**Private Peaceful Core Task: Big Joe**

**This piece of work needs to be completed on paper or in your book and handed in to your teacher, it is the first ‘core task’ for this unit of work and should be done after completing Lesson Block One (or what you have covered in lessons)**

1. **Read the extract below taken from Private Peaceful**
2. **Answer the questions below**

Big Joe ate more than all the rest of us put together. Everything was his favourite – bread and butter pudding with raisins, potato pie, cheese and pickle, stew and dumplings – whatever Mother cooked, he’d stuff it in and scoff it down. Anything Charlie and I didn’t like we’d shufﬂe on to his plate when Mother wasn’t looking. Big Joe always loved the conspiracy of that, and he loved the extra food too. There was nothing he wouldn’t eat. When we were little, before we knew better, Charlie once bet me an owl’s skull I’d found that Big Joe would even eat rabbit droppings. I couldn’t believe he would, because I thought Big Joe must know what they were. So I took the bet. Charlie put a handful of them in a paper bag and told him they were sweets. Big Joe took them out of the bag and popped them into his mouth, savouring every one of them. And when we laughed, he laughed too and offered us one each. But Charlie said they were especially for him, a present. I thought Big Joe might get ill after that, but he never did.

Mother told us when we were older that Big Joe had nearly died just a few days after he was born. Meningitis, they told her at the hospital. The doctor said Joe had brain damage, that he’d be no use to anyone, even if he lived. But Big Joe did live, and he did get better, though never completely. As we were growing up, all we knew was that he was different. It didn’t matter to us that he couldn’t speak very well, that he couldn’t read or write at all, that he didn’t think like we did, like other people did. To us he was just Big Joe. He did frighten us sometimes. He seemed to drift off to live in a dream world of his own, often a world of nightmares I thought because he could become very agitated and upset. But sooner or later he always came back to us and would be himself again, the Big Joe we all knew, the Big Joe who loved everything and everyone, especially animals and birds and ﬂowers, totally trusting, always forgiving – even when he found out that his sweets were rabbit droppings.

**Part A: Reading**

* **Question 1: Find the four true statements. Write the letters out in your exercise book.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Big Joe ate less than the rest of the family |
|  | Big Joe didn’t like a lot of foods |
|  | Big Joe ate rabbit droppings |
|  | Big Joe has brain damage |
|  | Big Joe is like everyone else |
|  | Big Joe never frightens his family |
|  | Big Joe loves animals, birds and flowers |
|  | Big Joe is always forgiving |

* **Question 2: Write down two pieces of evidence from the passage that suggest Big Joe likes food. (These could be in your own words or copied directly from the text)**
* **Question 3: Read the section below, taken from the extract above. What does this piece of evidence tell us about Charlie? Try to think of a few different things and explain your ideas in full sentences with lots of detail.**

*‘When we were little, before we knew better, Charlie once bet me an owl’s skull I’d found that Big Joe would even eat rabbit droppings. I couldn’t believe he would, because I thought Big Joe must know what they were. So I took the bet. Charlie put a handful of them in a paper bag and told him they were sweets.Big Joe took them out of the bag and popped them into his mouth,savouring every one of them.And when we laughed, he laughed too and offered us one each. But Charlie said they were especially for him, a present. I thought Big Joe might get ill after that, but he never did.’*

* **Question 4: Fill in the blanks/ complete the sentences below**

**Michael Morpurgo has made Big Joe seem like a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ character.**

**He seems this way because in the story so far he has…**

**The line in this extract which shows he is like this is ‘…’**

**This line makes him seem this way because…**

**Now have a go at using the same sentence starters but with a different idea about Big Joe!**