

Reading & Writing

1 Read the *Words2know*. Which of these do you read? Do you have any favourite writers?

Words 2 know (4.24)

- novels short stories blogs
- magazines newspapers poetry comics

2 Look at the book cover and read the caption.



- Do you know other novels which are also films?
- Do you prefer to read the book or watch the film?

About a Boy is a novel by Nick Hornby. It has been made into a film, starring Hugh Grant.

3 Read the introduction to *About a Boy* and answer the questions.

- What do you learn about Will?
- Has Will got any children?
- Why has Will joined the single parents' group?
- What do you learn about Marcus?

Thirty-six-year-old Will Freeman has a life without responsibilities. He isn't interested in children, marriage or work but he is interested in attractive single mothers. He invents a two-year-old son called Ned so that he can join a single parents' group. There, he meets Suzie, an attractive young mother, and her daughter Megan. One day, Will goes to the park with a group of mothers and their children. There, he meets a twelve-year-old boy called Marcus, who is having problems at home and at school.

4 Read the extract from the novel on page 89. Match the characters to the descriptions.

- [Will Suzie Marcus the park-keeper]

- _____ doesn't want to answer too many questions.
- _____ is sympathetic to Will.
- _____ kills a duck by mistake.
- _____ is angry about the dead duck.
- _____ lies about why Marcus was throwing bread at the duck.
- _____ seems worried about what he has done.

5 Discuss these questions in groups.

- How do Marcus and Will feel about each other at the beginning? Does this change?
- Why does Will lie to the park-keeper?
- Do you think Will is a nice person? Why? Why not?

6 Tick the things you think will happen later in the novel. Do you have any other ideas? Check on page 124.

- Will and Suzie fall in love.
- Suzie finds out about Will's lies and won't forgive him.
- Marcus and Will become friends.
- Will has a bad influence on Marcus.
- Marcus finds out about Will's lies and won't forgive him.
- Will becomes a better person.

7 Complete the book review of *About a Boy* with the *Phrases2know*.

Phrases 2 know (4.25)

Describing a book or film

- it's set in It was written by My favourite part is
- It's about (It) is called ✓ It was released
- It stars The characters are I like it because

A book I've read recently

The book ¹ *is called* 'About A Boy'.
² _____ a man called Will and his relationship with a boy called Marcus.
³ _____ an English writer called Nick Hornby and ⁴ _____ London in the present day.
⁵ _____ it's a modern story and it's also very real and funny. ⁶ _____ realistic and interesting, especially Will, the main character, and Marcus, the boy. ⁷ _____ the scene where Will and Marcus first meet in the park.

'About a Boy' has also been made into a film. ⁸ _____ five or six years ago. ⁹ _____ Hugh Grant. It was quite funny but parts of it were sad. I really recommend the book and the film!

ABOUT A BOY

(4.26)

Will played with the children for most of the afternoon. He kept away from the adults sitting on blankets because he didn't want to have to answer any difficult questions about Ned. He kept away from Marcus, too. Marcus was walking round the lake, throwing bits of his sandwich at the ducks.

Later, Suzie came to talk to him. 'You miss him, don't you?'

'Who?' He meant it; he had no idea who she was talking about. But then he remembered about Ned. 'I'll see him later.'

'What's he like?' asked Suzie.

'Oh ... Nice. He's a really nice boy.'

Before Suzie could ask more questions, Marcus ran over to them. He seemed very nervous and upset.

'I think I've killed a duck,' he said.

Will, Suzie and Marcus stood on the path by the edge of the lake, staring at the duck's dead body in the water.

'What happened, Marcus?' Will asked.

'I don't know. I was just throwing a piece of my sandwich at it. I didn't mean to kill it.'

'What's that in the water next to it? Is that the bread you threw at it?'

'Yes,' said Marcus. He didn't like Will much so he didn't want to answer his questions.

'That's not a sandwich, that's a loaf,' said Will. 'I'm not surprised the duck was killed.'

'Perhaps I didn't kill it,' said Marcus. 'Perhaps it died because it was ill.'

Nobody said anything.

They were all staring so hard at the scene of the crime that they didn't notice the park-keeper standing next to them. Marcus felt very frightened. He would be in big trouble now.

'One of your ducks has died,' said Will. He made it sound like the saddest thing he'd ever seen. Marcus looked up at him. Maybe Will wasn't such a bad guy.

'I was told it was your boy's fault,' said the park-keeper. 'It's a crime to kill a duck, you know.'

'Are you suggesting that Marcus killed this duck? Marcus loves ducks, don't you?'

'Yes,' said Marcus. 'They're my favourite animal. I mean, my favourite bird.' This was rubbish because he hated all animals, but he thought it helped.

'I was told he was throwing enormous loaves at it.'

'No,' said Will. 'He was throwing bread at the duck's body. He wanted to sink it because the sight of the dead bird was upsetting my friend's little girl, Megan.'

There was a silence. At last the park-keeper spoke.

'Well, I'll have to go into the water and get it,' he said.

Marcus felt much better. He didn't have to go to prison.



8 Write a review of a book or film. Use the *Phrases2know* and include the following:

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| <p>Paragraph 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The title What it's about Who it was written/directed by Where it's set | <p>Paragraph 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your opinion of the book/film/characters/story Your favourite characters/part | <p>Paragraph 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other information (Has it been made into a film? When was it released? Who stars in it?) Do you recommend it? |
|--|--|--|