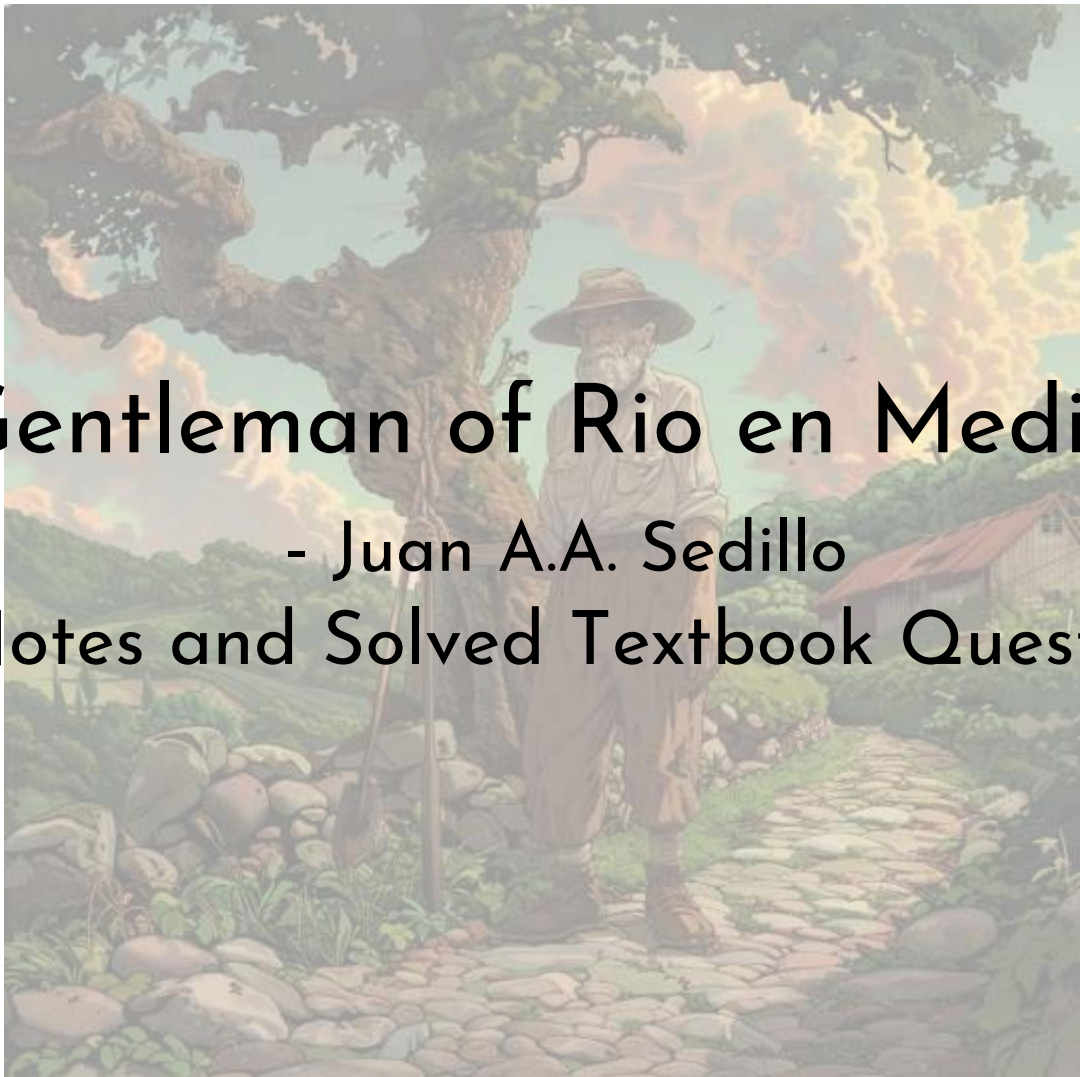


Gentleman of Rio en Medio

- Juan A.A. Sedillo

- Notes and Solved Textbook Questions



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Chapter Summary

In this story, Don Anselmo, the respected elder of a small village, sells his land to American landowners for twelve hundred dollars in cash.

A conflict arises when the children of the village play on the sold property.

Respect in the Village

Don Anselmo was the most respected man in the village.

He considered the children of the village as his descendants and called them - "sobrinos and nietos".

He had planted a tree for every child born in Rio en Medio since he took possession of the house from his mother.

Refusing a Fortune

The Americans were willing to buy more land from Don Anselmo for twice the agreed amount.

He refused to change the initial agreement.

A Conflict of Ownership

The Deed - The Americans who purchased the land from Don Anselmo, were given a deed that granted them "complete possession of the property."

The Argument

The narrator mediated on behalf of the Americans. He asked Don Anselmo to stop the children from playing in the orchard. Don Anselmo responded that he didn't sell the trees and that they belonged to the children for whom they were planted.

The Bittersweet Resolution

The Americans spent an entire winter buying the trees individually from the descendants of Don Anselmo in the valley of Rio en Medio.

Values

Honoring the Community, A Generous Spirit, Honoring and Respecting Tradition, A Living Legacy, Generational Ties, Refusing Ownership, Not Money-minded.

Check your Understanding Questions - Solved

Check your Understanding - I

1. The old man was ---- (Fill in the blank with the most appropriate word)

- a. understanding
- b. quick
- c. unhurried
- d. witty

Answer: c. unhurried

2. Do you think the ancestors of the old man lived in Rio en Medio?

Answer: Yes, I think the ancestors of the old man lived in Rio en Medio. According to the narrator the old man's ancestors had lived in the same area for hundreds of years.

3. A word in line 4 of paragraph 1 suggests that the old man was a farmer. Pick that word.

Answer: The word is: tilled.

4. Study the picture and describe the old man's orchard by using the words given below.

(a small stream, unpleasant, fruit bearing trees, old fashioned house, attractive)



Answer: The old man had an orchard which was beside a small stream. Although the heat during summers could be unpleasant, the orchard would be overflowing with fruit bearing trees. The man lived in an old-fashioned house that was next to the orchard. The picture of this ancient house against the backdrop of an orchard and a stream made for an attractive scenery.

5. In paragraph 2 the words "who" and "these" refer to --- and --- respectively.

Answer: "Who" refers to Senator Thomas Benton Catron who was a Senator of New Mexico from 1912 - 1917. "These" refers to the people of Rio en Medio.

6. Look at the picture and draw your inference about the old man's appearance and his social / living condition.



Answer: The old man was getting on in years. He probably lived at a time when formal attire was respectful. He had kept to his habits. However, his gloves had holes, and his clothes are torn which indicates that he wasn't well off.

7. The word "innumerable kin" means that the old man had a number of

- a. children.
- b. trees in his orchard.
- c. relatives.
- d. followers.
- e. canes.

Answer: c. relatives

8. In the Indian context the eyes of women are compared to fishes (Meenakshi) and lotus (Kamalakshi) based on their shape and size. Why do you think the eyes of the boy are compared to gazelle? Can you write it in Kannada?

Note: gazelle in Kannada is ಹರಿಣ.

Answer: A person's eyes are often compared to a particular animal's to indicate the shape and how expressive the eyes are. The boy's eyes were probably compared to a gazelle's because they were large, soulful, and expressive.

In Kannada - eyes of a gazelle would be called ಹರಿಣಾಕ್ಷಿ.

9. How did the old man greet the people who had been waiting for him?

Answer: The old man took his time coming into the meeting place arranged by the narrator. He bowed to everyone who was present in the room as a way of greeting.

10. The old man removed his hat and gloves carefully.

a. Was he afraid that they would get spoiled?

Answer: I don't think the old man was afraid of the gloves getting spoiled. I think he was generally someone who took great care of his possessions. He was probably used to doing things in a measured and careful manner.

b. Whose style did it remind the writer of?

Answer: Don Anselmo's slow removal of the hat and gloves reminded the narrator of the actor Charlie Chaplin doing the same in a movie where he acted as a janitor in a bank.

Check your understanding - II

1. In the meeting of the old man and the Americans, they talked about rain and the old man's large family. It was

- a. to mock his large family**
- b. to break the ice**
- c. a custom of the Americans**
- d. to make themselves comfortable**
- e. to prepare everyone for the main talk**
- f. to make everyone know that it had not rained in that area**

(You may think more than one among the above are appropriate. If so, tick them)

Answer: The appropriate options are

- b. to break the ice**
- d. to make themselves comfortable**
- e. to prepare everyone for the main talk**

2. Why do you think the storyteller spoke Spanish?

Answer: The storyteller was the mediator who could speak both English and Spanish. He was a friend of the Americans and was probably chosen to do the negotiation as Don Anselmo couldn't speak English.

3. The storyteller offered the old man almost the double of what he had quoted earlier. Why?

Answer: Before the Americans decided to purchase the land, they had sent a surveyor, an engineer, to examine the property. He discovered that Don Anselmo owned almost twice the land than what he had agreed to sell. The Americans were willing to purchase all the land for double the originally agreed amount. The storyteller, hence, made the offer to Don Anselmo on behalf of the Americans.

4. What was the reaction of the old man to the storyteller's offer?

Answer: Don Anselmo, the old man, did not appreciate the new offer made by the storyteller. He reminded the narrator that he had agreed to sell the land only because the Americans were good people. He did not care for the additional money and asked the storyteller not to discuss the issue again.

5. We respect elders in many ways. For example,

- a. We shake hands**
- b. We touch their feet**

Answer:

- c. We speak politely**
- d. We bow**
- e. We hand our heads and keep our eyes downcast**
- f. We don't talk back.**

6. The storyteller respected the old man by (Fill in the blank with appropriate words)

Answer: The storyteller seemed to respect the old man Don Anselmo and tried to persuade him to take the new deal made by the Americans as it would mean more money for him.

7. After the findings of the engineer the offer was doubled for the old man's land.

a. Did the old man raise the rate?

Answer: No, the old man did not raise the rate.

b. Did the storyteller offer more?

Answer: Yes, the storyteller was willing to double the offer on behalf of the Americans.

8. Match the following.

'A'	'B'
1. Seller	People of Spain
2. Some Americans	Follower of the old man
3. A young dark boy	Buyers
	The storyteller
	Don Anselmo

Answer:

1. Seller - Don Anselmo
2. Some Americans - Buyers
3. A young dark boy - Follower of the old man

9. (Tick the correct Answer)

Don Anselmo took only 12 hundred dollars for the land finally because

a. the storyteller failed to convince Don Anselmo to take more money than what had been agreed upon.

b. Don Anselmo was a man of principles.

Answer: b. Don Anselmo was a man of principles.

10. What did Don Anselmo do as he left the place with the money?

Answer: After signing the deed and taking the money, Don Anselmo refused to take more money than what was initially agreed, shook hands with everyone present in the room, put in his worn gloves, took his stick and walked out with the boy who followed him, behind him.

Check your understanding - III

1. Fill in the blanks with suitable word/s to describe the land and the house sold by the old man.

Answer:

- Before it was sold***
- a) peeled off plaster
 - b) gnarled, overgrown trees
 - c) torn fence

- After it was sold***
- replastered the old house
pruned trees
patched the fence

2. From the list given below, tick the activities in which the children of Rio en Medio were involved, after the Americans occupied the house and the land sold by Don Anselmo.

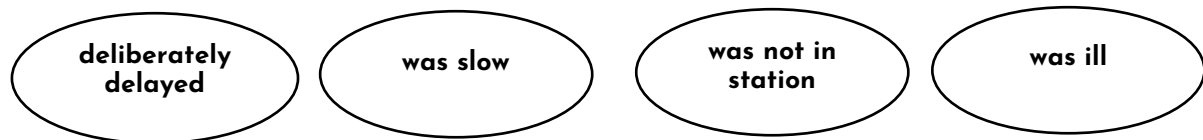
- i. pruning the trees
- ii. renovating the house
- iii. playing in the orchard
- iv. speaking harsh words to the Americans in Spanish
- v. plucking flowers from the trees
- vi. putting fences around their play area

- vii. laughing whenever they were spoken to
- viii. running around the land

Answer:

- iii. playing in the orchard
- v. plucking flowers from the trees
- vi. putting fences around their play area
- vii. laughing whenever they were spoken to

3. The possibilities for a week-long delay for another meeting are given. Which of them do you agree with? Discuss with your partner. The old man



Answer: The old man was slow. We see from the beginning of the story that he proceeded with things at a leisurely pace and did not hurry.

4. Don Anselmo repeated certain things whenever he met the story teller and took leave of him. Write them down. One is done for you.

Answer:

- a. the old man shakes hands
- b. the old man wore the same faded cutaway
- c. the old man carried the same stick
- d. the old man was accompanied by the same boy
- e. the old man talked about the weather

5. Don Anselmo says, "The Americans are good people." Does his remark strike you as sarcastic or sincere? Share your responses with your partner.

Answer: The remark of Don Anselmo that "The Americans are good people" struck me as sincere because he follows up the remark by saying that they were also good neighbours and that he had sold his property to the Americans only because he knew that they were good.

Check your understanding - IV

Fill in the blanks/choose the most appropriate answer.

1. Don Anselmo sold his land but he didn't sell his ----- .

Answer: trees

2. The children of Rio en Medio were Don Anselmo's ----- and -----.

Answer: sobrinos and nietos

3. Don Anselmo inherited the house from his -----.

Answer: mother

4. According to Don Anselmo, the real owner /s of the trees was/were -----.

- a. the children of Rio en Medio
- b. Don Anselmo himself
- c. the Americans
- d. the story teller
- e. Don Anselmo's ancestors

Answer: a. the children of Rio en Medio

5. Don Anselmo did not sell the trees. Why do you think he did not sell them?

Tick the correct answers.

- a. Trees were like children to him.**
- b. They were grown for the children of next generation.**
- c. He thought they did not belong to him but to the children.**
- d. He had grown them in memory of his ancestors.**
- e. He wanted his surroundings to be green.**

Answer:

- b. They were grown for the children of next generation.**
 - c. He thought they did not belong to him but to the children.**
-

Textbook Exercise Questions - Solved

Think about the text

1. Don Anselmo's appearance and manners were quite unusual. How would you support this statement based on the text?

Answer: Don Anselmo was an old man who dressed unusually. He wore a hat, an old, green, faded coat, and old gloves that were torn showing his fingertips through them. He also carried the skeleton of a worn-out umbrella as a cane.

2. Whose argument do you agree with? Don Anselmo's or the story teller's? Give reasons.

Answer: I agree with the story teller's side of the argument. When Don Anselmo sold his property, he should have made it clear that the trees were not included. This was misrepresentation. Whenever he met with the story teller, he spent so much time talking about the weather and other things. He should've made it clear before he agreed to the deal. Him taking less money doesn't discount the fact that he wasn't transparent.

3. Don Anselmo was passionate about his land and the children of Rio en Medio. Which details in the text support this statement? Write them.

Answer: Don Anselmo tilled the land that was worked on by his ancestors and agreed to sell it to the Americans only because he believed they were good people. He even refused to take extra money for additional land. Don Anselmo also had planted a tree for every child that was born as he considered them as his sobrinos and nietos. This shows that he was passionate about the land and the children of Rio-en-Medio.

4. Don Anselmo's reaction to the offer of more money was not expected. Justify this statement.

Answer: In the beginning, when Don Anselmo came down to meet the storyteller and sign the deed, the storyteller disclosed that the surveyor and engineer had made a discovery. Don Anselmo owned twice the land than what he'd initially thought. The storyteller explained that the Americans would have liked to purchase the additional land and would pay almost twice the initial amount of money that was agreed upon. Don Anselmo reaction was to be silent for a moment and then to refuse the new offer. He said he'd agreed to sell his house and land for twelve hundred dollars and that's the deal he was willing to adhere to. This reaction was surprising as he refused to take extra money for the additional land.

5. Read paragraph 5 and identify the tone or reaction of the old man while uttering the following word/words. Some examples are given. You may use any other appropriately.

(mild / harsh / blunt / authoritative / self-assertive / confident/ comfortable /polite/ aggressive)

Answer:

The old man

- a) Friend -
- b) I do not like -
- c) I know these -
- d) I do not care to be -
- e) That is the price -

Tone / reaction

- mild
- blunt
- confident
- self-assertive
- authoritative

6. Why do you think the Americans wanted to buy Don Anselmo's land?

Answer: Don Anselmo had a quaint house with a creek that ran through the land. He also had an orchard that was gnarled and beautiful. It was also being sold at a cheap price. Hence, I think the Americans bought the beautiful property to live on it.

7. Don Anselmo and the Americans were generous in their own ways. Comment on this.

Answer: Don Anselmo sold all this land to the Americans without charging them for the extra land that was discovered. He also planted trees for the Rio-en-Medio which display his generosity. The Americans, on the other hand, also offered to pay Don Anselmo double the amount for double the land which could be considered being fair. Later in the book, they don't contest Don Anselmo's decision to not include the trees in the sale and instead they tracked down every child who "owned" a tree in Don Anselmo's orchard and paid them for the ownership of the trees. Thus, the Americans are also said to be generous.

8. At last, the problem of ownership was resolved. But it took a long time. What might be the reasons for it? Write a paragraph on it.

Answer: When Don Anselmo sold his house and land to the Americans, he did not include the trees in the sale. The Americans weren't aware of it at the time and got to know about this only later when the children of Rio-en-Medio would overrun the orchard for their play. Don Anselmo justified his decision saying that he'd planted each tree when a new child was born in the village and that the children were therefore, the rightful owners. The Americans legally owned the land and trees. However, considering Don Anselmo's generosity when he refused to accept more money for the extra land that was discovered, the Americans did not legally contest. Instead, they spent most of that winter tracking now, negotiating and buying the trees from each child in the valley of Rio-en-Medio.

9. Read the story and arrange the given events in the order in which they occur in the text.

- a) The story teller offered Don Anselmo more money than what had been agreed upon.
- b) The children of Rio en Medio disturbed the peace of the Americans.
- c) The Americans bought the trees from the descendants of Don Anselmo
- d) The story teller was surprised at the strange argument of Don Anselmo
- e) Don Anselmo lived in Rio en Medio.
- f) The buyers renovated the house.
- g) Don Anselmo signed the sale deed after the negotiation for twelve hundred dollars.
- h) Don Anselmo felt offended when he was offered more money.
- i) The occupants of the house came up with lots of complaints about the children of Rio en Medio.

Answer: The order of events is:

- e) Don Anselmo lived in Rio en Medio.
- a) The story teller offered Don Anselmo more money than what had been agreed upon.
- h) Don Anselmo felt offended when he was offered more money.
- g) Don Anselmo signed the sale deed after the negotiation for twelve hundred dollars.
- f) The buyers renovated the house.
- b) The children of Rio en Medio disturbed the peace of the Americans.

- i) The occupants of the house came up with lots of complaints about the children of Rio en Medio.
- d) The story teller was surprised at the strange argument of Don Anselmo
- c) The Americans bought the trees from the descendants of Don Anselmo.

10. Imagine that a group of four students endorses the old man's views. The other group supports the Americans. Write a paragraph on each group's argument. Discuss them with the groups.

Answer:

The old man

Don Anselmo was born and brought up in Rio-en-Medio. He inherited his house and property from his mother. He loved the land he lived on very much which is evident in how much thought he put into checking who bought his land. His love for his land and the people is also shown when he plants a tree for every child that is born in his village. He is also a man of principles. He most likely knew how much land he inherited. However, he had agreed to an initial amount for his property, and he refused to take more money even though the Americans offered it for the extra land. It is possible that he grew up in a very different culture and so his reasoning for not including the trees as part of the land could be sound.

The Americans

Although the readers never directly read the perspectives of the Americans, there is plenty discussed about them and that is perhaps a good endorsement. The Americans offer a fair amount to buy the house and land. When their surveyor and engineer discover there was more land as part of the property than what was initially thought of, they don't hide the fact. In fact, they present it to Don Anselmo and offer him double the initial amount for the extra land. Later when they move into the house, it is pretty beat up. The new buyers spend a lot of time fixing up the house and as they begin to settle in, they are faced with intrusions on their property by children. When they raise the issue to the story teller, they learn that the trees were not included as part of the sale. This must've come as quite a shock. Then they have to listen to Don Anselmo's reasoning which doesn't make sense and then are forced to spend money to negotiate with children and their whims.

11. Imagine that your neighbour is in a fix as the Americans were. How would you solve the problem?

Answer: I would not interfere in my neighbour's issues as it's none of my business. In case they ask for my help however, I would lend a year. Since the Americans are my neighbours, it means I live in Rio-en-Medio. I would've probably known Don Anselmo for much longer than the Americans. In this case, I would side with Don Anselmo and ask the Americans to buy the trees individually from the children.