

Bruno is a nine-year-old German boy growing up during World War II in Berlin. His father is a high-ranking official who is promoted to 'Commandant', and to Bruno's sadness the family has to move away to a place called Out-With (which is the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz). There Bruno meets a boy in striped pyjamas; a Jewish prisoner called Shmuel. In this extract Bruno has dressed in striped pyjamas himself and he and Shmuel are lead to a gas chamber to be killed.

1 Bruno frowned. He looked up at the sky, and as he did so there was another loud sound, this time the sound of thunder overhead, and just as quickly the sky seemed to grow even darker, almost black, and rain poured down even more heavily than it had in the morning. Bruno closed his eyes for a moment and felt it wash over him. When he opened them again he wasn't so much marching
5 as being swept along by a group of people, and all he could feel was the mud that was caked all over his body and his pyjamas clinging to his skin with all the rain and he longed to be back in his house, watching all this from a distance and not wrapped up in the centre of it.

'That's it,' he said to Shmuel. 'I'm going to catch a cold here. I have to go home.'

10 But just as he said this, his feet brought him up a set of steps, and as he marched on he found that there was no more rain coming down anymore because they were all piling into a long room that was surprisingly warm and must have been securely built because no rain was getting in anywhere. In fact it felt completely airtight.

'Well, that's something,' he said, glad to be out of the storm for a few minutes at least. 'I expect we'll have to wait here till it eases off and then I'll go home.'

15 Shmuel gathered himself very close to Bruno and looked up at him in fright. 'I'm sorry we didn't find your papa,' said Bruno.

'It's alright,' said Shmuel.

20 'And I'm sorry we didn't get to play, but when you come to Berlin, that's what we'll do. And I'll introduce you to ... Oh, what were their names again?' he asked himself, frustrated because they were supposed to be his three best friends for life but they had all vanished from his memory for now. He couldn't remember any of their names and he couldn't picture any of their faces.

'Actually,' he said, looking down at Shmuel, 'it doesn't matter whether I do or don't. They're not my best friends anyway.' He looked down and did something quite out of character for him: he took hold of Shmuel's tiny hand in his and squeezed it tightly.

25 'You're my best friend, Shmuel,' he said. 'My best friend for life.'

Shmuel may well have opened his mouth to say something back, but Bruno never heard it because at that moment there was a loud gasp from all the marchers who had filled the room, as the door at the front was suddenly closed and a loud metallic sound rang through from the outside.

30 Bruno raised an eyebrow, unable to understand the sense of all of this, but he assumed that it had something to do with keeping the rain out and stopping people from catching colds.

And then the room went very dark somehow, despite the chaos that followed, Bruno found that he was still holding Shmuel's hand in his own and nothing in the world would have persuaded him to let it go.

Q1 - Read again lines 1- 7

List four things you learn about Bruno [4 marks]

Q2 - Explore how the writer uses language to show the danger the boys are in. [8 marks]

Q3 - How has the writer structured the text to interest the reader? [8 marks]

Q4 - Read again line 22 to the end.

A student having read the extract said 'The boys in the story seem very young and innocent, it is sad they are being sent to die'

To what extent do you agree with the student?