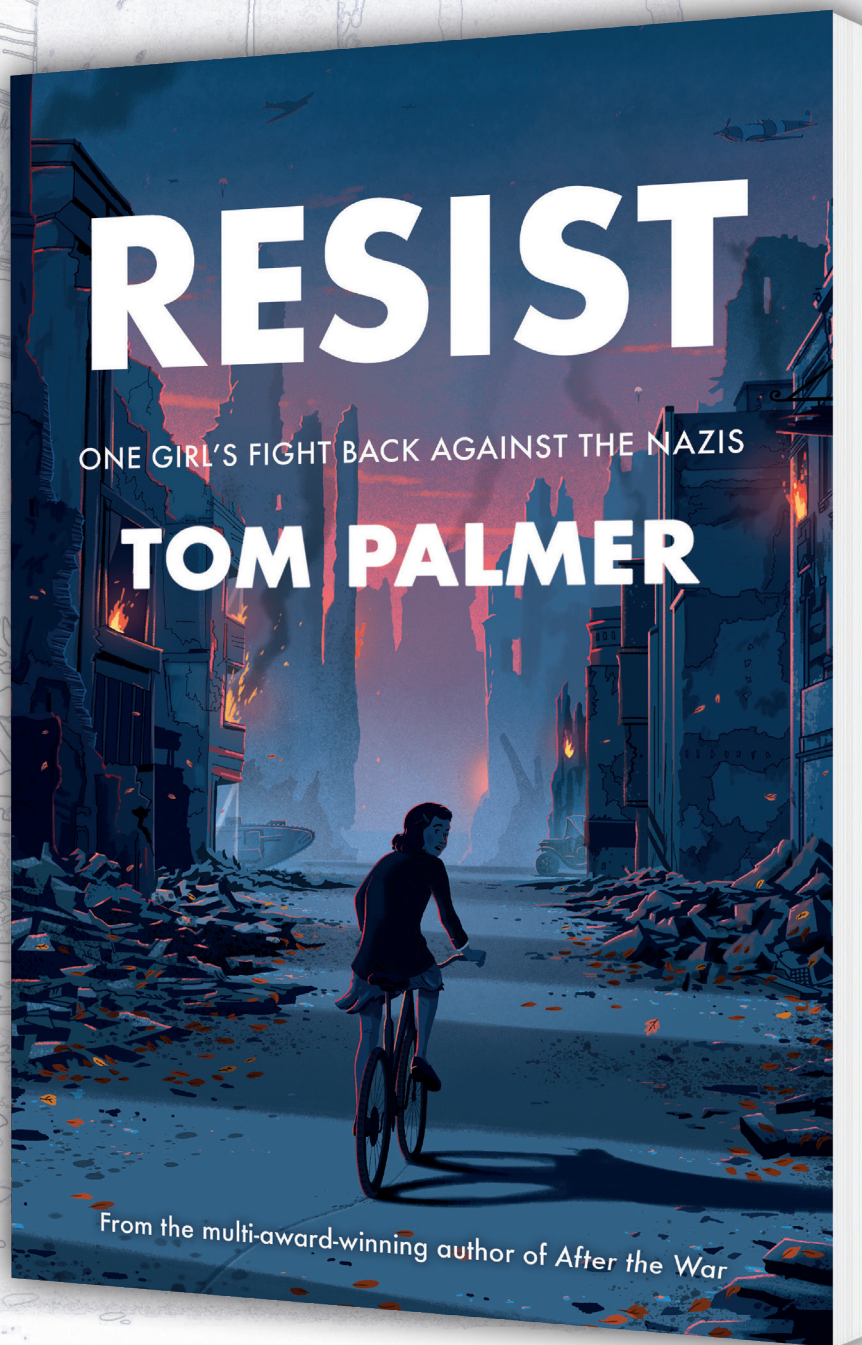


# CLPE TEACHERS' NOTES

## RESIST BY TOM PALMER



As the brutal Second World War stretches on with no end in sight, life for ordinary Dutch people in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands is perilous and full of hardship. There is very little to eat and they face the constant threat of arrest and enslavement.

After the murder of her beloved uncle and the capture of her brother by the Germans, Edda is determined to do anything she can to help the resistance fight back. But how much risk is one teenage girl willing to take?

978-1-80090-106-3 | £7.99 | IA: 9+  
Artwork © Tom Clohosy Cole

  
**CLPE**

Every child can be a reader  
Barrington  Stoke



# RESIST BY TOM PALMER

Barrington Stoke 978-1-80090-106-3

These notes have been written by the teachers at the [CLPE](#) to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

These teaching notes are particularly suitable when working with children in Years 5, 6 and 7 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and P6, P7 and S1 (Scotland).

## BEFORE YOU START:

- As you read through the book, it would be helpful to use a group Reading Journal to organise and record discussions and responses to the text. Children could also be asked to consider the writer's use of language and how he creates a particular effect or image. They might also like to note specific vocabulary and clarify understanding of period details like listening to the BBC from Britain, official rations, blackout blinds.
- Although it can be enjoyed in its own right, the story would be an excellent complement to any study of the Second World War and the Allied advance into the Netherlands at the end of the Second World War, especially the Battle of Arnhem as part of Operation Market Garden. The story is inspired by the early life of Audrey Hepburn, actress and humanitarian, in a village called Velp less than four miles from Arnhem, and it would be helpful to locate both locations on a print or online map and where they lie on the strategically important Rhine.
- The children may have heard of the author Tom Palmer from his previous novels, especially those set in wartime (see **Suggestions for Further Reading below**). Put together a display of books and consider what themes might run throughout from looking at the front covers and blurbs.
- The length of the book means that you will need to consider how you wish children to engage with the text. The sessions below propose a blend of reading aloud and discussing key passages; allowing time for pupils to read sections of the text independently between sessions; revisiting specific passages and episodes and engaging in specific activities to deepen response and comprehension.

## SESSION 1: COVER AND CHAPTER ONE (PAGE 1) TO CHAPTER TWO (PAGE 15)

- Begin by sharing the cover and drawing the children's attention to the illustration. Ask the children to make predictions of what the story could be about and to justify their responses, drawing out any connections they may make to what they see on the cover, other stories they have read or experiences they have had. Record the children's responses around a photocopy of the cover and return to these as you read the book, comparing the children's initial thoughts to how the story actually unfolds.
- Ask them to think about who the character on the cover could be, what she is doing and why, and what clues they get from her clothing, facial expression and body language. Consider where the story might be set:
  - Where do you think she might be cycling to?
  - Why might she be looking back?
  - What else do you notice about the setting, the damaged and burning buildings and the glow in the distance?
- Encourage them to look closely at the cover, and invite them to speculate about the story:
  - What time of day is this?
  - What might the role of the girl on the bike be?
  - What other vehicles can you see?
  - What do these and any other details suggest to you about the story?
- Consider the title **Resist**:
  - What does this verb mean to you, and how might it relate to the scene on the front cover?
  - What does it make you think about the story you are about to read?
  - How does the subtitle **One Girl's Fight Back Against the Nazis** support any predictions you might have made?
  - Children might relate the verb **resist** to the noun **resistance** and know something about resistance movements in occupied countries. Does the cover make you want to read the story? Why? Why not?
- Read aloud Chapters One and Two. Give the children time and space to reflect on what they have heard and discuss:
  - What do you think is happening in these pages?
  - What do you learn about Edda/Audrey?
  - Do any of her experiences resonate with your own? Children may have the same experience of feeling out of their depth and regretting taking on something that is difficult or daunting. Encourage them to relate the events of the story to their own experience as they explore how Edda feels.
  - What impression do you gain of the characters, setting and situation described?
  - What do you think about and feel as you hear the text read? What makes you feel this way?

- Provide a copy of the text from page 7, ***A soldier stopped...*** to page 13, ***... resistance was complete.*** Invite children to **text-mark and annotate**, identifying words and phrases that especially capture the drama and tension of being searched, the mockery of those being transported:
  - How does the identity and bag check make you feel?
  - What impact might this event have on Edda and the story?
  - What do you think Edda should do?
  - Is it too risky to undertake any more missions for Dr 't Hooft?
  - Why do you think she decides to carry on and complete the mission?
- Come back to the final sentence of the chapter, ***Ella van Heemstra was Edda's mother:***
  - What impact does this have on you as a reader?
  - What do you think Ella might be thinking or feeling at this point?
  - What might this mean for the story moving forward?
- Before reading on, reflect on the events of the story so far and the character of Edda. Ask the children to complete a **Role on the Wall** for her: have a prepared template of a girl onto which the children can record their ideas. Ask the children to write words or phrases they would use to describe her feelings and personality as they have observed it so far, which can be written on the inside of the outline, and what the children know about her outward appearance or other information about her should be written on the outside of the outline.
- To promote a higher level of thinking, ask the children to consider what we know from her speech and the narration and what we have to infer from body language, gestures and actions. Support the children in making explicit links between the external and internal. For example, what does something Edda does tell us about her personality — such as using her ballet-trained memory to remember addresses — or how does her personality make that action seem most likely (i.e. for an action to be 'in character' or characteristic) — such as her anger at the German soldiers' mockery of the train 'passengers' driving her on to complete her mission.
- Encourage the children to continue to return to the **Role on the Wall** as you read the story, using a different colour each time to highlight the knowledge they gain about Edda each time they read more, and how they see her character developing through the story.
- Ask the children to reflect on Edda's discovery that her mother is on the list in *De Oranjebrant* of those **not to be trusted**. Clarify what is meant by a Nazi sympathiser or collaborator and why such people were reviled. Ask children to write a brief **note of advice** to Edda, with any guidance and encouragement they can offer, then to read each other's letters and reply by **writing in role** as Edda to the letter they have received.
- Finish the session by discussing how the story might develop:
  - Why do you think Edda's mother might be on the list of collaborators?
  - How might this affect Edda's life in the village, and any future missions she might undertake for Dr 't Hooft?
  - What do you think might happen next?



## SESSION 2: CHAPTER THREE (PAGE 16) TO CHAPTER SIX (PAGE 51)

- Read Chapters 3–6, then ask the children to summarise what they have read. This will allow them to discuss and reach consensus on what happens when Dr 't Hooft asks Edda to dance at the **dark evening**, her mother's refusal to allow her, standing sentry on the **secret mission** while Opa and Ian listen to the illegal *Radio Oranje* broadcasts at Jan Mantel's, Ian being seized to join the *Arbeitseinsatz* (forced labour) and the turn the story takes as a result.
- Invite them to reflect on what we have found out about Edda's personality and how she feels about the situation she finds herself in:
  - What are your feelings towards Edda?
  - How do you think the author wants us to feel about her?
  - What clues does the author give you to her feelings at becoming increasingly involved in the resistance, her participation in illegal and therefore dangerous activities, and the impact of the Nazi occupation on her family, most notably Uncle Otto and Aunt Miesje, Alex and Ian?
- Consider Edda's discussion with Dr 't Hooft about the newsletter mission and her love of dance. Discuss how this interaction helps to establish a picture of her character and the relationships she establishes with those around her, her excitement about dancing and helping the resistance.
- Re-read the end of Chapter Three and opening of Chapter Four (pages 22–26) to discuss how Edda's high hopes are dashed with one word from her mother:
  - Why do you think her mother forbids Edda to take part in the **dark evening**?
  - What insight does the conversation offer us into the dynamics of the family?
- As new characters — including Mum, Ian, Opa, Dr 't Hooft — are introduced, the children could organise their thinking about the characters Edda meets or interacts with by adding a quick **pen portrait** of each to the Reading Journal. A pen portrait is an informal description of a person or a group of people, a character sketch in words. A pen portrait may discuss 'hard' facts, such as age or gender, but it should also focus on 'softer' aspects, such as attitudes and appearance. It might be interesting to let the children choose the characters they think are worth noting, but to include key friends and allies. Information you could include in the pen portrait might be name, appearance, background, likes and dislikes, as well as any other ideas they have expressed and the writer's own inferences about them from what they have read.
- Ask the children to discuss their responses to the text so far. The group can begin to explore their responses to it with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls '**the four basic questions**'. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:

- Tell me... is there anything you like about this text?
- Is there anything that you particularly dislike?
- Is there anything that puzzles you?
- Are there any patterns... any connections that you notice...?

- As you read on through the story, the children will benefit from regular opportunities to return to these questions and share their personal responses to the key events and character developments as they occur.
- Revisit Chapter Five from page 38, *Ian and Edda sat...* to its end on page 42 and invite the children to consider how the author conveys the relationship between brother and sister, and Edda's fear of giving away her resistance work even to her family. Then provide the children with copies of Chapter Six. Read this aloud, with the children following, and then give them a chance to re-read. As they do this, ask them to mark up the text, **looking at the language** and structure of this part of the story and encouraging the children to highlight and annotate to describe what effect different aspects have on them as readers. This might include figurative language, direct speech, different types of sentence structure and punctuation.
- Then, ask the children to prepare their own **performance reading** of this section, thinking about how they might convey the drama and emotion in their reading.
- Consider Mum's reaction to the news of Ian being captured, with one son already in hiding:
  - Why do you think she changes her mind about Edda performing at the **dark evening**?
  - Why do you think she **whispers** her change of heart?
  - What might this tell us about her state of mind?
- End the session by considering how the plot has advanced since we first met Edda on her bicycle at the level crossing. Ask the children to reflect on how Edda is changing and to update the **Role on the Wall** with any insights they have into her character.



## SESSION 3: CHAPTER SEVEN (PAGE 52) TO CHAPTER ELEVEN (PAGE 90)

- Begin the session by asking the children to summarise what they have read so far, considering the different aspects of the story — Edda's increasingly active role in the resistance, the impact of war on her family, her long-term plans to make a career from her passion for dance — and revisiting their predictions for the next chapters.
- Read on through Chapters Seven to Eleven and allow time and space for the children to reflect on what they have read. This might include what else we have found out about Edda and her mother in this section of the story.
- Use **visualisation** to deepen the children's response to the *dark evening* and unpick what the author might have wanted to achieve in this section of the story, based on the effect it had on us as readers. Read aloud from page 52, *The chatter of anti-aircraft fire* to page 61, *She knew that*. Ask the children to visualise the scene in their mind's eye as you are reading aloud, closing their eyes and picturing the scene unfolding as if it were a scene in a film. Read the section aloud two or three times and then ask them to describe to a partner what they pictured and reflect on the similarities and differences in their interpretations. You could give the children simple art materials to depict their visualisation in a simple illustration.
- Following this, ask the children to share what they imagined and to identify key vocabulary or phrases which supported their understanding or interpretation. For example: *dark lanes* or *searchlights criss-crossing each other* or *large blacked-out house* or *close to a hundred people gathered in a large, dimly lit room, some sitting on chairs and sofas, some squatting on the floor and others still standing* or *heavy blanket covered the piano* or *little flashes of orange amongst the crowd*. You could support this with questions, if necessary:
  - Why did particular words and phrases stick out to them?
  - What made them so vivid or memorable?
  - What impression does the author create through these descriptions?
  - How do these descriptions make you feel?
  - What would you be thinking if you were an onlooker?
- Encourage them to discuss how Edda feels to be dancing again, and what her performance might mean to Mum, and to Alex, whom she has not seen for so long:
  - How does each of them react to what she has done to help the resistance?
  - What do you learn about the character of Anje and her dog Roos? Why are they important to the story?
  - What might this friendship tell us about Edda?
  - How do you think it might feel for your performance to be met with silence, or with one audience member sobbing?
  - What more do you learn about Dr 't Hooft and his position in the community? What in the text tells you about how he is regarded by the villagers?

- Invite the children to consider Edda's conversation with her mother about the time she met Hitler, and an initial but long-gone attraction to what he seemed to promise. Encourage them to focus on what Mum says about Edda needing to be careful to avoid being seen running errands for Dr 't Hooft: *What do you think are the dangers Mum fears of being seen to support the resistance?* Ask the children to speculate on how these dangers might be reversed if the Allies are successful: *what do you think might happen to suspected collaborators and sympathisers if the Nazis are defeated?* You might like to share with the children that after the liberation of the Netherlands there was considerable confusion over who had in fact collaborated, and who had only appeared to collaborate in order to undermine the Nazis.
- After reading Chapter Nine, ask the children to summarise the change in mood that news of the Allied invasion in Normandy brings. Encourage them to identify changes that Edda notices in people's mood, and indicators that the dynamic of the war might be changing. Invite them also to unpick the different emotions she experiences when she sees paratroopers being dropped, then when Opa and Alex set off with others to investigate and she is told to stay home, updating the **Role on the Wall**.
- Read and discuss Chapters Ten and Eleven, focusing on the impact on Edda and her family of the uncertainty after the Allied troops have parachuted in:
  - Why do you think they move to the cellar?
  - How do you think the prospect of war in Velp makes Edda feel?
- Children may draw parallels between Edda's experience and scenes they may have seen on television of the impact of war on civilian life – for example, most recently in Ukraine. Sensitivity should be shown to children who may be affected by the plight of those caught in the crossfire or deliberately targeted by an invading or occupying force.
- Discuss how the tension is sustained from Chapter Nine to the end of Chapter Eleven in the incidents the author depicts. Invite them to re-read passages aloud that they find especially powerful, identifying the features of the writing that convey the sense of rising drama. They might notice the use of punctuation for effect; the careful selection of vocabulary, including powerful verbs to capture the action or as Edda and her family grow ever thinner and weaker, asking how they affect the reader's experience.



## SESSION 4: CHAPTER TWELVE (PAGE 91) TO CHAPTER SIXTEEN (PAGE 132)

- Begin by asking the children to summarise the story to this point, arriving at a shared understanding of the way the plot has developed, the various things that Edda is experiencing and might have on her mind. Invite them to consider predictions for how the story might continue and resolve; what they think might happen next, and why. Invite them to consider how their predictions are constrained to some extent by the fact they know the ‘big picture’ of the end of the war – that the Nazis retreated, then surrendered and the Netherlands were liberated. *Does knowing the historical background help you to speculate about how Edda and her family might be affected?*
- Discuss with the children whether retreating to the cellar was a turn in events that they expected when they heard the airborne invasion had begun:
  - Do you think this is what the people of Velp also expected?
  - How do you think Edda feels to see the Allied soldiers taken prisoners of war and marched past the house?

Ask them to consider why the displacement of civilians on page 97, *like the whole population of Arnhem was descending on Velp* was *the most miserable sight Edda had seen in her life*. They might draw on events they have seen on the news and in the press to consider whether it is worse when war affects civilians rather than soldiers, and if so why.

- Invite the children to consider what discovering Anje, Roos and her family among the displaced, and Edda setting up a dance school for the children, adds to the story:
  - What do we learn from Anje’s account of the bombing in Arnhem?
  - What more do we learn about Edda from the way she deals with the German soldiers who disrupt her dance class in their hunt for the British paratrooper the family is hiding?
- Encourage them to consider the effects of war on normal life, clarifying the impact of rationing and the lack of food, especially at the start of Chapter Fifteen:
  - How does the author convey the impact on Edda and her family of the lack of food?
  - Which words or phrases capture their struggle most effectively?
- Re-read Chapter Sixteen, in which Edda helps the downed American airman that Dr ’t Hooft had mentioned in the previous chapter, and allow time and space for the children to summarise what has happened:
  - How do these events affect Edda? What more do we learn about her?
  - What does this section of the story make us think about how it might continue?
  - How do you think Edda feels to undertake this secret mission? Do you think she has changed from the *naive, stupid girl* (page 6) who almost gave up delivering *De Oranjebrant*? What do you think has changed about her, and how?
  - What do you think are the factors that have compelled her to take on ever more dangerous missions?
- End the session by asking the children to write Edda another brief **note of advice**, which could include summarising what she has so far achieved, why her actions matter and why you think she needs to carry on defying the Nazis.

## SESSION 5: CHAPTER SEVENTEEN (PAGE 133) TO TWENTY-TWO (PAGE 183)

- Begin the session by reading aloud the first three paragraphs of Chapter Seventeen, up to ***The Dutch were dying every day of disease and hunger*** (page 134). Ask the children to summarise the events of the story that have brought Edda and her family (and the Dutch nation) to this point, hiding in cellars, too weak and starving ***to do anything more than walk into Velp to collect their meagre rations***. Explain that this account is based on real events, the *Hongerwinter* (hunger winter) or Dutch famine of 1944, in which severe malnutrition was common and 18,000 people starved to death. Read on through the rest of the chapter, as Alex and Edda go out to dig up bulbs in the garden of collaborators:
  - What does Edda — and we through her — learn about the progress of the war?
  - What do we learn about the ***madness of war*** (page 144) from the incident where the British Spitfire attacks the German troop truck, leaving both occupiers and occupied laughing hysterically?
- Read Chapter Eighteen, reflecting on how close Edda became to being captured. This includes the section: ***Why did the Germans want girls now? To work in factories too? Or worse? She had heard stories. The Germans were capable of anything. They disgusted her.*** You will need to use sensitivity and judgement if the children raise questions as to why the Germans might be rounding up women, and what they might have in mind for them, as women were often subject to exploitation and abuse after capture.
  - What do you think gave her the courage to resist capture and run?
  - What might this tell us about her?
  - How do you think her experiences have developed her character?
- Reflect also on her mother's reaction:
  - Do you think she is right to confine Edda to the cellar until the liberation?
  - Why do you think she is driven to such an extreme response?
- Follow on to Chapter 19 and reflect on the situation of the family:
  - What does the author do to highlight the extreme conditions the family are forced to survive in?
  - What does this make us think or feel about the characters?
  - How does Edda find the strength to carry on, even in the worst times?
  - What does this show us about her character?
- Reflect on the decision to end the chapter with the short sentence: ***And then they ate.***
  - What do you think or feel as you read this?
  - Why do you think the author has chosen to keep this final sentence so simple?
  - What effect does it have on you as a reader?
  - What do you imagine in your mind's eye as you reflect on this sentence?



- Read the final three chapters, considering the joy of liberation undermined by Mum being taken into custody; her rescue by Dr 't Hooft; Ian's return. Allow the children time and space to summarise and reflect on what they have read, how the resolution of the story has affected them, and how they feel about the book as a whole.
  - How does the resolution of the story make you feel? How does the author draw everything together in one place? Does it remind you of other stories you know in books or films? Is this the kind of story ending you enjoy?
  - Is the ending satisfying for you as a reader? Why, or why not? Do you feel this is the right outcome for Edda; for Alex and Ian; for Mum, Opa and Dr 't Hooft? Would you change anything?
  - How do you think the author wants us to feel about Edda and what she might go on to do? How do you think each of the characters feels at the end? How do you know?
- Revisit Aidan Chambers' '**four basic questions**', giving the children the opportunity to reflect.
 

- What did you like and/or dislike about the story?
  - What puzzles did it contain?
  - What links do you see to other stories you already know?
- **Resist** is an example of historical fiction, and the author is a passionate historian and assiduous researcher who has based other novels in World War II and other historical periods:
  - What do you understand by the term historical fiction?
  - Can you think of other examples you may have read?
  - What do you think is special about historical fiction?
  - Why might it be enjoyable to write and to read?
  - What do you think an author might have to do as they write a book like this?
- The publisher has claimed that Tom Palmer 'brings history to life':
  - What do you understand by this phrase?
  - Do you think it is true for Edda's story?
  - Did he bring history to life for you? How?
- Revisit the subtitle **One Girl's Fight Back Against the Nazis**:
  - Do you think this is an accurate description?
  - Does it capture what the book meant for you?
  - Who do you think would enjoy this book?
  - What would you say to them about it?
  - How could you make an enticing recommendation without giving away too much of the plotline?

## AFTER READING, YOU COULD ALSO:

- Consider the different characters, the plot and the different settings. Which character, aspect of the story, incident or episode interested the group the most? Did any of the characters remind you of characters in other books?
- Children might like to repeat the visualisation activity they did for the **dark evening** with different settings – e.g. war-damaged Arnhem (page 141), the dance lesson in Opa's bedroom (page 108), the cellar (page 84) ... *How does the author use the different settings? How important do you think they are to the story?*
- Review the story in chronological order and consider the different emotions that Edda has felt throughout the story, the high and low points, using the **Role on the Wall** to support discussion of her emotional journey. They could also create a story map to support their recall of the story.
- You could use **hot-seating** to explore the feelings of any of the characters further; in hot-seating one member of the group role-plays a central character from a poem or story and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character's motivation and responses. The children could work collaboratively to choose words that describe a character's emotions at different points of the story. Write these on Post-it notes and then organise them to demonstrate shades of emotional intensity that they have felt in the story. You could also explore the emotional journey of other characters such as Dr 't Hooft, Ian or Alex, Mum.
- Ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, for example: *the most memorable part of the story was... because...; my top moment in the story was... because...* and in pairs ask them to identify their favourite part of the narrative. Encourage children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these, modelling with your own thoughts and opinions if necessary.
- Children could find out more about Tom Palmer and his writing of **Resist** at his website <https://tompalmer.co.uk/resist/> where he talks about taking inspiration from the early life of Audrey Hepburn, and could research her life after the Battle of Arnhem and Operation Market Garden.
- If possible, leave copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

### By Tom Palmer:

Tom Palmer has written fifty-five books for children, but his war novels might be especially appealing:

- *Over the Line* (Barrington Stoke, 2020)
- *Armistice Runner* (Barrington Stoke, 2018)
- *D-Day Dog* (Barrington Stoke, 2019)
- *After the War* (Barrington Stoke, 2020)
- *Arctic Star* (Barrington Stoke, 2021)

### Stories with similar themes:

- *Skyward: The Story of Female Pilots in WWII*, Sally Deng (Flying Eye Books, 2018)
- *When the Sky Falls*, Phil Earle (Andersen Press, 2021)
- *While the Storm Rages*, Phil Earle (Andersen Press, 2022)
- *War Boy: A Wartime Childhood*, Michael Foreman (Pavilion, 2006)
- *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank (Penguin, 2012)
- *Once* and its sequels *Now/Then/After*, Morris Gleitzman (Puffin, 2006)
- *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Shirley Hughes (Red Fox, 2000)
- *Billie Swift Takes Flight*, Iszi Lawrence (Bloomsbury, 2021)
- *Rose Blanche*, Ian McEwan, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti (Red Fox, 2004)
- *Goodnight Mister Tom*, Michelle Magorian (Puffin, 2014)
- *Now or Never: A Dunkirk Story*, Bali Rai (Scholastic, 2019)
- *The Missing: The True Story of My Family in World War II*, Michael Rosen (Walker, 2021)
- *My Secret War Diary*, by Flossie Albright, Marcia Williams (Walker, 2015)
- *Audrey Hepburn: Little People, Big Dreams*, Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara, illustrated by Amaia Arrazola (Lincoln Children's Books, 2017)

CLPE has also curated a [World War II booklist](#) with further suggestions for titles of interest.

Contact Barrington Stoke to order Tom Palmer posters and bookmarks for your classroom (while stocks last).

Email: [info@barringtonstoke.co.uk](mailto:info@barringtonstoke.co.uk) | Tel: 0131 225 4113 | Visit: [www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/tom-palmer](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/tom-palmer)