

Boys Without Names

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This novel follows an 11-year-old boy, named Gopal, who lived in a rural Indian village with his dad, mom, and younger twins. His family depended on their crops to survive, but after an inflation of the crops, his family was left extremely poor and in debt. With no other choice left, his father decides to quietly leave the village and go to Gopal's uncle's house in Mumbai to look for new opportunities. As the oldest child, Gopal seeks for a job to earn money for his struggling family. When a stranger offers to introduce Gopal to a job, Gopal does not hesitate and follows the stranger. However, instead of a job that pays money, Gopal was tricked into working for a man for no money and was trapped there. Gopal soon finds out that he is not the only one; there were 6 other boys already working for the man. They had to follow many rules, including no talking to one another. The boys silently worked in horrible conditions with minimum food and rest. This changed when Gopal decides to do what he loves to do best: tell stories. As the other boys start to open up and share stories too, they are able to bond and grow closer. Gopal, who gave up on escaping, started to become hopeful again with the growing friendship between the boys.

This book was entertaining to read from the beginning to the end. This book gave me a more insightful view on how children are tricked into child labor, how they are treated, and what their lives are like. Throughout this book, there were many parts that broke my heart for the kids. The only part that I disliked about this book was that it was a little slow in the beginning. Overall, I absolutely enjoyed reading this book!

The best age group to read this book would be middle school and early high school students. The vocabulary is not very difficult and is appropriate for middle school students. However, it is also suitable for high school students due to the insight it gives the reader on child labor. Although this book is fictional, the author has done thorough research on child labor and has incorporated many truthful events into this novel.

I would recommend this book as a book to get from a library. This book can be a great resource for students to learn about child labor through a child's perspective from a novel. The storyline is not very appropriate as a gift, so I would not recommend getting this book as a gift. However, it is a perfect book to check out at the library to read and learn.

Recommended Titles:

“Escape from Aleppo” by N.H. Senzai

“Shooting Kabul” by N.H. Senzai

“Amal Unbound” by Aisha Saeed