

BOOK KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – STREET CHILD BY BERLIE DOHERTY

Important Information

Plot

Jim Jarvis becomes orphaned in London during the Victoria-era and finds himself in the workhouse, begging on the street and earning a living with an unpleasant master. His search for safety and a better life keeps him moving on time and time again.

Themes

Bullying, Poverty, Hardship, Hunger, Life and Death, Education, Welfare, Being Orphaned.

Setting

The book is set mainly in 1860s London during a time when the population of England had doubled in 50 years. People came to the cities for work, often still ending up unemployed and homeless due to overcrowding and where sanitation and disease were serious problems.

Characters

Jim Jarvis	Protagonist - Orphaned boy living in London.
Jim's mother	Jim's mother dies leaving him orphaned.
Lizzie and Emily	Jim's sisters whom he is separated from.
Rosie	Jim's mother's only friend.
Tip	A friend Jim makes in the workhouse.
Mr Barrack	The harsh teacher in the workhouse.
Mr Sissons	The cruel master of the workhouse
Shrimps	A homeless boy who becomes Jim's friend.
Grimy Nick	Antagonist - Jim is sold to the captain of a small coal ferry.
Snipe	Grimy Nicks aggressive dog.
Madame Juglini	Provides Jim with a job at the circus.
Dr Barnardo	After seeing the poverty and struggle of street children, he sets up a home for destitute boys.

Context - The Victorian-era was defined by many things: Queen Victoria's reign of the British Empire, famous inventions from the telephone to the railways, unusual medical practices, and medical advances and the significant gap between the rich and the poor. The introduction of the Education Act of 1870 meant children could finally attend school and the abolishment of children in workhouses did not occur until the early 1900s. Jim Jarvis was a real boy, but not very much is known about him. His story and that of other orphans was written down in a series of very short leaflets which Doctor Barnardo sent to wealthy people when he was trying to raise money to open an orphanage.



What Can the Book Teach Us?

Have perseverance and the hope for something better.

Our current way of life should be appreciated.

Not all adults are kind and generous.

Quotes

"No bars on the windows or locks on the doors. No beatings. I could run away tomorrow if I wanted to. But I don't, see?"



Name of Book: Street Child

Date Published: 1993

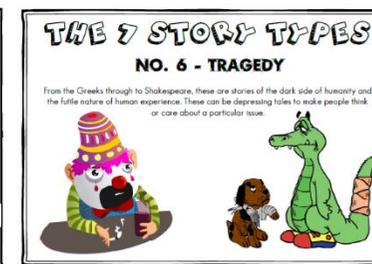
Author: Berlie Doherty

Reading 'Reconsidered' Spine:

Year 5/6 and on Pie Corbett's

recommended reading spine

Genre: Historical Fiction



Key Vocabulary

pauper	a very poor person
coaxed	to be persuaded or lured in
vaguely	uncertain, unclear or roughly
gruel	a thin, water porridge
infirmary	a place to care for the ill or dying
cholera	infectious, often fatal disease passed on through dirty drinking water. Many died of this in Victorian times.
scullery	a room joined to a kitchen
bramble	a prickly bush or shrub
taut	pulled or drawn tightly
lumber	to move with heavy clumsiness
caper	to dance or leap about playfully
skulking	moving around sneakily
wharf	a structure on the bank of a river to dock boats
reproach	to blame
workhouse	those unable to support themselves would work and be fed here. Treatment was harsh and unpleasant.