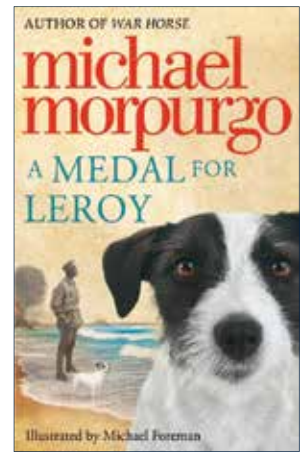


michael morpurgo



A Medal for Leroy



A Medal for Leroy – Poodle

'I grew up in the 1940s in London, just after the war. When I was a boy, my friends called me 'Poodle.' I didn't mind that much. I'd have preferred they called me Michael – it was my real name after all – but they rarely did.'

(A Medal for Leroy, Chapter 2, Poodle, Page 11)

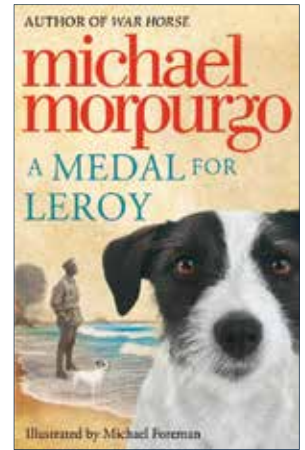


Several of the characters in the story of *A Medal for Leroy* have nicknames:

Aunt Mary is called Auntie Pish, Aunt Martha is called Auntie Snowdrop and Leroy is called 'The Wizard'.

- Do you have any nicknames? If so what are they and why were you given these nicknames?
- Do you have any nicknames for any of your friends and relations? If so what are they and why have you chosen for them these names?

michael morpurgo



A Medal for Leroy

A Medal for Leroy – Who am I?

'I had expected to see simply the back of the photograph, but there was something else there, a writing pad about the same size as the photo. On the front it said, 'Basildon Bond', in fancy printing, and below it, written in pencil, in large capital letters:

'WHO I AM, WHAT I'VE DONE, AND WHO YOU ARE'

BY...'

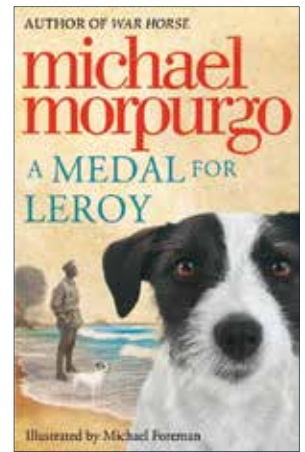
(The Mozart Question, Chapter 9, Read it, his eyes were telling me, Page 98)

Write your own story using the title 'Who I am and what I've done' by . . .

michael morpurgo



A Medal for Leroy



A Medal for Leroy – Lucky Beggar

READ THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT IT.

'They said what a 'lucky beggar' he was, Bobby did most of the talking when they came – he'd been the goalkeeper in the football team back home. He was the one who told me how it happened, how the whistle had gone, they'd gone over the top into No Man's Land, Leroy kicking a football ahead of him, Jasper running along beside him, as he always did. But they hadn't got far, about halfway across, before the German machine guns opened fire and the shells started falling all around. Several of them went down. They had to take shelter in a crater, in a shell hole, Jasper still with them. They lay there all day and into the night.

When it had all quietened down, they heard the sound of a man crying out for help, screaming in pain. Leroy didn't think twice about it, they told me. He clambered up out of the shell hole and went out there, out into No Man's Land, to fetch him back. But once he found him he discovered there were two more men lying out there as well, both badly wounded, one of them unconscious. Twice more he crawled out into No Man's Land to bring them back. And still no one spotted him. But the last time Leroy went out there, the flares went up and he was caught out in the open. Machine guns opened up, rifle fire. That was when he was hit, shot in the leg.

Three lives he saved that day, and without a thought for his own. They were all on the way back across No Man's Land, carrying the wounded men with them when the shelling started and Leroy went down, hit again, a shrapnel wound this time. Bobby piggybacked him back to the trenches. "He was awful heavy to carry, I can tell you," he said. It was from Bobby and his other pals that I learnt so much more about Leroy than he'd ever told me himself. He was just a Private soldier, the same rank they all were, but Leroy was the one they always followed. They believed he was lucky. Leroy and Jasper – they were like talismans to them, lucky mascots.

"All we've got out here is luck, luck and pluck," Bobby told me one day after the visit was over, as we walked out of the hospital ward together. 'Leroy's lucky. So we stay as close to him as we can. That way we get lucky too. He got a lucky wound, a Blighty one, so like as not they'll send him home. Never seen pluck like it bringing those boys in like he did. He should get a ruddy Victoria Cross for that, if you ask me. It's what we all want, a medal for Leroy. We told the officers what he did, the whole story, that he deserves a medal. Course, being like he is, they probably won't give him one. But I'm telling you, there won't be no justice in this world if Leroy doesn't get a medal.'"

(A Medal for Leroy, Chapter 15, Lucky Beggar, Pages 154 – 158)

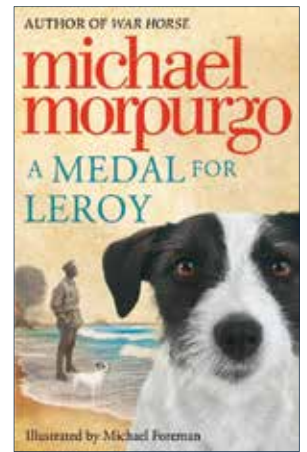
Questions

1. What is No Man's Land?
2. What position did Bobby play on the football team?
3. Who do you think sent a flare up and why?
4. Where was Leroy shot?
5. What is a Victoria Cross?
6. Who did Bobby believe were lucky mascots?
7. Why did he describe Leroy's wound as a lucky wound?

michael morpurgo



A Medal for Leroy



A Medal for Leroy – Lucky Beggar

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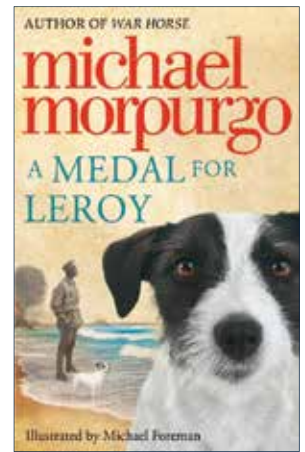
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A Medal for Leroy



A Medal for Leroy – Lucky Beggar

Answers

1. No Man's Land is a piece of land that lies between two enemy trench systems to which neither side wished to move openly or to seize due to fear of being attacked by the enemy in the process.
2. Bobby played goal keeper.
3. Small patrols were sent out to obtain information about the enemy. These patrols would go out at night. They would have to crawl forward on their stomachs in an attempt to get close enough to find out what the enemy was up to. To stop British night patrols the Germans used a light-shell rocket. Suspended from a small parachute, the flare blazed brightly for a minute giving the defending troops a chance to kill the soldiers who had advanced into No Man's Land.
4. Leroy was shot in the leg.
5. The Victoria Cross is a medal awarded for bravery in 'the face of the enemy'.
6. Bobby believed that Leroy and Jasper were lucky mascots.
7. Bobby thought that Leroy's wound was serious enough that he would be sent back to a hospital in England to recover, escaping the war zone.