

Private peaceful essay sample

War



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Award winning novel *Private Peaceful* by author Michael Morpurgo takes readers on a journey into lives of the Peaceful family. Set in England and the trenches of Belgium during the period of World War One, Morpurgo illustrates how different people respond to authority. Narrator Thomas (Tommo) Peaceful follows the rules and obeys the commands of people that are more powerful than him. His brother Charlie on the other hand rebels to authority figures which ultimately causes him many problems. Mother however with her family's best interests at heart, compromises with people of power in a way to ensure everyone is happy.

Tommo, the youngest member of the Peaceful family followed orders to ensure he did not get punished or hurt. This is made obvious with his brother Charlie who was extremely influential and protective of Tommo. Charlie insisted Tommo broke the rules and became the mailman between Molly and Charlie who were forbidden to see each other by Molly's parents. Tommo agreed to this arrangement because Charlie was someone he looked up to and felt was more powerful than he was. He also took notice of his elders when he was labelled a "coward" by an old lady who insisted he joined the army and go to war. Tommo although petrified felt it was his duty to follow his brother and go to war to prove he was brave and also because he felt he "never dared enough". During his time at school with Mr Munning's and Ms McAlister and his time at war with Sergeant Hanley and Wilkes Tommo always obeyed orders which is made obvious predominately at war when Tommo tells Charlie "Hanley is like Mr Munnings, our lord and master. You can't fight him". Tommo a character of obedience always liked to follow orders of higher commands unlike his brother Charlie.

Charlie Peaceful preferred to do things his way and essentially this went against those who had more authority than he did. Charlie got himself into all sorts of strife with various ranks throughout the narrative. It was first made obvious in school when Charlie got into a fight as a result of sticking up for his brother Tommo which resulted in the “ cane” for disobeying school rules by Mr Munnings. Charlie also rebelled against the Colonel on many occasions. Charlie the leader of his brother and Molly got them into trouble after being caught poaching on the Colonel’s land in an attempt to put food on the family table each day. Charlie also went against his Colonel at the “ Big House” stealing Betha the greyhound in a desperate attempt to keep her from being killed. This ended in Charlie having to work for no money as a punishment and he also lost his job.

During the times at war Charlie opposed the Sergeant named Hanley. He had a smart mouth and rubbed his higher rank the wrong way on many occasions. For example telling Hanley he was “ happy to be here” at war when everyone knew this was completely sarcastic towards their leader. Charlie as a result of sticking up for his brother twice ended up with “ fifty lashes” and finally met his end with a “ court martial” and a “ death sentence” after he refused to leave his injured brothers side and fight with his fellow soldiers. Readers can ascertain that Charlie was a rebellious character to those of higher authority as he liked to stick up for those more vulnerable than he was.

Mother like Tommo likes to keep the peace and follow commands, however compromises, keeping her family’s best interests at heart. Since Fathers death, Mother was left to look after the children and the house which

belonged to the Colonel. It was not long until she was threatened to be removed from her house if she did not go and work for the Colonel. At first it seemed that Mother had no choice but to abandon her children and leave for work, however, she compromised with the Colonel and was allowed to return at nightfall to care for her children after indicating “ I have children, who will care for my children?”

Mother also compromises with the Colonel after her son Charlie is caught out stealing Bertha. She gave the Colonel “ sixpence” and suggested that the dog “ is now not stolen”. This left the Colonel feeling compelled to agree to the arrangement. Mother deals with authority similar to both her sons. She likes to keep the peace as does Tommo, and she also likes to stick up for her family as does Charlie however she does it in a manner that is controlled and non-threatening. Mother is a character that compromises to those more powerful in order to keep everyone happy.

Morpurgo leaves the reader with a message that authority can be dealt with in a variety of ways however can result in a diverse range of consequences and actions. Tommo “ never dared enough” and followed commands afraid to get into trouble. Older brother Charlie rebelled to those of more power as he was not going to “ lie down and let them walk all over [him]”. Mother liked to keep the peace and compromised to keep everyone happy. In conclusion Private Peaceful shows authority in many different ways and how the characters respond to it.