion, even when the soft Italian invasion becomes the harsh German version.

**Horror from within:** Then civil war hits the island, and the horrors come from inside. Now it is Greek against Greek and the atrocities are even worse. But in this tragedy of Gothic proportions, the writer has not finished with our emotions. Shortly after the end of the civil war, the island is struck by an earthquake, and families are ripped apart again by death, made doubly hard to bear this time because parents have left children to die in collapsing houses, and children have left elderly parents.

**A tragic love story:** Perhaps the writer is asking us to decide which of these horrors is the hardest to bear. But he is not done with us, because he offers another more personal horror – the horror of a lost life. The lovers have lost their chance of happiness through a ridiculous misunderstanding, not in the fog of war. As with the best tragedies, everybody is right and everybody suffers in the end.

## Discussion activities

### Chapters 1–4

#### Before reading

1 **Group work:** Students read the Introduction and make a map with Cephallonia in the centre. They include and label all the places mentioned in the Introduction. Maps can be displayed in the classroom and stay there while the class works on the book.

#### After reading

- 2 **Discuss:** Ask students: *Why doesn't Dr Iannis like his own openings to the History of Cephallonia? Why is he finally satisfied with his change of title?* After students have answered these questions, ask them: *Is it possible to be objective when writing history? Doesn't reality always depend on the lens through which a person looks at it?*
- 3 **Research and artwork:** Students search the Internet for posters of the 1950s. Then they read carefully about the performance that Megalo Velisarios gave in the square (pages 3 and 4) and make a poster announcing the event.
- 4 **Pair work and discuss:** Ask students to find in this section of the book what the people in the village thought of the priest, the doctor and the doctor's daughter, and to discuss whether being a respected citizen in the village seems to depend on people's jobs, attitudes and behaviour, social position, etc. Ask them to also consider Dr Iannis's ideas about a good husband for Pelagia and his fears about what the town would think if she did not marry the man she was engaged to. Pairs report their ideas to the class and the class discusses whether the conditions that lead people to earn respectability have changed since the 1950s and whether they are different in small towns and big cities.
- 5 **Group work:** In groups, students compare the reasons why Carlo Guercio and Pelagia felt that they had to hide their feelings for the persons they loved and discuss whether their situation would be different today.
- 6 **Read carefully and write:** Students read pages 15 and 16 carefully and discuss why Francesco's perception of the time it would take to get to Athens changed from two weeks, into two months and then into two years. They write a letter from Francesco to his wife. Tell them to imagine that he wrote the letter over days, as the conditions of their trip changed, and that the last paragraph of the letter is written by Carlo. In it, he tells Francesco's wife about how Francesco died.
- 7 **Role play:** Students take the roles of Pelagia and Kyria Drosoula and role play their conversation after they have washed and looked after Mandras.
- 8 **Pair work and role play:** Divide the class into pairs. Half the pairs speak about Mandras's feelings when he received Pelagia's letters and could not read them or write back. The other half speak about Pelagia's feelings about Mandras's silence. Then students shift pairs and role play a conversation between Pelagia and Mandras when they meet.
- 9 **Research:** Read the following lines to the students: *'Those Italian pigs have sunk one of our ships at Tinos. And they fired on the harbour there. It was full of people. On a holy day too.'* (page 8). Ask students to search the Internet for information about this event. Tell them to find how the following names relate to the event: Elli, Mussolini, Metexas. Students report their findings to the class.

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

## Chapters 5–8

### Before reading

- 10 Guess:** Tell students: *These are lines from the coming chapters. Who do you think they are about? Has this man become evil or insane? What other cruel things do you think a man like this could do in war times?*  
'It was easier each time he hit him. In fact it became a pleasure. It was as if the anger from the earliest years of his childhood rose in him and was given expression. The old man threw himself on the ground, screaming, and (...?...?) suddenly knew that he could be a god.'

### After reading

- 11 Role play:** Tell students to imagine that both Mandras and Captain Corelli love Pelagia so much that they want her happiness over and above their own. They role play a conversation between the two men; each gives reasons why it would be better for Pelagia to stay with the other.
- 12 Read carefully and discuss:** Students read carefully the first paragraph on page 25. Then they discuss why people, like Dr Iannis, want to write the history of their times and expect their writings to be read in the future. Ask them: *Is it because we all want to continue to exist in some way after we are gone? Is it because they want their version of truth to be known? What event in the history of your country in your times would you like the inhabitants of the future to know about?*
- 13 Debate:** Tell students: *Mandras justified his actions on Hector's ideas that 'a new Greece would be built, and you did what you liked with the inferior bricks that were going to be thrown away' (page 35). Weber thought that other races were inferior to his, and that this was a fact from science (page 44). Ask them: Is there any difference between these two men's ideas? Is Mandras's attitude different from the enemies he is fighting? Can a nation be built on the bases of violence and discrimination? Does fighting for your nation and ideals justify cruelty towards individuals?*
- 14 Group work:** Divide the class into groups. Have them discuss how far they agree with the following statements, explicitly or implicitly made in this section of the book. Groups report their conclusions to the class.  
*Music is not just a sweet sound; it is an emotional and intellectual journey.*  
*It is the duty of the inhabitants of a nation to hate invaders.*  
*Moral principles are important, not science.*  
*Love is a temporary madness (...?) Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away.*
- 15 Artwork:** In groups, students draw the soldiers described in the first paragraph of page 26, Pelagia and Dr Iannis. Using these drawings, the whole class makes a collage poster of the scene.

- 16 Pair work:** In pairs, students select a passage from this section of the book that, in their opinion, represents a clear image of war. Pairs share the passages they chose and explain why they selected them.
- 17 Write and role play:** Students write an article that appears in a local newspaper informing people of what ELAS was doing. In the article, they mention the names of some of the people involved, including Mandras. Then they role play a conversation between Pelagia and her father after they have read the article.

## Chapters 9–10

### Before reading

- 18 Guess:** Tell students: *The coming chapter is called 'Autumn 1943: Betrayal'. Who do you think is going to betray whom?*

### After reading

- 19 Discuss:** Remind students of their discussion in activity 12. Have them now discuss whether the reasons that might have led Carlo to hide his writings in the hole in Dr Iannis's house were the same that led the doctor to hide his own. Then ask them: *How would people's need to be remembered be different if an eternal youth tonic were discovered and men became immortal? Would war still make sense? Would civilizations, countries, ideas fight each other to become dominant?*
- 20 Discuss:** Have students read carefully Carlo's and Corelli's answers to Weber's request for forgiveness before killing the Italian troops. Ask them to discuss which answer will probably stay longer in Weber's memory and why.
- 21 Role play:** Students imagine Weber and Corelli meet again many years after the war has ended, and role play their conversation.
- 22 Discuss:** Students discuss whether Weber's answer when ordered to kill the Italians was motivated by his desire to have a clean file or a clean conscience.
- 23 Role play:** Students decide what they think they would have done in Weber's place. Then they imagine Weber had refused to obey his orders and role play a jury deciding on his fate.
- 24 Write:** Students write a letter from Corelli to Carlo's family, informing them of how he died.
- 25 Discuss:** Students choose the music that they think would make an appropriate soundtrack for a film version of the scene in which the bodies of the Italian soldiers are burned.
- 26 Read carefully and discuss:** Students read carefully the fifth and sixth paragraphs of page 56. Then they discuss whether they think an imminent feeling of approaching death may cause relief when people are in deep pain or utter terror.



# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

## Chapters 11–13

### Before reading

- 27 Guess:** Ask students: *In the coming chapters, who do you think will be kidnapped, adopt a baby, curse his/her own son/daughter, kill him/herself, develop a belief in ghosts?* Students share their ideas, and then check their predictions as they read.

### After reading

- 28 Debate:** Students look the word 'euthanasia' up in their dictionaries. Then they debate whether it would have been 'more human' to help Corelli die if he had been as badly hurt as Dr Iannis first thought he was. In two groups, students then debate whether euthanasia should be legal or not, and in what cases.
- 29 Pair work and write:** In pairs, students write the speech the doctor made when Carlos was buried.
- 30 Discuss:** Tell students: *The doctor tells Corelli, 'The truth will make us free. We overcome fear by looking it in the eye.'* Students discuss whether they agree with this statement or not and why.
- 31 Read carefully and discuss:** Remind students of their ideas in activity 22. Have them read carefully Corelli and Pelagia's conversation about Weber on page 66 and compare their ideas about Corelli's feelings for Weber and the feelings he expresses here. Ask them: *Does Pelagia feel the same? How do you think you would feel?*
- 32 Role play:** In groups, students role play an islander telling his/her grandchildren, many years after the war is over, his/her memories of the Italian and the German soldiers. Students who play the role of grandchildren ask the questions a child is likely to ask about war.
- 33 Group work and write:** In groups, students discuss and write a different version of Pelagia's reaction when she finds the record player and the collection of Marlene Dietrich's records at her door. Then they vote for the version that they find more likely in the circumstances.
- 34 Debate:** Ask students: *Can a person who has suffered as much as Mandras be blamed for having become insanely evil? Or should he be forgiven?* Divide the class into two groups and have them debate the question. One group finds arguments for forgiving him and the other for blaming him for his behaviour.
- 35 Group work and game:** Tell students: *In his resentment, Mandras calls Pelagia 'a cow'.* In groups, students imagine which animal Pelagia would have chosen to express her feelings for Mandras, her father, Antonia, Drosoula and Captain Corelli. The other groups try to find out which animal represents her feelings for each person. The group that finds the most correct answers wins.

## Chapters 14–17

### Before reading

- 36 Group work and guess:** In groups, students discuss whether Pelagia has been seeing Captain Corelli's ghost or Captain Corelli himself, and why they think so. Groups share their ideas and then check as they read.
- 37 Write:** In pairs, students discuss whose return the title of the last chapter makes reference to. They write the ending that they would like Pelagia and Corelli's love story to have.

### After reading

- 38 Research and artwork:** Tell students that Cephallonia is to the east of the area where the European and Aegean tectonic plates meet. Ask them to search the Internet for information about the 1953 earthquake and the location of the plates. Students share the information they find and, in groups, make a map of the tectonic plates.
- 39 Debate:** Divide the class into two groups and have them develop arguments in favour of the following motions: Group A: *In a natural catastrophe like an earthquake, one should try to help oneself. It is by saving oneself that one can help others.* Group B: *Even in a natural catastrophe like an earthquake, one should always try to save others, old people and children in particular. If everybody tries to save others, more people will survive.*
- 40 Group work:** Tell students: *Some events become so important in people's lives that they never forgotten. The earthquake changed the lives of the people in Cephallonia so much that after it they referred to events as having occurred before or after it. Has anything happened in your country that has become a significant event like this? Has anything happened in your lives that has become a significant event like this?*
- 41 Discuss:** Tell students: *Pelagia did not want to allow Antonia's marriage with Alexi because she remembered her feelings for Mandras at Antonia's age and thought it might be a mistake.* Divide the class into two groups and have them discuss the following: *Should parents interfere with their children's decisions on the basis of their own experience?*
- 42 Role play:** Students take the roles of Pelagia and Corelli and role play their conversation when they arrive at Casa Nostra.
- 43 Pair work:** Tell students that after some time Corelli decides to visit Carlo's grave to thank him for having saved his life. In pairs, students prepare the speech that Corelli makes at Carlo's grave. Pairs read their speeches and students vote for the most moving.
- 44 Write:** Tell students to imagine that when Pelagia saw Corelli the first time he came back, he did not hide but met her. Have them write an ending for the story at that point.

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Photocopiable

## While reading

### Chapters 1–4

- 1 What are the following things used for?
  - a a hammer and a hook, warm water  
.....
  - b old nails, broken pots and stones  
.....
  - c salted clean water, healing oils and creams  
.....
- 2 Who said or thought each of these things?  
Write Pelagia (P), Mandras (M) or Iannis (I).
  - a I'm glad nobody can hear my thoughts! ....
  - b I follow politics; I want to make the world a better place. ....
  - c If people see this silly smile on my face, they'll think I'm going mad. ....
  - d I've received a letter; I'll be asked to join the army soon. ....
  - e I feel I may die if you do not marry me. ....
  - f Will people trust someone who replies immediately, without thinking? ....
  - g I told him I'd have to ask for your opinion and permission. ....
  - h I don't want to marry Mandras. ....

### 3 Write the names in these sentences.

- a ..... is the town's doctor.
- b ..... is a visitor to the village.
- c ..... is a fisherman.
- d ..... is a clergyman.
- e ..... is a 17-year-old.

Now answer questions 1–5 with the right letters (a–e).

Who ...

- 1) has a moustache? ....
- 2) has long hair? ....
- 3) has a round body? ....
- 4) has strong arms? ....
- 5) has a beautiful body? ....

### Chapters 5–8

#### 4 Look at the book and find ...

- a the name of the King of Greece during the Second World War  
.....
- b the foreign civilization that stayed the longest in Greece and affected its language and civilization  
.....
- c the century in which the British invaded Greece  
.....

- d a deal that Dr Iannis made with the invaders  
.....

#### 5 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F). Find evidence in the text to support the true statements.

- a Corelli was a man with a sense of humour. ☐
- b Wars are between countries, not between individuals, so sometimes men forget their countries are enemies. ☐
- c Being on the same side, the Italians and the Germans liked each other a lot. ☐
- d Hector thought that the end justifies the means. ☐

#### 6 What/Who are these?

- a Antonia: .....
- b La Scala: .....
- c ELAS: .....
- d Bunnios: .....

#### 7 Rewrite Dr Iannis's advice to Bunny Warren in correct English.

#### 8 Find in the wordsearch at least 15 words related to war. They can be in any direction.

I	M	A	R	C	H	Y	O	L	F
W	N	E	N	E	M	Y	T	L	R
G	O	V	E	R	N	Z	R	R	E
B	C	U	A	H	E	R	O	E	E
U	C	S	N	S	W	V	O	B	D
L	U	H	W	D	I	Y	P	E	O
L	P	I	A	V	Z	O	U	L	M
E	Y	P	R	P	L	A	N	E	L
T	R	U	L	E	B	O	O	T	S
W	S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y	U
D	E	F	E	A	T	U	N	I	T

### Chapters 9–10

#### 9 Who is or feels betrayed by whom? Complete the sentences.

- a The Allies invaded Sicily and betrayed their loyal friends, the .....
- b The ..... betrayed their own people by committing atrocious crimes against royalist Greeks.
- c The Germans felt betrayed by the ....., who did not seem to resist the invasion of the Allies.

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Photocopiable

- d The ..... forces stationed on warships betrayed the soldiers on the island by withdrawing their protection from them.
- e Weber felt betrayed by his country's former allies, the .....
- f The ..... betrayed the Italians by breaking their promise to let them keep their weapons and leave the island.

## 10 Answer these questions.

- a Who was General Gandin?
- b He had to make a difficult decision. What two choices did he have?
- c Which option did he choose?
- d What two mistakes did he make?
- e How did his life end?

## 11 What would you write on Carlo's and Arsenios's tombstones? Write a short text starting 'Here lies ...' for each of them and share it with another student. Do you have similar ideas?

## Chapters 11–13

### 12 Match letters and numbers to create descriptions of the characters. Then write the name of the character that each phrase describes.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a cheeks .....  | b eyes .....  |
| c a body .....  | d eyes .....  |
| e a heart ..... | f flesh ..... |
- g transparent skin .....
- 1) with too many holes and too much blood .....
  - 2) trembling with tears and anger .....
  - 3) wide and desperate .....
  - 4) full of horror and hope .....
  - 5) racing with fear and determination .....
  - 6) made of steel .....
  - 7) stretches tightly over the bones .....

### 13 Write I or G next to the phrases that refer to the Greek's memories of Italians (I) and Germans (G) after the occupation of their country.

- People who ...
- a helped the villagers' with their work in the fields in order to escape boredom. ....
  - b cheated in football games. ....

- c flirted with Greek girls. ....
- d enjoyed singing. ....
- e stole chickens. ....
- f looted and killed. ....
- g had no passion, except for strength. ....
- h thought of themselves as a superior race. ....

### 14 Use the syllables in the box to form words and complete the sentences. Whom do they describe? Write their names next to the sentences.

less	port	bro	pris	ment	ers	im
ness	word	pass	on	un	butch	ken

- a These ..... destroyed the lives of millions of people. ....
- b This woman's ..... spirit gave Pelagia strength to go on. ....
- c Her sense of ..... increased as Mandras leaned against the door. ....
- d It was when she wanted a ..... that this woman found that she did not exist officially. ....
- e In his ....., he drew some comfort from the little girl. ....

## Chapters 14–17

### 15 Find evidence in the text to support these statements.

- a Velisarios earned the love and respect of the villagers.
- b After the earthquake, there were many aftershocks. (An aftershock is a smaller earthquake that occurs after the main earthquake.)
- c Pelagia could not forgive herself for having survived her father.
- d Pelagia added a feminine perspective to her father's History of Cephallonia.

### 16 Who says this, Pelagia (P) or Corelli (C)?

- a 'I was so bitter I couldn't speak.' ....
- b 'Did you think about my heart?' ....
- c 'You should have died and left me with my dreams.' ....
- d 'I'm a Greek citizen.' ....
- e 'I see you still have my ring.' ....
- f 'Who wants to be with someone who is dreaming of someone else?' ....
- g 'I want you to remember me properly.' ....

# Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Photocopiable

## Chapters 1–4

### 1 Choose the right answers, 1, 2 or 3.

- a Mandras thanked Velisarios for hurting him because ....
  - 1) he had to go to the doctor's and met Pelagia.
  - 2) he became famous in the village.
  - 3) he could not go to war if he was wounded.
- b Doctor Iannis gave Pelagia a gun ....
  - 1) in case Mussolini came to her wedding.
  - 2) so that she could defend herself if war broke out.
  - 3) because he wanted her to fight the enemy.
- c Carlo felt he had found himself in the words of ....
  - 1) a priest.
  - 2) a doctor.
  - 3) a philosopher.
- d Pelagia hadn't received any answer to her letters from Mandras because ....
  - 1) many letters got lost in war time.
  - 2) Mandras hadn't written back.
  - 3) Mandras had never received her letters.

## Chapters 5–8

### 2 Write the correct name or phrase.

Bunnios ELAS Pelagia Weber Hector  
Homer Mandras an old man

- a ..... climbed out of bed on the day of the Italian invasion, as if the invasion were more important than being sick.
- b ..... felt guilty whenever she saw ..... She didn't love him anymore.
- c ..... joined a group of three men in the hills, who had neither plan nor purpose.
- d There were several groups of freedom fighters in the area, the most organized being a Communist group known as .....
- e ..... handed ..... a length of knotted rope and said, 'Beat him.' He was speaking of .....
- f ..... thought that other races were inferior to his.
- g ..... spoke old Greek, the Greek of .....

## Chapters 9–10

### 3 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- a Corelli agreed with Gandin's idea that the Italians should surrender to the Germans and he trusted the Germans. ☐

- b Corelli agreed with Carlo that the Allies would help the Italians in Greece. ☐
- c The Italian warships in the Greek harbours sailed to Italy on the night of the Italian surrender to the Allies. ☐
- d Corelli's family had died in Libya, so he had no home in Italy. ☐
- e Large numbers of Italian soldiers and Greek civilians were killed by German bombs. ☐
- f The German officer that ordered Weber to kill the Italian soldiers considered they weren't prisoners but traitors. ☐
- g Corelli tried to keep the spirit of his soldiers high by playing the mandolin. ☐
- h Father Arsenios saved Corelli's life. ☐

## Chapters 11–13

### 4 Change the names or phrases in *italics* for a name in the box to make the sentences correct. You will need to use some names more than once.

Velisarios	Carlo	Dr Iannis	Corelli
	Pelagia	Mandras	

- a *The Germans* kicked open the door of Pelagia's house. ....
- b Eight bullets had passed through *Corelli's* body. ....
- c *Dr Iannis* explained why the bullets were not deep in Corelli's body. ....
- d They hid *Velisarios* in the hole in the kitchen. ....
- e *Carlo* drowned himself. ....
- f *Drosoula* adopted Antonia as her daughter. ....
- g *Mandras* lost his speech. ....
- h Pelagia thought that she saw the ghost of *Mandras* every year. ....

## Chapters 14–17

### 5 Who does what? Write the names.

- Velisarios Iannis Spiridon Pelagia Corelli
- a ..... plays the *bozouki* in the taverna.
  - b ..... wants to play the mandolin.
  - c ..... cleans Corelli's mandolin and tightens and tunes the strings.
  - d ..... teaches Iannis how to place his fingers on the mandolin.
  - e ..... opens the door of the hole under the ruins of Dr Iannis's house.
  - f ..... cries for a week.



## Captain Corelli's Mandolin

### Book key

#### 1–2 Open answers

#### 3 a Possible answers:

You sweep a floor clean with a broom.

A cannon is a large gun that was used by armies in the past to destroy buildings and kill people.

You wear goggles to protect your eyes (for example, from dust).

A mandolin is a musical instrument that you play for your own pleasure or to entertain people.

Morphia is a drug that stops pain, and is used, for example, when people are dying.

A trapdoor covers an opening in which you may keep or hide things.

#### b Possible answers:

People embrace by putting their arms around each other and holding each other closely because they are feeling affectionate or want to comfort each other.

People flirt by joking, saying nice things about each other, giving presents, and looking at each other affectionately. This may be a pleasurable game, or they may want to have a sexual relationship.

Soldiers invade a place by marching into it and threatening the local people because they want control of that place.

A man rapes a woman (for example) by forcing her to have sex with him. The motive may be the desire for sex, but it usually the expression of violent anger.

#### 4 a dissatisfied

b cross with

c accepts

d beautiful

e worried

f gun

g can't

h disaster

i isn't able

j disgusted by

#### 5 a Stamatis is speaking. Without the pea in his ear, the ear feels empty and the sounds around him are suddenly loud.

b Mandras is speaking about the time when Velisarios accidentally fired his cannon at him and knocked him down. When he was carried into Dr Iannis's house, he met Pelagia for the first time.

c Dr Iannis is speaking to the other men in the cafe after Italian soldiers sank a ship and killed people at the harbour on a holy day.

d Dr Iannis is talking about Mandras, who has asked Pelagia to marry him.

e Francesco is talking to Carlo about the horrors of the war that they are fighting in. He makes the decision to die.

f Pelagia is talking to Mandras, who she doesn't recognize when he returns to her house from the war. He is a stranger, so shouldn't be alone with her.

g Mandras is explaining why he didn't ask other men to write letters for him. He didn't want them to know that he can't write, or about his feelings for Pelagia.

#### 6–7 Open answers

#### 8 a Cold.

b More excited than afraid.

c To get medicines and equipment in return.

d A concert musician and composer.

e Pleased, because they are alike.

f How to read, write, steal, rape and kill.

g With calm politeness.

h Shame.

i In disguise.

j A British spy who speaks ancient Greek.

k His belief in the survival of the strongest.

l To be very careful.

#### 9–11 Open answers

12 a T b T c F d F e F f T g F h T

i F j F

#### 13–15 Open answers

16 a difficult

b painful

c Carlo

d kitchen

e food

f escape

g Italians

h ELAS/Communists

i Fascist

j Drosoula

k recognize/know

l kill/shoot

m baby

n speak

## Captain Corelli's Mandolin

17 a Dr Iannis / Corelli

b Corelli / Carlo

c Corelli / Weber

d Pelagia / Mandras

e Mandras / Dr Iannis

f Mandras / Pelagia

g Drosoula / Mandras

h Pelagia / Corelli or Corelli's ghost

18–20 Open answers

21 a 1 b 1 c 2 d 1 e 2 f 1 g 2 h 1  
i 1 j 1 k 2 l 2 m 2

22–33 Open answers

### Discussion activities key

1–3 Open answers

4 Open answers. References: People didn't respect Father Arsenios because he was greedy (page 4); people respected Pelagia because she was the doctor's daughter (page 5); no direct reference to Dr Iannis's reputation, but it can be inferred that he was respected for his position and for the help he gave to people; Dr Iannis thought Pelagia would marry a foreigner, perhaps a dentist, someone that would be her 'equal' in education (page 12); he knew that breaking an engagement would cause great shame (page 19).

5 Possible answer: Both think their feelings are improper; Carlo because he is a homosexual, Pelagia because she likes Mandras's body.

6–8 Open answers

9 Possible answer: At the beginning of the Second World War the Axis advance from one country to another. Mussolini, head of Italy, decides to attack and occupy Greece. The Italian forces torpedo the Greek cruiser Elli in the harbour of Tinos. Many people die. Then they demand that the Greeks let the Italian army enter and occupy the country. Metaxas, the prime minister of Greece, wants his country to remain neutral and rejects the ultimatum; the Italian troops invade Greece from Albania and the people of Greece defend the country; in 6 weeks they drive the Italian army back into Albania.

10 The lines are about Mandras; open answers

11 Possible answers: Captain Corelli may think that Pelagia would miss Greece if she went to Italy and suffer discrimination in Greece if she married an Italian; Mandras may think that Pelagia may be happier with a more educated man than with the man that she loves.

12–27 Open answers

28 Open answers; euthanasia: the act of killing someone painlessly; especially someone suffering from an incurable illness.

29–35 Open answers

36 Pelagia has not been seeing a ghost but the Captain himself.

37 Open answers

38 Some information about the 1953 earthquake: In August of 1953, four earthquakes hit the island, the worst of which measured 7.3 on the Richter scale. The earthquakes destroyed almost every house and six hundred people died. The centre was on the southern tip of the island and raised it by 60 cm. The watermarks on rocks around the coast bear testimony to this fact.

39–44 Open answers

### Activity worksheets key

1 a to remove a pea from Stamatis's ear

b to shoot the old cannon during Velisarios's performance

c to wash and treat Mandras

2 a P b M c P d M e M f P g P h I

3 a Iannis b Velisarios c Mandras d Arsenios  
e Pelagia

1 a 2 e 3 d 4 b 5 c

4 a George

b the Italians

c the nineteenth century

d providing accommodation to a foreigner in his house in exchange for medicines

5 a T; Open answers; possible evidence: he orders the soldiers to look left when he saw a beautiful woman; he told Pelagia he had won when they kept looking at one another; he kissed Pelagia and said he had thought that she was her father; he brought a disguise for Pelagia so that she could ride the motorcycle with him.

b T; Open answers; possible evidence: Pelagia and Captain Corelli's love; Carlo and Velisario's meeting (page 30).

c F; Open answers; possible evidence: the Germans thought the Italians were inferior and the Italians didn't understand the Germans' lack of sense of humour and extreme sense of duty (page 31); Captain Corelli and Günter Weber's discussion about the importance of science and moral principles (page 44).

## Captain Corelli's Mandolin

- d T; Open answers; possible evidence: he spoke of the building of a new Greece, and justified his behaviour by saying it was a 'historical necessity'; he said that villagers were Fascists and loyal to the king, so a lesson would do them good (page 35).
- 6 a Captain Corelli's mandolin  
b an opera group that Captain Corelli organized from among the men who could sing  
c a Communist group of freedom fighters in Greece  
d a British spy
- 7 Possible answer: Look, your accent is really terrible. Do not talk, do you understand? Keep quiet until you have learned more Greek. Also, be careful with the Communists; they are thieves. Italians and Germans are not good either. Do you understand?
- 8 army; boots; bullet; defeat; enemy; freedom; govern; hero; invasion; march; occupy; plane; rebel; rule; security; ship; troop; unit; war; wound
- 9 a Greeks  
b Greek Communists  
c Italians  
d Italian  
e Italian  
f Germans
- 10 a The leader of the Italian troops in Cephallonia.  
b He could ask the Germans to surrender to the Italians, who outnumbered them, and attack them if they refused, or he could surrender to the Germans on condition that they guaranteed the safety of the Italian soldiers on the island.  
c He took the second option; he negotiated with the German leaders for the Italian soldiers to keep their weapons and be allowed to leave the island peacefully.  
d First mistake: his decision to negotiate with the Germans. Second mistake: he brought his soldiers into the town in increasing numbers, so it was easier for the Germans to isolate them and cut them down.  
e He was killed by the Germans and his body was burned with those of his men.
- 11 Open answers
- 12 a 2; Dr Iannis  
b 3; Pelagia  
c 1; Captain Corelli  
d 4; Pelagia  
e 5; Pelagia  
f 6; Captain Corelli  
g 7; Pelagia
- 13 a l b l c l d l e l f G g G h G
- 14 a butchers; ELAS soldiers  
b unbroken; Drosoula  
c imprisonment; Pelagia  
d passport; Antonia  
e wordlessness; Dr Iannis
- 15 a the author says that when he was old, Velisarios was more respected than the priest and the teacher (page 84).  
b Months after the earthquake there were times when the earth shook (page 84).  
c Pelagia felt so guilty for not having helped her father that she would spend hours sitting at his grave (page 85).  
d Pelagia added details on clothing, baking, and the cruel treatment of widows (page 87).
- 16 a C b P c P d C e C f C g P
- ### Progress test key
- 1 a l b 2 c 3 d 2
- 2 a Mandras  
b Pelagia, Mandras  
c Mandras  
d ELAS  
e Hector, Mandras, an old man  
f Weber  
g Bunnios, Homer
- 3 a F b F c T d T e T f T g F h F
- 4 a The Germans > Velisarios  
b Corelli > Carlo  
c Dr Iannis > Velisarios  
d Velisarios > Corelli  
e Carlo > Mandras  
f Drosoula > Pelagia  
g Mandras > Dr Iannis  
h Mandras > Corelli
- 5 a Spiridon b Iannis c Spiridon d Corelli  
e Velisarios f Pelagia