

I Survived The Battle of D-Day, 1944



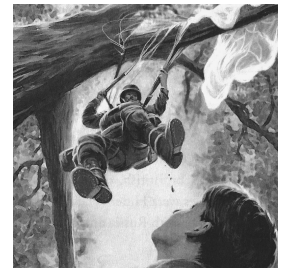
READ-ALLOUD

CHARACTERS:

Narrator
Paul
Sergeant Victor Lopez
German Soldier
Pierre
Mr. Leon
Maman

In this read-aloud from *I Survived the Battle of D-Day, 1944*, Paul is nearly run down by the Nazis occupying his town. The box of madeleines he worked so hard to get for his mother's birthday is smashed to crumbs. As he sits there feeling helpless and hopeless, he suddenly hears a strange cooing sound...

Assign roles to your family and friends.



Narrator: Paul looks up to see a pigeon staring at him. It swoops through the air and lands at his feet, near the crushed cookies.

Paul: Go ahead, bird, eat the crumbs. Someone might as well have them.

Narrator: But the pigeon just coos again, still looking at him.

Paul: What do you want?

Narrator: It flies off over the hedge and into the meadow.

Paul: *(to the pigeon)* Am I supposed to follow you? *(to himself)* Am I actually talking to a pigeon?

Narrator: Paul follows, watching as the bird zips up into a tree and disappears. Then he hears:

Sergeant Victor Lopez: Hey, kid, can you help me?

Narrator: Paul jumps, startled. His gaze follows the voice up into the tree. There's a paratrooper hanging in the tree, his parachute tangled in the branches.

Victor: I need to cut myself down, but I dropped my knife. It's somewhere on the ground. Do you see it?

Narrator: Paul hesitates—he knows what can happen to people who help Allied soldiers. But he thinks about his beloved history teacher, Mr. Leon, who was shot by the Nazis and left for dead in a river... The next thing he knows, he's grabbing the knife and climbing the tree.

Paul: I'll be right there.

Victor: Thanks, kid. I'm Sergeant Victor Lopez, American Army.

Narrator: He cuts himself out of his parachute.

Paul: I'm Paul. How long have you been up here?

Victor: Since about 4 a.m. Wasn't a good flight. I had to jump out too low, no time to steer. And here I am.

Narrator: Paul hears the pigeon again. It's perched on a branch above Victor.

Victor: That's Ellie. She's a carrier pigeon.

READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

She's supposed to fly back to England with a message about what happened to me, but she won't go.

Paul: Maybe she likes you.

Victor: (*laughing and lowering himself to the ground*) Ellie, if that's true, the army's going to fire you.

Narrator: Suddenly, they hear a motor.

Seconds later, a Nazi patrol truck pulls up. Victor lowers his voice.

Victor: Time to go. Know any good hiding places?

Paul: I do—I can take you there.

Victor: No, no, that's too much to ask—

German Soldier: I see a parachute in the tree!

Narrator: There's no time to argue. Victor and Paul crouch down and run, Ellie flying above them.

Paul: This way! Through the orchard!

Narrator: They reach a crumbling old castle.

Paul: This is it. Nobody ever comes here—

Narrator: Suddenly a man with a rifle leaps out from behind a tree

Pierre: Don't move. Don't talk. Is anyone else with you?

Victor: No.

Pierre: You'd better not be lying. Now move it.

Narrator: The man pushes them inside the castle. For a moment, Paul doesn't believe his eyes, for there, in front of him, is Mr. Leon. Alive.

Victor: I'm Sergeant Victor Lopez, American Army, and this boy here is—

Mr. Leon: Paul!

Paul: Mr. Leon! How did you—how are you here—

Narrator: Paul feels a flicker of hope as Mr. Leon pulls him into a hug, then shakes Victor's hand.

Mr. Leon: Welcome to the Le Roc resistance, Sergeant. I know why the Allies sent you, and we're here to help.

Victor: I would have been captured if it hadn't been for Paul. This kid is *brave*.

Mr. Leon: Indeed, he is. Paul, did you know that this was a resistance base?

Paul: No, I just thought it would be a good hiding place. Sir, I was there when you got shot, and I...I...

Mr. Leon: Yes, I'm sorry. I wish I could have let you know that I was all right. But it's important that the Nazis believe I'm at the bottom of that river. Paul, listen, now *you're* in danger, I'm afraid, but it's not safe for you to leave.

Paul: I have to go—Maman will worry. I can't do that to her.

Mr. Leon: Well, actually—. Maybe it's better if I just show you. Come with me.

Narrator: Mr. Leon leads Paul and Victor to a basement crowded with people he recognizes, all members of the resistance. And there, in the middle, is his mother. When she sees Paul, she stands, slowly.

Maman: I thought I could keep you safe if you didn't know. But the time for that is past now, clearly.

Mr. Leon: Your mother is one of the best

READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

messengers the resistance has.

Paul: All those mornings when you left before dawn?

Maman: I was carrying messages.

Paul: So, you lied?

Narrator: For a moment, Maman looks ashamed. Then she takes Paul's hands.

Maman: I did. But this work is important and requires secrecy to keep us all safe. Do you understand?

Narrator: Paul's anger melts away, and the flicker of hope in his heart sparks into a flame.

Paul: I do, Maman. And I'd like to help. Let me be part of the resistance.

Victor: Kid, I think you already are.

Narrator: From her place on the windowsill, Ellie coos as Maman and Paul hug. ■