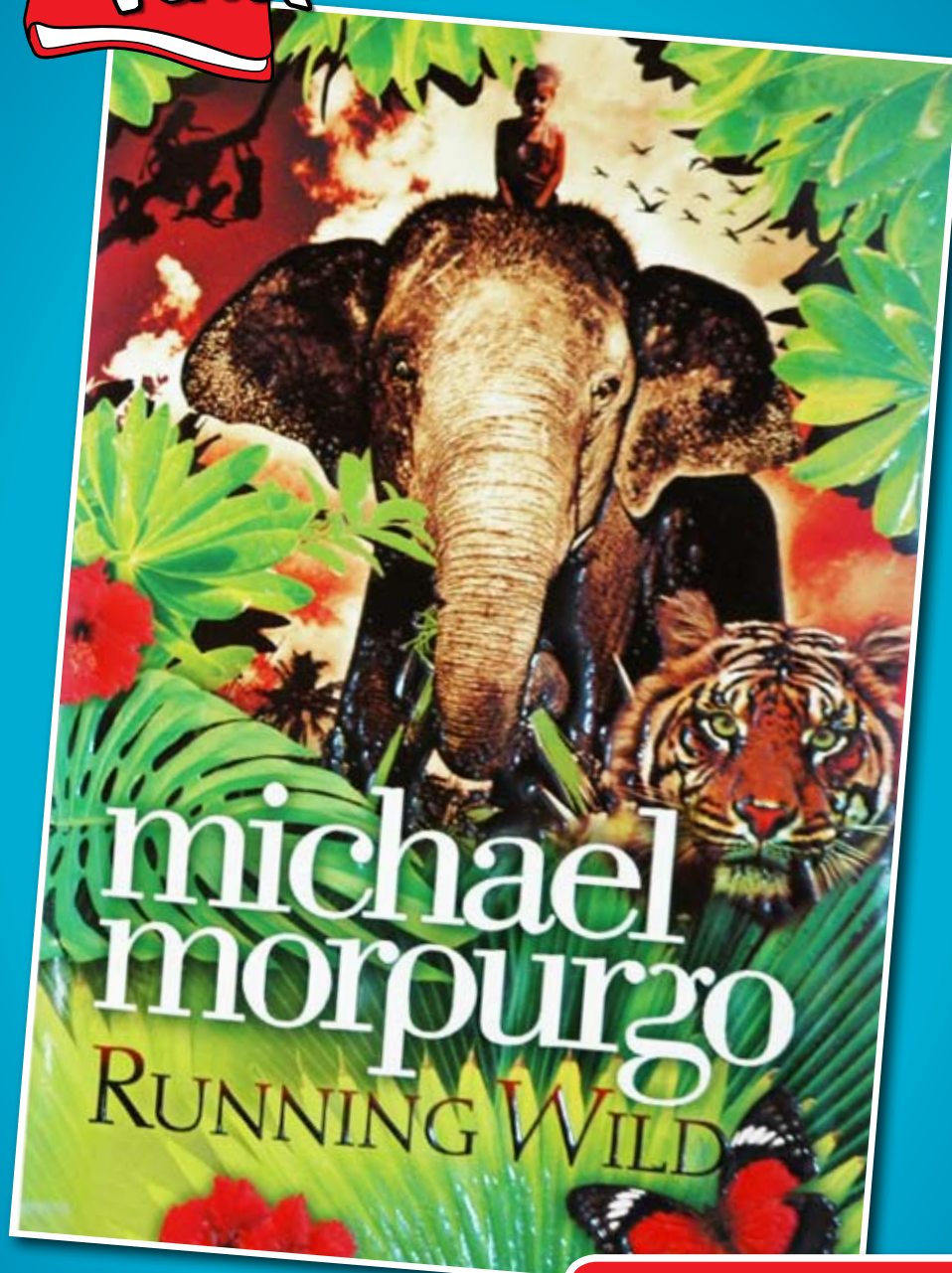


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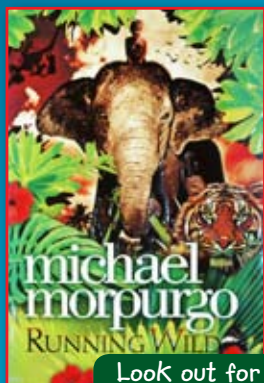
**Book
Talk**



AGES 8+

**Engage and inspire your
pupils with a Book Talk!**

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Look out for this book at your Fair!

AGES 8+

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| Price | £4.99 / €6.00 |
| Case | Read On |
| Author | Michael Morpurgo |
| Publisher | HarperCollins |

Using this book in your classroom

Themes

Many strong themes run through this moving story – including **respect for the environment**, the **relationship between people and wild animals**, and the process of **dealing with grief and bereavement**.

Summary

After Will's soldier father dies in the Iraq war, he and his mother decide to visit Indonesia. They hope that the holiday will do them good and help their slow progress towards recovery following his father's death. But tragically their holiday coincides with the terrible tsunami of Boxing Day 2004. Will's mother is swept away in the tsunami, but against all odds Will survives. Oona, the elephant he is riding when the tsunami strikes, runs to safety in the jungle, taking Will with her. It is hard for Will to survive in the jungle. But luckily Oona is an extraordinary elephant – faithful and intelligent, she helps Will to find enough fruit, water, coconuts and even fish to keep him alive on their long jungle trek. Together they face amazing hazards – including a fire and an unforgettable face-to-face encounter with a tiger. They also meet a colony of orangutans who are wary at first, but eventually learn to trust Will, who respects and trusts them in return.

But Will's new life in the jungle is threatened when a party of hunters arrives and kills many of the adult orangutans, kidnapping Will and several baby orangutans. The kidnapers take him away from Oona to the evil Mister Anthony, who owns much of the jungle and thinks nothing of killing people and animals and destroying the environment in order to protect his own interests. Mister Anthony seems determined to kill Will, but just in time Will manages to escape with the baby orangutans, helped by Kaya, a friendly cook. Eventually he becomes reunited with Oona. But after a while, Will becomes ill. Fortunately, he reaches a sanctuary where orphaned and injured orangutans are cared for. The owner of the sanctuary, Dr Geraldine, takes him in and nurses him back to health.

Meanwhile, Will's grandparents have tracked him down, via Dr Geraldine. They want to take him home with them, but he now feels that his true life is in the jungle with Oona and the orangutans – so he decides to remain in the jungle and help with the work of the sanctuary. To his delight, his grandparents decide to move to Indonesia and help at the sanctuary too.

Did you know?

- Michael Morpurgo was the Children's Laureate from 2003 to 2005. As Laureate, he toured extensively, telling stories wherever he could. He aimed to remind adults as well as children of the power of a good story.
- As well as novels and stories, Michael Morpurgo also writes screenplays and opera libretti.

The Story Session

1. Introducing the story

Begin by talking about the Indonesian tsunami disaster of December 2004. You could tell the children how an enormous earthquake created a massive wave of water which engulfed villages and towns, resulting in the death of thousands of people and the destruction of homes and farms. Explain that in *Running Wild*, Will is caught up in that tsunami.

2. Reading the story

- Read Chapter 2. Ask: "What do we find out from this chapter about what has happened in Will's life recently? How do you think he would be feeling? What do we find out about the elephant, Oona? Do you think Will and Oona will be safe?"
- Encourage the children to predict what will happen to Will in the rest of the book. Explain that the tsunami destroys the resort Will was staying in, so he can't go back and has to survive in the jungle with Oona. What will he eat? How will he survive? How do they think the story might end?
- If you have time, encourage the children to read the rest of the book. At the end of the book, talk about why Will decides to stay in the jungle at the end rather than going back to the farm with his grandparents. Do the children think he made the right decision? What main message do the children think the author was hoping to convey to readers with this book?

3. Follow-up

- The poem 'The Tyger' by William Blake features strongly in the book. Share the poem with the children (search for it at www.bl.uk). Encourage the children to draw or paint a picture inspired by the poem, or you could work together on a class poem based on 'The Tyger', but focusing on a different animal such as an orangutan or an elephant.
- Encourage the children to do some internet research to find out about the plight of endangered orangutans in Indonesia and elsewhere. The website of the Sumatran Orangutan Society has some useful information aimed at children: www.orangutans-sos.org/kids.

YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class?
- Were they helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We're always happy to hear your comments, so please email us!

For the UK, email: bookfairs@scholastic.co.uk

For Ireland, please email: bookfairs@scholastic.ie