



0. SCARS from a PRIOR WAR - Story Preface

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Ted Narracott fought in the Second Boer War (1899 to 1902)—also known as the South African War—a vicious fight between soldiers of the British Empire and people in South Africa. This image depicts a painting, from 1900, by Richard Caton Woodville entitled “Charge during the Boer War.” Today this work is part of the Atkinson Art Gallery Collection. Click on the image for a better view.

Sometimes people who've been through trauma can talk about their experiences. Others bury the horrors deep inside their souls and refuse to ever think about the pain again.

The trouble with the second approach is buried pain can resurface at any time since it is only hidden, not gone. Ted Narracott has hidden pain caused by the unhealed wounds and scars of a prior war.

Sent with his unit - the Seventh Battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry - to South Africa, Narracott is a Boer-War veteran. Fighting in the Transvaal, he witnessed what no person should ever have to see.

Among other things, he knows about the South African concentration camps in which corralled civilians lived and died without justice and without mercy. He knows those concentration camps were created by orders of British commanders.

He also knows that Britain's "scorched-earth" policy, regarding the Boers, caused many South African families to lose their homes. It would have been a heartbreaking thing to see a house going up in smoke following a deliberately set fire.

It wasn't only men - like Ted Narracott - who fought in the Boer War. So did horses - thousands of horses - sent to South Africa aboard ships.

In the early 1900s, when Narracott was serving his country, horses moved men, ammo and equipment. Many of those horses were slain, just like the troopers they carried on their backs.

Brave beyond his call of duty, Narracott received a Distinguished Conduct Medal for saving men in peril. He was also given another medal - the Queen's South Africa - just for fighting in the Boer War, and he still has his campaign pennant. His son, however, knows none of this. What Albie *does* know is that his father drinks a great deal of alcoholic beverages.

Doing the best he can, given the path he is on, Ted rents land and grows crops (like turnips). His fields, however, are filled with rocks which can be very difficult for a man trying to plow.

Needing a good horse, to help with the work, Ted goes to town. (In the film, the town is Castle Combe, in the neighboring county of Wiltshire.) Maybe he'll find a good Shire horse. Maybe he'll buy a Dartmoor Pony.

Instead, Albie's father buys a totally unsuitable animal - a thoroughbred with legs meant for running, not plowing. Worse, he overspends for the horse his son calls "Joey."

Persuading his parents to keep the horse - and not return him for something more suitable - Albert bonds with Joey. He and the horse become inseparable.

Able to plow, as well as run, Joey proves worthy of his steep purchase price. Then ... "the guns of August" begin to boom, and Joey's pastoral life on the Narracott farm ends.

Joey's next job will be to serve Britain as a war horse.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SCARS-from-a-PRIOR-WAR-War-Horse>

Questions 2 Ponder

How Do We Decide Whether to Share Bad News?

In the story and film, “War Horse,” Ted Narracott thinks about what happened to him during the Boer War, in South Africa. He chooses not to tell his son about the horrors he had experienced, as a young man, during a war which took place on another continent.

Is it better to share our difficult experiences, with family and friends, or to keep such events private? Why or why not?

Sometimes people report that talking about difficult experiences make them feel better, but other individuals report that it makes them feel worse. How could we know, beforehand, which approach is personally better?

What Is the Impact of Prejudging Someone’s Abilities?

In the novel “War Horse,” and the film which interprets the story for the screen, people have opinions about a horse called “Joey.” Nearly everyone thinks Joey is unsuitable to be a farm horse, and they freely express those opinions.

How was Albert able to help Joey become a farm horse?

Was Albert’s unwillingness to give up, and his dedication to working with his horse, at least partly responsible for Joey’s newfound skills?

How often does prejudging someone’s abilities happen in the real world? What is the best response to such a discouraging attitude?

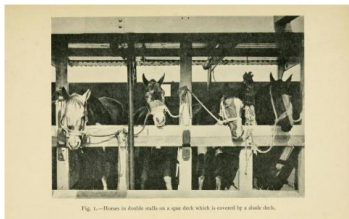
Media Stream



Ted Narracott - Boer War

Image of burning Boer home, online courtesy South African National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ted-Narracott-Boer-War>



War Horse - Boer War Horses

Photo from *Horses on Board Ship: A Guide to Their Management*, by Captain M. Horace Hayes - published, 1902 by Hurst and Blackett, London. Online, courtesy Open Library.

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War Horse - Boer War Offloading Horse

Photo from *Horses on Board Ship: A Guide to Their Management*, by Captain M. Horace Hayes - published, 1902 by Hurst and Blackett, London. Online, courtesy Open Library.

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Boer War - Distinguished Conduct Medal - Symbol Side

Photo of Distinguished Conduct Medal, online courtesy [UK National Archives](http://www.uknationalarchives.gov.uk).

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Boer-War-Distinguished-Conduct-Medal-Symbol-Side>



Boer War - Distinguished Conduct Medal - Text Side

Photo of Distinguished Conduct Medal, online courtesy [UK National Archives](http://www.uknationalarchives.gov.uk).

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Boer War - Queen's South Africa Medal

Photo of Distinguished Conduct Medal, online courtesy [UK National Archives](http://www.uknationalarchives.gov.uk).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Boer-War-Queen-s-South-Africa-Medal>



War Horse - Ted Narracott's Campaign Pennant

Photo of military campaign pennant, online courtesy [UK National Archives](http://www.uknationalarchives.gov.uk).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/War-Horse-Ted-Narracott-s-Campaign-Pennant>



War Horse - Ted Narracott Goes to Town

Photo by JMenard48, online via Flickr.

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War Horse - Ted Narracott and a Horse Auction

Photo by JMenard48, online via Flickr.

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War Horse - Joey

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War Horse - Albert and Joey

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War Horse - Joey Takes the Harness

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SCARS from a PRIOR WAR

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