

THE BORROWERS

By Mary Norton

**Guide by Dr. Betty Powers Francis
READING RIGHT**

THE BORROWERS

Synopsis

This is a story with humor as well as loyal friendships through thick and thin. The Borrowers are a group of small people who live in the homes of humans. They borrow things from humans to sustain their lives. Humans for the most part are unaware of their existence. It is generally the job of the males to do the borrowing. But Arrietty doesn't have any brothers and her father is getting too old to do all the family borrowing. The rule is don't be seen by humans. Arrietty ignores that rule. The human boy wants to be a friend to Arrietty and her family. It works for a while but the Borrowers are discovered and the humans plan to have them exterminated. The boy comes to the Borrowers' rescue and they are able to move on to a new location.

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Lesson 1

Chapters 1 - 4

1. In what city is this set? What country is that city in?
2. Where did Mrs. May live when she was a child?
3. What happened to Pod that upset him so?
4. What does "emigrate" mean?
("It's no good, Pod, I won't emigrate.")
5. Mrs. May tells a story about when she and her brother were little. This is called:
 - a. History
 - b. Foreshadowing
 - c. Flashback
6. What was different about the lights Mrs. Driver lit in Great Aunt Sophy's house and the lights we have today?
7. How tall do you think Arrietty is? What information did you use to decide?
8. Tell what Homily is like? (Her personality)

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Lesson 2

Chapters 5 - 8

1. How did the little people get the name of Borrowers?
2. Why does Homily say that Arrietty should learn to borrow?
3. For what reason did Arrietty and her father go upstairs?
4. What does "hankering," mean?
("And it'll give her a bit of interest like and stop her hankering.")
5. Put the following events in order.
___ Arrietty goes upstairs with her father
___ Pod is seen
___ Arrietty parents discuss Egglestina with her
6. Why do Homily and Pod tell Arrietty about Egglestina when they do?
7. What had caused the different Borrower families to move away?
8. Predict what you think might happen to Arrietty while she is out.

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Lesson 3

Chapter 9 - 13

1. How does Arrietty meet the boy?
2. Arrietty thinks that borrowing is normal. What does the boy call it?
3. Tell how Arrietty knows that the boy found the letter?
4. What does " bilingual" mean?
("Well, if you're born in India you're bilingual.")
5. Why does Pod allow *Great Aunt Sophy* to see him but not others?
6. At their first meeting the boy tells Arrietty something that upset her. What was it?
7. Do you think Arrietty is foolish or brave to go to see the boy?
Why do you think that?

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Lesson 4

Chapters 14 - 17

1. Why did Homily put curlers in her hair?
2. List at least 2 things the boy tells the Borrowers he COULD bring them from the upstairs dollhouse.
3. Who does Mrs. Driver, the housekeeper, think stole the objects from the sitting room at first?
4. What does "placatingly" mean?
("There, Homily," he said placatingly, "you've always wanted something like that!")
5. Put a check by the event that happened last.
☐ Arrietty and the boy begin reading together
☐ The boy giving the Borrowers a harp
☐ Homily meets the boy
☐ Pod finds out about Arrietty talking to the boy
6. Arrietty has been seen and even talked to the boy. At first what are her parents afraid of?
7. Tell two traits the boy has and examples of each that make you think that.

trait

example

trait

example

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Lesson 5

Chapters 18 - 20

1. Why does the family of borrowers have to move immediately?
2. What do you feel the boy was thinking when Mrs. Driver locked him in his room?
3. Mrs. Driver sent a cat after the Borrowers. What happened to the cat?
4. What did the boy do in the end that probably saved the Borrowers lives?
5. Mrs. May has her own reasons for believing in the Borrowers what were they?
6. In the end were Arrietty's parents right in being worried about her being seen by the boy? Explain why you think that?
7. What part of the story made you believe it?

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Answer Key

LESSON 1

1. This story is set in London, England.
2. Mrs. May lived in India when she was a child.
3. Pod is upset because a boy saw him.
4. Emigrate means to leave one's own country to settle in another.
5. C
6. The lights in Aunt Sophy's house were different than lights are today because hers used gas instead of electricity.
7. Answers may vary. The story says that Tom Thumb would be a giant in comparison so Arrietty was less than 2 feet tall.
8. Answers may vary. Homily worries a lot, is demanding, and she can't read and write.

LESSON 2

1. The Borrowers were given that name because they borrow things from humans to live.
2. Homily wants Arrietty to learn to borrow because the family doesn't have a son and there is concern that something might happen to Pod.
3. Arrietty and her father go upstairs because Homily needed a new scrub brush.
4. Hanking means to yearn or crave for something.
5. The correct order is 3, 1, and 2.
6. Homily and Pod decide to tell Arrietty about Egglintina because Pod had been seen and they were concerned that their life was not as safe as it had previously been. They didn't want Arrietty to slip out and get eaten.
7. Other Borrower families had moved away because of changing circumstances in the house had changed. Not as many people lived in the house so there was less food and other items to borrow.
8. Answers will vary.

LESSON 3

1. Arrietty meets the boy when she goes outside and he is lying in the grass.
2. Arrietty thinks the borrowing is normal but the boy calls it stealing.
3. Arrietty knows the boy found her letter because she overheard Mrs. Driver talking about the boy out in the yard calling down all the rabbit holes for an uncle something.
4. Bilingual means the ability to speak two languages.
5. Pod lets Aunt Sophy see him because she drinks too much and no one will believe anything she says.
6. The boy tells Arrietty that there are no other Borrowers left and that upsets her.
7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 4

1. Homily puts curlers in her hair because she doesn't want to get caught not looking her best.
2. The boy says he could bring any of the following: carpets, rugs, and beds, cooking pans, tables, a pot with a plant, and a cage with a bird.
3. Mrs. Driver thinks Aunt Sophy is taking the missing items.
4. Placatingly means to sooth or appease.
5. The event that happened last is **THE BOY GIVING THE BORROWERS A HARP**.
6. Arrietty's parents are afraid that they will be found out since she was seen by a boy.
7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 5

1. The Borrower family has to move immediately because the housekeeper is having the police and a sanitary inspector come to the house and check it out.
2. Answers may vary. The boy was probably feeling angry and upset when he was locked in his room because he knows the Borrowers are in trouble and he is unable to help them.

3. The cat that was supposed to chase off the Borrowers was chased off by the Rat Catchers terrier dogs.
4. The boy probably saved the Borrowers lives by breaking the outside grating on the house so the Borrowers could escape.
5. Answers may vary. Mrs. May left things out for the Borrowers and they disappeared, that convinced her they were real.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.

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