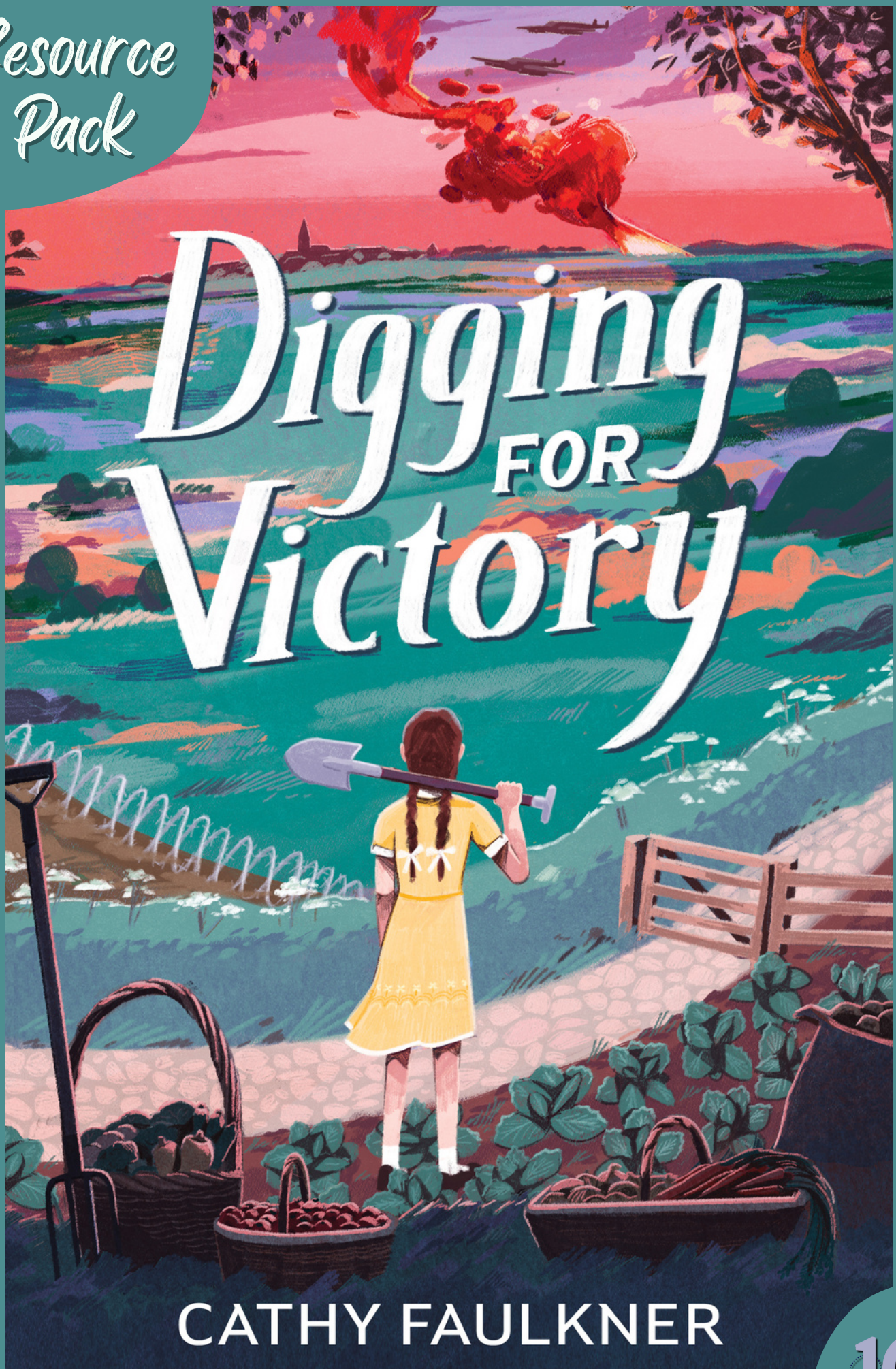


Resource
Pack



CATHY FAULKNER

Longlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Medal 2024
and the Branford Boase Award 2024





'a wonderful story, so beautifully told'

Elen Caldecott

Digging FOR Victory

by Cathy Faulkner

Perfect for ages 8+

Set in Devon in 1941, *Digging for Victory* tells the story of twelve-year-old Bonnie Roberts who is desperate to play a valuable part in the war effort. For her, tending the family vegetable patch just doesn't cut it; she wants to be a hero like her RAF pilot brother, Ralph.

But when the mysterious Mr Fisher is billeted at her farmhouse, and Ralph is reported missing in action, she starts to question what heroism actually involves. And as Bonnie attempts to find out who Mr Fisher really is, she embarks on a life-changing and emotional voyage of discovery.

Themes:

World War Two (the home front), Physics (forces and electricity), Growing Food (plants and seasonality), Friendship, Loyalty, Bravery and Heroism

Subject checklist:

Literacy, History, Science, Design and Technology, Art and Design, Music, Geography, PSHE

'Adventure-filled with beautiful verse and a very satisfying ending'

Lucy Cuthew

Front Cover & Blurb

Look carefully at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about?



What kind of person do you think the main character will be?

What do you think the title means? Does the title give you any idea as to what the book will be about?

Where and when do you think this book is set?

Now read the blurb on the back of the book.

Does it confirm your thoughts or has it changed your mind? Why?



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are the character on the front cover and consider what you would be able to see, hear, feel, taste and smell. Share your ideas with the others in your group and create a list poem together.

December 1940



Questions to consider

- What do you understand by the word 'hero'? Can you write a definition?
- What do you think Bonnie could do that would make her a hero?
- Why do you think it was helpful to know the differences between planes in 1940?
- Why do you think the writer has chosen to use the layout that she has at the bottom of page 5? What effect does this have on the reader?
- Why do you think Betty Sanders says that things are backward here? In what ways might they seem backward?
- What kind of jobs do you think land girls might have done on farms?
- Can you predict who might be coming to stay on Bonnie's farm?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

- Find out about the differences between Spitfires and Hurricanes, Wellingtons and Halifaxes and how they were used in the Battle of Britain in 1940.
- Research the kinds of toys children played with in the 1940s and find out about early forms of animation such as zoetropes.
- Discover why children were evacuated in World War Two. Consider what it must have been like to be an evacuee or to have one stay in your house.
- Find out about the role that land girls played in World War Two.

ART AND DESIGN

- Have a go at making a 1940s themed thaumatrope, zoetrope or flipbook.
- Find out about the types of clothes that men, women and children wore in the 1940s and create a cover for a fashion magazine or dressmaking pattern.

Opportunities for Writing

Choose an object from the 1940s. This might be an aeroplane, a child's toy, an item of clothing, a hairstyle or something of your own choice. Write a description of the object, considering how you might arrange the words on the page to also create a visual representation of it.



January 1941

Thursday 2nd January 1941

Questions to consider

- What do you think a 'conchie' or conscientious objector might be?
- Why do you think Mr Howard might live in a caravan?
- Why do you think the writer chose to mention the paper chain three times? What effect does this have on the reader?
- Think of some adjectives that describe how Bonnie feels when she hears that Mr Fisher is coming to stay.
- Can you predict why Mr Fisher might need to stay on their farm?



Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

- Find out about the reserved occupations during World War Two and create a poster showing them.
- Discover how conscientious objectors were treated in World War Two.



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are a conscientious objector. Make a list of kennings (hyphenated noun + verb / noun + noun) to describe war as you see it (e.g. life-stealer, pain-inflicter etc.). Write your favourite one on a long strip of paper and share it with your group. As a group, rearrange your strips of paper until you are happy with the order. Either copy out your group's finished kenning poem or create a paper chain with your strips.

Think of as many adjectives and nouns as you can that Bonnie might use to refer to a conscientious objector. Share them with your group and discuss which adjectives and nouns work well together. Create a list poem using the best combinations.



Friday 3rd January 1941



Questions to consider

- The writer has used similes on pages 12 and 16. Find them and decide which one you prefer and why.
- Why might Mr Fisher not seem interested in what Bonnie has to say about Ralph?
- How would you feel if you were in Bonnie's shoes at this point?
- Why do you think the writer chose to repeat the words 'not understood' so many times on page 16? What effect does this have on the reader?



Opportunities for Writing

Draw an outline of Mr Fisher on a large sheet of paper. On the inside, make a note of any information you know for certain about him (e.g. he has blue eyes) and on the outside add any impressions, ideas or predictions you have about him. Add to your paper as you continue to read through the book.

Questions to consider

Saturday 4th January 1941

- Bonnie sees a poster saying 'Dig for Victory'. What do you think this means?
- How many times is the word 'dig' used on page 18? What do you think about this repetition?
- Can you think of some adjectives to describe Bonnie's personality?
- Why isn't Mrs Barker friendly towards the land girls?
- If you were a young woman in the 1940s, what type of job would you have preferred to do? Why?
- What do you understand by the expression 'like a duck out of water'? Why do you think the writer has chosen to describe what the ducks are doing here?

HISTORY

- Using books or the internet, see if you can find a poster like the one Bonnie sees. Can you find some other propaganda posters from the 1940s? What other things were people in the UK encouraged to do to help with the war effort?
- Find out about the different ways in which women contributed to the war effort.

Cross-curricular
activities



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine what it would be like to arrive in a village as a land girl. Write a letter back home to share your experiences, how you've been received, what you've seen and how you feel.

Sunday 5th January 1941

Questions to consider

- How do you think Bonnie feels about having to chit potatoes?
- What reasons do you think Mr Fisher might have for not saying anything as he sits by the fire?
- Do you have any idea why Mr Fisher might be staying with Bonnie yet?



SCIENCE

- If it is between January and March, try chitting seed potatoes as Bonnie does. These can then be planted in the ground or in large buckets of soil in the spring.

Cross-curricular activities

Monday 6th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think the writer has chosen to arrange the boys' words at an unusual angle on page 26? What effect does this have?
- Why does Nancy suggest giving Mr Fisher a white feather on page 27?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about the white feather campaign during World Wars One and Two.

PSHE

What do you think about the white feather campaign? What were the problems with it?



Opportunities for Writing

Consider how it might have felt to give or receive a white feather during World War Two. Choose one of these situations and write a short poem in the first person describing your feelings. If you like, you could make your poem feather-shaped.

Tuesday 7th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think the writer has used a different typeface for the word 'victorious'? What effect does this have? Do you like it?



Opportunities for Writing

Bonnie uses the words 'I don't like' three times in the first stanza. Creating a list like this can be an easy and effective way of writing a poem. Imagine that you are living in the 1940s and write a poem about all the things you don't like. You might also consider where it would be effective to use different fonts for particular words.

Questions to consider

Saturday 11th January 1941

- Would you have preferred to work with a spade or a gun in World War Two?

Cross-curricular activities

MUSIC

Songs were often used during World War Two to raise morale. Listen to, learn and perform some different ones. Can you find a song that was actually sung by the land girls?

Can you compose a tune (or choose an existing tune) to sing the land girls' song to? Practise and perform the song in small groups. You could try adding percussion instruments if you like.



Opportunities for Writing

Identify the rhyme scheme in the land girls' song on page 34. Have a go at writing a second and / or third verse to this song. Start with the line 'Join in! Join in!' and then follow using the same rhyme scheme.

Questions to consider

- Children were expected to contribute to the war effort. Many of them knitted socks or scarves to be sent out to the soldiers. Would you have enjoyed doing this?
- Why do you think Carol is not impressed by what Bonnie has been doing?
- How would you describe Carol?

HISTORY

Research different ways in which children were expected to contribute to the war effort.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Learn how to knit a simple scarf like the ones children made for soldiers in World War Two.

Cross-curricular activities

Opportunities for Writing

It can be fun to use ascending or descending numbers to structure a poem as the writer does on page 36. Try writing a poem which starts each line with a number. You could imagine that you are contributing to the war effort in some way, and write about that.



Questions to consider

Monday 13th January 1941

- How many nouns and verbs associated with chickens can you spot on the top half of page 37? How effectively has the writer used these words?
- What do you think is meant by Bonnie going outside 'to turn things over'?
- How effective do you think the layout is on page 39?
- Do you have any idea how to answer Bonnie's questions on page 39 yet?



Opportunities for Writing

The writer describes the children in terms of animal (chicken) characteristics at the top of page 37. This is an example of **zoomorphism**. Can you think of any human behaviour that reminds you of how a particular animal behaves?

Share your ideas and choose one example to work on as a group or class. Together, think of as many words as you can connected to your chosen animal. Use a thesaurus to help you if you like. Then use your words to write a group poem about the human behaviour you chose. You might also consider altering the layout on the page for even greater effect.



Tuesday 14th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Where is Plymouth and why has it been hit?
- Do you think Carol was right not to shut the other children up as she always has done before?
- Green and gold shiny badges were mentioned earlier in the book. Can you remember who wore them and why?
- Do you think the writer's use of the word 'uncovered' on page 42 is effective? If so, why?
- Can you piece together the evidence to work out what Mr Fisher is doing yet?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about the Blitz and how cities like Plymouth were affected. Research blackout regulations during World War Two.



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine how Carol feels after failing to stand up for her friend as usual. What thoughts might be going through her head? Do you think she feels relieved or guilty or a mixture of the two? Write her diary entry for this day. You can choose to write in free verse as the writer does or prose.





Wednesday 15th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Carol wants to collect old rags?
- What do you think a Cog badge was? Why might it have been called this?
- Why do you think the writer chose to leave so much white space between the last four lines? How effective is this?
- Do you think Bonnie really is fine about not being asked?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about Cog badges and what kinds of materials were salvaged in World War Two and why.

ART AND DESIGN

Design a World War Two propaganda poster encouraging children to collect rags or other materials.



Opportunities for Writing

Write the text to go on your propaganda poster. Consider what techniques you could use to make this text as persuasive as possible.



Friday 17th January 1941



Questions to consider

- What does Bonnie mean by 'only he has no idea what kind of digging I've been up to' on page 47?
- The writer has used lots of different fonts, spacing and layouts in this section. Do you like how she has done this? If so, which is your favourite example and why?
- Why does Bonnie have difficulty getting the bike light to come on?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Bonnie uses a dynamo to convert mechanical energy into electrical energy to power her bike light. This works like a motor in reverse (a motor converts electrical energy into mechanical energy). Have a look at a small electric motor if you can. Identify which part you would have to turn in order to use it as a dynamo. Can you think of a way in which you could turn it fast enough?

Saturday 18th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Bonnie's mother says that vegetables shouldn't be planted in the same place twice?
- What are brassicas?

Cross-curricular activities



SCIENCE

Find out about the principles of crop rotation and why this is important. Discover how vegetables are classified into different groups.



Sunday 19th January 1941

Questions to consider

- Is Bonnie right about smaller needing to be faster when it comes to wheels?
- How do you think Bonnie feels by the end of this section? Can you think of some suitable adjectives?
- How would you suggest that Bonnie might overcome her problem?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE / DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Investigate cogs and gears to find out whether Bonnie is correct about smaller needing to be faster.



Opportunities for Writing

Find a creative way to convey your findings about different-sized cogs and gears. Carefully consider the words you use and their layout on the page. You might choose to combine words and images.

Digging FOR Victory

Tuesday 21st January 1941



Questions to consider

- Why would Rev Collins report Mr Fisher for lighting a cigarette?
- What do you think 'Herr' in 'Herr Fischer' means?
- Can you find a simile on page 63? Why do you think the writer has chosen to use this one? How effective is it? How has this image been extended throughout the rest of the stanza? Is it used again later in the section? Are any other similes used?
- What do you think Bonnie should do at the end of this section?

Cross-curricular activities

ART AND DESIGN

Create a piece of artwork that represents Bonnie's fears on page 65 or her mixed up dream on page 67. Consider what medium / media would be effective.

DRAMA

Consider what advice you would give Bonnie at this point in the story then, participate in a conscience alley activity.

Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are Bonnie and that you have decided to write a letter to Mr Brown explaining your fears. Write the letter using a formal style, present your argument logically and use the evidence you have gathered to support that argument.

Your conscience alley activity may have sparked an idea for an alternative piece of writing that you could try now.



Digging FOR Victory

Wednesday 22nd January 1941



Questions to consider

- Why do you think the RAF base is deserted?
- Do you think Bonnie was right to keep her discovery to herself?
- What do you think Mr Fisher does on the empty RAF base?
- Why do you think the writer chose to end this section with Bonnie digging?

Cross-curricular activities

ART AND DESIGN

Some books include a map on the endpapers. You could use the information in this section (and particularly on page 70) to design your own for this book. Why do you think the writer chose not to include one?

HISTORY

Find a variety of different 'careless talk costs lives' propaganda posters from the 1940s. Decide which one you think is most effective and justify your choice. Have a go at designing your own.



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you've been asked to persuade the residents of Bonnie's village that careless talk costs lives. Prepare a short speech that will convince them.

Consider what techniques you could use in order to be most persuasive.

Practise delivering your speech and then record or deliver it live to the rest of your group.



Saturday 25th January 1941



Questions to consider

- Who is Mr Fisher referring to when he says 'twenty-five Macaroni taken prisoner'?
- Do you know where Libya, Egypt and Tunisia are?
- What does the study of physics involve?
- Which do you think is a more interesting subject, geography or physics?

Cross-curricular activities

GEOGRAPHY

Find Libya, Egypt and Tunisia on a map. Which continent are they part of?

HISTORY

Find out how this continent was involved in World War Two.

Research nicknames that were used for different nationalities during World War Two.

PSHE

How do you feel about the use of such nicknames?

Opportunities for Writing

Consider the types of questions that the study of physics might help us to answer (e.g. can light bend around corners? Can we travel to the past? Can air make shadows?). Write a list of questions and share them with your group. Consider creative ways to write your questions using different fonts, layouts and colours. Make a display of your physics questions.



Sunday 26th January 1941

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Try growing some cress in different conditions. Record the results.

Find out about atoms. How do you think Mr Fisher might have explained them to Bonnie?

How would you explain what you've learnt to a child who is much younger than you?

February 1941

Sunday 2nd February 1941

Questions to consider

- How does the layout on page 84 reflect the different forces mentioned? Can you think of different ways of presenting them?
- Have your first impressions of Mr Fisher changed? Why do you think he may be behaving differently now?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Investigate the effects of friction by observing the effects of a brake on a bicycle wheel. Investigate how parachutes work by designing and scientifically testing a variety of different ones which could be used to lower a plastic toy soldier to the ground. Find out how scientists developed the theory of gravitation.

HISTORY

Find out about the role that paratroopers played in World War Two.



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are Mr Fisher. Write an informative leaflet for Bonnie that explains gravity, air resistance, water resistance and friction. Be as creative as you like in the way that you present your leaflet.



Tuesday 4th February 1941



Questions to consider

- Why do you think Bonnie has so many mended and repurposed clothes and soft furnishings in her house?

Cross-curricular activities

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

In the 1940s, people were encouraged to make do and mend. As a class, make a collection of old clothes and soft furnishings that are damaged or no longer wanted. How could these be repurposed or upcycled? Research and share different ideas. Design and make your new products when you have a large enough collection. Be as creative as you can. Consider the different benefits of a project like this.

Opportunities for Writing

Write a set of instructions so that someone else could make a similar upcycled product. Don't forget to include persuasive reasons for why they should do this.



Questions to consider

Thursday 6th February 1941

- Why aren't the snails already causing damage?
- What kind of damage might they eventually do?
- How does Bonnie feel about hunting for snails? How do you know this?
- Are you surprised that the land girls are still there?
- Would you enjoy doing their kind of work?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Find out which animals hibernate and why.

Friday 7th February 1941

Questions to consider



- Why does Bonnie try to make herself as small as she can in the back row of the class?

Cross-curricular activities

MUSIC

Find out about, learn and perform the Cog's salvage song ('There'll always be a dustbin' sung to the tune of 'There'll always be an England'). You might want to compose a more modern version.



Opportunities for Writing

Try writing the lyrics for an alternative salvage song or rap.

Saturday 8th February 1941

Questions to consider

- What do you think the letter from Ralph may have contained?



Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Research what it would have been like as a young RAF pilot in World War Two.

Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are Ralph. Write a letter home describing your experiences. Remember that it may have been censored before being sent!



Sunday 9th February 1941

Questions to consider

- Is there any language that the writer has used that you particularly like in this section? Why?
- Do you think heroes might ever use physics? How?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Find out about the different components in an electrical circuit and have a go at creating one that lights a bulb. Draw a diagram of your circuit using recognised symbols.

If it is mid- to late spring, sow some spinach seeds in the ground or in a container outside. Water it regularly and be sure to protect it from slugs and snails!

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Research the benefits of eating spinach and find different recipes that use it. Try making one of them when your spinach has grown.



Opportunities for Writing

Can you describe the circuit you made in a more poetic way? Think of similes for each of the components you used (what is the battery like, what is the bulb like?). Then describe what happens when everything is connected. Perhaps your similes might all be connected in some way (like parts of a particular animal), or you may want to keep them deliberately unconnected. Be as creative as you like!



Sunday 16th February 1941



Questions to consider

- How does Bonnie feel in this section? How does the writer convey this?
- Why do you think Mr Fisher says, 'Just wait. You'll see. Very soon'?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

If it is between February and April, you could plant broad beans outside. Alternatively between April and June you could plant other types of beans in small pots of soil; these can then be planted outside from May onwards. Record how they grow, making labelled drawings at regular intervals.

Monday 17th February 1941

Questions to consider

- Are you surprised that Bonnie is starting to like Mr Fisher? Why / why not?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Make a class collection of broken electrical equipment that can be taken apart. Try and identify some of the different components in them.

Opportunities for Writing

Write a poem describing what you see inside some broken electrical equipment. You don't need to understand how it works. Use similes and / or metaphors, powerful adjectives and consider how you write and organise the words on your page.



Wednesday 19th February 1941



Questions to consider

- Why do you think that Mr Fisher says 'you're better off with snails and sparrows'?
- Why are the words hyphenated in the line, 'I'm-a-grown-up-and-I-know-better-than-you way'?

Cross-curricular activities

ENGLISH

Learn or revise about the need for hyphens in compound adjectives.

Opportunities for Writing

Have fun creating your own hyphenated compound adjectives to go in front of the following nouns: way, expression, face, eyes, voice, smile, frown. Make them as long or as short as you like. You might want to then use them in a short poem describing what you like or don't like about adults, siblings etc.



Thursday 20th February 1941

Questions to consider

- How does Bonnie's act of stamping the soil down hard demonstrate how she is feeling? Do you think it is more effective to show or tell the reader how a character is feeling?

Opportunities for Writing

Pick a character and a situation of your choice. This could be someone in *Digging for Victory*, another book or film, or one in your own imagination. Imagine how the situation makes your character feel and what actions they might take that would demonstrate this.

These don't need to be big actions; they might be as small as raising an eyebrow or picking at their nails. Write a short poem about your character in this situation without saying directly how they feel. Share your poems with each other. See if your group can correctly identify your character's feelings from their actions.



Friday 21st February 1941



Questions to consider

- Why has the writer chosen to put full stops after each of the last three words?
- How effective is this?
- Would it be effective if it were done regularly?

Opportunities for Writing

Think of a situation in which words might effectively be separated by full stops in this way. Write a short poem or paragraph that makes use of this technique. Be sure not to overuse it!



Saturday 22nd February 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think the writer juxtaposes the destruction of Swansea with Bonnie searching for snails? How effective is this?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about how Swansea was affected in the Blitz.



Opportunities for Writing

Write a newspaper article describing the damage done to Swansea. Alternatively, imagine you are a newsreader and create a news report like the one Bonnie may have heard on the wireless.

Sunday 23rd February 1941



Cross-curricular activities

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

If you have planted any seeds outside, design and make a scarecrow to protect them from the birds. It might resemble a person like Bobbie, or you could come up with a different type of design.

Thursday 27th February 1941

Questions to consider

- What are the two meanings of 'to blow a fuse' used in this section? How effective do you think it was to use them together like this?
- Are there any words or expressions that are unfamiliar to you in this section? Can you work out the meaning from the context?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Find out what a short circuit is, how one can occur and how it can be avoided. Discover what role a fuse plays in a circuit and when and why it is important. Take a look inside a disconnected plug and identify the fuse.



Opportunities for Writing

'Mother blows her fuse' is an example of an idiom because it is not meant literally here. Can you think of any other examples of idiomatic language? Now look at a list of common idioms. Choose one of them and write a poem in which the expression is used both literally and non-literally. Have as much fun as you like doing this!

Digging FOR Victory



Friday 28th February 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Bonnie's rhubarb is being grown under pots?



Cross-curricular activities

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY / SCIENCE

Find out about seasonality and make a poster to show what food is harvested locally at different times of the year. Consider how other fresh foods may be acquired and the advantages and disadvantages of this.

Investigate which foods were not easily available during World War Two and attempt to explain why. Discover how some foods can be obtained out of season without negative consequences (e.g. forced rhubarb).



Opportunities for Writing

Look very carefully at any seedlings that have grown from seeds you have planted. Describe what you see in a short poem by using a range of adjectives.



March 1941

Saturday 8th March 1941

Questions to consider

- Where would Bonnie's family have got the cream from?
- Why do you think Mother puts her hand to her mouth as soon as she hears the words, 'no reply'?
- Which of the fonts used in this section do you find the most effective? Why?
- How does this section make you feel? What techniques has the writer used to achieve this?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Communication was very different in the 1940s than it is today. Find out some of the different ways in which information was communicated during World War Two.



Opportunities for Writing

An acrostic is a poem in which a certain letter of each line spells out a word or phrase. Write the words 'Missing in action' down the left-hand side of your page and use these letters as the first letter of each line to write a poem from Bonnie's point of view. Make sure that you convey how she is feeling at this point.



Sunday 9th March 1941



Questions to consider

- Why do you think Bonnie shouts at Mr Fisher when he is trying to be nice to her?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Research how many people went missing in action during World War Two.

PSHE

Consider how sadness, fear and anxiety can make people behave in different ways.

Opportunities for Writing

The dress that the scarecrow is wearing triggers all sorts of memories for Bonnie. Think of an object that you've had for a long time and consider the memories that it holds for you. Try writing a short poem about it. You might want to repeat 'I ___ it' at the beginning of each stanza (substituting a different verb each time) if that would be helpful.



Questions to consider

Monday 10th March 1941

- What do you think may have happened to Bonnie's brother? What are the different possibilities?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about the Battle of Ypres and what happened to prisoners of war in World War One.

Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are Carol. Write a letter to Bonnie explaining how you feel. Remember to keep this letter informal in style.



Digging FOR Victory

Tuesday 11th March 1941



Questions to consider

- How is Bonnie feeling in this section?
- What techniques does the writer use to convey this and how effective are they?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

If it's spring, plant vegetable seeds in a prepared bed outside. (Lettuces, leeks, radishes, parsley and peas are all fairly easy to grow. Parsnips are more difficult.)

Wednesday 12th March 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think the writer describes Bonnie trying to imagine the seeds stirring beneath the surface?
- Is this in any way related to how Bonnie is feeling at this point?



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine how Carol is feeling at this point. What might she be thinking of or doing? If you were writing a poem from her point of view, how might you incorporate this thought or action into it to help convey more vividly how she is feeling?



May 1941

Friday 16th May 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Mary Smith has come round?
- Why do you think Mr Fisher brushes away a tear?
- Why do you think no one wants to blow out the candle at the end of the song?
- Why has the writer included so much white space on page 128? What is the effect of this?



Saturday 17th May 1941

Questions to consider

- Why does Mr Fisher ask Bonnie what she can see in the vegetable garden on page 137?
- Three explosions are mentioned (the first on page 147, the second on page 149 and the third on page 151). Are they all literal explosions? If not, what are they?
- What do the 'thuds' on pages 154 and 155 refer to?
- What is the purpose of the deserted RAF base where Mr Fisher works? Do you think this is a good idea?
- Has your impression of Mr Fisher changed now? In what way?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about what happened at Dunkirk in the summer of 1940.



Opportunities for Writing

Write a letter of apology from Bonnie to Mr Fisher

Digging FOR Victory

Sunday 18th May 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think that Bonnie's ears are ringing?
- Why do you think that Mr Fisher says it's important that his job stays buried underground?
- Why does Bonnie tap the side of her nose?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Find out about how sound and light travels, and make a poster to show this to others.

Monday 19th May 1941

Questions to consider



- Look back at the definition you wrote for the word 'hero' when you first started reading *Digging for Victory*. Have you changed your mind about what it means? How does it compare to the definition that Bonnie finds in the dictionary?
- Do you think that Bonnie can be regarded as a hero? Why? Why not?
- Why do you think the writer has chosen to write about Bobbie on page 174? Is Bobbie a metaphor for anything? How effective is this?

Opportunities for Writing

Write a poem that starts every line with 'A hero is'. How many creative ideas can you come up with? Good poems often surprise the reader or help them to see things in a new way. How could you do this here? Can you include some very unlikely heroes? You could always share your ideas and use the very best ones to create a group or class poem.



June 1941

Thursday 5th June 1941



Questions to consider

- What is the Victoria Cross?
- In what ways are Carol and Mr Fisher similar and different to each other?
- Do you think it's important to be recognised for performing heroic deeds?

Cross-curricular activities

PSHE

Research some of the different awards that are given in society in recognition of good deeds, and find out about some of the people who have received these awards.



Opportunities for Writing

Write a short poem from Carol's point of view expressing how she feels about being awarded a Cog badge. Consider how you might use repetition, adjectives, similes, metaphors, layout and other techniques to convey her excitement and pride. Share your poems and discuss the strengths of each.

Friday 6th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Mr Armstrong still looks like a rabbit in headlights?
- Why do you think Mr Fisher doesn't talk about Mr Armstrong to Bonnie?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

If it is June or July and the flowers on your potato plants have died, it may soon be time to dig them up. Research what family of plants potatoes belong to and how they grow. Find some different recipes that you can use your potatoes in.

Saturday 7th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think the writer chose to mention the weather in this section? How effective is this given the event that happens?



Opportunities for Writing

Try rewriting this scene keeping the main event the same (i.e. the news about Ralph arriving) but with very different weather conditions. How does this affect the scene? Does it improve it or make it less effective?

Questions to consider

Monday 9th June 1941

- Bonnie seems to have changed her attitude towards working in the vegetable garden. What factors do you think have caused this change?
- Has the writer used any imagery (similes and / or metaphors) in this section? If so, how effective is it?



Thursday 12th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Find a line or sentence that you particularly like in this section. Explain to your group why you like it.
- What do you think Bonnie will find in Mr Fisher's bunker?
- How do you think Mr Fisher uses physics in his job?

Opportunities for Writing

The writer uses the metaphor 'a seed of excitement is sown right in the pit of my tummy'. Extend this metaphor or choose a different one related to plants, circuits, electricity or physics to write a short poem that describes how Bonnie feels when she wakes up on Saturday morning. Write your poem in the first person. Try and develop your chosen metaphor as much as you can – how far can you push it? Where will it take you?



Questions to consider

- What surprised you most about the decoy site that Mr Fisher operates?
- Look carefully at the layout in this section. Why do you think the writer has chosen to use this layout?
- Why do you think the writer has chosen not to use conventional speech punctuation in this book? How do you feel about this?
- On page 211, images flash through Bonnie's mind as they might in a zoetrope. Compare the images described on this page with the description of the zoetrope images on page 6. How are they different? Why do you think the writer decided to mention a zoetrope again here?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Do some research into decoy sites; what different types were there? See if there were any in your local area. If so, find out if you can visit them.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Make a model decoy site using a range of different modelling materials.

Opportunities for Writing

At the time of writing, there seems to be very little information about World War Two decoy sites in history books for children. Choose your favourite non-fiction book about World War Two and write a page in a similar style, including information that you have found out about decoy sites from *Digging for Victory* and any other research you have done.



Tuesday 17th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Why does Mr Fisher say, 'Calm before the storm, this'?
- Do you think Bonnie's perfect day could be spoilt by a storm? If so, how?

Cross-curricular activities

SCIENCE

Now might be a very good time to revise the water cycle.

Wednesday 18th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Consider Bonnie's question on page 235: how long must a hero carry on being a hero before he becomes a coward?
- How do you regard Mr Armstrong by the end of this section? Is he a coward or a hero or neither?
- Do you think anything could have been done to help Mr Armstrong?
- How do you regard Mr Howard by the end of this section? Have you changed your mind about him in any way?
- How do you regard the land girls by the end of this section?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

Find out about rationing during World War Two. What products were rationed and why? Discover what happened to deserters in World War Two. How do you feel about this?

PSHE

Discuss whether anything else could have been done to support soldiers who were traumatised by their experiences in the war.

SCIENCE

Design and make a simple series circuit to light a bulb using a switch and a battery. Now imagine that you are Mr Fisher and that you have to create a circuit that will illuminate a number of different lights on the decoy runway. Systematically add more bulbs to the circuit and see what happens as you do so. What can you do to solve this problem? When you have successfully done this, you could use your circuit in a model of Mr Fisher's decoy site.

Opportunities for Writing



Write this scene from someone else's point of view. You might choose to do so from Mr Howard's or one of the land girls' perspectives as they become involved in the action. Alternatively, you might imagine what is going through the mind of Mr Fisher or Mr Armstrong as they hear bombs falling in the distance. Instead, you might consider what Bonnie's parents do when they find her gone. Do they feel concerned when they hear bombs falling, or do they not connect the two events? Be as imaginative as you like. Write in prose or free verse and use as many different writing techniques as you like to convey how your chosen character is feeling.

Thursday 19th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Do you think that Bonnie was actually Mr Fisher's back-up plan?
- What does Betty mean when she talks about having a 'vocation'?
- Why does she say 'my mother would die for one of those!' about the Hoover?
- Think back to all the brave things that Bonnie has done throughout the book. In your opinion which was the bravest? Why?
- Why do you think the writer chooses to refer to the zoetrope again here?
- Has the writer used any metaphors or similes that you particularly like in this section? If so, why do you like them?

Cross-curricular activities

HISTORY

If you haven't already done so, research what life was like for the armed forces during World War Two. Find out what part women played, for example in the WRNS.

GEOGRAPHY

Find where Falmouth is on a map. Can you remember which other place names are mentioned in the book? Which are real and which are fictional? Whereabouts do you think *Digging for Victory* was probably set? Justify your choice.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

See if there is a local vegetable garden, allotment or walled kitchen garden in your area. Arrange to visit it and find out what fruit and vegetables are in season at the moment. Are there any growing that you haven't heard of or tried before?



Opportunities for Writing

Imagine that you are Ralph. Write the letter that is waiting on Bonnie's mantelpiece describing what happened to you. Go into as much detail as you like, making use of any research you have done into RAF pilots and the armed forces in World War Two.

Sunday 29th June 1941

Questions to consider

- Why do you think Mr Howard looks so awkward when he is passed the medal?
- Why do you think Mr Howard is there at all?
- What kept Ralph alive while he was in hiding? How do you think hearing this made Bonnie feel?
- Why do Bonnie's eyes grow so wide at the bottom of page 277?
- Do you like the way that the title *Digging for Victory* is used in the final line of the book? Why / why not?
- Have a look back at Wednesday 3rd December 1940. How many of the things mentioned then are repeated in this final part? Why do you think the writer has done this? How effective is it?
- Do you think that Bonnie can now be called a hero?
- Who else in the book could be called a hero? See if you agree with your group.
- Have you changed your mind about what it means to be a hero as you read the book?
- What did you like about *Digging for Victory*?
- What did you dislike?
- Which was your favourite character and why?

Cross-curricular activities

ART AND DESIGN

Consider what elements you would choose to include on the front cover if you were to redesign it. Try quickly sketching several different ideas and layouts in pencil before working on your final one. What colours and medium / media will you use to create it?



Opportunities for Writing

Write an honest review of *Digging for Victory*. If you wanted to, you could share it with others in your school, display it in your school library, ask your teacher to post it online or share it with the writer at www.cathyfaulkner.co.uk. Writers always love to hear what readers think of their books.

