

# STREET CHILD KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Plot:

Jim Jarvis's mother dies and he is left an orphan in London to fend for himself. He is picked up by the Police and sent to the workhouse. He manages to escape but is taken in by Grimy Nick and faces brutal treatment and desperate circumstances. Finally, he is discovered by Dr Barnardo who takes him in to the city's "Ragged School".

### Themes:

injustice, poverty, child labour, cruelty, loneliness, responsibility, mistrust, resilience, humanity.

### Setting:

London – 1860s, workhouse

## CHARACTERS

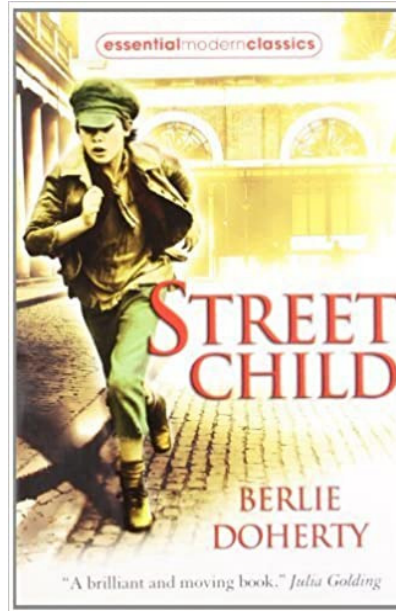
Jim Jarvis	A young orphan – the main character of the story.
Joseph	Old man in the workhouse
Mr Sissons	Mean man who runs the workhouse.
Mr Barrack	Horrible teacher at the workhouse who beats and whips the boys.
Grimy Nick	Mean and nasty character who uses Jim as a slave and mistreats him.
Dr Barnardo	Founder of the school for the city's "Ragged Children".
Rosie	A friend of Jim's mother who helps Jim and gives him a place to stay.
Shrimps	Jim's friend – his street "bruvver"

## KEY QUOTES

"Take 'em to the workhouse," the policeman said.  
"Let them die in there, if they have to."

"Now, them's the boys what tried to run away. They catch 'em and stick 'em in there till they're good. Remember that."

"They didn't often laugh. There wasn't much for them to laugh at."



Name of book:	Street Child
Date Published:	1995
Author:	Berlie Doherty
Genre:	Adventure, Historical Fiction

## DISCUSSION POINTS

- What was life like for poor people in Victorian times?
- Why do you think the workhouses were designed to look and be like a prison?
- Why do you think the schoolteachers 'beat' the children in Victorian times? Was this right?
- Jim has several 'homes' during the course of the story. How would you define the word 'home'? Do you think Jim could call any of the places that he lived a 'home'?

## VOCABULARY

asylum	A place where people are cared for.
brazier	A metal container for holding lit coals.
clamour	A loud noise.
coamings	A raised edge to keep out water.
contempt	The feeling that a person or thing is worthless or beneath consideration.
dormitory	A building with many bedrooms.
gruel	Thin oat mixture boiled with water.
infirmary	A place to care for the ill or injured.
lashed	Hit with a whip or cane.
lumbered	Moved in a slow, heavy, awkward way.
malevolence	Doing unkind things to others.
orphan	A child whose parents have died.
ragged	(Of cloth or clothes) old or torn.
sallow	Yellowish-grey, sickly skin colour.
scrawny	Very thin and skinny.
scullery	A room where food is prepared.
shilling	Former British coin which would have been roughly a week's pay.
sluice	A channel of water.
snarling	Making an aggressive growl with bared teeth (e.g. dogs).
vagabond	Someone with no permanent home.
wharf	A place in the water where ships and boats dock.
wheezing	Breathing with a whistling or rattling sound in the chest.
whelks	An edible sea snail with a pointed shell.
workhouse	A public institution in which the destitute of a parish received board and lodging in return for work.
wretched	Someone who is incredibly unhappy and miserable.

