

Superbird

Brian Tomlinson

Before reading

1. Look at the cover. What can you see? What do you think this story is going to be about?
2. Now read the blurb on the back cover. Do you know any other books or films with a story like this?
3. Match the chapter titles with the sentences from each chapter.

Chapter 1 Superbird crashes in the desert

Chapter 2 Escape from Superbird

Chapter 3 The house

Chapter 4 The drawing of Superbird

Chapter 5 The journey back home

- a I looked through an open window and I could see one of the big people.
 - b They ran after us, shooting their guns.
 - c And then there was a very loud noise, thunder, and something hit Superbird very hard.
 - d The three of us smiled and held hands as Superbird took off.
 - e At first I didn't know what they wanted me to do, so I just took the pen and smiled at the people.
4. If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

Check your reading

CHAPTER 1

1. Read the first two paragraphs of the story. We don't know why Mary Mount hasn't spoken about the journey before. What do you think?
2. Match the numbers and phrases.

1 20	a the number of years since Superbird crashed
2 5	b Mary's age
3 4	c the number of people that died on Superbird
4 60	d the number of people everyone thought died on Superbird
5 4th	e the day of the interview
3. Chapter 1 ends: 'But some of them stayed on the hill. They were watching Superbird. But they couldn't see us.' What is going to happen in Chapter 2?

CHAPTER 2

1. How do the people in the desert look different from Mary Mount? Find four differences.
 2. Find three adjectives that describe Mary Mount in Chapter 2.

a _____ s _____ t _____
- Can you think of any more adjectives?
3. At the end of the chapter, Mary Mount ran towards the house. What do you think she finds there?

CHAPTER 3

1. True or false?
 - a Mary Mount saw two people in the house.
 - b The yellow-haired person was unfriendly.
 - c Mary Mount couldn't eat any food.
 - d Mary Mount was sad when she thought about Sam.
 - e No-one came to the house while Mary Mount was there.
2. Who or what is 'it' in these sentences?
 - a It came outside the house to meet me.
 - b It was brown and flat.
 - c It sat down near my feet and was very friendly.
 - d I've never shown it to anyone before.

CHAPTER 4

1. What three mistakes did Mary Mount make in her drawing of Superbird?
2. Why do you think the three people in the room wanted a drawing of Superbird?
3. Put these events in the right order.
 - a The people in the room were angry with her.
 - b Mary Mount counted the fingers on the woman's hand.
 - c The yellow-haired woman took her back to the room.
 - d She drew a real picture of Superbird.
 - e Mary Mount made some mistakes in her picture.
 - f Mary Mount ran away.
 - g Mary Mount lived with June for nine months.
 - h They took Mary Mount away in a car.

CHAPTER 5

1. Look at the words in italics. Which people do the pronouns refer to?
 - a *I* didn't tell *them* about the gas.
 - b *She* put her mouth on my face while someone took a photo.
 - c *Theys* screamed for a short time and then they were dead.
 - d *Why have they* locked me in a room all these years?
 - e *He* told me to turn my tape recorder off.
 - f ... we look forward to talking to *you* when you return.

the soldiers Captain Lake June Jim and Steve Mary Mount
2. How does Mary Mount feel about returning to Earth?
3. What do you think Mary Mount wants to do when she gets to Earth? Who does she want to see?

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CHAPTER 6

1. Look at the pictures on pages 26 and 28. Imagine these are pictures from a newspaper story. Write a sentence for each picture.
2. Correct the mistakes in the summary.

On the flight to Earth there were six spaceships. On Mary Mount's spaceship, there were seven people altogether. She became good friends with Captain Lake. Captain Lake spoke to her for the whole journey. While Superbird 2 flew round the Earth, the other Superbirds stayed with them. The humans wanted them to land at once. Suddenly there was the noise of guns. It was the humans. They were shooting at the spaceship.

CHAPTER 7

1. Who are Sheila and Judd? Have they met Mary Mount before?
2. Who said what?
 - a 'Hello! Where am I?'
 - b 'OK Judd. Be quiet! This is Mary. She's our friend.'
 - c 'You're a very lucky woman, Mary. You're lucky to be alive.'
 - d 'We want you to tell their captains to land the Superbirds on Earth.'
 - e 'You shot your guns at Superbird 2 first.'Major Jones the doctor Sheila Mary Mount
3. What is Major Jones going to ask Mary Mount? Write three questions.

CHAPTER 8

1. Who ...
 - a wanted Mary to talk to Captain Lake?
 - b was in hospital?
 - c said he was sorry?
 - d asked Mary and Captain Lake to go to Washington?
 - e was in Sheila's house when Mary got back?
 - f tried to shoot the President?
 - g married Major Jones?
 - h was going to fly on Big Bird?Captain Lake Sheila Sam Major Jones Mary the President
2. What has happened to Judd?

CHAPTER 9

1. Match the beginnings and endings.

1 Lots of people	a wanted to have a nice house.
2 Mary taught	b worried about her dream.
3 Mary and Sam	c her language to the Americans.
4 Mary was	d watched Big Bird take off.
2. Mary says: 'I saw a huge black thing in the sky and below it many things were dying. I heard them shout and I heard them scream and I saw them die.'

What do you think Mary Mount's bad dream means? Do you think her dream is going to come true?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Imagine you meet a visitor from another planet. What questions would you like to ask him or her?
2. Mary Mount is the most important character in Superbird. What do you like or dislike about her?
3. Here are some of the new things that Sylvia Beach and the others from Superbird 2 learnt while they were on Earth:
how to play jazz how to swim how to play football
Which ones do you think will be easy or difficult to teach a visitor from another planet?
4. Write a letter to the author, Brian Tomlinson, telling him why you liked or didn't like the book.
5. On page 47, Mary Mount and Sam Bridges are talking together. Write their conversation.
6. Choose five of the pictures and write a sentence about them.
7. What do you think will happen to these people after the end of the story?
Mary Mount and Sam Bridges
Major Jones and Mrs Sheila Jones
Captain Lake
8. Mary Mount learnt English during the nine months she stayed with June on Earth. Do you think it was easy or difficult for her. What problems do you think she had?
9. Make a quiz for other students to do.
e.g. Who said what? Who did they say it to?
'Well, just kiss me then and make me happy too.'
(Answer: Sam Bridges to Mary Mount, page 42)
Write five more questions.
10. Here is the blurb from another book at this level.

The Double Bass Mystery

Penny Wade is a musician. She is enjoying her first visit to Barcelona with her orchestra. But first her double bass is lost, and then someone in the orchestra dies. The police want to know what happened, and Penny's life changes as she slowly learns the truth.

Do you want to read *The Double Bass Mystery*?

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