

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR SOLDIER'S GAME

BY JAMES KILLGORE

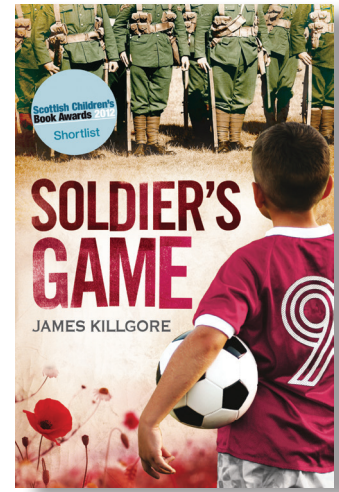
THEMES/ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS BOOK

Friendship, family, war, community, teams, death, football, winning and losing, surviving, trust, sacrifice, remembrance.

BOOK SUMMARY

Ross is fed up with being on the losing side, as Bruntsfield Primary football team suffer another humiliating defeat. But after football practice each week he goes to visit his grandmother, and this week she has a special present for him. Pat digs out a pair of old football boots and strip which belonged to her father, who once played for Heart of Midlothian Football Club. Ross is amazed that his great-grandfather, Jack, had played for the famous Hearts. He wears the old football boots to a match, but they do not bring him the luck he hoped for.

As he finds out more about Jack through Pat's stories and going through old newspaper clippings, Ross learns that Jack was a top scorer when he played for Hearts during the First World War, before joining a battalion with his team mates and football fans, the Heart's Battalion, who fought at the Battle of the Somme.



BEFORE READING

GROUP ACTIVITIES



- Discussion: do you buy a poppy in October/November? Do you know what it symbolises? Do you know what the sales raise money for?



- Discussion: are you part of a team? What kind of team is it? What is team spirit? Have you experienced a bond within a team?

AFTER READING (note, contains spoilers!)

INDIVIDUAL WORK



- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
 - a) Ross uses his great-grandfather's boots to play football (chapter 4)
 - b) Jack enlists for the war (chapter 7)
 - c) The battalion advances (chapter 13)
 - d) Jack's football career is over (chapter 14)
 - e) Ross sees the poster of Jack (chapter 15)



- The First World War inspired a lot of poetry; some talk about the glory of war and some describe the horror of it.
 - a) Use the web to find examples of a pro- and anti-war poem. Compare and contrast them.
 - b) Try writing your own war poem. Will it be for or against war?



- Write a letter home from a young soldier after his first experience of fighting. Who is he writing to? What did he see? Hear? Smell? How does he feel? What happened to him?



- Design a football strip for your school or community. What colours will you use? Stripes or one colour? Will you use any emblems, symbols or logos? What do each of your images/colours represent?



- Create an enlistment poster using slogans and pictures. For ideas see page 61.



- Research: Did any male member of your family serve in the First World War? 80,000 women served in the armed forces in noncombatant roles, are you related to one of them? Or did any female member of your family join the war effort by working as a nurse, in a factory or in any of the thousands of other jobs vacated by men joining the army? Search for family history, family trees, pictures and newspaper articles using the web. Alternatively ask your parents and other relatives for information. Make your own First World War family record with the facts you find.

Group Activities



- Discussion: 'Isn't it better just to forget?' Ross asks Pat (page 140). Is it important to remember? Or do you think it's better to forget wars? Have you seen any war memorials near where you live? Can you think of any other ways the soldiers of the First World War are remembered?



- Project: Research how the First World War affected your local area. Did they have a Pals battalion? What effect do you think the Pals battalions had on the local community? Why do you think men signed up as a group instead of individually?



- Activity: Jack received the Silver War Badge 'For King and Empire – Services Rendered' (page 78). In groups, research what other types of badges and medals were awarded during the First World War. Make a poster with pictures/drawings and information about the medals.



Vocabulary



- Check you know what the following words mean (page numbers of example words in brackets):

adjacent (88)	ceremony (139)	exhaustion (99)	occupying (59)	sniper (117)
abandoned (124)	civil servants (87)	grim (72)	outrage (62)	subsoil (116)
aghast (124)	condemned (62)	influenza (102)	platoon (124)	surrender (125)
alliances (56)	courtesy (97)	inscription (78)	postpone (60)	squad (37)
artillery (118)	delirious (131)	laudanum (133)	predicted (144)	tactical (111)
bunker (132)	discharge (134)	manuals (118)	prevail(143)	transformed (152)
brass (15)	disordered (88)	momentum (43)	recruited (51)	tremendous (125)
brigade (110)	enraged (52)	numerous (87)	rendered (78)	vivid (133)
centennial (142)	evacuated (133)	obliged (88)	sergeant major (86)	



Kelpies Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler, Mollie Hunter and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, Floris has continued to add to the series with a range of successful new Scottish novels for children including books by Alex Nye, Lari Don, Anne Forbes, Annemarie Allan and Margaret Forrester.