

Class VIII

The Best Christmas Present in the World

Summary (Part II)

He read the letter.

Her husband was happily narrating an incident. It was Christmas morning and they were standing in their trenches.

He observed a white flag waving from the side of German soldiers. They called out 'Happy Christmas' loudly. Soldiers from his side also wished them back cheerfully.

However, the air of confusion was offering them to share schnapps and sausage. About twelve soldiers started coming towards them in no man's land. Initially, the narrator was apprehensive yet he made no efforts to stop them.

He was rather happy that they were celebrating happiness with his enemy soldiers. He further added that he liked the way the German officer came towards him and introduced him.

He wished him 'Happy Christmas' and told him that he played the cello in the orchestra. Mr. Macpherson greeted him and replied that he was a school teacher from Dorset. He shared rum and sausage.

He spoke almost perfect English. He said he knew Dorset. In fact he had never been to England. His favourite writer was Thomas Hardy and his favourite book was 'Far from the Madding Crowd'. It was from there he learnt about Dorset. MacPherson shared with Hans Wolf the Christmas cake his wife had sent for him. Hans Wolf said the marzipan was the best he had ever tested.

They discussed Bathsheba, Gabriel Oak, Sergeant Troy, and Dorset. His family includes his wife and one son.

The letter read as the narrator had the best time with the enemy celebrating. Next, the fun element was a game of football. They made goalposts by pitting Greatcoats.

Hans Wolf and Jim Macpherson wanted to resolve the differences and would not harm their families. Macpherson was sure of winning a game of cricket. The game was won by Germans and to his surprise, Hans Wolf admitted that their goal was wider than theirs.

Soldiers of both the sides bade goodbye to each other and felt that the night was a memorable one. They exchanged carols, 'Stille Nacht from German's side and While Shepherd's Watched from England's side. Jim concluded the letter by saying that both armies wanted peace.

Word Meaning

1. Standing to- taking up positions
2. Trenches- long deep ditches in the ground where soldiers hide from the enemy.
3. Fritz-(here) a name for a German soldier
4. Tommy- a common English name, used here to refer to British soldiers.
5. That would be that- that was all, that was the end of the matter.
6. Schnapps- a German drink made from grain
7. Cello- a musical instrument like a large violin
8. Marzipan- a sweet covering on a cake made from sugar, eggs and almonds.

9. Dugout- a shelter for soldiers made by digging a hole in the ground and covering it.