

Inspiring Children in Literature

di Sarah Gudgeon

1. Read

Do you like reading? Do you prefer classic stories or modern stories? Do you like stories with a happy ending? I do. Many of my favourite books are about children: children who are very poor; children who have no parents; children who live in orphanages; children who live with horrible old relatives but mainly children who stay strong and good and kind and finally get the happy ending they deserve.

Classic literature gave us *Oliver Twist* (by Charles Dickens) and *The Secret Garden* (by Frances Hodgson Burnett) which are two of my old favourites. *Oliver Twist* has a terrible life because his mother is dead and he lives in a workhouse. Then he has to work for a gang of criminals and is about to go to prison. But in his happy ending he is saved and discovers that he is from a rich family and is loved.

Mary Lennox is the main character in *The Secret Garden*. She is different because she lives in a nice home with rich parents in India but she is spoilt and is a very unpleasant little girl. Her life is filled with servants and luxury but she isn't loved. One day, her parents die and she moves back to England to live with her uncle. Here in England, she learns that the most important things in life are friends and family and love and she becomes a very happy child.

In modern literature, we've got *Matilda* (by Roald Dahl) and *Harry Potter* (by J.K. Rowling). *Matilda* is very intelligent but the rest of her family is very very stupid. *Matilda* learns to read by herself. She always goes to the library. *Matilda's* family are not interested in her. Finally, she goes to school but there is a very mean and scary headmistress, Miss Trunchbull. *Matilda* develops special powers and finds a friend in her new school teacher Miss Honey. Finally, she gets the terrible Miss Trunchbull to leave the school and all the children and Miss Honey are very happy.

Harry Potter is an orphan. He lives with his aunt and uncle; they are horrible. Then, *Harry* goes to *Hogwarts* which is a school for wizards. He makes lots of good friends and he learns magic. *Harry* and his friends use their magic against *Voldemort*, the baddie who killed *Harry's* parents. *Harry* becomes a fantastic wizard.

Glossary

deserve = meritare

workhouse = ospizio

spoilt = viziato

orphan = orfano

baddie = cattivo

2. Answer true or false

- a. Orphans have got a mum and dad.
- b. All the stories have a happy ending.
- c. Oliver Twist wants to work for a gang of criminals.
- d. Mary Lennox is a very pleasant little girl.
- e. Matilda's family is very intelligent too.
- f. Harry Potter is a baddie.

3. Who is your favourite orphan from a story? Why?

Talk to a partner.

My favourite orphan from a story isOliver Twist

He is inspiring becausehe has a really terrible start in life but he never loses his sense of what's right and wrong.

Teachers Notes

2. Answer true or false

- a. false
- b. true
- c. false
- d. false
- e. false
- f. false

3. Get the students talking about different books they've read in which the main character is an orphan before putting them into pairs.

Sample answer:

My favourite orphan from a story is

I like him because he is just a normal kid, with normal problems when suddenly, he has the power to do amazing things.

His mask is red with a black/ grey spider's web on it.