



This text is from *This Morning I Met a Whale* by Michael Morpurgo.

Michael lives in London near the River Thames. One day he goes to the river to look at the birds and is surprised to find a very different creature there.

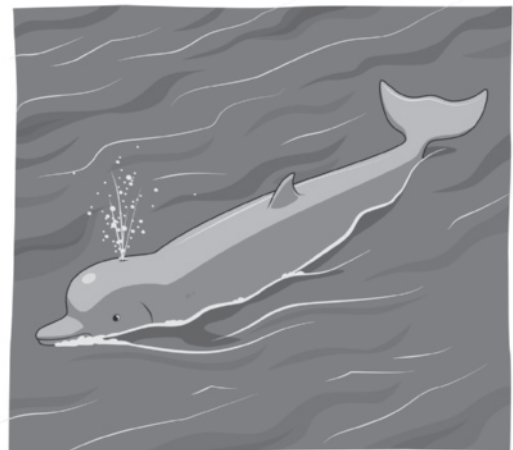
This Morning I Met a Whale

This morning I saw an egret* too, perched on a buoy out in the river, and you don't see many of those. They're quite like herons, only much smaller, and white, snow-white. He was so beautiful. I couldn't take my eyes off him.

I was watching him through my binoculars, and he was looking right back at me. It was like he was asking me, 'Hey you, what are you doing here? This is my river, don't you know?' Suddenly, without any warning, he lifted off. Then they all lifted off, all the birds on the shore. It was really strange. It was just as if I'd fired a gun or something, but I hadn't. I looked round. There wasn't a single bird anywhere. For a while the river was completely still and empty and silent, like it was holding its breath almost, waiting for something that was about to happen. I was doing the same.

Then I spotted something slicing slowly through the water towards me. It was a fin. Shark! I thought. Shark! And a warm shiver of fear crept up my back. Then I saw the head and knew at once it couldn't be a shark. It was more like a dolphin, but it wasn't. It wasn't quite the right shape. It was too big and too long to be a dolphin. It was big enough to be a whale, a real whale. Now I knew what it was. With a face like that, I knew it had to be a bottle-nosed whale. (I know quite a lot about whales because my uncle sent me a whale poster he'd got out of a newspaper, and I've had it pinned up in my bedroom over my bed ever since. So that's why I can recognise just about all the whales in the world, narwhals, belugas, sperm whales, pilot whales, minkies, bottle-nose whales, the lot.)

To begin with I just stood there and stared. I thought I was still dreaming. I couldn't take it in. I couldn't believe my eyes. I mean, a whale in the Thames, a whale in Battersea!



*egret = a kind of bird

Name:

Class:

Date:

This Morning I Met a Whale

1

In paragraph one, Michael sees an egret.

What does an egret look like?

Give **two** things.

1

2

2b

1 mark

2

Look at the paragraph beginning: *I was watching ...*

Which phrase from this paragraph means 'unexpectedly'?

Tick **one**.

don't you know

☐

without any warning

☐

really strange

☐

about to happen

☐

2a

1 mark

3

What is the first sign that there is something unusual in the Thames?

2b

1 mark

4

Then I spotted something slicing slowly through the water towards me.

In this line, the word *spotted* is closest in meaning to ...

Tick **one**.

studied

☐

watched

☐

noticed

☐

witnessed

☐

2a

1 mark

/ 4

Total for this page

- 5 Draw lines to match Michael's thoughts about the whale with what he sees.

He thinks it is a shark

when he first sees its face

He thinks it is a dolphin

when he first sees its fin

He thinks it is a whale

when he first sees its head

1 mark 2b

- 6 Look at the paragraph beginning: *Then I spotted something ...*
Explain **two** different feelings Michael experiences when he first sees the whale.

1 _____

2 _____

2 marks 2d

- 7 How can you tell that Michael is very interested in animals?
Give **two** ways.

1 _____

2 _____

2 marks 2d

- 8 Look at the last paragraph.
What is Michael's reaction to seeing the whale?

1 mark 2d

/ 10
Total for this test