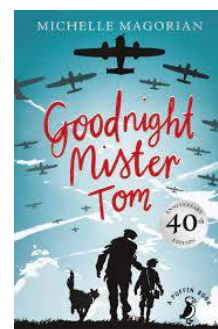


**Title:**

Goodnight Mr Tom

**Author:**

Michelle Magorian

**Blurb:**

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, Willie Beech, a thin, withdrawn eight-year-old boy, is evacuated from London. He is placed with a gruff widower called Tom Oakley, who has been a recluse since the death of his wife and child 40 years earlier. Tom is horrified by the abuse Willie has experienced. With quiet authority, patience and sensitivity, Tom takes care of Willie, and a bond develops between them. Gradually, Willie's physical and emotional scars begin to heal.

**Author background:**

Michelle Magorian was born in 1947, and her father was in the Royal Navy. She lived in Singapore and Australia before returning to England at the age of nine. She became interested in drama and trained to be an actress. While touring with the theatre, Magorian began writing poetry and short stories. *Goodnight Mister Tom* evolved from a short story inspired by a song in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* and her mother's memories of the Second World War. The novel took over four years to write and was immediately successful on publication.

**Cultural background:**

The Second World War started in 1939 and lasted until 1945. From 1st September 1939, children living in cities and towns were evacuated to the countryside, where they were safer from bombing. During the Second World War, railways, harbours and cities were targeted by German bomber planes.

**Literary terms:**

**Accent:** A way of pronouncing words that is often like other people from that area or country. For example, Will has a strong cockney accent that is reflected in how he pronounces certain words.

**Dialect:** The pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary that are often used by people from the same area or country. For example, Tom says 'Ent they?', which means 'Aren't they?'

**Historical fiction:** Historical fiction stories take place at a real time in the past, but the events might not have really happened.

**Linear:** A linear narrative is a story that is told to the reader in the order in which the events happen. The story is in a logical order, progressing from what happens at one point in time to the next. Flashbacks are not normally used.

## BOOK ANALYSIS

**Pace:** The pace is the speed at which the story is told. For example, an action story often has a fast pace, with lots of events happening one after another. Historical novels, like *Goodnight Mister Tom*, may have a slower or gentler pace.

**Pastoral:** A pastoral landscape refers to land that is used for grazing sheep or cattle. A pastoral novel is about the benefits of living in the countryside.

### Vocabulary examples:

Archaic language and other vocabulary including: aghast, clammy, dither, dilapidated, emaciated, jaundiced, quagmire, surreptitious

### Benefits for our children:

This book is really a gentle and moving story about the developing relationship of trust and love between Willie and Tom. But it also gives a very clear background picture of life in England during the Second World War, the contrast between life in the country and life in London. It depicts the differences between the city and country, and for some of our children, the country is all they know.