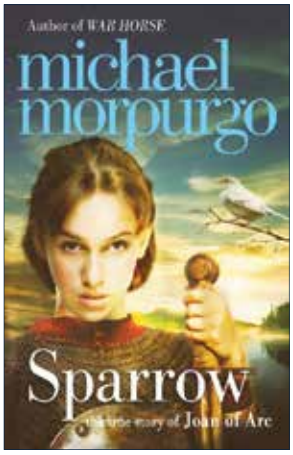
michael morpurgo

Sparrow



Sparrow – The Maid of Orleans

'Joan of Arc is a significant person in the history of France as a nation. She is probably the only female who was able to influence the French military force in a very significant and substantial way. During her lifetime, she was an asset to her nation and her influence remained even after her last breath.

Joan of Arc was born sometime in 1412 to farmers residing in Domremy, France. In her native land, she is known as Jeanne d'Arc. Aside from working on the farm, Joan of Arc's father was also employed as a village official. Joan's life started to become controversial at a very young age. When she was 12 years old, she claimed that she had a vision of three saints, namely St Catherine, St Margaret, and St Michael. These three holy people instructed her to make the English troops leave France thereby making it possible for Charles the Seventh to be crowned as the French king.'

(The Beadle Maniacs)

In Michael Morpurgo's book *Sparrow*, we learn about the life of Joan of Arc, who believed she was sent by God to free France from the English in the early 1400s.

'My voices speak to me all the time now, Belami – the Blessed St Margaret, the Blessed St Catherine – they will not desert me. France will be free of the enemy, they have promised it.'

(*Sparrow*, Chapter 1, page 1)

Using books and the internet to help you, create a timeline about Joan's life, from birth to her execution at the stake.

Include the dates of significant events and battles that weakened the enemy defences.

What happened to France after Joan of Arc's execution?

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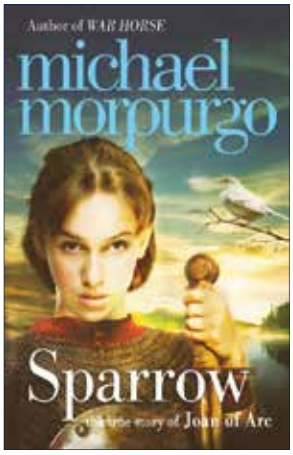

Sparrow – Belami

'He was born in the little grey house in Domremy, the same house Joan had been born in, but fifteen years later to the day. There was an old nest hole high in the thatch, a safe enough birthplace for a sparrow…'

(*Sparrow*, Chapter 2 page 33)

'When the hands opened, he found himself blinking up into Joan's smiling face. "Don't worry," she was saying, "I promise I won't hurt you. And I won't let Minou hurt you either. I promise. A white sparrow! I didn't know sparrows could be white."

(*Sparrow*, Chapter 2 page 35)

'…"They said I would find a friend," she went on. "My voices told me so, and they never lie to me, never. Because you are beautiful and because you are my friend, I shall call you Belami. Do you like that? Belami – yes, it suits you. They told me you would come. I needed a friend, Belami, someone I could tell everything to. I wanted to tell Hauviette – she's my best friend – but they said no. They told me to be patient – the blessed St Margaret is always telling me to be patient – and here you are, just as they promised. They promised me a friend to keep me company, one who would never betray me, and therefore not of humankind, they said…"

(*Sparrow*, Chapter 2 page 36)

Belami became a constant friend and companion to Joan of Arc from that day until the day she died.

Imagine that you have a friend that is NOT human.

Describe what friend you would choose and why.

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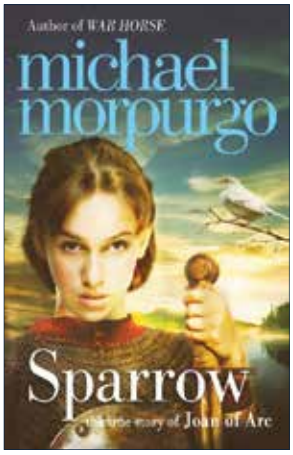

Sparrow – Eloise Hardy

'In the house where I grew up, in our old house in Montpellier, the picture always hung at the top of the stairs. Every time I went up to bed at night, there she'd be – Joan of Arc in her shining armour, holding her standard with a shaft of light falling across her uplifted face. I would often gaze up at her and yearn to be serene and strong, just as she was. I wanted to have the same visionary, faraway look in my eyes, and the same hairstyle too."

(*Sparrow*, Chapter 1, page 1)

Joan of Arc is an incredibly significant historical figure for several reasons:

- She believed that she was able to communicate with the Saints to help her carry out God's work
- She led and won many battles for France against the enemy
- She was a female soldier in a time when women were not soldiers

If you could be any significant historical figure who would you be and why?

Harper Collins