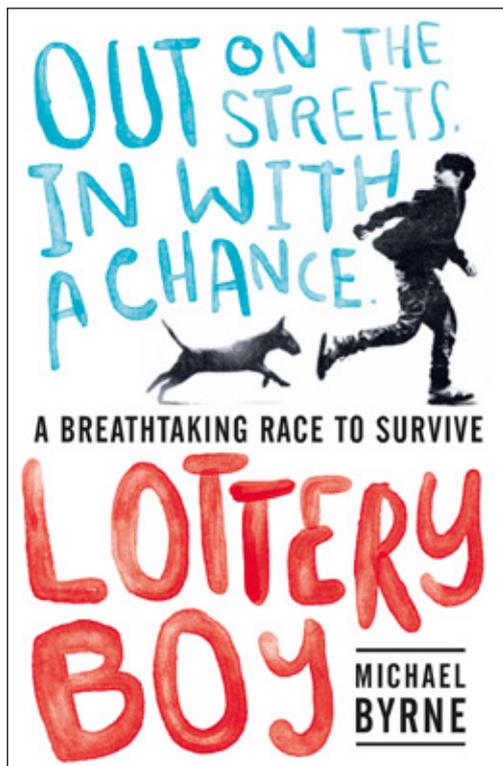


# LOTTERY BOY

**MICHAEL  
BYRNE**



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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Since the death of his mum, twelve year old Bradley (nicknamed Bully) is homeless and living on the streets of London with his dog Jack, a Staffordshire bull terrier. He's struggling to survive and has no idea what his future might hold – although he's certain that it isn't going to be rosy. One day, hidden in the last birthday card his mum gave him, he finds a lottery ticket she left for him and discovers that it is a "BIG" winning ticket. However, there are a few challenges to be overcome ... only five days remain to claim the prize. Bully is only twelve, claimants must be over sixteen and he's not sure there is anyone he can trust to claim it on his behalf, plus half of London's criminals have heard the news of the win and are hotly pursuing Bully.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Byrne worked as an English teacher in a secondary school just a few miles from Heathrow. He then moved to Winchester to work as an airport taxi driver. The irony is not lost on him. Michael lives with his daughter Eve and their cat Chloe in Hampshire. He is now a full-time writer. *Lottery Boy* is his first novel and he is working on his second novel for Walker Books

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## DISCUSS

1. Bully can't understand why people had books that were stories and kept them for so long after they had read them (p174/5). How would you persuade him of their value?
2. As part of the dedication in the book, there is a quote by Alfred Lord Tennyson, which is "Dreams are true while they last and do we not live in dreams?" What do you think this means and how do you think that quote relates to Bully's experiences in the book?
3. Imagine that you were Bully – how do you think you would feel if you discovered that you had won the lottery jackpot and then found out you have to be sixteen to claim. What would you have done in Billy's situation?
4. Each of the chapters has a time and date. Do you know why the numbers are written like this? What does this do as a device for the story and what impact does this have on the reader?
5. There is a strong sense of place to the story. If you have visited London, did the book bring London to life for you? Find a map of London and plot Bully's journey. Look at a map of the Underground and see how many stations he uses. How easy do you think that journey would have been for Billy, given the fact that he was being pursued?

6. What impressions about life on the streets do you get from the book? How do you think you would deal with being as hungry as Bully gets? Approximately 100,000 children run away each year and 70% of them aren't reported missing. Thirty percent of runaways are under 12 and 18,000 children sleep rough each year. What do these statistics say about our society and what might we do to change things?
7. Bully is portrayed as very "street savvy" and could be seen as beyond help, yet he dreams. He thinks about buying a zoo because he has a great love of animals. He only wants the "good" animals though. Which would they be and why? Why do you think that he keeps all of his affection for animals?
8. Although on one level Bully is "street savvy" in many ways there is a naivety about him. Explore some of the ways in which this naivety is shown and why do you think this is the case?
9. When Bully is trying to hide from Janks (p92), the description creates a heart-stopping tension. How did this make you feel as a reader and what was it about the writing that created such strong emotions?
10. There is a well-known saying that "Money is the root of all evil." In terms of this book, do you think this is true and what examples would you use to back up your view?
11. What did you think about the ending of the book – did it complete the story in a satisfying and believable way for the reader? How might it have ended differently? Write a different ending for the story.
12. Bully lets us know that he wants "everything to be OK at the end." (p187) Is this realistic at this point? He feels that this short respite from all of his cares is like a "trailer for another story." What do you think he means by this? You now know how this story ends – create a trailer for it or write another ending for Bully and Jack and create a trailer for that.
13. What is it about the relationship between Bully and Jack that makes it so powerful and makes the reader care about them so much?
14. What is the significance of the key (p189) and why do you think Bully can't understand why he has been given it?
15. Bully is beginning to understand the concept of trust as his life changes at the end of the book. He relates this to his understanding of dogs and how they should be treated and trained. Find examples of this in the text and explain how these could relate to your own personal experiences.
16. Dog fighting is illegal. Janks is using this to make money. Do you think that this still happens? What do you feel about Janks as a character and about the dog fights? Imagine that a dog fight has been raided and Janks captured. Write a newspaper article about this. Remember to link in everything that you have found out about Janks from the book.
17. Why do think Bully shares the news of his big win with people he barely knows and can't trust?
18. Bully refers to people as "Zombies" – why do you think he does this?

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## QUESTIONS FROM THE AUTHOR MICHAEL BYRNE

1. Think about what the lottery might represent in the book. What are the wider implications of chance and luck in *Lottery Boy*?
2. What do you think the significance of Jack's breed is to Bully in *Lottery Boy*?
3. Who is your favourite character in the book? Explain your thoughts and feelings.
4. What is your favourite scene in the book? Say why. Or rewrite that scene from a different point of view from the one in the book.
5. If you had to come up with the idea for the book, would you have written it any differently? Think about characters, the narrative (how the story is told and who's telling it) and plot (the actual events in the story). Explain your ideas.
6. Write the opening chapter of the sequel to *Lottery Boy*. Or write the last chapter of the prequel to *Lottery Boy*. Come up with a title for your book.

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