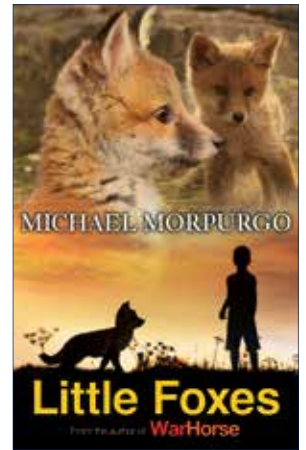


michael morpurgo

Little Foxes



Little Foxes – Billy Bunch

READ THE FIRST FEW PAGES OF THE BOOK TO THE CLASS:

'Billy Bunch came in a box one wintry night ten years ago. It was a large box with these words stencilled across it: 'Handle with care. This side up. Perishable.'

For Police Constable William Fazackerly this was a night never to be forgotten. He had pounded the streets all night checking shop doors and windows, but it was too cold a night even for burglars. As he came round the corner and saw the welcome blue light above the door of the Police Station, he was thinking only of a mug of sweet hot tea waiting for him in the canteen. He bounded up the steps two at a time and nearly tripped over the box at the top.

At first it looked like a box of flowers, for a great bunch of carnations – blue from the light above - filled it from end to end. He crouched down and parted the flowers. Billy lay there swathed in blankets up to his chin. A fluffy woollen bonnet covered his head and ears so that all Police Constable Fazackerly could see of him were two wide open eyes and a toothless mouth that smiled cherubically up at him. There was a note attached to the flowers; 'Please look after him', it read.

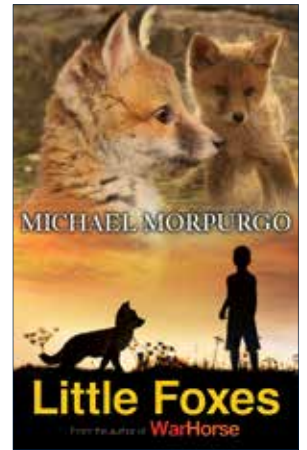
Police Constable Fazackerly sat down beside the box and tickled the child's voluminous cheeks and the smile broke at once into a giggle so infectious that the young policeman dissolved into a high-pitched chuckle that soon brought the Desk Sergeant and half the night shift out to investigate. The flowers – and they turned white once they were inside – were dropped unceremoniously into Police Constable Fazackerly's helmet, and the child was borne into the Station by the Desk Sergeant, a most proprietary grin creasing his face. 'Don't stand there gawping,' he said. 'I want hot water bottles, lots of 'em and quickly. Got to get him warm; and Fazackerly, you phone for the doctor and tell him its urgent. Go on, lad, go on.' And it was the same Desk Sergeant who to his eternal credit named the child, not after himself, but after the young Police Constable who had found him. 'I've named a few waifs and strays in my time,' he said, 'and I'll not condemn any child to carry a name like Fazackerly all his life. But Billy he'll be – not Billy Carnation, he'd never forgive us – no. now let me see, how about Billy Bunch for short? How's that for a name, young feller-me-lad?' And Billy giggled his approval.

Billy did not know it, but that moment in his box on the table in the Interrogation Room with half a dozen adoring policemen bending over him was to be his last taste of true contentment for a long time. He was not to know it either, but he sent a young policeman home that night to his bed with his heart singing inside him. Billy Bunch was a name he was never to forget.'

(Little Foxes, Chapter 1, Pages 1-5)

Why do you think 'Billy Bunch' was a name the policeman would never forget?

Write an overview of what you think the story of Billy Bunch will be before reading the rest of the book.

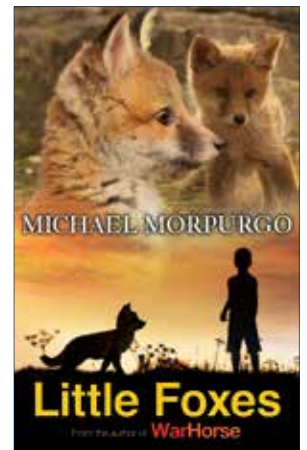


Little Foxes – Billy Bunch

[illegible]

michael morpurgo

Little Foxes



Little Foxes – Aunty May

‘Did you hear about those fox cubs, Billy?’ she asked suddenly, but she did not wait for an answer. ‘Four of them there was – that’s what my friend Ivy told me, you know Ivy at number 38 – and she said Mrs Bootle told her and she’s on the Committee so she ought to know, shouldn’t she? Well, someone spotted one of them a few days ago just down by that old ruin, just outside the fence it was. You know the place Billy? Then yesterday there was three of them seen from the school. Children came home full of it, Ivy said. You didn’t see them, Bill, did you? Don’t suppose you did – didn’t say anything about it, did you? Well anyway Mrs Bootle wasn’t going to have it. Vermin are vermin, like she says, and when they grow up they only breed, don’t they? And they’re into dustbins, all the time, spreading litter and disease. And Ivy says she knows her tabby cat was eaten by a fox last year – couldn’t have been anything else, she says. And like Mrs Bootle says, they’re a danger to health. I mean did you smell that dead fox a few weeks back? And she says they’ve been known to attack children in their prams when they’re hungry enough. And they don’t wash you know, they don’t ever wash. Well they wouldn’t, would they? Anyway, Mrs Bootle, she’s Chairman of the Committee now, you know, well she wasn’t having it, like I said. She rang up the Pest Control people last night and they came quick as lightening first thing this morning. Not surprising really – been a lot of complaints about Vermin on the estate. What’s the matter Billy? Don’t you like your baked beans?’

(Little Foxes, Chapter 6, Page 84)

Divide into two groups. One group is Billy’s team and likes the foxes. The other is Aunty May’s team and dislikes the foxes.

Prepare your arguments for and against foxes and hold a debate about whether they should be treated like vermin or not.

Billy’s team – pro foxes	Aunty May’s team – anti foxes

MICHAEL MORPURGO

Little Foxes

From the Author of WarHorse

'Hidden now from the estate, and with the world wild about him, Billy at last found peace. Here he could lie back on the springy grass the rabbits had cropped short and soft, and watch the larks rising into the sky until they vanished into the sun. Here he could keep a lookout for his owls high in the stone wall of the chapel itself, he could laugh out loud at the sparrows' noisy warfare, call back at the insistent call of the greenfinch and applaud silently the delicate dance of the wagtails on the gravestones...

(*Little Foxes*, Chapter 2, Page 16 and Page 18)

Once you have a clear picture in your head of the wilderness, write a poem that describes it.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.