

Private Peaceful Comprehension

Use the text to help you answer the questions below.

💡 If you see a light bulb next to the question, you will need to think about your own thoughts or opinions, based on what you have read.

💡 1. Why do you think the author has chosen to write this story in the first person?

Appropriate answers, e.g. I think the author feels that writing in the first person makes the reader feel more connected to the main character. Also, he is thinking back on his life and this would be an appropriate way to do that.

💡 2. What do you think is going to happen after 'tonight'?

The first section suggests that Thomas is now 18 and that he is looking back on his life up until this point. It may be the night before he is due to go to fight in the war.

3. What is a 'reprieve' (p.8)?

A reprieve means to cancel or change a punishment. He thinks going to school is a punishment and that his mother will change her mind.

💡 4. What impression do you get from this chapter of the relationship between Thomas and his brother, Charlie? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Appropriate answers, e.g. I think they have a good relationship with Charlie taking care of his little brother as much as possible. He tries to make him feel better on the journey to school and carries him on his back to cheer him up.

5. Why does Thomas dislike crows?

They stole baby robins from a nest in his garden.

💡 6. What impact does Thomas' secret have on him? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Appropriate answers, e.g. Thomas feels very guilty about what happened in the Wood with his father. He blames himself for the fact that his father is dead and feels ashamed of himself. He knows that he can never tell the rest of the family what happened.

💡 7. Why do you think Thomas feels like he'll be a different boy by the afternoon, once his first day of school is complete?



Appropriate answers, e.g. Thomas feels like this is the end of his beginning which means that he thinks it's the end of his time at home as a small child, the end of his carefree time. By the afternoon he will have experienced things that will have changed him.

💡8. Is Thomas right to be afraid of Mr Munnings? Why do you think that?

Appropriate answers, e.g. I think Thomas is right because Mr Munnings is quite a scary character for such a small boy. He shouts a lot and singles Thomas out to complain about having another Peaceful in the school.

9. How does Molly make Thomas feel better?

Molly makes him feel better just by smiling at him and reassuring him through her actions. She helps him tie his shoelaces and he feels like he now has a friend. He doesn't feel so lonely.

10. Why does Thomas blame himself for his father's death?

When he was there as the tree fell, he didn't run when his father told him to. Instead he stayed rooted to the spot causing his father to rescue him and this resulted in his father being hit by the falling tree. If he'd just moved by himself, his father would still be alive.

