

# Jojo's Story

Antoinette Moses

## Before reading

1. Look at the front cover. What do you think this story is about?
2. Read the blurb on the back cover. Have you seen anything about children and war on the television news or in the newspapers?
3. Look at the pictures on pages 6, 7, 12 and 20. What do you think happens in the first three chapters of *Jojo's Story*?
4. Match the chapter titles and the sentences from each chapter.

Chapter 1	Only me, Jojo
Chapter 2	The men in the lorry
Chapter 3	The field of the families
Chapter 4	The walls will fall down
Chapter 5	The river

- a 'The earth is kind to the dead,' my grandmother always said. 'You must give the dead to the earth.'
  - b I often walked along it with my brother. He said that you can't swim in it.
  - c But I think I'm the only person here. All the others are dead.
  - d And when the people came from the other side of the river, the walls didn't stop them.
  - e But I don't know who they are. They have strange voices. I must be careful.
5. If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

## Check your reading

### CHAPTER 1

1. Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences.

- 1 When Jojo returned from the fields,
  - 2 Jojo didn't know why
  - 3 Jojo couldn't understand
  - 4 Jojo was very hungry
  - 5 Jojo's grandmother said that after people die
  - 6 When Jojo heard the sound of the lorry
- a the men came to his village.
  - b he was very quiet so the men would not find him.
  - c you can talk to their ghosts.
  - d how anyone could hurt his sister.
  - e everybody in his village was dead.
  - f but was too afraid to look for food.

2. Jojo is only a ten-year-old boy. What can he do in this situation?
3. In what part of the world do you think this story happens?

### CHAPTER 2

1. Put the events in the right order.
- a Jojo ran out of the stable after Whitetail.
  - b Jojo thought the men in the lorry were going to kill him.
  - c Jojo found Whitetail, his favourite chicken.

- d Chris told Jojo that he couldn't stay in his village alone.
- e Jojo knew that the men were not from across the river.
- f The soldiers were kind, and gave Jojo food.

2. The soldiers' hats are blue, 'like a bit of the sky on the top of their heads.' (page 13) Where do you think the soldiers are from?
3. Chapter 2 ends: 'Only the ghosts understand.' What does Jojo mean?

### CHAPTER 3

1. Look at the words in italics. Who is *I*, *they*, *he*, *you*?
  - a 'I take photos because the dead have no-one else to speak for them.'
  - b 'I tell the soldiers the names of the people in each house.'
  - c 'I don't know why *they* don't just kill the dog.'
  - d '*He's* very happy to be outside and he runs around.'
  - e '*They* make holes and bury the people from my village.'
  - f 'I've brought you the family. I know *you'll* be happy to see them again.'

Dog Jojo Chris the soldiers Jojo's grandmother

2. 'The soldiers understand. They have families at home, they say.' (page 17) What do the soldiers understand?
3. Chris is a photographer and a writer. What will he tell the outside world about Jojo's village? How will he begin the story in his newspaper?

### CHAPTER 4

1. Complete the summary.

Chris drove Jojo away from his village to the .....  
 Jojo asked Chris why men ....., but Chris didn't know the answer. Jojo told Chris that his grandmother often told him .....  
 Then, he told Chris about his family but he couldn't talk about the ..... from across the river. Jojo's mother told him walls stopped people coming in. She also told him that the ..... was their wall because it was so big. She thought the village was ..... from the people on the other side. Now, Jojo knew that his mother was ..... The noise from the ..... was getting louder.

2. Jojo says: 'I love stories.' (page 22) Why do you think stories are so important for him?
3. Jojo says: 'You know that, after they die, people go away very slowly.' (page 24) What does Jojo mean?

### CHAPTER 5

1. Match the questions and answers.

- 1 'What happened?'
- 2 'What's your favourite story?'
- 3 'Do the soldiers with blue hats come and help the toad?'
- 4 'If the soldiers with blue hats ask the bad men to go away, will they go away?'
- 5 'Can I come and live with you in Oxford?'

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- a 'I don't know, Jojo ... I'll tell you another story.'
  - b 'No, I don't think so ... I think that the rat and the mole tell the bad animals to go away.'
  - c 'The people from across the river came.'
  - d 'No ... I'm sorry, Jojo, but I'm not at home very often. I'm always travelling.'
  - e 'It's about some animals who live near a river.'
2. Jojo and Chris tell each other stories. How are their stories similar or different?
  3. Why does Jojo think: 'But I don't want to listen to his stories any more.'? (page 32)

## CHAPTER 6

1. Who is speaking? Who are they talking to?
  - a 'No-one is going to eat your chicken.'
  - b 'This is your new home. You'll be fine here.'
  - c 'There are some things that make you want to stop talking.'
  - d 'So many quiet children and Jojo who never stops talking.'
  - e 'My goat was ...'
2. Complete the summary.

In the morning, Chris and Jojo arrived at the ..... but Chris had to leave again. Jojo knew that the older children were ..... Jojo asked Doctor Nicky about the ..... on her T-shirt. One day, Doctor Nicky asked Jojo to talk to a very quiet boy called ..... Jojo didn't want to but he agreed. Jojo told him stories about his ..... Red began to talk about his ..... then stopped. The next day Red ran away. Later, Jojo learnt that Red stepped on a ..... Now, the ..... was getting closer, and Jojo wanted to be with .....
3. "But there are children there, too," says Doctor Nicky. "They aren't bad. I will go anywhere where there are children who need me." But I don't want to listen.' (page 35)  
Why doesn't Jojo want to listen to Doctor Nicky?

## CHAPTER 7

1. Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences.
  - 1 Jojo saw the UN soldiers playing games
  - 2 Jojo didn't understand why the UN soldiers
  - 3 Jojo told Chris he was going to build
  - 4 Chris thought Jojo didn't understand
  - 5 Chris couldn't take Jojo back to England
  - a but he said he would write to him.
  - b because he was only a child.
  - c couldn't fight the people from across the river.
  - d a new school for the village.
  - e just like he played with his brother.
2. Do you think Chris will come back soon?
3. Chapter 7 ends: 'I don't like it here any more.' What do you think Jojo will do now?

## CHAPTER 8

1. Put the events in the right order.
  - a One of the soldiers told Jojo that he knew his brother.
  - b Jojo left the Children's House with the soldiers.
  - c Jojo felt like he was someone again.
  - d A bomb fell near the Children's House.
  - e Jojo took Duck's gun and boots.

- f The fighting was getting closer.
  - g They told the children they could fight for their country some day.
  - h Soldiers from Jojo's country arrived at the Children's House.
2. Chapter 8 ends: 'I was a boy when I met Chris. That was then. Now I have a gun and I'm a man.' Does having a gun make someone a man?
  3. What do you think will happen to Jojo after the end of the story?

## After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Would you like to know more about children like Jojo, who become part of a war? You can ask your teacher or visit these websites: [www.childreninwar.com](http://www.childreninwar.com) or [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)
2. Doctor Nicky worked for MSF, Médecins Sans Frontières. How much do you know about MSF? You can ask your teacher, or visit the MSF website: [www.msf.org](http://www.msf.org)
3. Before the men from across the river came, what do you think life was like in Jojo's village? Would you like to live this way of life?
4. What do you learn from Jojo's story about ghosts, his family and storytelling?
5. Jojo's story is like a journey through life. At the beginning, Jojo is only a child and doesn't know the answers to his questions. At the end, he feels like a man. Talk to another student. How does Jojo change through his experiences in the book?
6. Imagine you are Doctor Nicky. Write to Chris and give him the sad news that Jojo has left with the soldiers.
7. Imagine you are Chris. Write the story of Jojo for your newspaper.

Choose pictures from the book to go with your story.
8. Write a letter to the author Antoinette Moses. Tell her your feelings about *Jojo's Story*.
9. Look at some of the sentences in *Jojo's story*: 'Chris has a face like tired clothes.' (page 17)  
'When you leave your village, it's like walking into a big hole.' (page 41)  
'I was like a snake. I didn't have my old skin, and I didn't have my new skin.' (page 44)  
Write a poem about Jojo, using sentences with 'like'. For example:  
Jojo returned to his village. He felt like ... / It was like ...
10. Here is the blurb from another book at this level.

### The Man from Nowhere

A man is walking slowly in the desert. He is not wearing a shirt. The sun is on his back, which is burnt red. He cannot see, he cannot think. He does not know where he is or who he is. He only knows that he must keep moving, keep putting one foot in front of the other. Keep moving, or die.

Do you want to read *The Man from Nowhere*?