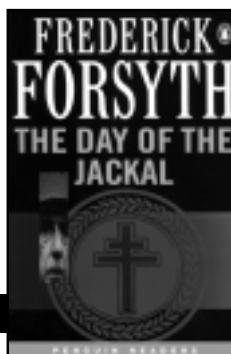


Teacher's notes

The Day of the Jackal

by Frederick Forsyth



SUMMARY

It is 1963. A secret French terrorist organization plans to assassinate the President of France, Charles de Gaulle, by hiring a professional killer. The organization has tried to kill de Gaulle before, but failed. The man they now choose to assassinate him is one of the world's most feared assassins, an Englishman whom they know only as 'the Jackal.' The killer is intelligent and ruthless. He works alone and, with half a million dollars as his prize, he will allow no one to stop him. How can France save its President from the greatest danger he has ever faced?

Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal* is one of the most famous thrillers ever written, and won its author the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Allan Poe Award in 1971. It has been translated into thirty languages and was made into a film in 1973. The film was a joint British-French production, directed by Fred Zinnemann. It starred Edward Fox as the Jackal and Michel Lonsdale as French detective Claude Lebel.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frederick Forsyth was born on August 25, 1938 in Ashford, Kent, England. He left full-time education as soon as he could, and joined the Royal Air Force, becoming its youngest fighter pilot at the age of nineteen. In further search of adventure, he entered journalism. This profession took him all over the world as a foreign correspondent.

When Forsyth returned to London in 1970, he began to write fiction. The story of his first novel, *The Day of the Jackal*, was one he had in fact begun to plan in 1962-63, when he had worked in Paris. By the time he sat down to write it, he had already spent much spare time in research and development. He had read many thrillers and adventure novels himself, but had often been disappointed at their authors' lack of knowledge of their subjects, which made the stories unrealistic. He thought that with his own novel he would do something different. Through the contacts he had made as a reporter, he was able to talk to many experts, including President de Gaulle's former bodyguards and drivers, a passport forger, a gun-maker and even a real hired assassin, to provide realistic details for his story.

This accuracy of plot details, against a background of real events and characters, is Forsyth's greatest contribution to thriller writing. In *The Day of the Jackal*, readers feel they are being shown how a professional assassin really would work, and how a detective might really track him down. His novels have now sold well over 50 million copies around the world. *The Day of the Jackal*, however, remains his most popular book.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

General Charles de Gaulle (1890 - 1970) was one of France's greatest heroes. He fought bravely in World War I (1914-18) and was wounded on three separate occasions before being captured by the Germans. He made five attempts to escape, but he was a very tall man: he was easily identified and recaptured.

In World War II (1939-45), de Gaulle became France's Under-secretary of State for War and National Defence. In 1940, France was defeated by the Germans and de Gaulle fled to London. There, he was recognized as leader of the Free French and worked hard to encourage the country against her invaders. At last, after the invasion of France by Allied (those fighting against Germany) troops in June 1944, France was set free, and Free French soldiers entered Paris on 25th August. Later that day, de Gaulle himself arrived and the following day he led a parade of victory along the Champs-Élysées. The 25th of August was celebrated every year afterwards as Liberation Day.

De Gaulle was recognized as temporary president of the French Republic, but retired from politics when his views about how France should be governed were not accepted. However, he returned to power in 1958, after the Algerian Crisis (see below) emerged, and remained president this time until 1969. He died of a stroke in 1970, just before his 80th birthday. All his life he had fought for France and her position in the world, and was called in his lifetime 'the greatest Frenchman'.

The Algerian Crisis is one of the worst problems in French history. Algeria, in north Africa, had been part of the French empire since the mid-nineteenth century. After World War II it remained a colony. Over one million French-speaking Europeans lived in Algeria, amongst its native Arab and Berber population.

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INTERMEDIATE

THE DAY OF THE JACKAL



Teacher's notes

However, in 1954 Algerian nationalists began to fight for independence from France. French troops were sent to Algeria to fight the nationalists. By 1958, more than half a million French troops had been sent to the country. But in France itself, opinion was strongly divided: some people thought Algeria should be free, but many thought it should remain French.

Some French people were sure that France was going to give Algeria its freedom, and began to plot against the government. They hoped they could form a new government, and that perhaps General de Gaulle would lead it, believing that the General shared their views. When de Gaulle came to power, however, he began the process of giving Algeria independence.

The Europeans who were living in Algeria and the French right-wing were not at all happy with de Gaulle's actions. They looked to the army for support. A group of high army officers, led by General Raoul Salan, formed the Secret Army Organisation (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète, OAS) and tried to take over Algeria. When this plan failed, they turned to terrorism, and there made several attempts to kill de Gaulle. From September 1961, terrorists tried several times to kill him with bombs, and in August 1962 his car was shot at. In every case, however, the attackers failed.

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/groupwork questions, can also be used by students working in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Ask your students what they know about President de Gaulle. Collect their answers and write them up on the board. (You can check their facts against the information given in the Background and Themes section of this Factsheet.)

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1 - 2

In small groups, students try to remember as much as they can about the appearance and character of the Jackal and his crime. They then invent their own crime and criminal and describe them to the rest of the class. Everyone can vote on which is the best idea.

Chapters 3 - 5

In small groups, students write short descriptions of Paul Goossens; the forger; Viktor Kowalski; Claud Lebel; Colonel Saint-Clair de Villaubon; and Superintendent Thomas. Each group reads their descriptions without saying any names. The other groups guess who they are describing.

Chapters 6 - 8

Tell students to imagine that Colette stops the Jackal from killing her. They think about this, but must not discuss it.

Then in small groups, they write a story. They start the story when the Jackal finds Colette with his gun (page 71). Each group takes one sheet of paper. The first student writes at the top: '...You want to use this to kill de Gaulle.' Then he/she continues the story for only one sentence. Then the student passes the paper to the next student, who writes the next sentence and so on.

Each group reads their story to the class, and the class votes on the best story.

Chapters 9 - 11

Who was the Jackal? In small groups, students make up a life story for him. What made him a killer? What made him cold? Why did he always work alone? Each group writes down its story and reads it out. The class discusses which story is the most likely.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

- In small groups, students discuss the following question, and then report back to the class:
What other assassinations or attempted assassinations of famous people do you know about? How did they happen? Why?
- Class discussion:
Would it ever be right to assassinate a leader of a country or other powerful or well-known person?

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know these new words. They are practised in the Before You Read sections of exercises at the back of the book.

Chapters 1-2

assassin (n) a murderer
bullet (n) a small piece of metal which is fired from a gun
certificate (n) an official document which says that a fact is true
colonel (n) a high level job in the army
file (n) facts about a person or subject which are kept by a company or organization
forge (v) to copy a document or something to make people think it is real
identity (n) who someone is
jackal (n) a wild animal like a dog, that eats dead animals
medal (n) a round flat piece of metal given to someone who has done something brave
rifle (n) a long gun which you hold up to your shoulder
wig (n) false hair

Chapters 3-5

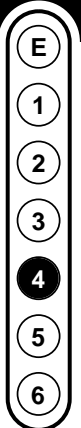
detective (n) a police officer whose job is to find out facts
melon (n) a large round fruit
plaster (n) a white liquid which goes very hard, used to cover broken bones
security (n) things that are done in order to keep someone or something safe
string (n) something made for tying things
superintendent (n) a middle-level job in the British police

Chapters 9-11

crutch (n) one of a pair of long sticks that you put under your arms to help you walk
liberation (n) to be set free
salute (n) an act of raising your hand to the side of your head



Student's activities



INTERMEDIATE

THE DAY OF THE JACKAL



The Day of the Jackal

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These activities can be done alone or in pairs/small groups.

Activities before reading the book

Read the Introduction at the front of the book. Close the book, then answer the following questions.

- (a) What nationality is Frederick Forsyth?
- (b) What year was he born?
 - (i) 1908 (ii) 1938 (iii) 1958
- (c) What did he do before he became a reporter?
- (d) He worked in three cities as a reporter. Name them.
- (e) Answer these questions with one sentence each.
 - (i) What is the book about?
 - (ii) What interests you about it?

Activities while reading the book

CHAPTERS 1 - 2

Chapter 1

- 1 Imagine you interview Colonel Marc Rodin (and he tells you the truth!) Write his answers to these questions.
 - (a) Why do you want to kill President Charles de Gaulle?
 - (b) What is the OAS?
 - (c) The French secret police often know all about your plans. How?
 - (d) Why did you choose the Jackal for your professional assassin?
 - (e) When you met the Jackal, he already knew a lot about the OAS. How?
 - (f) You told the Jackal that the OAS could help him with information. Where does the OAS get this information?
 - (g) How can the Jackal get in touch with you?
- 2 Work in pairs. One student can write other questions for the Colonel. The other student can write the answers. Then you can act out the interview.

Chapter 2

Just after the Jackal left him, Paul Goossens made some notes. But he was nervous and made a lot of mistakes. Can you correct them?

The German needs a gun. He needs a rifle which cannot be taken to pieces, and will fit into a wide plastic tube. He will be aiming at the legs, and the 'gentleman' will be moving. He's paying me one thousand two hundred German marks. He needs the gun in twenty days. He said: 'Ask people who I am. If you don't, you'll die.'

We agreed that the gun I'm going to give him will have a mark and a number, so that the German can be connected with me.

CHAPTERS 3-5

Chapter 3

- 1 Match the names with the descriptions.

(a) Viktor Kowalski	(i) one of the Jackal's false identities
(b) Sandor Kovacs	(ii) a Polish friend of Viktor, who looks after his daughter
(c) Colonel Marc Rodin	(iii) a Hungarian member of the OAS
(d) Rene Montclair	(iv) one of the Jackal's false identities, a 53-year-old Frenchman
(e) Andre Casson	(v) JoJo's wife
(f) JoJo (Josef Grzybowski)	(vi) an important officer in the OAS
(g) Michel	(vii) Viktor's daughter
(h) Sylvie	(viii) an important officer in the OAS
(i) Alexander Duggan	(ix) an OAS gunman who sometimes acts as a guard
(j) Andre Martin	(x) an important officer in the OAS
- 2 Why is Kowalski worried? Was JoJo telling the truth on the telephone? Why not?
- 3 Why did the Jackal kill the forger but not the gun-maker?

Chapter 4

Complete the sentences below with one word. Then take one letter from each of those words (you are told which letter to take). Write each letter down. Then rearrange the letters to make a word which is very important in the story.

- (i) When Kowalski was attacked by the police, his was broken. (Take the 3rd letter.)
- (ii) Roger Frey is a government (3rd letter)
- (iii) Colonel Saint-Clair de Villaubon works closely with the (4th letter)
- (iv) The President doesn't want any extra (6th letter)
- (v) Saint-Clair de Villaubon arrives back at his flat just after (2nd letter)
- (vi) In Rome, Marc Rodin gets a message that Kowalski has to the police. (2nd letter)
- (vii) The Jackal, as 'Mr Duggan', flies from Brussels to (4th letter)
- (viii) When he flies, he has his leg in (4th letter)

Student's activities

Chapter 5

Which of these things do the French or British police know are certainly true? Which do they think may be true? Put a tick (✓) against the things they know are certainly true.

- In 1961, the head of the government in the Dominican Republic was assassinated.
- The gunman was an Englishman.
- The OAS have been informed that the police know about the Jackal.
- The informer was called Valmy.
- JoJo told Valmy.
- The Jackal is on the files of a police force somewhere outside France.
- At the time of the assassination in the Dominican Republic, there was a man there named Charles Calthrop.
- He was employed by a company that sold guns.
- This same Charles Calthrop is the Jackal.

CHAPTERS 6-8

Chapter 6

Answer the following questions.

- Why, at the beginning of the chapter, does Minister Frey say, 'It seems we're back where we started'?
- After the detectives in London have searched Charles Calthrop's flat, they become more certain that he is the Jackal. Why?
- Why is it fortunate for the Jackal that the customs officers at the French border do not look under his car?
- Superintendent Thomas asks his detectives to get a list of recent passport forms from the Passport Office and check birth and death certificates. What is he hoping to find? Why is it important?
- Valmy tells the Jackal to stop everything, but the Jackal decides to carry on. Why?

Chapter 7

All these sentences are false. Correct them.

- Colette is single.
- She looks older than she is.
- French customs tell Lebel that the Jackal entered France on 22nd July as Charles Calthrop.
- Colette wants the Jackal to stay in her room after their night together.
- At Gap, a policeman finds out there are ten new guests at the Hotel du Cerf.
- The Jackal doesn't know Colette's address when he goes to look for her.
- He changes the colour and number plates of his car although he doesn't think the police are looking for it.

Chapter 8

Answer these questions.

- Why does the Jackal kill Colette?
- Why does he travel to Paris as a Danish priest, and not Alexander Duggan?
- Why does Lebel want to use his powers to listen to some telephone calls?

CHAPTERS 9-11

Chapter 9

In this chapter, Lebel receives or finds out important pieces of information. How did he get them? Match each piece of information with his way of getting it.

Information

- That Colonel Saint-Clair's girlfriend has been passing information to Valmy
- That a Danish priest reported that his passport was stolen
- The details of an American, Marty Schulberg, whose passport was stolen
- Marty Schulberg's photograph

Way of getting the information

- from Superintendent Thomas
- from the Passport Office in Washington (USA)
- by recording phone calls
- from Superintendent Thomas

Chapter 10

1 Choose the correct ending for the following sentences.

- In Jules Bernard's flat, the Jackal checks the food because
 - he's worried that Bernard doesn't eat properly.
 - he wants to know more about Bernard.
 - he's thinking of becoming Bernard.
 - he wants to hide in the flat for three days.
- The Minister calls for Lebel again because
 - the Secret Service can't find the Jackal, and he needs Lebel's help.
 - he wants Lebel's advice about crowd control.
 - he wants to hear everything Lebel knows about the Jackal.
 - he wants Lebel to walk round each of the ceremonies.

2 Why has the Jackal chosen to be an old soldier with one leg on the day he kills de Gaulle?

Chapter 11

Write who is speaking, then put the sentences in order, as they come in the story.

- 'Lebel,' said the other man.
- 'Yes, sir. A crutch. A metal crutch.'
- 'What are you doing here?'
- 'So if the Jackal wasn't Calthrop, then who exactly was he?'
- 'The Jackal,' he said calmly.
- 'Has anyone been past, anyone at all?'
- 'They got him. In Paris. No problems.'
- 'I was going to ask you the same thing.'

Activities after reading the book

- Copy a simple map of Western Europe, and draw on it the Jackal's travels between cities and towns.
- Write down the names of all the Jackal's false identities, and write a short description of each of them.

