

# W&A

WITH MICHAEL MORPURGO



**Q. What book did you love as a child and why?**

**A.** As a little child I loved the stories that my mother read to me, *The Elephant's Child* by Rudyard Kipling, poetry by Edward Lear and John Masefield. She loved them and so she read them beautifully: that inspired my own love. I was not a great reader growing up but liked comic books like *Tintin*, *Dan Dare* and *Eagle*. I could follow the stories quickly and they were real page turners. I also enjoyed Enid Blyton books for the same reason.

**Q. Who are your current favourite children's authors/illustrators and why?**

**A.** I'm lucky to work with a lot of my favourite illustrators. Michael Foreman seems to know the same world that I knew when growing up so his illustrations always complement my writing. Quentin Blake has a wonderfully quirky eye on the world and Emma Chichester-Clark's drawings are extremely atmospheric. I think *Skellig* by David Almond is an extraordinarily beautiful book and I also enjoy Philip Pullman and Geraldine McCaughrean.

**Q. What tips would you give to encourage children to read?**

**A.** The only way to encourage children to read is to read them the books that you love and hope that they will trigger something within them as my mother did to me. If you find a story that they like then find similar authors; that will encourage them to read for themselves. You mustn't ever tell children they should read: you can't force it, it's something to be enjoyed.

**Q. What do you enjoy best about being an author?**

**A.** I most enjoy the beginning process of writing where you bring your dreams together in your head and pursue them, it's a feeling of great freedom. I also enjoy doing research around the world I'm creating and sometimes try saying little bits out loud to get the tone right. I call it Dream Time. I also enjoy receiving the completed book from the publishers, seeing my name on it and thinking to myself, what a clever fellow you are.

**Q. Tell us something about yourself that you think might surprise people.**

**A.** Although I've written over 120 books people might be surprised to know that I'm quite lazy. I always put off until tomorrow what I should be doing today. The bit I find difficult is settling down to write. Of course, you always get into trouble for putting things off and I don't like being in trouble so I give myself a deadline for every piece of writing that I do. So people might be surprised to know just how good I am at procrastinating.

*'I saw the grey soldiers ahead of us raise their rifles  
and heard the death rattle of a machine gun...'*



A powerful story of the truest of friendships in the worst of wars from the award-winning former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo.

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