

BOOK KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – GOODNIGHT MR TOM BY MICHELLE MAGORIAN

Important Information

Plot

William Beech is evacuated from London during World War II. He suffers from physical and emotional abuse from his mother and expects that Mr Tom will be the same. Tom, known to be rather grumpy by the rest of the villagers, soon realises William cannot read or write and they develop a caring relationship between one another. William eventually has to return to his old life again in November.

Themes

War, Loss, Love, Abusive Relationships, Power of Expression and Community

Setting

The book is set between 1939-1940, just as war has been declared. The novel beings in inner city London but the threat of mass bombings means children have to evacuate. William journeys to the small countryside village of Little Weirwold where he makes new friends, attends school and develops new relationships.

Characters

Tom Oakley	Protagonist - Mr Tom is in his 60s. His wife and baby son died 40 years earlier. Villagers see him as grumpy and reclusive, but he is a kind man.
Sammy	Sammy is a collie dog owned by Mr Tom.
William Beech	Protagonist - This eight-year-old boy from London is sent to Little Weirwold after a huge threat of bombing raids from the German Air Force.
Zacharias Wrench	Zach is a flamboyant and artistic boy who is also an evacuee. He is kind and always encourages William.
George Fletcher	After being unsure to begin with, he becomes one of William and Zach's closest friends. He is down-to-earth and very different to Zach.
Carrie and Ginie	They are almost impossible to tell apart but very different in personality and interests.
Annie Hartridge	This is William's school teacher who becomes proud of William and all of his achievements. She has a mothering presence in his new life.
Emilia Thorne	She is the school librarian in charge of putting on plays.
William's mother	Antagonist - William suffers greatly from his physically and emotionally abusive mother. However, we see she is likely to have had a sad, unfortunate life and has dealt with her pain by becoming abusive.
Charlie Ruddles	Charlie makes sure everyone is putting the effort in during this time of war and takes the role of Air Raid Warden.
Geoffrey	Geoffrey lives in the believed-to-be haunted house at Spooky Cott who is a soldier that has returned injured back from war.



What Can the Book Teach Us?

Death of loved one is the hardest of all to face but learning to love again is possible.

Whilst there is much darkness, light and hope are always there.
Learn to express yourself.

Quotes

"If I painted the sky," she had said one day, "I could go through life paintin' nothin' else, for it's always changin'. It never stays still."

She had hoped that he had remained a serious child. The smile frightened her. It threatened her authority. She swallowed her feelings and stepped forward again, handing him her bag.

THE 7 STORY TYPES

NO. 1 – OVERCOMING THE MONSTER



Name of Book: Goodnight Mr Tom

Date Published: 1981

Author: Michelle Magorian

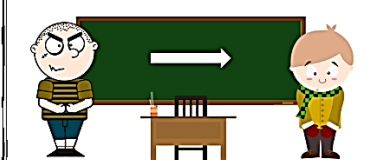
Reading 'Reconsidered' Spine: Key

Stage 2 appropriate

Genre: Historical Fiction

THE 7 STORY TYPES

NO. 7 – REBIRTH



THE 7 STORY TYPES

NO. 4 – VOYAGE AND RETURN

Stories like these are of normal protagonists who are suddenly thrust into strange and alien worlds and must make their way back to normal life once more.



Key Vocabulary

aghast	shock/ amazement, filled with fright / horror
brusquely	blunt or curt in manner or speech
clammy	covered with a cold, sticky moisture; sickly
dilapidated	old and rundown as a result of abandonment
emaciated	extremely thin to the point of a wasting away of flesh
flaxen	a soft yellow colour
fortnight	period of time covered by 14 days
jaundiced	yellowish tint to the skin that symptomatic of an untreated health condition
mackintosh	term for a raincoat
mollycoddle	to treat with indulgent care; pamper / spoil
mottled	spotted or blotched in colouring
quagmire	situation from which escape is very difficult
recluse	person who lives in seclusion or apart from society
sagacity	ability to make good judgments
shell-shocked	Loss of sight or memory resulting from time at war
surreptitious	something done in a secret or suspicious way
stupor	lack of physical and mental energy
unkempt	dishevelled, messy, and unclean
vicarage	British term for the housing where a minister lives

Context – The British government was worried that a new war might begin when Hitler came to power in 1933. They were afraid that British cities and towns would be targets for bombing raids by aircraft. Evacuation tried to ensure the safety of young children from the cities that were considered to be in danger of German bombing - London, Coventry, Birmingham, Portsmouth etc. 827,000 school children and their teachers were evacuated along with 540,000 mothers and children under five. Up to 12,000 pregnant women and many disabled people were also evacuated. At 11.07am on Thursday 31st August 1939 the order was given to evacuate and 1.5 million people were evacuated in total.