

(Honeydew)

## Chapter 1 : The Best Christmas Present in the World

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### Comprehension Check (Page No. 10)

#### Question 1 :

What did the author find in a junk shop?

#### Answer 1:

The author found a 19th century old roll-top desk in a junk shop which was made of oak. It was in a very bad state. The roll-top was broken into pieces. One of its leg was not repaired properly and the other side had burn marks.

#### Question 2:

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

#### Answer 2:

The author found a small tin box in the secret drawer of a roll-top desk. A piece of lined note paper was cello-taped to its top. It had, 'Jim's last letter, received January 25, 1915, to be concealed with me when the time comes" written on it. Probably it was put there by Mrs. Jim Macpherson, who was Jim's wife. She had written her name and address on the envelope inside the box.

### Comprehension Check (Page No. 14)

#### Question 1:

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

#### Answer 1:

Jim Macpherson had written the letter to his wife Connie Macpherson on December 26, 1914.

#### Question 2:

Why was the letter written-what was the wonderful thing that had happened?

#### Answer 2:

Jim wrote the letter to tell his wife that a wonderful thing that happened on Christmas day. The British and the Germans were engulfed in a war, yet on this day, both the troops met in no man's land. It was a wonderful thing because in spite of a war going on, the warring soldiers were trying to make peace.

#### Question 3:

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

#### Answer 3:

Hans Wolf was from Dusseldorf. He played the cello in the orchestra. Jim Macpherson was a school teacher from Dorset.

**Question 4:**

Had Hans Wolf even been to Dorset? Why did he say he knew it?

**Answer 4:**

No, Hans Wolf had never been to Dorset. He had gathered knowledge about England from school and also from reading books in English.

**Question 5:**

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

**Answer 5:**

No, it is most likely that Jim Macpherson did not come back from the war. The cello-taped notepaper mentioned that the letter was his last letter. His wife did not receive more letters from him. It was evident that Jim Macpherson had died. This happened in the earlier part of the World War I in which the Germans were triumphant which implies the defeat of the British and the death of Jim Macpherson.

**Comprehension Check (Page No. 15)****Question 1:**

Why did the author go to Bridport?

**Answer 1:**

The author went to Bridport because it was the place where Mrs. Macpherson used to live. The address on the letter read "Mrs Jim Macpherson, 12 Copper Beeches, Bridport, and Dorset. He wanted to give that letter back to her.

**Question 2:**

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

**Answer 2:**

Mrs. Macpherson was a hundred and one-year-old. She was in a nursing home in Burlington house, on the Dorchester road, on the other side of town.

**Comprehension Check (Page No. 16)****Question 1:**

Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was?

**Answer 1:**

Connie Macpherson thought that her visitor was her husband, Jim.

**Question 2:**

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

**Answer 2:**

The sentence which shows that the visitor did not try to hide his identity is, 'I explained about the desk, about how I had found it, but I don't think she was listening.'

**Working with Text****Question 1:**

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

**Answer 1:**

Connie might have kept Jim's letter for a very long time. This is because she told the narrator how she read it very often every day so that she could feel that Jim was close to her.

**Question 2:**

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

**Answer 2:**

When the house in which Connie Macpherson lived had caught fire, the desk must have been sold after which she was taken to a nursing home. All the burnt up things must have been sold after that.

**Question 3:**

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

**Answer 3:**

Jim and Hans thought that getting involved in games or sports is a good way of ending conflicts because nobody dies in the matches. No children are orphaned and no wives become widows and no one suffers as there is no loss of life and property. Yes we agree that conflicts can be resolved in ways suggested by Jim and Hans because wars are always harmful and never benefiting. Wars are the reason of deaths, devastation and wreckage.

**Question 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 Ans.

**Answer 4:**

The soldiers of the both the armies were like each other. Below are some instances from the story to prove:

- Both the armies celebrated Christmas
- Both the armies shared their food and spent time together in smoking, laughing, talking, drinking and eating.
- They played a football match and agreed that conflicts and disputes can be resolved by a football match
- They agreed on the termination of wars and about their negative aspects.
- They exchanged carols and hoped to meet with the families again.

### **Question 5:**

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

#### **Answer 5:**

The British and the German troops celebrated Christmas with each other. They enjoyed each other's food and spent time together in smoking, laughing, talking, drinking and eating. Hans and Jim shared the cake Connie had baked. They talked about Bathsheba, Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Troy and Dorset. Both of them liked books and talked about it. Both the troops played a game of football for which both Hans and Jim cheered and clapped. They also exchanged carols at night. In this way, they celebrated Christmas together, finding a lot in common between them.

### **Question 6:**

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

#### **Answer 6:**

Connie mistook the narrator for her husband Jim when he came to see Connie and gave her the box. She thought that Jim had come home for Christmas to meet her. This was Connie's best Christmas present in the world because Jim had written in the letter that he would visit home on Christmas. She read that letter several times every day to feel that he was near her. She was extremely happy with all this.

### **Question 7:**

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

#### **Answer 7:**

Yes, the title of the story is suitable. The story is based on the spirit of Christmas. The story gives us a strong message that peace and good will to all is brought by celebrating Christmas. It was on a Christmas day, in the middle of a war, that the two warring troops made peace and the moment of peace that the soldiers shared was the best Christmas present for them. Again, it was on a Christmas day that the narrator went to see Mrs Macpherson. He went to return her

husband's letters to her. The letter was the most precious gift she could receive on Christmas, but her delusion that the narrator was her husband Jim and he had returned as promised on a Christmas day was even more heart touching.

## Working with Language

### Question 1:

**(i) Read the passage below and underline the verbs in the past tense.**

A man got on the train and sat down. The compartment was empty except for one lady. She took her gloves off. A few hours later the police arrested the man. They held him for 24 hours and then freed him.

#### Answer (i):

A man got on the train and sat down. The compartment was empty except for one lady. She took her gloves off. A few hours later the police arrested the man. They held him for 24 hours and then freed him.

**(ii) Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verbs in brackets.**

My little sister is very naughty. When she \_\_\_\_\_ (come) back from school yesterday, she had \_\_\_\_\_ (tear) her dress. We \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) her how it had \_\_\_\_\_ (happen). She \_\_\_\_\_ (say) she \_\_\_\_\_ (have, quarrel) with a boy. She \_\_\_\_\_ (have, beat) him in a race and he \_\_\_\_\_ (have, try) to push her. She \_\_\_\_\_ (have, tell) the teacher and so he \_\_\_\_\_ (have, chase) her, and she \_\_\_\_\_ (have, fall) down and \_\_\_\_\_ (have, tear) her dress.

#### Answer (ii):

My little sister is very naughty. When she **came** (come) back from school yesterday, she had **torn** (tear) her dress. We **asked** (ask) her how it had **happened** (happen). She **said** (say) she **had quarreled** (have, quarrel) with a boy. She **had beaten** (have, beat) him in a race and he **had tried** (have, try) to push her. She **had told** (have, tell) the teacher and so he **had chased** (have, chase) her, and she **had fallen** (have, fall) down and **had torn** (have, tear) her dress.

**(iii) Underline the verbs and arrange them in two columns, Past and Earlier past.**

- (a) My friends set out to see the caves in the next town, but I stayed at home, because I had seen them already.
- (b) When they arrived at the station, their train had left. They came back home, but by that time I had gone out to see a movie!
- (c) So they sat outside and ate the lunch I had packed for them.
- (d) By the time I returned, they had fallen asleep! Past Earlier past

Past	Earlier Past

### Answer (iii):

- (a) My friends set out to see the caves in the next town, but I stayed at home, because I had seen them already.
- (b) When they arrived at the station, their train had left. They came back home, but by that time I had gone out to see a movie!
- (c) So they sat outside and ate the lunch I had packed for them.
- (d) By the time I returned, they had fallen asleep!

Past	Earlier Past
set out	had seen
Arrived, Came	had left, had gone
Sat	had packed
Returned	had fallen

### Question 2:

Find these phrasal verbs in the story.

burn out      light up      look on      run out      keep out

Write down the sentences in which they occur, consult a dictionary and write down the meaning that you think matches the meaning of the phrasal verb in the sentence.

### Answer 2:

**(i) burn out:** House number 12 turned out to be nothing but a burned-out shell, the roof gaping, the windows boarded-up.

**(ii) light up:** That was the moment her eyes lit up with recognition and her face became suffused with a sudden glow of happiness.

**(iii) look on:** Hans Wolf and I looked on and cheered, clapping our hands and stamping our feet, to keep out the cold as much as anything.

**(iv) run out:** The time came, and all too soon, when the game was finished, the schnapps and the rum and the sausage had long since run out, and we knew it was all over.

**(v) keep out:** Hans Wolf and I looked on and cheered, clapping our hands and stamping our feet, to keep out the cold as much as anything.

### Question 3:

Noun phrase

Read the following sentence.

I took out a *small black tin box*.

- ❖ The phrase in *italics* is a noun phrase.
- ❖ It has the noun — *box* — as the head word, and three adjectives
- ❖ preceding it.
- ❖ Notice the order in which the adjectives occur — *size* (small), *colour* (black) and *material* (tin) of which it is made.
- ❖ We rarely use more than four adjectives before a noun and there is no rigid order in which they are used, though there is a preferred order of modifiers/adjectives in a noun phrase, as given below.

determiner	modifier 1 (opinion, feeling)	modifier 2 (size, shape, age)	modifier 3 (colour)	modifier 4 (material)	head word
a/an/ the	nice/lazy/ beautiful	tall/ round/ old/young	red/white/ light/dark	silk/cotton/ woollen	woman man/ table/chair

### Answer 3:

Do under the guidance of subject teacher.

### Question 4:

The table below contains a list of nouns and some adjectives. Use as many adjectives as you can to describe each noun. You might come up with some funny descriptions!

Noun	Adjective
Elephant	circular, striped, enormous, multicoloured, round, cheerful, wild, blue, red, chubby, large, medium-sized, cold
Face	
Building	
Water	

### Answer 4:

Noun	Adjective
elephant	enormous, cheerful, wild, large, medium-sized
Face	round, cheerful, chubby
building	multi-coloured, blue, red, large, medium-sized
Water	blue, cold

## POEM — The Ant and The Cricket

### Working with Poem

#### Question 1:

The cricket says, “Oh! What will become of me?” When does he say it, and why?

#### Answer 1:

The cricket said the given line when it found that its cupboard was empty and winter had arrived. It could not find a single scrap to eat on the snow capped ground and there were no flowers or leaves there on the tree. It wondered what would it do and how would it survive because it was getting colder day by day and since it had nothing to eat, it would starve and die.

#### Question 2:

- (i) Find in the poem the lines that mean the same as “Neither a borrower nor a lender be” (Shakespeare).
- (ii) What is your opinion of the ant's principles?

#### Answer (i):

The line in the poem that mean the same as “Neither a borrower nor a lender be” are 'But we ants never borrow; we ants never lend.'

#### Answer (ii):

I agree with what the ant is saying that one should have savings for the future with him or her, something that can be used in the future so that one does not need to depend on someone else or borrow.

But I don't agree with the ant's principle which it told later. If he was a close friend or a true friend of cricket then he should have helped the cricket when it was in need and suffering. And as it is rightly said that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

#### Question 3:

The ant tells the cricket to “dance the winter away”. Do you think the word 'dance' is appropriate here? If so, why?

#### Answer 3:

The ant told the cricket to “dance the winter away” because when it asked the cricket what did it do in the summers and why didn't it store any food for winters, the cricket replied that it sang through the warm and bright months of summers. In reply to this, the ant told the cricket to “dance” the winter away the way it “sang” all through the summers and did not think of storing food for winters.

**Question 4:**

- (i) Which lines in the poem express the poet's comment? Read them aloud.
- (ii) Write the comment in your own words.

**Answer 4:**

- (i) The line in the poem that expresses the poet's comment are "Folks call this a fable. I'll warrant it true."
- (ii) This comment of the poet means that this poem is indeed a fable as it has a moral behind it. The cricket had nothing to eat during the winters as it did not take the trouble to store food during summers. It had a casual attitude and kept singing all through the summers instead of collecting and storing food for winters. The ant, on the other hand, had built a nice home for itself and had stored food also so that it would not go hungry during winters. It worked hard throughout the summers to attain this. Thus, the moral of the poem is to be keep oneself prepared for the difficult times and always work hard instead of being ignorant.