



L-1. The Best Christmas Present in the world

- **Michael MorPurgo**

New Words

1. Spotted	Found
2. Mended	repaired
3. Scroch marks	burn marks
4. Restore	repair
5. Shallow	not deep
6. Trenches	deep holes in the ground
7. Porapet	the wall at the side of the trench
8. Huddles	groups
9. Rousing	exciting
10. Long for	desire
11. Devastation	damage
12. Prevails	dominate

Answer the following questions

1. For how long do you think Connie had kept Jim's letter? Give reasons for your answer?
A. Connie had kept Jim's letter for a long time. She had received it on January 25, 1915. Jim had written it on December 26, 1914. At that time Jim was an officer, a captain in the English army. A captain in the army is always a young man. It means that Jim's wife Connie must have also been young. In the story she is 101. It means the letter was about 70 -75 years old.
2. Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when?
A. The desk must have been sold when the house in which connie macpherson lived had caught fire. She was taken to a nursing home. All the burnt up things must have been sold after that.
3. Why do Jim and Hans think that games or sports are good ways for resolving conflicts? Do you agree?
A. Jim and Hans thought that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts because nobody dies in matches. No children are orphaned and no wives become widow. Due to these reasons, games are good ways for resolving conflicts. Wars only lead to death and devastation.
Yes, I agree that some non – violent method must be found to resolve disputes between nations.

4. Do you think the soldiers of the two armies are like each other, or different from each other? Find evidence from the story to support your answer?

A. The soldiers of the two armies like each other. The story is all about it. They like to greet each other. They play football. They eat and drink together. The two captains talk affectionately about their lives away from the field. They agree that the problems can be resolved by playing games instead of fighting wars.

The soldiers of both the armies are eager for the war to end. They want to go back to their families. Thus there is much which is common between them.

5. Mention the various ways in which the British and the German soldiers become friends and find things in common at Christmas?

A. It was the Christmas that made the British and German soldiers friends. The Germans waved a white flag and wished the British a happy Christmas. The British responded with same to you. They were surprised when the Germans moved further towards them without arms. They came close and shook hands.

The Christmas and the ways of celebrating it were common between the two. They played, they ate and they sang carols. The two captains talked of their families. They talked of their own fields of activity when there was no war. They had the same tender feelings about life. They did not want to fight. They wanted peace. They wanted to be with their families as soon as possible.

6. What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it the best Christmas present in the world?

A. Connie's Christmas present was the letter which the writer had brought for her. However, in her muddled state she thought that it was not be author but her Jim. She called the writer Jim and made him sit beside her. She kissed him on the cheek. For her, her husband had returned after such a long time. So he said that it was the best Christmas present she had ever got.

7. Do you think the title of this story is suitable for it? Can you think of any other title?

A. Yes, the title of the story is suitable for it. The spirit of Christmas is the theme that prevails throughout the story. The message of Christmas peace and good will to all is brought out so clearly through the story. It was on a Christmas day. In the middle of a raging war, that two warring troops made peace. The moment of peace that the soldiers shared with each other was the best Christmas present for them. Again it was on a Christmas day that the narrator went to see Mr. Macpherson. He went to return her husband's letters to her but even more precious was her delusion that the narrator was her husband Jim, who she believed had returned as promised on a Christmas day. This was the best Christmas present in the world for her.

However, it is always possible to find alternate titles. For example "war" can be another title. The story, is after all an anti-war story. 'Christmas' could also be a title because the story narrates two important Christmas days.

Lesson – 2 The Ant and the Cricket

New words

1. Crumb	broken
2. Gag	happy
3. Cupboard (here)	store house
4. Starvation	death by hunger
5. Dripping	flowing down
6. Mouthful	a small quantity
7. Lend	give a loan
8. Quoth	said
9. Hastily	hurriedly
10. Folks	people
11. Warrant	maintain

Answer the following questions

1. The cricket says, “oh! What will become of me? When does he say it and why?
A. The cricket speaks these words on the arrival of winter. He says so because he finds that there is no food for him in his house.
2. i. Find in the poem in the lines that mean the same as neither a borrower nor a lender be.
ii. What is your opinion of the ant’s principles?
 - i. The line is: ‘we ants never lend.’
 - ii. I do not agree with the ant’s principle on the other hand, I believe that a friend in need is a friend in deed.
3. The ant tells the cricket to “dance the winter away”. Do you think the word dance is appropriate here? If so, why?
A. Yes the word ‘dance’ is appropriate here. It is so because the cricket had spoken of his love of singing and dancing go together.
4. i) Which lines in the poem express the poet’s comment?
ii) Write the comment in your own words.
 - i) The lines are: “Folks call this a fable; I’ll warrant it true. Some cricket’s have four legs and some have two.’
 - ii) People say that this is a short story with a moral. However, it is true. There are people in this world who spend all their earnings. They do not save anything for the future. In the moments of crisis or in their old age they come to grief. They find they have no money to depend upon. Such people says the poet, are like the cricket of the story.