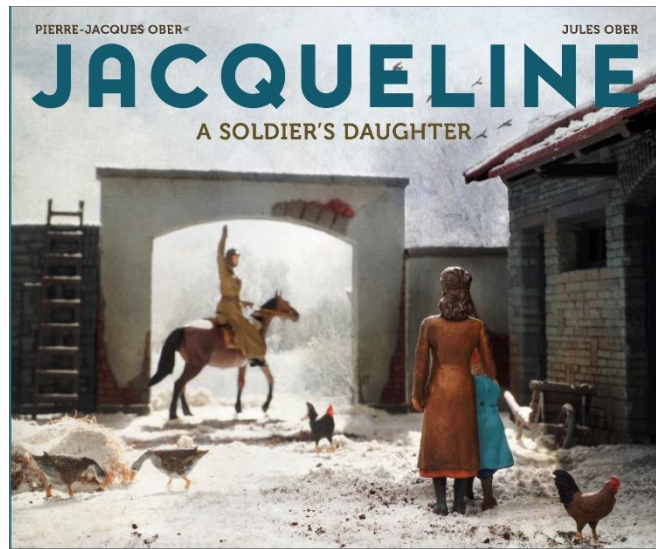


**Teacher's Notes**  
***Jacqueline: a soldier's daughter***

By Pierre-Jacques Ober and Jules Ober  
 Published by Ford Street Publishing, 2021



**ABOUT THE STORY**

*Jacqueline: a soldier's daughter* is based on the author's mother's childhood memoirs, telling of her experiences during the second world war as the daughter of a soldier. Spanning the duration of the war, it shares the fear, loneliness and uncertainty which follow young Jacqueline as she is moved through countries by her experiences with the war and her father's responsibilities.

The story is told not only through words but also through photographs of miniature figurines, positioned artfully to share the emotion while also bringing the perspective of something very small being controlled from above, much like Jacqueline is.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR**

French/Australian Pierre-Jacques Ober comes from a 30-year international career as an independent producer and director in film and television.

Educated at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Jules Ober has brought her musical sensitivity into the visual world as an image-maker working between Australia & Europe across platforms as diverse as fine art printmaking, photography, film & multimedia production.

Pierre-Jacques and Jules Ober have turned their creative energy to books, using a unique method of story-telling that uses photographs of figurines in miniature sets to create 'paper movies'.

Their first book, *The Good Son*, has been hailed as 'having the power of a timeless fable' by *The New York Times* and has won prestigious prizes and awards in the US and France. In Australia it has been shortlisted for the CBCA Picture Book of the Year and is the winner of the NSW Premier's Young People's History Prize.

## ACTIVITIES

The following learning tasks have been categorised by the focus for learning. Before reading the book with students, decide on the learning focus to determine which angle to take for their learning. The learning tasks are recommended for students working from Year 5 to Year 8 level in the Australian Curriculum. Curriculum links are noted below.

### Synthesising

**Learning Intention:** *We are learning to explain our changes in thinking as we read.*

Explain to students that synthesising is where we make connections with our prior knowledge and think about how new information changes our thinking. Ask students to make notes as the book is read, noticing things they find surprising, is new information, or challenges their thinking.

Model these skills on Page six, “In the beginning, we didn’t take it too seriously.” Notice if you personally find this surprising, new or challenging. Potentially make connections to the gas masks and the start of the war and some people’s reactions to COVID-19.

Pause again on Page 16 for students to reflect on the German soldier helping to change the tyre. Is this surprising, new or challenging?

At Page 53, where the family is reunited, pause again to reflect. Does Jacqueline’s experience so far fit what you knew before about children’s experience of World War II? What is surprising, new or challenging? What would you like to know more about?

At Page 80, when Jacqueline starts to have nightmares, ask students to reflect again on what is surprising, new or challenging. Do you think Jacqueline’s experience was pretty normal for the time and place, or unusual? Why do you think this?

Finally pause at Page 95, where Jacqueline and Hildegard become best friends. What has been surprising, new or challenging in their experience? What do you think has happened to Hildegard? How do you think her experience has been the same as or different from Jacqueline’s?

Reflection: Do you think this is a biography or biographical fiction? What evidence do you have? What makes you doubt if it is fact or fiction?

### Exploring Viewpoints in Text

**Learning Intention:** *We are learning to notice characters’ viewpoints and give evidence to support our thoughts.*

Explain that your viewpoint is your perspective, how you see the world differently because of your experiences. Give examples from the class to support this understanding. Explain that today we are noticing viewpoints in the text and the evidence we have which supports this.

Read the book, explicitly modelling the viewpoint of Jacqueline and the evidence which supports your opinion. Eg. She was afraid of German soldiers because they killed her dog, but German soldiers helped her, which caused her conflict.

Ask students to independently or in pairs notice the viewpoints of minor characters, such as:

- Jacqueline’s mum or dad
- The old couple Jacqueline’s family stayed with in 1939
- Any of the German soldiers
- The local patriots who helped Maman to free Papa from the German prison
- The gamekeeper who guided them across the border

- Khalil
- Hildegard

Viewpoints can be deduced through character's actions, their words, or their prior experiences. Students may have to infer characters' prior experiences.

Reflect as a class on how each character's history impacted the way they behave, and why it helps us to understand them better when we think about this.

## **Analysing Images**

**Learning Intention:** *We are learning to use images to add to our understanding of a text.*

### **ABOUT THE USE OF FIGURINES**

#### ***From Pierre-Jacques Ober and Jules Ober***

The use of miniatures creates the perfect environment for learning and experiencing. *Jacqueline* is about being small in a large world. It is about a vast, ghastly piece of history, and the feeling of being subject to forces beyond your control. Its original style taps into one of the fundamental insights of childhood, especially related to conflict and complexity: when we play with figures, dolls, models, and small things, we participate in them, as the mover and creator and combiner. To play in miniature is to experience things with knowledge and security, even when those things are difficult. The originality of Pierre-Jacques and Jules books creates the perfect environment for learning, difficult things, for rehearsing, yes, but also for the formation of a historical and moral consciousness.

Philosophers tell us that nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison. A tiny-scaled world can give us new perspectives and, in unexpected ways, let us see the world in a whole new light. Something too big to visualise at full scale, a building, a crowd or a war, may be rendered comprehensible in miniature because it encourages greater scrutiny and deeper participation. The unique illustration technique developed by Pierre-Jacques and Jules Ober introduces a 'third dimension' that traditional illustration cannot usually achieve. The viewer does not know if they have to shrink in order to immerse themselves in the picture or if they will have to grow into the picture in order to feel the immensity of the emotions at stake.

In the age of screens and drone shots the purpose of the book is to entice children to pay attention, discover and enjoy the world at their feet. We cannot know what it feels like to be a tiny creature or plant, a *Borrower*, *Stuart Little*, or *Gulliver* but we understand their predicament intuitively, because it mirrors our own responses to our environment. In the case of children, the "big", adult world around them, in the case of this book, nature at large. This is a book about looking, and about seeing. And with this comes elucidation.

Given this statement from the authors, ask students to compare how they have played with their toys and how war unfolds with some in power and some without. How are Jacqueline and her family like toys which are being moved by a bigger power? How are they different?

Have students look at individual pictures and think about how the pictures and figurines show thought, action and emotion. How does the medium of figurines add to the message of the book? Examples of this include:

- On page 9, where frozen crows fall from the sky to illustrate how desperately cold it was. Also, the lack of colour on this page shows the lack of optimism and vitality, and the slight colour on the house shows the small amount of hope within.

- On pages 19 and 20, the comparison to page 9 with the same location showing growth, light and warmth because of the security, hope and happiness they were experiencing.

Reflection: How is your understanding of the message of the book impacted by the images?

## **Engaging the Audience**

**Learning Intention:** *We are learning to identify how the author engages the audience.*

Talk to students about how authors and illustrators think carefully about their audience and what can be done to ensure that the audience is engaged in the books, that is, that they either enjoy it or are interested and invested enough to continue reading and thinking about the message.

An example of this is the author deciding to tell the story from Jacqueline’s perspective instead of from her mother or father’s. This makes the story more engaging and relatable for younger people.

Read the book and look for examples of where the authors and illustrators have deliberately engaged the audience. Places which may be noticed include:

- On page 7, where the children are wearing gas masks and laughing because they looked like pigs as an example of using humour to engage the audience.
- On page 15, where the dog is introduced because it is relatable and gives the audience something familiar to relate to.
- On page 31, where the dog dies it is both relatable for anyone who has experienced the loss of a pet, and also demonstrates that war has innocent victims.
- On page 38, where the German soldier bars their way and says, “You must not leave...” which gives us a brief moment of suspense until the next page where he finishes “until you have had breakfast”. This adds suspense, and the use of the words ‘barred their way’ indicates that they are being held against their will.

Have the students independently or in pairs find other examples of where the authors have used words which convey emotions, either to add suspense, humour, relatability, or another feeling.

Reflection: Share examples students have found and discuss the purpose. Were they deliberate choices by the authors, or were they just coincidences?

## **Message of the Book**

**Learning Intention:** *We are learning to identify the themes and messages in the book.*

Explain to students that biographies and biographical fiction are structured like narratives in that they have an orientation, a series of events occur which are the complication, and then there is typically a resolution. In addition, there is generally a message about a lesson to learn, and theme to all of these genres. The theme might be love, family, redemption, good vs. evil, and so on. Each person’s life experiences will shape the way they interpret these themes and the message, so there are many possible ways to respond, and as long as the interpretation can be justified with evidence from the text it is valid.

Discuss in small groups the following questions:

- Does *Jacqueline* follow a narrative structure? What are the parts?
- What lesson might we learn from *Jacqueline*?
- What themes run throughout the book?
- What evidence do you have to support your ideas?

You might wish for students to write their responses down in essay form as a text response.

Reflection: Discuss as a class what messages and themes people found, including differences in opinion.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

There are many links to be made to the Australian Curriculum (AC) in the English Learning Area. The table below demonstrates some of the possible connections between the above learning activities and the curriculum from Years F-6, allowing for both extension and literacy support groups using the same text. Differentiation is achieved by level of detail and evidence which is required by the students, allowing all students to work within their zone of proximal development.

Learning Activity	Year Level	Australian Curriculum Links
Synthesising	Level 5	Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources ( <a href="#">ACELY1703 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 6	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts ( <a href="#">ACELY1713 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 7	Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources ( <a href="#">ACELY1723 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 8	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view ( <a href="#">ACELY1734 - Scootle</a> )
Exploring Viewpoints in Text	Level 5	Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts ( <a href="#">ACELT1608 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 6	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts ( <a href="#">ACELT1613 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 7	Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts ( <a href="#">ACELT1619 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 8	Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups ( <a href="#">ACELT1626 - Scootle</a> )
Analysing Images	Level 7	Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts ( <a href="#">ACELT1621 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 8	Understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups ( <a href="#">ACELT1628 - Scootle</a> )
Engaging the Audience	Level 5	Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences ( <a href="#">ACELT1795 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 6	Identify and explain how choices in language, for example modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, influence personal response to different texts ( <a href="#">ACELT1615 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 7	Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage ( <a href="#">ACELT1803 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 8	Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts ( <a href="#">ACELT1807 - Scootle</a> )
Message of the Book	Level 5	Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text ( <a href="#">ACELY1701 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 6	Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text ( <a href="#">ACELY1711 - Scootle</a> )

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	Level 7	Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose ( <a href="#">ACELY1721 - Scootle</a> )
	Level 8	Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text and the ways that referenced sources add authority to a text ( <a href="#">ACELY1732 - Scootle</a> )

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

### History Notes

Page 3: World War Two began in Europe on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. A nation to which Great Britain and France had guaranteed military support if it were attacked by Germany. Great Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany on September 3.

Page 5: During the First World War several countries, including Germany, France and Britain, had resorted to chemical warfare. This included firing shells at soldiers that contained chlorine, phosgene and mustard gas. French and British governments feared that the German would use aircrafts to drop chemical bombs on civilians. Therefore, gas masks were issued to all French and British civilians at the start of World War Two.

Page 6: Once the war was declared, the French government evacuated the population living close to the German border. It created a militarized zone to stop the expected invasion.

Page 12: Jacqueline's Papa was able to visit them because it was a period called the "Phoney War". A term coined by journalists to derisively describe the eight month period (October 1939-May 1940) during which no land operations were undertaken by the Allies or the Germans after the German conquest of Poland in September 1939.

Pages 18-29: On May 10, 1940, the Germans launched their offensive in Western Europe. Panic broke out in northern France and Belgium. People's memories of the brutal August 1914 occupation were still fresh and they didn't want to live through the same nightmare. Within days, nearly two million Belgians had gathered at the French border, alongside many Dutch and Luxembourgers. Many French people also fled their homes in the north and east of the country. By the time the Germans had reached the gates of Paris, in June, the exodus had reached an extraordinary scale. In all, 8-10 million refugees fled their homes to try to escape the Nazi invasion – almost a quarter of the French population at the time. It is estimated that more than 100,000 people were killed on the road during that exodus.

Page 30: A month later, following the defeat of the French army, an armistice agreement was signed on June 22, 1940 in order to put an end to hostilities. Northern and western France were placed under German occupation. The rest of France remained an unoccupied zone called "The Free Zone".

Page 39: Although no precise estimates exist, the number of French soldiers captured during the Battle of France between May and June 1940 is generally recognised around 1.8 million, equivalent to around 10 percent of the total adult male population of France at the time. After a brief period of captivity in France, the French POWs were deported, sent to camps in Germany where they were quickly set to work on farms, in industry, mines and on the railways, to replace German men away fighting.

Page 43: During the exodus of May 1940, 90,000 children were either separated from their parents or became orphans.

Pages 54-55: The French Demarcation line was the boundary line marking the division of Metropolitan France into the territory occupied and administered by the German Army (occupied Zone) in the northern and western part of France and the Free Zone in the south.

Pages 60-61: Jacqueline's father's situation was not simple. A prisoner, then a fugitive, he wanted to continue the fight against the occupier but, being a professional soldier, he owed obedience to the government. But this government, based in Vichy and directed by Marshal Pétain, had agreed to collaborate with the Germans. His only chance to be able one day to fight without breaking his oath



was therefore to join the French Army of Africa. It was still under the authority of the French government but much less in the grip of the Germans. He had to embark clandestinely in Marseille because the Germans and Italians of the armistice commission were monitoring all ports in order to prevent an exodus of French soldiers. Jacqueline and her parents arrived in Algiers in December 1940.

Pages 62-63: French Algeria was the period of French colonisation of Algeria. French rule in the region began in 1830 with the invasion of Algiers and lasted until the end of the Algerian War of Independence in 1962. Algiers is the capital and largest city of Algeria. It is located on the Mediterranean Sea. The modern part of the city is built on the level ground by the seashore; the old part climbs the steep hill behind the modern town and is crowned by the Kasbah or citadel, 400ft above the sea.

Pages 71-73: On November 8, 1942 Anglo-American forces landed in Morocco and Algeria during "Operation Torch". Algiers was bombed in order to submit the last French units loyal to the Vichy government but an armistice was quickly concluded and the French Army of Africa joined the Anglo-Saxon allies to resume the fight against the German at their sides.

Page 78: In June 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, and, in December 1941 the Japanese attacked the US base at Pearl Harbor. The United States declared war against Germany, Italy and Japan. The conflict had become a world war.

Page 84: In May 1943 the Allies armies forced the Italo-German armies out of North-Africa, in July 1943 they invaded Sicily. From November 1943 to July 1944 they invaded and liberated Italy and in August 1944 they landed in Provence in the south of France and pushed the Germans further and further north until France was totally liberated in March 1945.

Pages 86-87: In February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin decided the partition of Germany. The country would be divided into four zones of occupation, the French occupying the south of the country.

Pages 88-89: Jacqueline's father was assigned to Friedrichshafen on the shores of Lake Constance. A city 80% destroyed because of the proximity of the famous Dornier and Zeppelin factories which produced weapons and planes.

Page 90: Jacqueline's family was part of the very first French families to settle in the occupied zone. Nothing was organized - no school, no shops, housing was requisitioned and food provided by the military. The majority of military wives had preferred to stay near their families in France or Algeria where life was comfortable.

## **The Process**

Our creative process is similar to that used in producing and directing films.

- A first period of research, writing, budgeting and acquisition of materials.
- A second period of pre-production which consists of painting the figurines, building and painting the models, preparing or creating the decorative elements.
- A third period, that of the principal photography, during which the scenes are photographed after having been storyboarded in a cinematographic or documentary way and carefully put in place.
- A fourth period during which the images are retouched, laid out and finally calibrated. Phase during which the text also takes its final form. Sometimes it's just down to the word, but it's the final purification of this text from the desired images and emotions.

In reality and given the somewhat organic aspect of this work, periods 2, 3 and 4 overlap and intermingle as needed. Jules, the photographer, "works" on the images after each shot to ensure that visual continuity is respected.

The written story is therefore a plot to follow, an indication of the possible images and an intention of the text. As in author films, it is at the "editing" stage that the images and especially the text will take their final form. The end result will remain very close, but it will be a work of fine edit at the service of story and emotions.

The average time to complete a work from design to delivery can be estimated at 12/18 months. Full-time period for the model maker and 50% full-time, 50% part-time for the photographer.

Contrary to traditional storytelling methods, in which a story is first imagined and written, then brought to life with drawings or with actors, animation, or CGI, we make a story from pre-existing materials: models and miniatures available at hobby shops around the world. That way it felt as if the "little soldiers" themselves were telling us their stories. The story was drawn from them instead of them being used to suit the purpose of a pre-written story.

## **The Photography**

From a photography point of view, the main challenge is how to bring emotion to the very stiff and expressionless little plastic men- how to create an eerie reality that would take the viewer beyond their plastic edges to feel and share with them the terrible array of emotions they experience.

Credit for overcoming this challenge goes to the emotional power of the photography.

*Jules : " I use a short depth of field and selective focus in my images. This decision helps me to never feel overwhelmed by the set-ups. The reader's eye always knows where the focus of the image is. We always make sure that every image is a visual feast. We want the reader to linger on each photo to take it all in. Even though the photos are of toys, we have to feel we are stepping back in time. Each photo is infused with enough emotion to make it easy to forget that these are toy soldiers.*

*To only use natural light brings another layer of authenticity to the images. We work with natural light, we explore the notion of time passing by photographing our subjects at different times of the day. Allowing nature to have her hand in the scenes."*

The use of framing, depth of field, the decision to use only natural light at different times of day, and the very important step of making digital adjustments to colour and texture all helped us not only to capture an emotion with each image but also to create an overall feeling for the story.