

No Man's Land

11 From both sides of me I heard a gradual crescendo of
18 excitement and laughter rippling along the trenches,
26 interspersed with barked orders that everyone was to
38 keep their heads down and no one was to shoot. From my
49 vantage point on the mound I could see only an occasional
60 glimpse of a steel helmet, my only evidence that the voices
70 I was hearing did indeed belong to real people. There
80 was the sweet smell of cooking food wafting towards me
93 and I lifted my nose to savour it. It was sweeter than the
105 sweetest bran-mash I had ever tasted and it had a tinge of
108 salt about it.



Extract from Chapter 16 of 'War Horse'
by Michael Morpurgo and told from the
viewpoint of a horse called Joey.

Quick Questions

- **1.** Find and copy one phrase from the text that shows that the noises from the trenches got slowly louder.

- **2.** How does Joey (the narrator) know that the noises he can hear are coming from people?

- **3.** Why do you think this extract is titled 'No Man's Land'?

- **4.** Describe what the mood was like in the nearby trenches at this point in the story. Explain your answer.



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Answers

- 1. Find and copy one phrase from the text that shows that the noises from the trenches got slowly louder.

(gradual) crescendo

- 2. How does Joey (the narrator) know that the noises he can hear are coming from people?

Joey saw occasional glimpses of steel helmets coming from the trenches which was his only evidence that the voices were coming from real people.

- 3. Why do you think this extract is titled 'No Man's Land'?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it is because No Man's Land is the strip of land between the two opposing sides on the battlefield and where Joey is at this point in the story.

- 4. Describe what the mood was like in the nearby trenches at this point in the story. Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The mood would have been one of excitement and confusion since the soldiers would be wondering why a horse was in the centre of No Man's Land.

