After you listen to the story, “The Soldier and Death,” check out the activities below. There’s something for your inner everyone—writer, baker, candlestick maker…well, maybe not candlestick maker (at least, not yet), but you get the idea. Click on the one you are most interested in, or try them all!

**Activities for the...**

**Baker (and Historian):** A brief history of biscuits and a recipe for Suvarov Cookies

**Designer:** Design your own deck of Winning Cards!

**Dreamer:** What would you put in your nose bag?

**Geographer:** Where does our story come from?

**Lexicographer:** Words and where they come from

**Philosopher:** Questions to ponder

**Writer:** How to outwit Death

**Extra Curious:** Sources & further reading
For The Baker (and Historian): A brief history of biscuits and a recipe for Suvarov Cookies

In America, when we think of biscuits, we often think of a hot roll that we might eat with a savory meal (such as biscuits and gravy). However, in other English speaking countries, a biscuit means a hard cookie or cracker. The word biscuit comes from Latin, bis (two) and coctus (baked), meaning “twice baked.” Biscuits were, among other things, army rations for soldiers, dating all the way back to Ancient Rome.

The biscuit (or cookie) recipe below was likely not the kind our soldier was carrying around, but they do have a military connection!

Alexander Suvarov was a Russian military leader and national hero who lived from 1730-1800. He fought in six wars, was given many awards and titles, including that of “prince“ and wrote a military manual called The Science of Victory. These biscuits (or cookies) are named for him. For more about the legend behind these cookies, read this blogpost by Victoria Drey.

Suvarov Shortbread

Ingredients for the dough:
2 cups (300g) all-purpose flour
1 ¾ sticks (200g) butter, softened
¾ cup (100g) powdered sugar (sifted)
2 egg white
a pinch of salt
a little vanilla extract (or a pinch of vanilla sugar)

Ingredients for the filling (optional):
dulce de leche, or any jam,
or
2/3 cup (100g) dark chocolate

Making the Cookies:
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. When the butter is soft (but not melted), put it in a large bowl and beat with a mixer until it is fluffy. Add the powdered sugar with a pinch of salt and vanilla, and continue mixing. As the mixture becomes airy and easier to mix, add the egg whites. Mix all together.

Add the flour and mix all together. The dough will be thick. If you don’t mind getting messy, you may want to switch from using the beaters to mix the dough with your hands (or a spatula).
Prepare a baking pan with a sheet of parchment paper. Spoon the dough out onto the parchment paper in round cookie-shaped balls. If you want to get really fancy, you can use a piping bag with a large star nozzle and make longer cookie “tube” shapes. (Piping bags and star nozzles might be hard to get right now, so don’t worry about those.)

Bake for 10-12 minutes, but be careful not to over-bake the cookies. Let the cookies cool on the tray - they will be soft at first, but will harden as they cool.

Once the cookies have cooled, you can leave them the way they are, or optionally spread the bottom side with the filling of your choice (jam, dulce de leche). For a chocolate twist, melt the chocolate in a small pan on low (or in a double boiler), and, if needed, add a little milk, and stir. Dip half of each cookie into the chocolate, then let cool. Enjoy!

For the Designer: Design your own deck of Winning Cards!

What will your playing cards look like? Whose faces will you feature on the cards? How will you make sure they always win?

A few fun facts about playing cards:

- Playing cards have been around for centuries and have spread across many cultures. The earliest mention of cards in known history is from China in 868 C.E., where a princess is described as playing “the leaf game” with her family.
- Playing cards spread to Medieval Europe in the 1300s, and with them spread drinking and gambling. Cheats and charlatans quickly joined in the game. Playing cards became so widespread and disruptive that some cities banned them, calling them “the Devil’s picture book.”
- Russian Playing cards typically only have 32 or 36 cards (leaving off 2s-5s and sometimes 6s). The 52 card deck we know comes from France.
- The symbols on the cards (what we know today as diamonds, spades, hearts, and clubs) are called pips. Pips used to vary from place to place and were anything from stars to swords, goblets to birds, chalices to sorcerers.

"Death" from Rider-Waite tarot deck, Image from Wikipedia

For more inspiration, check out this article from The Atlantic on The Lost Origins of Playing-Card Symbols.
For the Dreamer: If the beggar had given you a nose bag, what would you put in it?

A **nose bag** is another word for feedbag. It is usually fastened over a horse's nose and allows them to eat without much food being wasted.

Draw a picture of the nose bag the beggar has given you, and all of the items you would put in it. Remember, that bag can hold anything, no matter how big!

For the Geographer: Where does our story come from?

Today's tale, *The Soldier and Death*, comes from Russia, which is all the way across the Atlantic Ocean if you go east, and all the way across the Pacific Ocean if you go west. What if you went in a straight line? Which countries and bodies of water would you cross to get there?

![Map of the world](image)

It is approximately 6,095 miles (or 9,810 kilometers) from Tucson to Moscow, Russia's capital, by airplane, and it would take you 12.5 hours to get there if you flew without stopping.

But what if you couldn’t fly? How would you get there? How many miles (or kilometers) would that journey take? How long do you estimate your journey would take?
For the Lexicographer: Words and where they come from

**devil** (noun) - (usually the Devil) (in Christian and Jewish belief) the chief evil spirit; Satan.
- an evil spirit; a demon.
- a very wicked or cruel person: *they prefer voting for devils rather than for decent men.*
- a mischievously clever or self-willed person: *the cunning old devil is up to something.*
- (the devil) fighting spirit; wildness: *he was dangerous when the devil was in him.*
- (the devil) a thing that is very difficult or awkward to do or deal with: *it's going to be the very devil to disentangle.*

**ORIGIN**
Old English dēofol (related to Dutch duivel and German Teufel), via late Latin from Greek diabolos ‘accuser, slanderer’ (used in the Septuagint to translate Hebrew śāṭān ‘Satan’), from diaballein ‘to slander’, from dia ‘across’ + ballein ‘to throw’.

**hinder** (verb) - to create difficulties for (someone or something), resulting in delay or obstruction: *the soldier hindered the devils’ quest to take over the town.*

**ORIGIN**
Old English hindrian ‘injure or damage’, of Germanic origin; related to German hindern, also to behind.

**idle** (adjective) - (of a person) avoiding work; lazy.
- (of a person) not working; unemployed.
- (especially of a machine or factory) not active or in use: *assembly lines standing idle for lack of spare parts.*
- [attributive] (of time) characterized by inaction or absence of significant activity: *at no time in the day must there be an idle moment.*

**ORIGIN**
Old English Ĳdel ‘empty, useless’, of West Germanic origin; related to Dutch ijdel ‘vain, frivolous, useless’ and German eitel ‘bare, worthless’.

**infernal** (adjective) - relating to or characteristic of hell or the underworld: *the infernal regions| the infernal heat of the forge.*

**ORIGIN**
Early 16th century: from French origine, from Latin origo, origin-, from oriri ‘to rise’.

**sovereign** (noun) - a supreme ruler, especially a monarch

**ORIGIN**
Middle English: from Old French soverain, based on Latin super ‘above’. The change in the ending was due to association with reign.
For the Philosopher: Questions to ponder

What would you do with a sack full of devils?

Why does the soldier offer Death his own life in order to save the Tsar?

If you could put Death in a bag so that no one could ever die again, would you?

Why doesn’t Heaven want the soldier?

Is the soldier a hero?

Could the soldier have had a happy ending if he had made a different choice? Where did he go wrong? Or did he do everything right?

What do you imagine happens when you die?

Tell us what you think! Email us at storiesforscamps@scoundrelandscamp.org!

For the Writer: How to outwit Death

People have heard that you (the soldier) have outwitted death! They want to do it, too. They are asking for instructions. What will you tell them?

Or, make your own instructions (as yourself) as to how you would go about outwitting death. Your instructions can be as fantastical as you wish.

Tips for Getting Started:

● We are asked to follow instructions every day. Your teachers give you instructions. Recipes give you instructions. If something goes wrong with your car, there’s an instruction manual to guide you. Sewing patterns, assembling furniture, sometimes there are even “instructions on how to read this book.” How many different examples of instructions can you think of?

● Pick a style of instructions, and use it as inspiration to write your instructions for outwitting death.

Further Inspiration:
Julio Cortázar, an Argentinian writer, wrote a series of poems as an instruction manual about all kinds of different things. Here are two examples of his work, “Preamble to Instructions on How to Wind a Watch” and “Instructions on How to Wind a Watch.”
For The Extra-Curious: Sources & further reading

The Soldier and Death


Biscuits and Suvarov Cookies

Drey, Victoria. “Inspired by Russia’s greatest commander, Suvorov shortbread cookies are a blast.” Russia Beyond, October 14, 2018. 


Geography

Google Maps. 
https://www.google.com/maps/@37.3187091,-60.6403829,9028212m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!6m1!1s185RiJgmFSxl9eGUNWT0AldY10NXKe85. Accessed April 21, 2020.


Lexicography

Definitions from

Playing Cards


