

ENGLISH



THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT IN THE WORLD

~Summary~

-by Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo has written "**The Best Christmas Present in the World.**" Morpurgo is a British author, poet, playwright and has written many children novels. He is 76 years old now. The lesson, as the name suggests, is about a Christmas present. Who gave the Christmas present to whom in what condition - forms the crux of the story.

Part – I

The story starts with the author trying to buy himself a large roll-top desk from a junk shop in Bridport, during Christmas eve. The desk's condition is pretty bad, but he still buys it because he feels he can work on it and bring it to good condition. When he gets home, he tries to pull open all the drawers. The last one seems stuck, but when forced, it opens up to a secret drawer. There is a small tin box in it, with an envelope. It is written "Jim's last letter, received Jan 25, 1915. He opens the letters with much hesitance, but with curiosity. The letter is addressed to Mrs. Jim Macpherson, with her address on it.

Part – II

The contents of the letter are shown in this part. The letter is written by Jim Macpherson, to his wife, Connie. It is revealed that the story is set in the time of World War 1 - the great war between the British and Germans, claiming millions of lives and lasting for over a few years. He starts the letter by saying it was a cold Christmas morning that day when he, along with his troops, was standing in a trench. Jim belongs to the British, and he is the Captain of his troops. He sees a white flag waving from the other end of the no man's land, from the Fritz. Fritz refers to German soldiers, here. They wave a Happy Christmas wish to the Tommy (English soldiers). Jim and his troops are surprised but wave and wish back. He warns his troops to be safe, but it was not the trick.

The German soldiers invite the British soldiers to have a drink called Schnapps with them and share their sausages. Before Jim could think or stop his troops, they grey and khaki uniformed men mingle in laughter, talking and make merry. The German Chief, Hans Wolf and Jim exchange a very surprising chit-chat where they introduce themselves and share their views on books, favourites, family amongst other topics. They also share the cake made by Mrs. Jim for Christmas and Wolf says it had the best Marzipan ever.

After some time someone brings a football, and they happily start a match between the Germans and the British. It was a friendly match which both the teams enjoy and much to their surprise Germans win the match. But Wolf is generous enough to say it hadn't been a fair game because their goal post was wider.

After the match, both of them feel war should also be settled like football matches - there are no deaths, no destruction. No child is orphaned, and no wife is widowed. Both of them get

emotional and share a moment of friendliness before they get back to their troops. That night they sing carols to each other and end the day with a sense of peace.

The letter ends with Jim saying he will be home soon as both the armies are longing only for peace.

Part - III:

The scene is back to the author with the letter in his hand. He decides to drive to see Mrs. Macpherson and hand over her letter. He learns that she is now in a nursing home, with no visitors. Her age is 101, and she is mentally disturbed after a fire accident at her home. He finds her on a wheelchair and starts explaining how he got the letter. But soon he realizes she is not listening, and she is looking at the letter intently. She thinks it is her husband Jim, who has returned, as promised in his letter. The author chooses to conceal his identity, as this is the best Christmas gift he could ever give to an aged, lonely, widowed wife of a warrior who fought for his country.

~Conclusion~

The Best Christmas present in the World is a story by Michael Morpurgo. In this story, the author buys a roll-top table from a junk shop, and to restore it starts working on it on Christmas Eve. While repairing it, he finds a secret space in the last drawer. In that secret space was a small tin box.