

Book Knowledge Organiser – Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo

Important Information

Plot

The novel revolves around the life of Thomas Peaceful as he recounts his memories. As time goes on, Thomas begins to feel isolated and excluded due to the growing connection between Molly and Charlie, who fall in love. Soon, World War I arises and Charlie and Thomas are enlisted to fight in the war. Tommo tells the stories of his wartime experiences, including his training and the savage trench battles he endures in France.

Themes

War, Loss, Blame, Bullying, Love, Loyalty, Courage Vs Cowardice and Justice Vs Injustice.

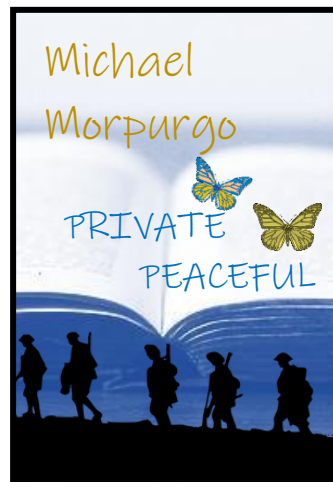
Setting

The main setting of Private Peaceful is the village of Iddesleigh (Devon, England). The brothers also travel to France for training, and ultimately, the German front in Belgium.

Characters

Thomas Peaceful (Tommo)	Protagonist – As he narrates, he is an underage English soldier fighting in Etaples, France, in World War One.
Charlie Peaceful	Charlie is Tommo's older brother and protector.
Molly	Having grown up together, she is a childhood friend of Thomas. She is a bit of a tomboy and likes to do the things he does.
Mrs Peaceful	Mother of the three peaceful sons who is forced to take a job that keeps her away from her children for the majority of the day
Big Joe	The oldest of the Peaceful brothers, but he has the mind of a child due to the case of meningitis he suffered as an infant
Grandma Wolf	Antagonist - Great aunt to the boys and inflicts physical punishment and bullying upon them whilst their mother is at work.
The Colonel	Local land-owner and the most powerful man in their village. Grandma Wolf encourages him to become brutal and cruel.
Sergeant Hanley	Commanding officer who bullies Tommo.
Captain Wilkes	An ex-choirmaster who cares for the soldiers.
Anna	Has a brief relationship with Anna.

Context – World War I began after the assassination of Austrian-Hungarian Archduke Ferdinand by a Serbian nationalist. Germany supported the Austrian-Hungarian side while Russia supported the Serbian cause, leading these major powers into war. Later, Belgium, France, and Great Britain would join the Serbian cause and America joined the war in 1917. The war ended with the surrender of Germany on November 11, 1918. Millions were killed and it became known as 'The Great War'. Over 290 British soldiers were executed for cowardice and desertion. These men endured extremely stressful conditions and likely had developed what we would now call PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Still, these men were given a short trial by court-martial (if at all) before being executed by a firing squad likely made up of their fellow soldiers.



What Can the Book Teach Us?

Although relationships can be difficult at times, it is important to try and get along. Look beyond surface appearances and connect with who people truly are.

Quotes

"Being his real brother, I could feel I live in his shadow, but I never have and I do not now. I live in his glow."

"I must survive. I have promises to keep."

"All that is different about this morning is that I know whose death it will be and how it will happen."

Name of Book: Private

Peaceful Date

Published: 2003

Author: Michael Morpurgo

A.R Level: 5.2

A.R Points: 7

Genre: Historical Fiction

Key Vocabulary

marauding	in search of things to steal or people to attack
raucous	making a disturbingly harsh and loud noise
mutiny	refusal to obey the orders of a person in authority
brigadier	rank of officer in the British army, above colonel and below major general
cavalry	soldiers who fought on horseback
befuddle	make (someone) unable to think clearly
bewilderment	a feeling of being perplexed and confused
vicar	in the Church of England, a minister or priest
skiving	avoiding work or duties by staying away or leaving early
tickety-boo	when everything is in good order or fine/okay
slog	to work hard over a period of time
immaculate	very clean
regiment	a unit of an army typically commanded by a colonel
thatch	a roof covering of straw, reeds or palm leaves
privy	bathroom or toilet
scourge	person or thing that causes great trouble or suffering
vendetta	prolonged bitter argument with someone
dilapidated	something in poor condition or in disrepair
gramophone	an old type of record player
chateau	large French country house or castle