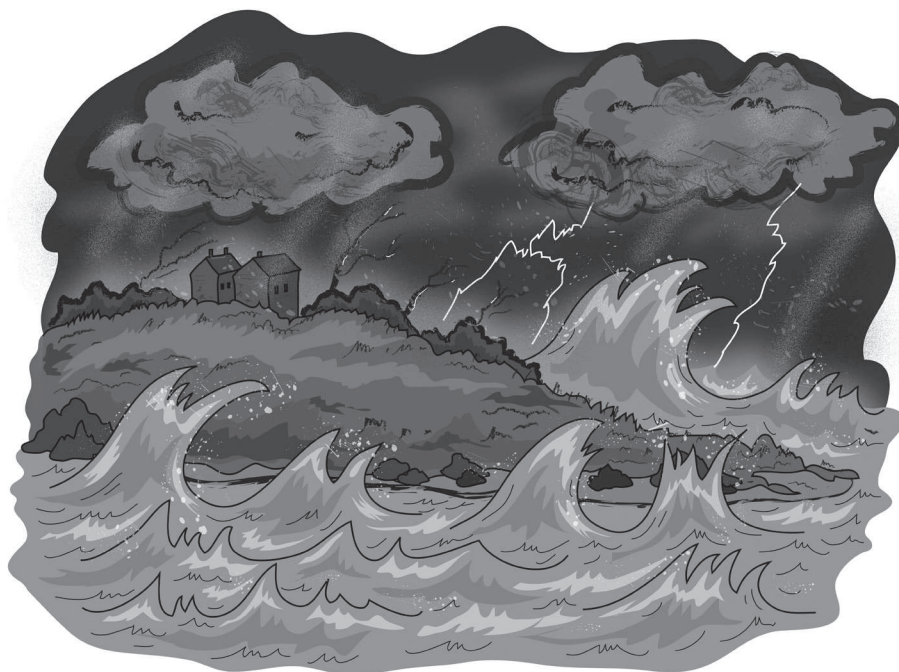


Why the Whales Came

Michael Morpurgo

- 1 Mother was sitting in the kitchen, her chair rocking back and forth. The lamp was on the table beside her and her sewing lay in her lap. I expected a wiggling from her for being out after dark but she looked up vacantly at us as we came in and seemed neither annoyed nor surprised that we were late.
- 5 “Well,” she said, a weak smile on her face. “You’re back.” And then, “I’m afraid your Mr Wellbeloved was right after all, Gracie. I thought he might be, you know. I didn’t want to believe him, no one did, your father least of all; but he’s an educated man, Mr Wellbeloved, he could see it coming.”
- 9 “Right about what, Mother?” I asked. “What’s happened?”
- 10 “Where is everyone?” Daniel asked. “Can’t find anyone at home.”
- 11 “They’ve all gone to a meeting in the church, Daniel. Father’s gone too, Gracie. They called an island meeting as soon as they heard the news this afternoon.”
- 13 “It’s the war, isn’t it?” Daniel said. “They’ve started the war, Gracie, like old Welly Belly said they would.” And Mother lowered her head.
- 15 There was such a storm that first night of the war, a violent thunderstorm that flashed and rolled around the island as if it wanted to uproot it from the sea. The wind moaned and howled horribly through the house. White sheet lightning turned the night to day outside my window heralding each new rumbling crescendo of thunder.



Name:	Class:	Date:
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1 Circle the correct option to complete each sentence.

a) At the start of the extract, Mother is:
 annoyed anxious busy surprised

b) The narrator is:
 Mother Gracie Mr Wellbeloved Daniel

2 Find and copy one piece of evidence from the first paragraph that shows the story is not set in modern times.

3 Mother “looked up vacantly at us”.

Which word is closest in meaning to “vacantly” in this sentence? Tick one.

angrily ☐ happily ☐ blankly ☐ comfortingly ☐

4 Look at paragraph 2, which begins ““Well,” she said.”

Find and copy two words or phrases that show Mother is anxious and unsure.

5 Who do you think “old Welly Belly” is?

6 Do you think Gracie and Daniel are sister and brother?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

7 Number these events to show the order in which they happened – this may not be the order in which you read about them.

Event	Order
Gracie and Daniel came into the kitchen.	
Father went to the church.	
Mr Wellbeloved predicted there would be a war.	
They called an island meeting.	

8 Look at the paragraph describing the storm. Find and copy four different words and phrases that show how severe the storm was.

9 Why do you think the writer decided to write a violent storm at this point in the text? Use evidence from the text in your answer.
