



# I Wish I'd Written? The Last Giants

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I Wish I'd Written

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**Michael Morpurgo** chooses Francois Place's **The Last Giants**.

Michael Morpurgo on Francois Place's **The Last Giants**, a potent tale of the folly of man ... <!--break-->

It is a rare thing to be able to write *and* illustrate supremely well. Many try, and the result is often uneven. In **The Last Giants** Francois Place has produced a master-piece.

The story seems simple enough. Set in Victorian England an anthropologist discovers a giant tooth, carved, depicting a map of rivers and mountains. Research confirms this is the region of the Black River. He sets off on a voyage of discovery across the world, until at long last he discovers a land of giants. These gigantic, gentle creatures seem to have an ideal way of being as yet unattained by human society. He studies them, draws them, and after some months - and very reluctantly - leaves them.

Back home at the Royal Geographical Society, with Darwin there amongst others, he presents his paper, announces to the world his extraordinary discoveries. He is instantly famous, as of course are the giants.

Upon his return to the land of the giants some time later, he witnesses the dreadful consequences of what he has done - the gentle tribe of giants has been sought out and massacred.

It is a potent tale of the folly of man, of lost innocence, of hubris, and all wonderfully illustrated - the illustrations form part of the storytelling (they are the records of this voyage). A marvellous book which won praise and prizes all over France, but is scarcely read here. Pick it up, read, and wonder.

**The Last Giants** by Francois Place is published by Pavilion, 186205 289 1, £5.99 pbk. Michael Morpurgo's latest book is **Kensuke's Kingdom**, Heinemann, 0 434 80418 5, £8.99 hbk (see review in **BfK 120**).

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