

FULL FLIGHT GRIPPING STORIES:

Hero: A War Dog's Tale

Genre

Hero: A War Dog's Tale is an action adventure story.

Summary

The story is set in an unnamed mountainous desert country. Rebel soldiers are terrifying the local people and planting landmines.

Farad is separated from his family. He befriends a small puppy, Hero. Hero warns Farad about the approach of rebel soldiers. Farad returns the favour when he saves Hero from drowning.

Hero finally shows his true worth when he leads Farad safely across a minefield by sniffing out the explosives.

Book Introduction

In Muslim hadith (tradition), dogs are considered impure and must not be kept as pets.

The only permissible dogs are those that guard livestock or land.

The Quran, however, mentions the story of the sleepers in the cave who had a dog (Sura 18) and goes on to state that God has subjected animals to be of use to humankind.

In this story Hero is at first called "filthy" but he earns the affection that Farad has for him. However, it is a sensibility of which you should be aware.

New vocabulary

In addition to the vocabulary provided on page 4, here are some technical words and phrases in the order they appear in the story:

- P7 advice (noun); the verb 'advise' is spelled with an 's'
- P16 desperate (with 'er'); separate (with 'ar')
- P21 whirled (silent 'h')
- P27 sensitive
- P30 explosives

Group work

Discussion Points

- How did Hero feel about being separated from his family?
- How did Farad feel about being separated from his family?
- Do you think Hero will see his family again?
- Why did the man on page 12 call Hero “filthy”?
- Discuss the lines on page 13: “The man turned his back. He had his own family to look after.”

Pair work

- Role play what happens when Farad meets his uncle.
- **Farad’s uncle refuses to take Hero into his house: what does Farad say and do?**

Individual work

Some people don’t like dogs; a man in the story calls Hero “filthy”. List the ways in which Hero earns his place in Farad’s home.

Hero’s Mum gives two reasons why Hero should stay away from people. Can you think of any other reasons that there might be?

Write a story about what happens next to Farad and Hero – their next adventure.

Choose a country where you think this story might realistically be set. Without naming the country, add clues to the story that might help someone work out where it is set.

Y6, Unit 1 Narrative

Pupils evaluate and mark various real (anonymous) or simulated answers to previous text questions and discuss how they could be improved.

Which of the above questions have most helped you develop your understanding of this story?

What questions would you like to ask to help increase someone’s understanding of this story?

Using the CD

Write a caption for each of the pictures.

Copymasters

A The Nowzad Dogs

To increase the complexity of the task, ask pupils to read about the current dog rescues that the charity is helping.

'Pen' is nickname for Sergeant Farthing. Find out what his real name is. Answer: Paul

B The Dickin Medal

To increase the complexity of the task, find out how the story would have differed if it had been set during World War One.

Extension 1 (literacy)

Write a description of Hero based on the illustrations in the book.

Find out what breed of dog Hero most resembles.

Extension 2 (cross curricular)

Find out why the largest number of Dickin Medals have been awarded to pigeons.

Why haven't any medals been awarded to pigeons recently?

The Nowzad Dogs

In 2006 Sergeant Pen Farthing of the Royal Marines rescued two stray dogs from Afghanistan and brought them back to Britain.

Read his amazing story www.nowzaddogs.co.uk

Now answer the following questions:

- What was the name of the first dog Pen rescued? **Nowzad**
- Name the other dogs that Pen rescued. **Jena, AK, Helmand, Tali, RPG, (Dushka)**
- What did the dogs eat whilst Pen was looking after them? **Military rations!**
- Which dogs had puppies? **Tali and Jena**
- How many dogs got to the rescue home? **13 puppies, Jena, Tali and Nowzad = 16**
- What happened to the ones that didn't make it? **AK and RPG escaped, one puppy was stolen**
- Which of the rescue dogs went to live with Pen and his wife in Britain? **Tali and Nowzad**
- What is the name of the book Pen wrote about his experiences? **One Dog at a Time: Saving the Strays of Afghanistan**
- Why did Pen call his animal charity Nowzad Dogs? Two reasons: after the name of the town, Now Zad, where he was first stationed; and because he named his first rescue dog Nowzad.

