

Katipo Joe: Wolf's Lair

By Brian Falkner

• Reading • Writing • History • Thinking Skills

Synopsis

Katipo Joe: Wolf's Lair is the harrowing and thrilling story of Joseph St George (codename: Katipo) in Germany during World War II.

On the eve of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Adolf Hitler is preparing to move from Bavaria to the 'Wolf's Lair', his top-secret headquarters in East Prussia. Little does he know that among his entourage is a British spy, teenager Joseph 'Katipo' St George, playing the part of a keen Hitler Youth who has been chosen as Hitler's successor.

Already under suspicion by German counterintelligence, Joe has been given a risky new task by his handlers at MI5: the assassination of Hitler before he can lead Germany to victory over Russia.

The attack is to take place on the Führersonderzug, Hitler's Special Train, en route to the Wolf's Lair. But a perilous night-time crawl on the outside and roof of the train, in an attempt to poison Hitler's water supply, ends in failure, as does an air raid the following day.

With Hitler safely ensconced at his new headquarters, the invasion begins, and Joe sits horrified in the daily briefings as German troops blitz their way into Russia. Aided by Sofie, a German girl disillusioned with the Nazi regime, he embarks on an even more audacious assassination plot, a plan that is complicated when he discovers that his father – arrested three years earlier on Kristallnacht – is among the prisoners working as forced labourers at the complex.

With German counterintelligence closing in, Joe and Sofie must now try to help Joe's father escape, while continuing their plans for a powerful bomb right in the heart of the Wolf's Lair.

Set amidst real events and real-life characters in real-world locations, Joe's adventures will bring the brutal realities of the Second World War to life for young readers. The assassination plans are based on actual MI5 plans to kill Hitler as part of Operation Foxley.

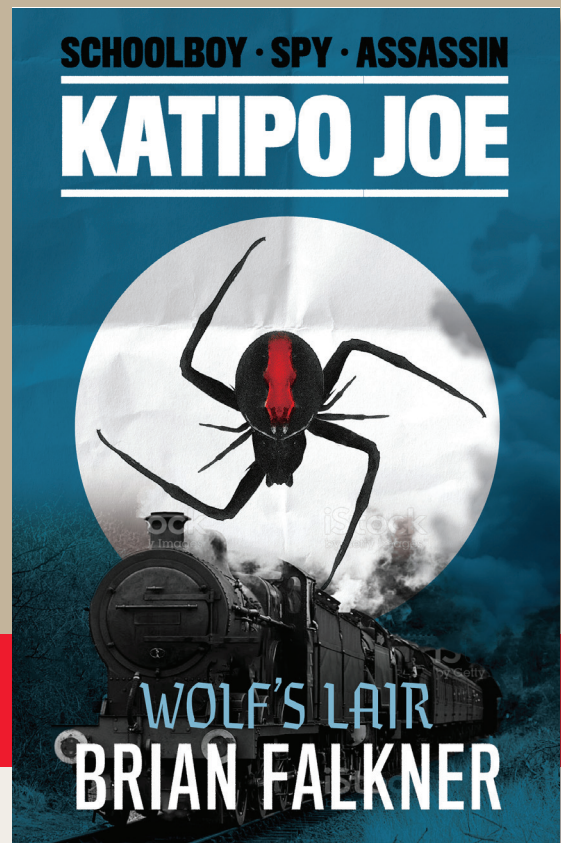
Includes themes of betrayal, courage, tragedy, difficult choices, survival, sacrifice and war.

About the Author

Brian Falkner began college intending to follow computer studies, but along the way he decided to shift his focus to something more creative. After gaining a diploma of journalism, he worked as a reporter and advertising copywriter. Other jobs helped pay the bills and also expand the first-hand experiences that would enrich his fiction, among them stints as a motorcycle courier, radio announcer, graphic designer, and an Internet developer.

Brian's previous books with Scholastic NZ have been the widely acclaimed *Shooting Stars*, and his World War One novel, *1917 Machines of War*, part of the *Kiwis at War* series. *Katipo Joe: Blitzkrieg*, and *Spycraft*, are the first two books in the Katipo Joe series.

Brian currently lives on Australia's Gold Coast.



Writing Style

An exciting, page-turning novel set in World War II Germany, *Katipo Joe: Wolf's Lair* is the third novel in the Katipo Joe Trilogy. The text is easy to read and, despite being the third book in a trilogy, also works as a stand-alone novel. Told from the perspective of Kiwi teenager Joe who is working as a British spy under the assumed identity of Jürgen Weyl, a member of Hitler Youth who has competed to become one of Hitler's golden circle and future successor, the storyline is compelling and thought provoking.

Through meticulous research and sensitive handling, award-winning author Brian Falkner has given believable voices to historical figures, including Hitler, Göring, Goebbels, Himmler, and Eva Braun. He has also used real historical settings and events, such as Hitler's Eastern Front military headquarters known as Wolfsschanze – Wolf's Lair – and actual British and German assassination plots to kill Hitler. Excerpts from the memoirs of the fictional Joseph (Katipo) St George, maps, and photographs of real people, places, and objects at the back of the book add authenticity and strength to the novel.

Themes of truth versus reality, power, perspective, trust, the atrocities of war, the strength of the human spirit, honour, and individual sacrifice for the greater good are played out in this tense adventure set in the inner sanctum of Nazi Germany. Through the dual identity of Joe/Jürgen, the reader gains insight into what it is like to think and live as a spy in a violent and dangerous world and employ self-control to play the long game to victory. A compelling read for 13–18 year olds who may never have been interested in World War II before, but will be after finishing this book.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

The novel includes front matter of an author's note and prologue and is then divided into three sections: Book 1 (pp.23–155), Book 2 (pp.157–338), Book 3 (pp.341–414), plus excerpts from fictional memoirs and quotes, followed by back matter of an epilogue, glossary, and historical photographs. During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions and inferences and relate these to their own experiences or prior knowledge. Read the passages aloud with students reading along in their own copy, or reading by themselves.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb.

- When and where is this story set? How can you tell?
- Who is the main character in the story? Who are the supporting characters?
- What do you think this story might be about? Why do you think that?
- What do you already know about World War II and Nazi Germany?
- What do you already know about spies?

Comprehension questions for Front Matter (pp.8–19)

- What does the author's note tell you about how he felt about creating fictionalised dialogue for Hitler? Why did he feel trepidation, or anxiety, about giving Hitler a voice?
- What is the purpose of the prologue? The carpenter wonders if his son will see him as a hero or a murderer. How do you view the carpenter?

Comprehension questions for Book 1 (pp.23–155)

- What secret do you think Joe is hiding? (p.24)
- How has the author used sounds to create tension? (Chapter 1)
- Why will Himmler take 'great delight' in sending the photo of Joe/Jürgen and Hitler to Jürgen's parents? (p.32)
- Why does Joe think that it would be 'terrifying' to be in love and value someone else's life 'above your own'? (p.34)
- What is propaganda and what place does it play in a war? (p.35)
- What important truth do we learn about Sofie? How do you think she came to be paired up with Joe? (p.36)
- What do you think Joe's mission is? Why do you think this? (p.38)
- Predict the importance of Hitler's dog having once belonged to Joe. How do you think this might play out in the story? (p.43)
- How does Mathias describe Joe? (p.45)
- What secret of Hannelore's do you think Joe betrayed and why? (p.53)
- Who is the Führer and what is a concentration camp? (p.56)
- Although Heike is described as 'hard-edged, sharp-tongued, tough-as-nails' there is another side to her personality. What is it? (p.59)
- Why do the teenagers think that the British have no 'honour' or 'intelligence'? (p.63)
- How does Joe justify the thought of committing murder? (p.69)



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- Is murder ever justifiable? Why/why not?
- Why is Eva so confident that none of the teenagers are ‘assassins’? (p.71)
- Why is Göring a threat to Joe? (p.75)
- Why does Hitler like Joe? (pp.77, 79–80)
- Why does Bormann want Joe to go through him to get to Hitler? Why does Joe not trust him? (p.84)
- What is meant by the phrase ‘made a deal with the devil to get a demon off his back’? (p.90)
- How does Joe use critical thinking in his answers to Hitler, Bormann, Göring, and Goebbels? (Chapters 4–6)
- How does Hitler’s version of historic events differ from that of Britain and its allies? (p.96) Do ‘facts’ really have ‘versions’? How does the author’s use of a speech from Hitler and quotes from Goebbels add authenticity to the text? (pp.96–97)
- Joe risks his life in an act of ‘madness’ to climb onto the roof of a moving train. What motivates him? Would you have done what Joe did? Why/why not? (Chapter 6)
- How does Sofie show emotional intelligence? (Chapter 8)
- The author uses foreshadowing on p.136 when Sofie says, ‘Maybe they won’t use it in the final film’ and Joe replies, ‘Not much chance of that.’ Predict what might happen to prevent Joe from being shown in the propaganda film.
- How are the two trains pulled up side-by-side an example of juxtaposition? What effect does this have? (pp.143–144)
- Neither Joe and Sofie or the Jews on the cattle train were in control of whether or not they got onto their trains or what will happen to them next. True or false?
- Compare and contrast the reactions of Heike and Sofie to the cattle train carrying Jewish women and children. (pp.143–145) How are their reactions similar? How are they different? When Sofie says, ‘That’s inhumane’ is she talking about the treatment of the Jews or the closing of the blinds so that she can’t see the truth, or both? How is this moment a turning point for Sofie?
- Why is Heike unresponsive when praised by Hitler? (p.147)
- What is the meaning of ‘Providence’? How is Hitler’s statement ironic? (p.154)
- How is Sofie an asset to Joe? How has their relationship changed? (p.155)

Comprehension questions for Book 2 (pp.157–338)

- What is the purpose of Chapter 11? Who do you think the prisoner is? Who do you think Elser is?
- In Joe’s world, personal happiness is often in conflict with the wider picture, causing a moral dilemma. Compare the first paragraph on p.164 to the quote from Kurt Tucholsky at the beginning of Book 1. Would you have made the same choice on the train as Joe? Why/why not?
- How does the description of the forest around the Wolf’s Lair set the scene for the moral landscape of Hitler’s headquarters? (pp.165–166)
- Joe believes that Roth is being kind to Felka, but is there a more sinister explanation for his visit and the food he brings? What does the wink and the closed door and blinds indicate? (pp.184–185)
- What is the purpose of the propaganda film Heike and Thomas star in? How do you think they feel about being in this film? Do their opinions change throughout the book or remain the same?
- What is a ‘shotgun wedding’ and why is it an apt description of Russia being taken over by Germany? Why does Goebbels change the terminology used to discuss the attack on Russia? What effect does this have? (p.199)
- What do you think Joe’s description of what he would do if he were Stalin is based on? Why is Hitler so confident that he will be successful? (pp.200–201)
- Why does Joe not trust Bormann? (Chapter 15) Is there anyone he can trust? Why/why not?
- What does Mathias mean when he says of Roth, ‘Men like that can also be useful if you know how to use them’? (p.214)
- Why doesn’t Joe tell Sofie the truth about Becker? (p.218)
- Has Sofie been corrupted or enlightened? Explain your answer with reference to the text. (p.219)
- Why is Felka not pleased when Joe offers her food? Why does she offer it back to him? (p.223–225)
- The Nazis were famously well organised. Is it strange that the storeroom is empty and unused? What could this mean? (p.228)
- Who do you think the mystery prisoner is? (p.229)
- Is Joe correct in thinking that the Nazi uniform ‘Turns them from men into barbarians’? (p.233) What is the purpose of a uniform? How do Hitler and his inner circle use uniforms?
- Is Sofie right to be angry with Joe? Why/why not? (pp.233–234)
- What does the doe and her fawn symbolise? (p.236)
- Joe is a killer who understands what it is to commit murder, yet he thinks that he may not be old enough to understand his love for Sofie. Is love harder to understand than death in wartime or is Joe correct in thinking that he is not emotionally equipped to deal with it? (p.254)
- Joe takes risks to protect Felka. Why does he do this?
- Why is it necessary for Joe to prove to his father that he is not a Nazi? (pp.299–300)
- What are Joe’s greatest risks of being discovered as a spy?
- Sofie says of Joe, ‘. . . because as long as there are people like you in the world, then there is hope.’ (p.307) How important do you think hope is during wartime?



- Why does Felka not want to see a doctor and have her pregnancy discovered? (p.313)
- Throughout Chapter 27, the reader is shown Joe's caring nature, but at the end of the chapter Joe declares that he is 'already a monster'. What is the author trying to convey?
- Roth is consistently suspicious of Joe, and Bormann accuses Roth of seeing Mephistopheles, or a devil, 'in every shadow'. (p.324) Why does Roth dislike Joe? Is Joe a 'devil' to the

Nazis and an 'angel' to the Allies, or is this statement too simplistic?

- On p.308, Sofie says that they can't save Felka, but on p.332, after having met Felka, she says, 'You know we can't leave her'. What does Felka symbolise to Joe and Sofie and why are they so keen to save her? Compare what Felka means to them with what she means to Hitler (p.337).

Comprehension questions for Book 3 (pp.341–414)

- Was it wise to outline their plans in a letter to Felka? (p.343) Can you think of a less risky way Joe and Sofie could have communicated the information?
- On p.346, Heike discovers Joe building the bomb. Predict what you think Heike will do. What will happen next? Then read on to the end of the chapter. Does it match your prediction?
- Why does the author have Sofie use past tense when she says 'She loved—'? (p.351) What effect does this have?
- How do you think Joe feels when he sees that Becker/Mathias has been arrested? (p.352) How does this change things for Joe?
- Sofie and Heike think that the Nazis see women as only good for typing and having babies, yet they are two of the most clever, capable, and brave characters in the novel. If the Nazis had valued them more highly, could things have turned out differently? Why/why not?
- What is the significance of Sofie's dream? (pp.354–355)
- Only two sets of papers have been requested for the escape of Joe's dad and Elser. How can Joe escape as well? How do you think Sofie feels about him leaving her behind? (pp.356–357)
- Chapter 31: Were you surprised to find that Heike was still alive? What do you think Joe and Sofie will do with her? Who will Joe save: Heike or Felka? How does the author increase the tension leading up to the climax? Although Joe is the hero of the novel, he is inactive during the climax. What effect does this have? What do you think has happened to Heike?
- Who is Andrew? (p.372)
- Why does Roth shoot at Joe? Why does Blondi join Joe in running? (p.378) Why does Joe's father take Roth's body into the tunnel? (p.383)
- What is the effect of the slowing down of narrative pace at the beginning of Chapter 34?
- On p.385, Joe's father declares that Joe shouldn't hate the Nazis because 'they are just people'. Refer back to his comments. Do you agree with them? Why/why not? What implications do they have for society?
- Why does Heike help Joe and his dad, despite knowing that Joe is an enemy agent? (pp.392–396)
- Although Heike did not respond when praised twice by Hitler, she acknowledges Joe's thanks for dressing his father's wounds. (p.400) Why is that?
- Why does Joe not view himself as a hero? (p.405)
- Hitler hanging the drawing of the bird ostensibly drawn by Joe/Jürgen but actually drawn by a prisoner from Soldau Concentration Camp and describing it as a drawing of Providence is an example of irony. (pp.407–408) What examples of irony are there on p.409?
- 'Schadenfreude' (p.409) is pleasure or satisfaction that comes from witnessing or learning of the pain or failures of others. Does this tell the reader something about Goebbels' and Göring's personalities, or is it merely a comment on human nature?
- How has the arrest and escape of Becker/Mathias benefitted Joe? (p.410)
- Thomas loved Heike, but her alleged political betrayal means so much to him that he is prepared to watch her execution. Is Thomas' reaction due to Heike's betrayal of the Nazi party or because he believes she made a fool of him, or is it both? (p.413)
- Due to the incorrect assumption that Heike was a spy, the propaganda film is to be destroyed (p.413), which means that Joe no longer needs to worry about being shown in it and having his cover blown. How does this outcome compare to your earlier prediction?
- Does Joe's statement on p.414 match your earlier thoughts on what Felka symbolises to him? How is it the same? How is it different?

Comprehension questions for Back Matter (pp.416–442)

- What is the purpose of the simile 'like the petals of a flower'? (p.418)
- How is the character Hardegen used to support the themes of the novel? What does Hardegen represent? (pp.418–419)
- What is the destination Joe has arrived at? (p.421) What does this tell the reader about what has or hasn't happened?
- The memoirs of Joseph (Katipo) St George are fiction. Why do you think the author included the excerpts from the fictional memoirs?
- What is the purpose of the glossary? List any additional words that would have been useful to have been included.
- What is the purpose of the photographs? Did they add to your understanding or appreciation of the book?



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Activities

ACTIVITY 1: THE PEN PLOT

On p. 51, Joe discovers a fountain pen containing poison in his left pocket. Write a paragraph describing how you think the pen got into his pocket without his knowledge.

ACTIVITY 2: OPERATION 'BARBAROSSA'

Research to find out more about Operation 'Barbarossa'—Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. What happened? What was the outcome? Why was this a turning point of World War II? Present your findings as a report or a PowerPoint presentation.

ACTIVITY 3: QUESTION TIME

On p.150, Sofie begins the following question to Hitler: 'At our last stop we pulled alongside—' Complete Sofie's question and write the response you think Hitler would have given her. Would there have been repercussions for Sofie? Include this information in your response.

ACTIVITY 4: A VOICE FOR HEIKE

Despite being a proud young Nazi, Heike is affected profoundly by the atrocities she witnesses in Russia and realises that everything she has been taught to believe is a lie. Heike could be said to represent many of the German people, who were also victims of Nazi lies, deception, and brainwashing. Write a letter from Heike to Hitler, explaining how she feels in discovering the truth about the Nazis.

ACTIVITY 5: PLOT STORYBOARD

Use the storyboard below to map out the plot points. Draw a sketch and add a description to break the story down into the following parts: **1) Exposition:** The introduction where characters and settings are established and the conflict, or main problem of the story, is introduced. **2) Rising Action:** The main events, including character development, that lead to the climax. **3) Climax:** The most exciting, dramatic event of the story and a turning point of the plot. **4) Falling Action:** Everything that happens as a result of the climax, including the wrapping up of various plot points, and character development. **5) Resolution:** The story is tied up and concluded.

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| EXPOSITION | RISING ACTION | CLIMAX |
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| FALLING ACTION | RESOLUTION | |
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