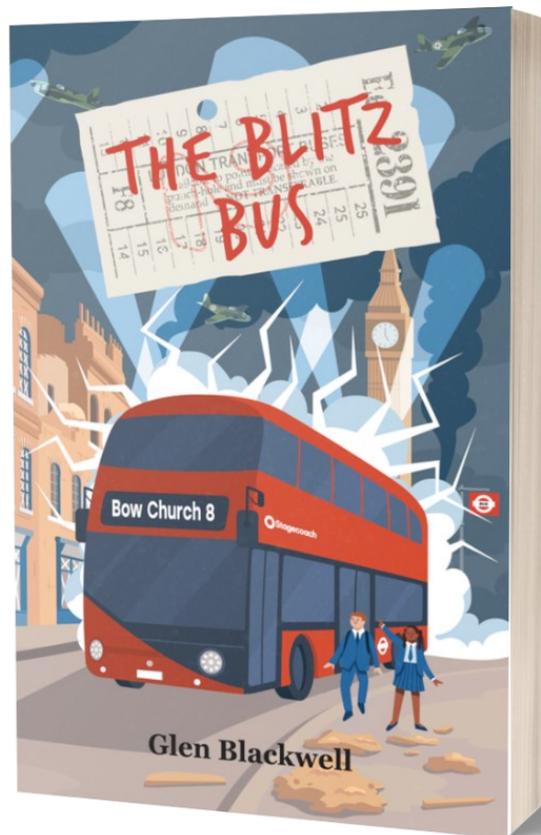


THE BLITZ BUS – COMPREHENSION EXERCISE



Emmie let out a huge sob – ‘It’s not a film set’, she cried. She held onto Jack for a moment, then took a step back, closed her eyes and shouted – ‘WHERE AM I?’

When Jack and Emmie suddenly find themselves transported back to London in 1940, they find a world both familiar, yet very different. As they dodge falling bombs and over-zealous policemen, they befriend Jan – a lonely Polish refugee. Together, they must work out if the shadowy figure they keep seeing is a spy and unlock the secret of getting home again...

INITIAL QUESTIONS

1) Look at the front cover. What do you think this story is going to be about?

2) What makes you think that?

3) Read the blurb. What genre do you think this book might be? Consider: comedy, horror, romance, history, sci-fi...

4) Why have you chosen this genre?

5) From reading the blurb, what do you think will happen to Jack and Emmie? Explain why you think this.

EXTRACT FROM THE BLITZ BUS – CHAPTER 2 (C) GLEN BLACKWELL

They reached the steps of the Tube station and clattered down, a mournful wail drifting after them, followed by a lot of shouting. As they reached the bottom of the steps and stopped to take a breath, Emmie looked around. This was definitely odd – the posters on the wall were really old fashioned and everyone seemed to be dressed quite formally – most of the men wore suits and the women were largely wearing dresses.

“No chips then, I guess?” said Jack, looking disappointed. “I don’t fancy getting any wetter though.” He turned his head to look at Emmie – “Are you ok?” he asked, “you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

Emmie didn’t get a chance to answer as, at that moment, a large crowd of people started coming down the stairs into the booking hall. “Move on down to the platforms,” said a man with an official sounding voice. Emmie and Jack got swept along in the throng, moving swiftly toward the escalators and then down to the platform level.

As they turned the corner onto the platform, both Jack and Emmie stopped in surprise – where there were usually people sat on benches, waiting for a train, there now stood rows and rows of bunk beds! There were even bunks down where the track should be. “What’s going on?” Emmie whispered quietly, “is everyone in fancy dress?”

Jack, still thinking about his chips, looked around. “Maybe there’s some kind of event going on?”

“Move along, please!” a man in a white tin helmet said loudly. Emmie looked at him curiously, and found her feet moving forward again, along with the rest of the crowd.

“Let’s sit down over here,” suggested Jack. They sank gratefully onto one of the lower bunks and stared at the mass of people slowly filing past, most talking quietly and taking their places on the bunks around them.

“What’s going on?” Emmie said again – this time her voice wavering slightly. “Do you think this is some sort of film set? Have they closed the station for the day?”

“Cool!” replied Jack, “maybe we’ll get to be in a film?” He looked around – there were still people coming onto the platform and almost all of the bunks were full now. There were a group of young children just along from where they sat who were playing a game of marbles on the platform edge – every so often a marble would roll off and someone in the track area would hand it back to them.

“I don’t like this – I think we should get going.” Emmie tugged on Jack’s arm - “There’s something not quite right going on.” She stood, picking up her school bag in one hand. Suddenly, ‘RUR, RUR, RUR, RUR’ - there was a series of muffled vibrations from above their heads. Emmie’s eyes bulged – “Now, Jack! Come on.”

“It’s only a train going through on the other track,” Jack said, surprised. He got up anyway and slowly followed Emmie back along the platform and through to the base of the escalators. There were people everywhere, some had spread blankets out on the floor, and there was a low murmur of conversation. Jack led the way up the central stairs again as the escalators still weren’t moving. It was hard going as there were people sat all the way up the staircase on one side.

As they reached the top and found themselves back in the ticket hall, there was another dull noise – this time it sounded more like a ‘CRUUUMMMPPP’. “That’s not a train!” shouted Emmie, quickening her pace towards the exit.

VOCABULARY

1) Use a dictionary to help you find the meaning of these words:

| Word | What does it mean? | Use it in a sentence |
|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mournful | | |
| Formally | | |
| Official | | |
| Curiously | | |
| Wavering | | |

2) For each of the sentences below, suggest an alternative to the word in bold:

He **turned** his head to look at Emmie – “Are you ok?” he asked, “you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

Jack, still thinking about his chips, looked around. “**Maybe** there’s some kind of event going on?”

“Let’s sit down over here,” suggested Jack. They sank **gratefully** onto one of the lower bunks and stared at the mass of people slowly filing past, most talking quietly and taking their places on the bunks around them.

Suddenly, ‘RUR, RUR, RUR, RUR’ - there was a series of **muffled** vibrations from above their heads.

Jack led the way up the **central** stairs again as the escalators still weren’t moving.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 1) Who noticed that something unusual was happening in the Tube station first – Jack or Emmie? What made you think this?

- 2) Why do you think the man asked everyone to move down to the platforms?

- 3) When Jack and Emmie reached the platform, there were rows of bunk beds. Why do you think they were there?

- 4) Why did Emmie want to leave the station? What do you think she was worried about?

- 5) How do you think Emmie felt when she heard the 'CRUUUMMMPPP' noise? How would you feel in the same situation?
