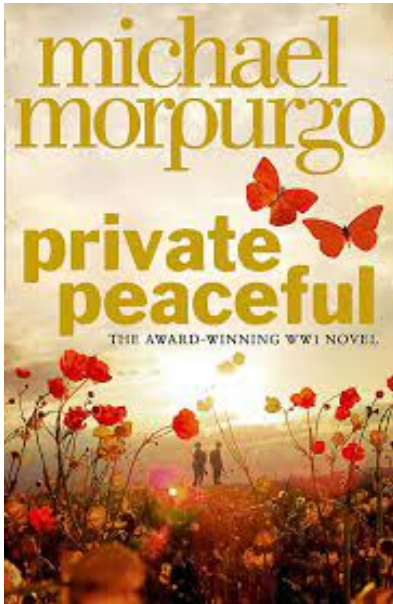




Prison Reading Groups

Private Peaceful

By Michael Morpurgo



Set during World War One, Tommo Peaceful is a young soldier reflecting on his life growing up and his eventual voluntary enrolment in the war effort. He remembers his simple life in the countryside with his beloved mother, brothers Charlie and Big Joe, and Molly, the girl he loves. When Charlie is forced to enlist to fight in the war, Tommo lies about his age to be with his brother. He recalls his wartime experiences, including his rigorous training, the brutal trench battles he endures in France and Charlie's continued protection of him which has devastating consequences.

Morpurgo focuses on the harsh realities of World War One and the consequences of disobedience and mental breakdowns. He explores themes of loss, family, courage and brutality through the unbreakable bond between two brothers.

Discussion Questions

1. Church towers represent heaven in the novel. On page 93, when Tommo arrives in the war zone of France, he notices that a bell tower is destroyed like a '*broken promise*'. What does this suggest about Tommo's belief in an afterlife? In what way might Tommo think coming to France was like a 'broken promise'?

2. What is the significance of Oranges and Lemons in Private Peaceful?

