



# Kensuke's Kingdom

*By Michael Morpurgo*

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## **Kensuke's Kingdom** By Michael Morpurgo

A spellbinding tale of survival and self-discovery from award-winning author Michael Morpurgo, who is poised for breakthrough U.S. success.

When Michael's father loses his job, he buys a boat and convinces Michael and his mother to sail around the world. It's an ideal trip - even Michael's sheepdog can come along. It starts out as the perfect family adventure - until Michael is swept overboard. He's washed up on an island, where he struggles to survive. Then he discovers that he's not alone. His fellow-castaway, Kensuke, is wary of him. But when Michael's life is threatened, Kensuke slowly lets the boy into his world. The two develop a close understanding in this remote place, but the question of rescue continues to divide them.

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## **Kensuke's Kingdom By Michael Morpurgo Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #144830 in Books
- Brand: Scholastic Paperbacks
- Published on: 2004-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.50" h x 5.30" w x .50" l, .28 pounds
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 176 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-8-This poignant adventure story begins in England in 1988 and ends halfway around the globe in a place that will change the 11-year-old protagonist forever. After losing his job, Michael's father surprises the family by purchasing a yacht in which they will sail around the world. In the first weeks at sea, Michael, his parents, and his dog, Stella, zigzag from England to Australia and across the Coral Sea, where Michael's reverie comes to a frightening end. In the middle of the night, he and Stella are swept overboard in a fierce storm, and he later awakens on an island beach. The island is a hostile jungle full of howling gibbons, voracious mosquitoes, and brutal heat, all of which challenge his ability to survive. Yet when he finds fresh water and food mysteriously laid out for him each morning, he realizes that he is not alone. He soon comes face-to-face with Kensuke, an old Japanese soldier who cautiously protects Michael in spite of the boy's dogged determination to build a bonfire that will signal potential rescuers, defying Kensuke's wish that the outside world never learn of his existence on the island. For nearly a year, the man and boy help each other, moving from an uneasy d,tente to a deep friendship. What might have been just a gritty tale of survival evolves into a gentle parable about trust, compassion, love, and hope. This well-crafted story has all the thrills and intrigues of Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet* (Macmillan, 1986) and Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* (Avon, 1976), and it will resonate with the same audience.

*William McLoughlin, Brookside School, Worthington, OH*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. A young boy is stranded on a small island with a man from a much different background who helps him survive. Does this sound like Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* (1969)? You bet, but it's also the plot of this highly readable British survival novel. When narrator Michael falls overboard, he ends up on a Pacific island, rescued by Kensuke, an old Japanese man who supplies him with food and water, but from a distance. Although Kensuke's broken English makes him sound uneducated, he was a doctor before he became stranded on the island at the end of World War II. He and Michael eventually forge a friendship in which Kensuke teaches the boy both survival skills and Japanese painting. Morpurgo avoids the stereotypes that characterize Taylor's novel, focusing, instead, on developing a touching relationship between Kensuke, who has been without human company for 40 years, and Michael, who learns to love the old man yet still longs for home. The end is bittersweet but believable, and the epilogue is a sad commentary on the long-lasting effects of war. *Kathleen Odean*

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Review

""A dazzling adventure' (by The Times.)"

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Susan Chestnut:**

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#### **Mattie Priest:**

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