Two Lives  Helen Naylor

Summary

The story is set in Tredonald, a mining village in South Wales, and involves the relationship between Huw Thomas and Megan Jenkins. Huw, a young but reluctant coal miner, lives with brother, Gareth and widowed, drunken father, David. Megan is still at school and her father is keen for her to go to college. Love grows between Megan and Huw, despite Mr Jenkins’ disapproval. Secretly, the two lovers agree to marry.

Disaster strikes – on the way home from the cinema, Huw and Megan hear an explosion at the mine. Huw races to the scene and hears that his brother Gareth is trapped underground. He is later found dead. The death brings Huw and his father closer; David Thomas does not want his remaining son to go back down the mine. Huw feels alone without Gareth. Megan is loving and supportive; they make love for the first time.

When Huw returns to work, his father returns to his drinking. Matters come to a head when his father is involved in a drunken brawl. A relative in Canada offers to pay for Huw and his father to emigrate for a new life. To Megan’s dismay, Huw sees this as the only way of saving his father from himself. Huw promises to write and return to marry Megan once he is established in Canada.

The story then jumps to fifty years later. Megan is sorting through her late father’s belongings and comes across unopened letters from Huw, which had been hidden from her. Reading them arouses strong memories of Huw, and she writes to him. Huw, now a successful artist, is astonished to hear from Megan, whom he has never forgotten, but decides not to reply. Meanwhile, Megan shows the letters to her grown-up daughter Beth. Huw is her father and she is anxious to meet him so she also writes to Huw. Beth’s letter persuades Huw to return to Wales.

Megan and Huw meet at a hotel in Tredonald and catch up on the last fifty years – Harry Jenkins’ attitude to Huw, the letters, Huw’s family in Canada, and their daughter Beth. Megan does not reveal that she is planning to marry another man soon. A meeting with Beth is arranged during which Huw realises his feelings for Megan are as strong as ever. Beth tells Huw about the forthcoming marriage and urges him to be careful. After seeing Megan again, Huw seems resigned to the fact that Megan is unattainable.

Huw meets Megan and fiancé Paul for dinner. Huw is subdued and sticks to safe topics of conversation, but gives Megan and Paul his good wishes for the future. The next day, Huw decides to cut short his visit and return to his family in Canada and says goodbye to Megan. But the following morning, when about to leave Tredonald, he is confronted by Megan, who has at last come to terms with the situation – she has to choose between Huw and Paul. She lost Huw fifty years ago, and now is desperate not to lose him again. They pledge to share their future life together.
Two Lives  Helen Naylor

Prologue
1. Student’s own answer.

Check your reading

Chapter 1
1. a Megan b Huw c Huw and Gareth
d Mr Thomas e Huw and Megan f Mr Jenkins

Chapter 2
1. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 3
1. a F, b T, c T, d T, e F

Chapter 4
1. 1 b, 2 d, 3 e, 4 a, 5 c

Chapter 5
1. 1 e, 2 b, 3 c, 4 d, 5 a
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 6
1. 1 M, 2 M, 3 H, 4 H, 5 M, 6 Both

Chapter 7
1. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 8
1. 1 old, 2 old, 3 new, 4 new, 5 new, 6 old
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 9
1. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 10
1. d, b, e, a, c

Chapter 11
1. 1 b, 2 c, 3 d, 4 c, 5 a

Chapter 12
1. a YES, b NO, c NO, d YES, e YES, f NO

Chapter 13
1. e, f, d, c, a, b

Chapter 14
1. Megan planned to marry Paul on 21st September and move away to London. She asked Huw to join them for dinner so he could meet Paul. Huw asked Megan if she was happy every time she heard Paul’s voice. Huw wanted to be sure that Megan was doing the right thing. He still loved Megan, and he only had two weeks to make her feel the same. But Megan didn’t like him organising her life after fifty years.

Chapter 15
1. a ✓, b ✗, c ✓, d ✓, e ✗, f ✓
2. Student’s own answer.

Chapter 16
1. a Beth, Philip, Paul b Megan c Paul
d Huw e Huw f Megan and Huw

Chapter 17
1. a H, b M, c H, d M, e M, f H