

# I SURVIVED

## BOOK CLUB

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### I Survived The Battle of D-Day, 1944



# CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

### CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the soccer ball so important to Paul? Why does he decide to sell it? When he gets turned down, how does thinking about Mr. Leon inspire him to try harder?

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2. At the beginning of the story, the madeleines Paul works so hard to get for his mother are crushed. How does this affect him? What does he realize in this moment, and why is it important?



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3. Why does Paul decide to help the paratrooper in the tree? Who or what does he think about? How is this an example of kindness in unexpected places?

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4. How does Paul's friendship with Gerard help him help Victor?

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5. Why are Paul's feelings complicated when he learns about his mother being in the resistance? Which feelings win out over the others, and why?

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## CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

6. What are *Nebelwerfers*? How are they part of the mission that the resistance is helping Victor with in Le Roc? Why is the mission so important?

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7. What is the chain of events that leads Paul to being on his own on the cliffs when the D-Day invasion starts?

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8. The legend of the dragon comes into play at the end of the story in a cool way. Who does the “dragon” turn out to be? What message might the author be trying to send about hope?

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9. Why was D-Day so important to ending World War II?

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10. How did the author’s visit to Normandy help her write this book?

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**ESSAY ASSIGNMENT:** Answer the organizer questions on the next page to help you brainstorm a short personal essay about the following statement: “You can find courage inside a heart pounding with fear.” (Remember that being courageous and brave **does not** mean that you aren’t afraid—in fact, we are brave and courageous **only** when we overcome our fear.) Then use the information from your organizer to write your essay.

# CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

## PERSONAL ESSAY ORGANIZER FOR *I SURVIVED THE BATTLE OF D-DAY, 1944*

**First, answer the questions below to brainstorm ideas for your first paragraph:**

When in your life have you been afraid? List three different examples.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you handle each of these situations?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**List any moments of bravery or courage you had during these situations. This could be an action you took, words you said, or something you felt or thought.**

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**Now write your essay on the back of this page or on a computer using your answers above. In the first paragraph, write about one of the situations you listed above, explaining what happened and why you were afraid. In the second paragraph, write about a moment of courage you had in the situation. In your concluding sentence, explain what you learned about yourself from this experience.**

## ANSWERS

### CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. The soccer ball is important to Paul because he and his friend Gerard used to play together all the time, until the Nazis took Gerard and his family away. Paul wants to sell the ball so he can make money to buy his mother a birthday present. After getting turned down by the leatherworker at the market, he thinks about Mr. Leon risking his life for the resistance and realizes he can try harder to sell the ball.
2. Paul is angry and upset when the madeleines are ruined, and he cries. But he realizes that what he's really feeling is helpless. He feels like there's no way to fight back against the Nazis. This is an important realization because it sets him on the path of looking for ways to fight back.
3. Paul thinks about his father in a Nazi prison; his friend Gerard being taken away; Mr. Leon fighting for the resistance; and Ellie, leading him right to the paratrooper. All these thoughts inspire Paul to act by helping the paratrooper. This is an example of the paratrooper finding kindness in an unexpected place—he probably didn't expect a child to show up and help him.
4. Paul and Gerard explored every inch of Le Roc and knew all the fields, paths, and hedgerows. Because of this knowledge, he's able to help Victor escape from the Nazis by leading him to Castle Le Roc.
5. When he learns about his mother being in the resistance, Paul feels fear, anger, hope and pride all at once. But hope and pride win out over fear and anger. He is proud that his mother is risking everything to help the people of Le Roc fight back.
6. *Nebelwerfers* are one of the most feared weapons the Nazis had. They were powerful cannons with six barrels that could shoot one hundred exploding rockets and kill a thousand people in just minutes. The resistance is helping Victor destroy the *Nebelwerfers*. It's important that they destroy these weapons before the Allied soldiers land in the D-Day invasion.
7. The resistance learns that the weapons are on the cliffs, but they don't know how to get there because the roads are blocked, and the Nazis have posted guards everywhere. Paul knows a secret route, but he can't make a map—he can only lead people there. He and Mr. Leon go together and put the C-3 in the *Nebelwerfers*, but after the explosions start, a plane falls from the sky and he and Mr. Leon get separated.
8. The legend is that the dragon in the castle's tower protects the people of Le Roc during wars. But at the end of the book, the "dragon" that comes to help Maman and Paul in the tower is Ellie, the carrier pigeon and resistance fighter. The author uses Ellie as a symbol of hope by having Ellie swoop in when it seems like all is lost with help and solutions.
9. D-Day was a huge step toward winning the war. The Allies broke through the Nazi's defenses. As a result, in the following weeks and months, they were able to get troops, weapons, tanks, and supplies into Europe. This allowed them to free most of France.
10. The author's visit to Normandy not only inspired her but it gave her ideas about key elements of the book, like the hedgerows, the castle, paratroopers caught in trees, and carrier pigeons.

**ESSAY ASSIGNMENT:** Answers will vary.