

Comprehension Check Part 1

Q1. What did the author find in a junk shop?

Ans. Author found a roll- top desk from early nineteenth century, made up of oak wood. It was in a very bad condition, the roll- top broken in several pieces, one leg clumsily mended and scorch marks all down one side.

Q2. What did he find in a secret drawer? Who do you think had put it in there?

Ans. He found a small black tin box in a secret drawer. I think the owner of the desk might have kept it there.

Comprehension Check Part 2

1. Who had written the letter, to whom, and when?

Ans. A captain in the British army Jim Macpherson, had written the letter to his wife Connie (Mrs. Jim Macpherson) on December 26, 1914.

2. Why was the letter written — what was the wonderful thing that had happened?

Ans. The letter was written to describe the wonderful event that how two armies- the British and the Germans who were fighting against each other celebrated Christmas together.

3. What jobs did Hans Wolf and Jim Macpherson have when they were not soldiers?

Ans. Hans Wolf played the cello in the orchestra while Jim Macpherson was a teacher.

4. Had Hans Wolf ever been to Dorset? Why did he say he knew it?

Ans. No he had never set foot in Dorset, never even been to England. He had learned all he knew of England from school, and from reading books in English. His favourite writer was Thomas Hardy, his favourite book Far from the Madding Crowd.

5. Do you think Jim Macpherson came back from the war? How do you know this?

Ans. No, Jim Macpherson never came back from the war. That's why her wife kept all his letters.

Comprehension Check Part3

1. Why did the author go to Bridport?

Ans. Author went to Bridport to meet Mrs. Jim Macpherson and to deliver her the letter.

2. How old was Mrs Macpherson now? Where was she?

Ans. Mrs. Macpherson was hundred and one years old now and was in a nursing home at Burlington House, on the Dorchester road, on the other side of town.

Comprehension Check Part 4

1. Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was?

Ans. Connie Macpherson thought that the visitor was her husband Jim Macpherson.

2. Which sentence in the text shows that the visitor did not try to hide his identity?

Ans. I explained about the desk, about how I had found it, but I don't think she was listening

1. For how long do you think Connie had kept Jim's letter? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. Connie had last letter of Jim dated January 25, 1915. She must have kept letters of Jim for long time as she told the author that she kept on reading his letters very often, every day which makes her feel that Jim was near by her.

2. Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when?

Ans. The desk must have been sold when the house had caught fire in which Connie Macpherson lived. She was shifted from there and taken to a nursing home. All the burnt-up things must have been sold after that. The desk was in a bad condition with the roll top in several pieces; one leg clumsily mended and scorch marks all down one side and finally landed in a junk shop.

3. Why do Jim and Hans think that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts? Do you agree?

Ans. 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 widows. Due to these reasons, games are good ways for resolving conflicts. Yes, I do agree with this statement. Wars only lead to killings on both sides, heart break, separation, pain, suffering, death and devastation. A loss to both the sides of armies.

Q4. 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.

Ans. The soldiers of the two armies were like each other. Both the troops left their trenches and celebrated Christmas in 'no man's land' together. They shared each other's food. All of them were smoking, laughing, talking, drinking and eating. They even talked about the books they liked. They agreed about everything. They also played a game of football for which both Hans and Jim cheered, clapped hands and stamped feet. Both sides exchanged carols at night. Moreover, they had the same view that wars only brought death and destruction, and wished that wars could be resolved like a football match where no children are orphaned and no wives become widows. They hoped that the war would end soon, and they could all go home and be united with their families. All these instances show that the soldiers of the two armies were similar to each other.

Q6. What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it "the best Christmas present in the world"?

Ans. When the author came to see Connie and gave her the box, she misunderstood him for her husband Jim. She thought that Jim had kept his promise and come home for Christmas. This was Connie's Christmas present. It was the best Christmas present in the world for her because Jim had written in the letter that he would come home on Christmas. She had read that letter several times every day to feel that he was near her and truly believed that he would one day return to her. Now that he was finally there with her, and she could hear his voice again she was extremely happy.

Q7. Do you think the title of this story is suitable for it? Can you think of any other title(s)?

Ans. Yes, according to me the title is appropriate for the story because it is revolving around the Christmas theme. For her it was the best Christmas present and even Jim also had written in the letter that he will come back on Christmas.

Another title can be "Best Christmas gift ever".