

After the War by Tom Palmer

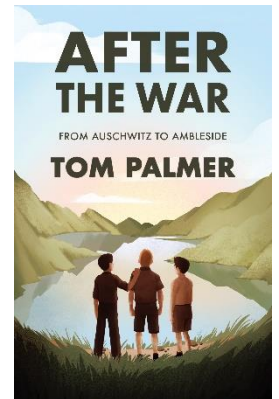
Reading Comprehension

Friday 8 May 2020 is the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Mark this significant anniversary quizzing this extract from *After the War* by Tom Palmer.

Summer 1945. The Second World War is finally over and Yossi, Leo and Mordecai are among three hundred children who arrive in the English Lake District.

Having survived the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, they've finally reached a place of safety and peace, where they can hopefully begin to recover.

Will life by the beautiful Lake Windermere be enough to bring hope back into all their lives?



Extract from Pages 66-67

Yossi noticed tomato plants growing on the insides of the windows. The sharp smell of the plants shook him. His mother used to grow tomatoes. He'd not smelled them for years. And on the table was a large wooden radio with a white and red dial at the centre.

He'd had one of those at home too. He hadn't thought about it for six years. The memory shocked him.

"Ah ... you've found Dad's bicycle," the woman said, joined by a second woman who was alongside her now. "And Spot," she said, naming the dog.

"Where's he been all morning?"

Mordecai translated for Yossi and Leo.

"Sorry, bicycles," Leo said quickly. In English.

The woman smiled. Mordecai patted his friend on the back, impressed that Leo had picked up so much English in just one week.

"We are Mordecai, Yossi and Leo," he told her.

"I'm Dorothy," the woman said. "Hello again.

And welcome. This is Joan, my sister. And your new friend, my daughter, is Joyce," she added, ruffling the girl's hair. Leo put his hand into his bag, causing the dog to sit obediently and stare into his eyes. Leo took out his jar of jam and gave it to Dorothy.



Yossi noticed her frown, confused at first. She would know this jam was from the estate kitchen.

“Jam?” She stifled a laugh.

“Jam,” Leo said seriously.

Then she spoke to Mordecai. “How do I say thank you?” she asked. “In your language?”

“Dziekuje,” Mordecai told her.

“Dziekuje,” Dorothy said to Leo.

Leo bowed, then looked in through the door.

“That smells good,” he said in Polish.

Mordecai reluctantly translated – he knew what his friend was up to.

“Would you like some?” Dorothy asked. “It’s scouse. Like stew. Just vegetables, no meat. With bread?”

Mordecai explained what she had said and all three boys nodded, stepping forward at once.

They sat at a heavy wooden table, large brown bowls in front of them steaming with vegetable stew.

There was a photograph of a very young man on the mantelpiece above the fire. His face looked a bit like Dorothy’s. Yossi wondered if he was her son, and whether he was dead or alive. He decided not to ask.

Seeing Dorothy watching him, Yossi pointed at the radio, wanting to change the subject.

“Radio?” he asked.

Dorothy smiled kindly. And then Joyce was talking excitedly.

“Yes. It is. It’s new. We used it to listen to Mr Churchill on VE Day.”

“VE Day?” Mordecai asked.

“Victory in Europe Day. When the Germans surrendered,” Joyce chattered on, looking at her mum for approval. “Then we had a party. There was tea and cakes. We had long tables outside and Mummy made bunting.”

“What is bunting?” Mordecai asked.

“Little flags. Red, white and blue,” Joyce enthused.

“And Mr Churchill said: ‘In all our long history, we have never seen a greater day than this.’ And everyone was laughing, then crying, then laughing again.”

“Do you remember that day, boys?” Dorothy asked, putting her hand on Joyce’s head.

“Yes,” Mordecai said. “This is the day we were free.”



Questions

1 From the text, the fragrance and the sight of which two things reminded Yossi of his own home that he had had to leave 6 years ago?

2 Which words and action tell the reader that Mordecai is proud that his friend Leo has learnt some English words in just a week?

3 When Leo presents Dorothy with a jar of jam she “stifles” a laugh. Write a definition of “stifle” and give an example of something other than a laugh that can be stifled.

4 Who was Mr Churchill?

5 Why do you think Joyce says that, “everyone was laughing, then crying, then laughing again” on VE Day?

6 For the boys, VE Day meant that they were “free”. Can you explain what they were free from?

7 From the text, the author says as the boys eat, Dorothy & Joan are studying them. What sort of look in their eyes do you think Dorothy & Joan might have?

Word of the day - Victory

Synonym

Antonym

Related
adjective

Related
nouns

My
greatest
victory
is ...

Make
up a
victory
dance

Free Reads and activities for all Tom Palmer's books here :
www.tompalmer.co.uk/free-stuff/

