

The Butterfly Lion - Michael Morpurgo

Lesson 1

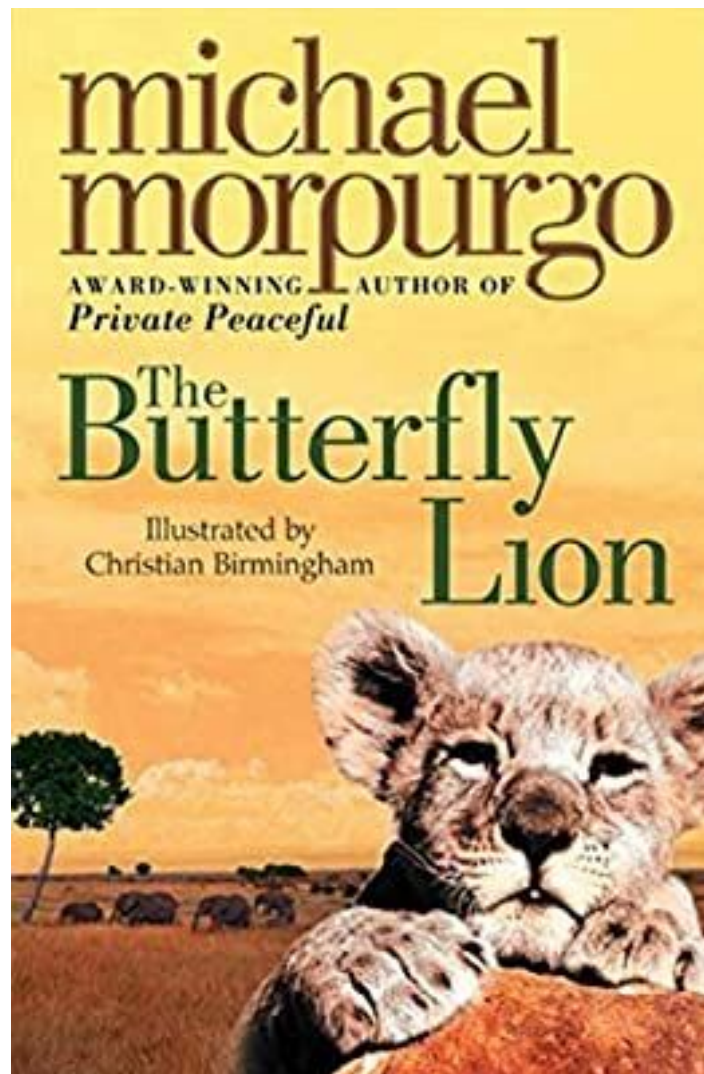
Before reading...

Look at the front cover.

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What things can you see on the front cover?
- What sort of story will it be?
- Who might enjoy it?

Now read the blurb...

- Were any of your predictions correct?



Preface

Read the **preface** below and **think about the following questions**:

- Why is it included?
- What information does it give us?
- Does it change the way we read the story?

The Butterfly Lion grew from several magical roots: the memories of a small boy who tried to run away from school a long time ago; a book about a pride of white lions discovered by Chris McBride; a chance meeting in a lift with Virginia McKenna, actress and champion of lions and all creatures born free; a true story of a soldier of the First World War who rescued some circus animals in France from certain death; and the sighting from a train of a white horse carved out on a chalky hillside near Westbury in Wiltshire.

To Chris McBride, to Virginia McKenna and to Gina Pollinger – many, many thanks. And to you the reader – enjoy it!

MICHAEL MORPURGO

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Comprehension

Chapter 1: Chilblains and Semolina Pudding

1. How does the author manage to make the reader understand how unhappy he was?
2. How old is the narrator when he decides to run away from boarding school?
3. Give two reasons why the narrator is miserable at this time.
4. What escape route does the narrator use?
5. Why do you think he tries to disguise his uniform?
6. Do you think the narrator is being brave in this chapter? Why? What other words would you use to describe him?
7. How do you think life in a boarding school compares to life in other schools?
8. Imagine that you are a person travelling in the car that the narrator hides from. Who are you? Where could you have been travelling to that day?

Chapter 2: Strange Meeting

1. During this chapter we first meet the little old lady. How does meeting her begin to distract the boy from his unhappiness?
2. What do you know about Bertie already after reading this chapter?
3. Name three things the narrator notices about the old lady when he first meets her in the rain.
4. How does the old lady describe her dog, Jack, so as not to worry the narrator?
5. Why does the old lady's house look as if it has 'grown out of the ground'?
6. Who do you think Bertie is?
7. Describe how you think the narrator feels as he sits in Millie's kitchen.
8. Think of any books you have read or films you have watched that had African animals in them.

Chapter 3: Timbavati

1. In this chapter we find out a lot about Bertie. What do you now know about him?
2. Why is this chapter called 'Timbavati'?
3. Name five wild animals that are mentioned in this chapter.
4. What do you think the word 'veld' might mean?
5. How is Bertie's mother described in this chapter? 5. What does Bertie most enjoy doing during the day? How does he amuse himself at night?
6. Name two of the dangers Bertie might have faced beyond the compound walls.
7. Why does Bertie's father shoot the lioness?
8. Who is narrating this chapter? How do you know?

Chapter 4: Bertie and the Lion

1. There are some real dramas in this chapter. What are they in your opinion?
2. How does the lion cub try to protect itself against the hyenas?
3. What makes the hyenas run away?
4. Give one reason why Bertie's father says he can't keep the lion cub.
5. Give one reason why Bertie's mother says they should keep the lion cub.
6. What changes happen to Bertie's mother after they allow the lion cub to live with them?
7. Explain why you think Bertie's mother has been so sad up till this time?
8. Can you think of a happy event that happened in your own family? How did it make you and your family feel?
9. Why do you think the story of Peter and the Wolf is important to Bertie?

Vocabulary

1. astonished
 2. caning
 3. cavern
 4. chilblains
 5. compound
 6. companion
 7. codswallop
 8. confines
 9. dignified
 10. discernible
 11. flamboyant
 12. grieved
 13. hackles
 14. haul
 15. hoisted
 16. interminably
 17. khaki
 18. lament
 19. listless
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HOMEWORK

How does Morpurgo make the **opening** of the story **exciting**?

OR

Write a **short story** using **at least 5 new words** (above) that we learned from these chapters.