Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Helping you choose books for children

0-5 5-7 7-9 9-12 12+

opening extract from

On Angel Wings

written by

Michael Morpurgo

published by

Egmont Publishers Ltd

All text is copyright of the author and illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

First published in Great Britain 2006 by Egmont UK Limited
239 Kensington High Street, London W8 6SA

Text copyright © 2006 Michael Morpurgo
Illustrations copyright © 2006 Quentin Blake
The moral rights of the author and illustrator have been asserted
A CIP catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library

ISBN 10 – 1 4052 2175 5
ISBN 13 – 978 1 4052 2175 2

Printed and bound in Singapore
All rights reserved
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

For all the children who read this
on Christmas night.
M.M.





The truth is that once we weren't children any more we never did believe Grandpa's story, not really, much as we might have wanted to. It was just too improbable, too fantastical. We still loved listening to it, though. Christmas nights would never have been the same without it.

We'd be out there on the hillside, all of us together, keeping watch over the sheep by night. That's where he'd been on the first Christmas night all those years before, the night it happened – or that's what he told us. We'd be wrapped in

our cloaks and huddled round the fire, the sheep shifting around us in the darkness, and we'd be ready and waiting for the story to begin. That's just how it was last night. Grandpa poked his shepherd's crook into the fire and sent a shower of sparks flying up into the night sky.

'When I was very little,' he began, 'I remember I used to think all the stars were made out of sparks like those, sparks that went on for ever, that never went out. Then one night, I'd have been nine, or maybe ten years old, something quite wonderful happened. Father and Uncle Zac were there, and my older brothers, Reuben and Jacob. We were all tired and irritable. It had been a long, hard day. We'd lost a couple of lambs the night before, to a wolf maybe, or a jackal. So no one was singing around the fire that night. No one was even talking. I remember I was stabbing at the fire with my crook, making stars of the sparks, as I loved to do. Then it happened.

Instead of flying up high to join the stars, they seemed to be playing with one another, then arranging themselves into a figure, a human figure, that was bathed in sudden glorious light,