Boys without Names
by Kashmira Sheth

Teacher’s Edition

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by Kashmira Sheth
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# Table of Contents

About the Book and the Author ........................................................................................................... 4

Prereading Activities ............................................................................................................................. 5

Chapter by Chapter

- Chapters 1–4 (pages 1–37) .................................................................................................................. 6
- Chapters 5–8 (pages 38–79) ................................................................................................................. 10
- Chapters 9–11 (pages 80–123) ............................................................................................................. 14
- Chapters 12–14 (pages 124–161) ......................................................................................................... 18
- Chapters 15–19 (pages 162–201) ......................................................................................................... 22
- Chapters 20–22 (pages 202–239) ....................................................................................................... 26
- Chapters 23–25 (pages 240–279) ....................................................................................................... 29
- Chapters 26–28 (pages 280–305) ....................................................................................................... 31

Wrap Up .............................................................................................................................................. 33

Library Applications .............................................................................................................................. 35

Suggestions for Further Reading ........................................................................................................... 36

Correlations to National Standards ....................................................................................................... 37

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About the Book and the Author

Boys without Names
by Kashmira Sheth

Summary:
Eleven-year-old Gopal feels ashamed that his family must flee their rural Indian village to escape their debts. The family hopes for a better life in Mumbai, but once there, Gopal’s father goes missing. Desperate to help support his mother and younger siblings, Gopal follows a boy who promises him a factory job—only to find himself enslaved in a sweatshop. Author’s note.

JLG Reviewers Say:
★ Vivid details about daily life in India immerse readers in Gopal’s world.
★ Gopal is an incredibly sympathetic main character. It is impossible not to root for him as he attempts to help his family, himself, and the other boys held captive in the sweatshop.
★ It is heartbreaking, but realistic, seeing Gopal realize that he can’t always rely on his parents.
★ The book will expose kids to many human rights issues and provoke discussions about this important topic.
★ As Kashmira Sheth carefully reveals details about each of the boys, the reader, along with Gopal, perceives with increasing hope how the boys might be convinced to work together toward their emancipation.

Kashmira Sheth was born in Bhavnagar, India, and spent her childhood in Bhavnagar and in Mumbai. She moved to the United States when she was seventeen to attend college in Ames, Iowa. Ms. Sheth received her BS from Iowa State and an MS from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in microbiology, a field in which she worked for many years.

“Even though I pursued science,” Ms. Sheth says, “I was always interested in literature and read a lot. In school, I learned Gujarati, Hindi, English, and Sanskrit. When I was young, my family told me stories from the Indian epics Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Panchatantra.

“When my daughters, Rupa and Neha, were young, I read to them. When they were old enough to read on their own, they would talk to me excitedly about books, and I began to read along with them. It inspired me to write my first novel, Blue Jasmine.”

Boys without Names is Ms. Sheth’s sixth book for young readers.
Prereading Activities

Making Predictions
Reread the summary for *Boys without Names* on page 4. Then answer the questions below to make predictions based on evidence from the text and/or from your prior knowledge or personal experience.

1. How do you think Gopal will react to his enslavement?
   *Answers will vary.*
   
   I predict: Possible prediction: Gopal will try to escape.
   
   Based on what evidence? Possible evidence: If I were taken away from my family and made to work in a sweatshop, I would try to escape.

2. Who do you think are the boys with no names? *Answers will vary.*
   
   I predict: Possible prediction: The boys with no names are people Gopal meets in the sweatshop.
   
   Based on what evidence? Possible evidence: Gopal becomes enslaved in the sweatshop by following a boy who has promised him a factory job.

3. Set a purpose for reading based on your predictions above.

   Possible purpose: I want to find out who the boys with no names are and whether or not Gopal will ever be able to rejoin his family.
**Before You Read**

**Introducing Vocabulary: Foreign Words and Phrases**

*Boys without Names* takes place in the cities of Thane and Mumbai, which are in the state of Maharashtra in India (like: the city of Chicago in the state of Illinois in the United States). To give readers a sense of the region in which the story takes place, the author includes in Gopal’s native words, phrases, and expressions from languages spoken in the area.

To help readers understand the foreign terms, the author often defines them by using an **appositive** (an explanation that directly follows the word, set off by commas) or **context clues** (information in the nearby text). Complete the chart below by using appositives or context clues to define each term. If you need help, use the glossary on pages 307–310 of *Boys without Names.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Appositive or Context Clues</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>desh (page 1)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>land of our forefathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khajoor (page 3)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bindaas (page 3)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bajra (page 3)</td>
<td>context clues</td>
<td>a type of grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>borus-chinch (page 3)</td>
<td>context clues</td>
<td>a type of fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maha nagari (page 5)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>grand city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayavati nagari (page 5)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>make-believe city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahnbhalun ja! (page 8)</td>
<td>context clues</td>
<td>Be careful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhai (page 27)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chai (page 30)</td>
<td>context clues</td>
<td>a kind of tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thahro (page 35)</td>
<td>appositive</td>
<td>wait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After You Read
Checking Predictions
Before reading, you made a prediction about how Gopal would react to his enslavement. Gopal has not yet fallen in the hands of his kidnappers. However, you have come to know some things about Gopal’s character. Based on what you have read so far, do you think Gopal is someone who could escape enslavement in a big city? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Gopal is a smart, creative kid whose parents entrust him with responsibility for his siblings and knowledge of their hardest struggles. However, relative to the lives of children who live in the city, Gopal’s life has been very sheltered. He is not accustomed to brusqueness or trickery, and this may make him vulnerable to his captors.

Analyzing the Writing: Internal and External Conflict
An internal conflict is a problem a character experiences within himself or herself, such as indecision or grief about a loss. An external conflict is a problem caused by actions taken against a character by others in the story or by forces in nature, such as weather or animals.

In the chart below are examples of conflict Gopal and his family experiences in Chapters 1–4. Complete the chart by telling whether each conflict is internal or external and then explaining your answer. **Note:** Some conflicts can have both internal and external causes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Internal, External, or Both?</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gopal’s family is deeply in debt.</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>External: The family needs money to survive. Internal: Their indebtedness causes them to feel shame and stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Aai, the city is a monster.</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Aai feels distressed by the idea of leaving her village forever and starting over in an unpredictable place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baba wants a good future for Gopal.</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Baba feels protective of Gopal to the point where he is willing to sacrifice his good name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopal believes people should always pay their debts.</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Gopal feels shame that his father is running away from their debt and responsibility to someday repay it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopal can’t tell his friends he is leaving.</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>External: Telling could bring danger to Gopal’s family and friends. Internal: Gopal is very sad he can’t say goodbye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moneylender will harass Aai if Baba goes by himself to Mumbai.</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>The moneylender could abuse Aai and force her and her children to do hard labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The train fare was raised.</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Gopal’s family can’t pay the train fare, and they can’t return home, because it’s too dangerous.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting to Know the Characters: Traits
1. What do Baba and Aai’s differences of opinion about Mumbai show about them?

Possible answer: Baba is disillusioned with village life and idealistic about the opportunities he could find in the city, while Aai feels deeply connected to her village and friends and fearful about what could go wrong for the family in the city.

2. Reread Gopal’s story about the marble on page 16. What insights into Gopal’s character does this story give? Explain your answer.

Possible answer: The hero of Gopal’s story looks for a marble rather than silver or gold, which shows that Gopal values beauty over money. The story also shows that Gopal is a dreamer. (In his story, trees are as tall as ships and a marble is uncommonly beautiful and mysterious.)

3. How do Naren and Sita feel about Gopal, and what does this show about his character?

Possible answer: The two rather idolize Gopal. They want to be wherever he is, and they adore his stories. They also accept him as one of their caretakers. This shows that Gopal is gentle and nurturing with his siblings, as well as someone they and his parents can depend on.

4. What is contradictory about Card-Man’s character, and what brings out the contradiction?

Possible answer: When Gopal first meets Card-Man, Card-Man is someone who would steal a seat from a child and then taunt him. But Aai’s gentle nature brings out Card-Man’s softer side. After she calls him bhai, Card-Man shows great generosity by teaching Gopal games, answering his questions, buying tea for the family, and then giving Gopal his deck of cards.

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Social Studies Connection

Debt and Interest
On page 3, Gopal explains that part of the reason for his family’s debt is that they owe not only the money they borrowed but also interest on this money. Find out what interest is and how it accumulates over time. Then discuss these questions with a partner: How does charging interest enable people to lend money? What does a moneylender gain by charging interest beyond what the borrower can pay?
Responding to the Story
1. What first caused Gopal’s family to go into debt, and what is ironic about the cause?
   
   Possible answer: Gopal’s family went into debt, because they lost money on their onion crop. What is ironic is that they had an excellent crop. The problem was that their competitors also had excellent crops, which caused the demand for onions to decrease and the price of onions to go down.

2. What did Baba and Aai do to repay their debt, and why wasn’t it enough?
   
   Possible answer: Baba and Aai took extra jobs; Baba worked at the rock quarry, and Aai carried luggage for tourists. However, this wasn’t enough to repay the debt, because interest on the debt caused the amount of money the family owed to keep increasing.

3. Why did the family have to sell their farm?
   
   Possible answer: Naren became very ill, and the medicine he needed cost a lot of money. The family sold the farm and borrowed money to help pay for Naren’s treatment.

4. How is indebtedness viewed in Gopal’s culture, and what does this help you understand about Baba’s decision to take the family away from the village?
   
   Possible answer: Indebtedness is considered a great dishonor, one so serious that it caused Gopal’s friend’s father to commit suicide. To resolve not to repay a debt carries even greater shame with it, as well as the possibility of harsh punishment. The fact that Gopal’s father is willing to bare such shame and put himself in danger shows the hopelessness of the family’s situation and the commitment Baba feels to giving Gopal, Naren, and Sita a better life.

5. Card-Man is Gopal’s first encounter with someone who lives in the city. If Card-Man represents what Gopal can expect from other city dwellers, what might his experience with Card-Man foreshadow?
   
   Possible answer: It might foreshadow that Gopal will experience cruelty as well as incredible generosity from people living in the city.
Chapters 5–8:
Thane
pages 38–79

Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Gopal’s plan to get to Jama’s home from Thane will work? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Possible answer: How well Gopal’s plan will work depends on how close
Thane is to Mumbai. Gopal’s family has little money for travel, so it’s possible they will get stuck
in Thane. Perhaps they can do work there to earn fare for the whole family to get to Mumbai.

Literary Devices: Simile
Simile is a type of figurative language, or language writers use to evoke images in readers’ minds. Similes compare two unalike things that are alike in a specific way, and they always include the word like or as. (Examples: In the distance, rain hung like a curtain across the horizon. Overhead, clouds as dark as ash continued to accumulate.)

Complete the chart below by finding the simile at the location indicated, writing it, and then
telling what two things the simile compares, along with what the simile means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Simile</th>
<th>Comparison and Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 38</td>
<td>His face has this strange look, as if someone has promised him a singing bird and handed him a rusty cage.</td>
<td>What Baba has learned is compared to a promise that wasn’t kept. Baba looks as if he has been tricked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 50</td>
<td>In the daylight the city is overwhelming like a crowded fair, and at night it is forbidding like an enemy’s camp.</td>
<td>The city is compared to a fair in daytime and an enemy camp at nighttime. The city is exciting during the day and dangerous at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 55</td>
<td>So we all sit like pebbles on the footpath and watch people.</td>
<td>Gopal’s family is compared to pebbles. They feel small, inconsequential, and easily stepped upon in the footpath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 60</td>
<td>When Aai and I sit down by our luggage, her sigh is as deep as the pond.</td>
<td>The depth of Aai’s sigh is compared to the depth of a pond. Aai sighs deeply, because she is very concerned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether or not Gopal’s plan to go from Thane to Jama’s would work. What have you read that supports or refutes your prediction?

Possible answer: So far, the family is still stuck in Thane, and now Baba is missing, as well. However, Thane is only a day’s walk from Mumbai. Perhaps the family can find their way there on foot.

Analyzing the Writing: Juxtaposition and Tension
In these chapters, the author makes many uses of juxtaposition, or the placement side by side of two ideas or events that are different but equally important. Authors use juxtaposition to create tension, or draw attention to characters or ideas that are in conflict with one another.

1. What are two examples of encounters Gopal has in Thane, where harshness from one person is juxtaposed with the kindness of another person? What do these juxtapositions show?

   Possible answer: Gopal and Baba experience extreme callousness from a grocery store customer, who insults Baba and won’t point them toward a place where the family can stay for the night, and then incredible kindness from the grocery store owner, who gives them free lentils and rice. Then, again, Gopal experiences cruelty from a woman who insults him and then refuses to pay him for carrying her luggage. This is juxtaposed with the generosity of the porter she did pay, who gives Gopal the full amount rather than splitting it with him. These juxtapositions show that while the city is a rough place, good people do live there.

2. What does the grocery store owner say about the dreams versus reality of people who come to the Mumbai and its suburbs for work? Does this help explain some of the severity Gopal and his family have experienced from other city dwellers? Explain your answer.

   Possible answer: He says that all of them come with the dream of finding jobs, working hard, and having a good life. However, reality sets in when they find that even a big place like Mumbai is not big enough to feed and house them, even if they are willing to work hard. This does help explain some of the severity Gopal and his family have encountered. Others may view them as competition for the little living space and few jobs there are to go around.
3. Reread the last paragraph on page 63, which continues at the top of page 64. How does Gopal’s circumstance differ from that of the girls, and how does this influence his idea of necessity versus luxury?

Possible answer: The girls are obviously very well off; they are well dressed and manicured, and they have just been dropped off by a driver to do some shopping at a shoe store. Gopal, who comes from poverty, views their lifestyle as wasteful. If he had their money, he would be satisfied to get himself “a nice pair of dark brown sandals.”

Getting to Know the Characters: Gopal
Complete the chart below by telling what Gopal does to show that he possesses the trait indicated. Answers will vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clever</td>
<td>Possible answer: When Baba can’t get anyone to slow down and give him directions to Jama’s home, Gopal suggests asking the people stuck in line at the bus stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>Possible answer: When Gopal and Baba are unable to cross the busy street in Thane, Gopal watches how other people get across and then mimics what they do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Possible answer: Gopal suggests that Baba wait till morning to try to board the bus, because fewer people ride at that time of day, and it will be easier for Baba to find a seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>Possible answer: Gopal’s storytelling not only captivates his siblings but also captures the attention of a child who sits near them on the footpath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>Possible answer: Gopal’s parents seek his advice and entrust him with many adult responsibilities, such as caring for his siblings, handling the family’s money, and finding a safe place for the family to sleep the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>Possible answer: Gopal plays with the idea of selling magazines as a way of building toward becoming the owner of a bookstore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>Possible answer: When Gopal’s father does not arrive with Jama, Gopal finds a safe place for his family to sleep the night in Thane, and he earns bus fare for his family to get to Mumbai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responding to the Story

1. Since beginning their trip to Mumbai, Gopal’s family has had to revise their plan for getting to Jama’s several times. On the lines below, tell how their plan has changed and why Plans A, B, and C didn’t work.

   **Plan A:** Use Jama’s money to buy train tickets for the family to get to Mumbai. This plan doesn’t work, because train fares recently increased.

   **Plan B:** Buy train tickets to Thane and then take the bus the rest of the way to Mumbai. This plan doesn’t work, because there isn’t enough money for the whole family to ride the bus.

   **Plan C:** Baba will take the bus to Mumbai, find Jama, and then come for the family. This plan doesn’t work, because Baba goes missing.

   **Plan D:** Gopal will earn money for bus fare for the family, they will go to Jama’s together, and then they will find Baba.

2. Reread Gopal’s story on pages 56–59. Based on his story, what do you think Gopal would say is the best way to achieve success in life, and how is this idea reflected in Gopal’s real-life career plans?

   Possible answer: Gopal believes in hard work, honesty, and a focus on achieving something special. In working toward his heart’s desire, he believes he can take care of practical needs better than he could if merely focused on getting by from day to day. This idea is reflected in his real-life plan for finding work that earns money for his family while also helping him realize his dream of owning a bookstore. (He hopes to sell magazines, like the girl he saw in Thane.)

3. Aai mistrusts the people staying under the bridge until she hears them speak. What is she able to tell about them through their speech?

   Possible answer: Aai is able to tell where they come from (a rural area much like her home) Understanding where they come from gives Aai insight into what their values are, which makes them seem less unpredictable than other people she has met in the city.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Before leaving his family, Baba promised “I will always find you.” Do you think this is a promise Baba can keep? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Though it is apparent that Baba would never abandon his family willingly, he seems lost in the city. He doesn’t know how to cross the street, he can’t read the address Gopal wrote for him on a piece of paper, and he lacks the ability to think creatively when faced with a challenge. At this point, it seems unlikely that Baba will be able to keep his promise.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether or not Baba would be able to find his family. What evidence supports or refutes your prediction?

Possible answer: It took Gopal and his family only an hour to get from Thane to Mumbai by bus, yet Baba has been missing for days. It seems that something horrible may have happened to him.

Introducing Vocabulary: Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound...like sounds! Onomatopoeia is created by both real and made-up words. For example, squawk and boom are dictionary words that imitate sounds. Or an author might fabricate a word, such as ker-plash or wheew-ee, to evoke something he or she has heard.

Below are examples of onomatopoeia used in Boys without Names. As you read, find each example on the page indicated. Then tell what makes the sound on the line provided. (Note: Not all answers are found on the same page as the word—read on until you find the answer.)

1. bang (page 81) sound made by beating a pot
2. thud (page 100) rain drops falling on palm fronds
3. ticks (page 113) movements of the inner workings of a wall clock
4. Ting, ting, ting (page 116) the chiming of a clock
5. Khas-khas-khas (page 117) footsteps on the rungs of a ladder
6. *kal-bal, kal-bal* (page 120) many people talking at once

7. taps (page 121) Rocking Boy’s fingers drumming on his knee

Why do you think authors use onomatopoeia in their writing? How does it affect the reader?

Possible answer: Authors use onomatopoeia to create images that pull readers into the story.

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**Analyzing the Writing: Imagery**

Imagery is a description that engages one of the five senses: sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste. Complete the chart below by finding text with imagery on each page indicated, that appeals to the sense matched with the page number(s) in the chart. Underline words in the text that appeal to the sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 84</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>“The fresh bread is spongy and soft, and the <em>bhaji</em> is spicy and tingles my throat as it goes down. I take a sip of water. It tastes different than the water in our village or by the station, but it doesn’t taste bad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 86</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>“One voice is needle-sharp, the other is well-deep.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 89–90</td>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>“Naren has put on an orange shirt as bright as the sky at sunset.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 100</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>“The stink of everything mixes together: chemicals from tanning hides, melting plastic, people and animal waste, and rotted plants. They all mask the heavenly scent of the rain-soaked earth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 113</td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>“My throat aches and my lips are dry. I move my tongue over them and they have a parched, scaly feel, like the earth before a monsoon.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting to Know the Characters: Gopal and Jatin

1. How do the following serve as signs that Jatin is untrustworthy?

   **How he looks (pages 94–95):** Jatin has a slick appearance. Gopal says he has “sleek, black hair. Each strand seems to have its own assigned place on his head. It is kind of unnatural.”
   
   Also, “his clothes are not bad.”

   **What he says (pages 94–95 and 108–110):** He says he needs money, though he doesn’t appear to be poor. He gives only vague information about his uncle’s factory, which makes it seem that he might be lying. Later, it seems he’s forgotten the story he told about his uncle.

   **How other characters react to him (page 97):** Jatin makes Gopal uncomfortable. Gopal tells Aai he’s not sure he can trust Jatin.

   **What he does (pages 108–110):** Jatin is very pushy with Gopal. He tries to convince Gopal to come with him, without first telling Aai where he is going. Jatin claims to be in a big hurry, but then he insists on having tea with Gopal before they go.

2. What practical concerns cause Gopal to ignore his intuition about Jatin?

   **Possible answer:** Gopal is worried about how his family will get by, and he feels he must take over his father’s responsibility as provider. This makes Gopal willing to overlook his discomfort about Jatin, who says he may be able to find Gopal a job.

3. What are some other reasons Gopal decides to trust Jatin?

   **Possible answer:** Gopal understands that most people in the city are different from those he knows from home, and he thinks that fearing their differences will close him off from making friends. His experience with the Card-Man showed that people who first seem untrustworthy can be surprisingly generous when shown kindness. For this reason, Gopal thinks that Jatin may deserve the benefit of the doubt.
Responding to the Story

1. On pages 106–107, Gopal mentions a *pipul* tree that grows at the end of the block. What about this tree might seem hopeful to Gopal?

   Possible answer: The tree seems out of its element in the city, yet it has survived.

2. Gopal has a strong mind and ability to persevere. On page 106, he shows this in something he says. What is it, and what does it help illustrate?

   Possible answer: This is the analogy: “The smell of this place bothers me, but I have to keep breathing. I miss Baba, but I have to keep on living.” It helps illustrate both how oppressive Gopal’s sadness over Baba’s loss feels and how necessary it is that Gopal not allow himself to be overcome by his sadness.

3. What kind of power does Scar exert over the boys in the sweatshop by taking away their names? What does a person’s name signify?

   Possible answer: He exerts psychological power over the boys. By taking away their names, he strips them of their identities as individuals.

4. What does the nimba tree symbolize for Gopal?

   Possible answer: The nimba tree symbolizes hope for Gopal, because it reminds him of the nimba tree at home, where he used to dream, write, and eat *gorus-chinch* fruits.

Science Connection

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

In these chapters, Gopal describes a serious waste problem in the city of Mumbai. However, he also mentions a number of clever ways that people reuse materials that are commonly thrown away. Work with a partner to find examples of items reused by people in Jama’s neighborhood and discuss the environmental benefits of the items’ reuse.

(Discarded clothing, rags, old notebooks, plastic bags, and metal sheets are reused, which helps preserve raw materials such as trees and metals and cuts down on pollution caused by their creation and destruction.)
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think the boys with no names will help or hinder Gopal’s efforts to escape? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary. It is almost certain that the other boys would like to escape, as well. However, at least one (Thick Fingers) seems to be in league with Scar, and the others are very fearful of Scar. Whether they help or hinder Gopal as he tries to escape may depend on how much they trust Gopal and how desperate their situation with Scar becomes.

Introducing Vocabulary: Idiom
An idiom is an expression, or figure of speech. It is a word or phrase that conveys meaning beyond its literal meaning. (An example of idiom is underlined in the following sentence: I had the time of my life on my last vacation. In this sentence, the time of my life means “a good time.”)

Complete the chart below by reading the sentence and telling what group of words forms the idiom. Then write the meaning of the sentence. Use context clues from the page number indicated, if you need help defining the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t wag your tongue!” (page 134)</td>
<td>wag your tongue</td>
<td>Possible answer: Don’t talk!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I may have a small mouth and talk big, but what about you?” (page 139)</td>
<td>have a small mouth and talk big</td>
<td>Possible answer: I may talk as if I’m braver than I really am, but what about you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC saying, “My own cat going against me?” to Thick Fingers makes me happy. (page 144)</td>
<td>my own cat</td>
<td>Possible answer: GC saying, “My team member/friend is going against me?” to Thick Fingers makes me happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am soaked I sweat and worried to my bones. (page 155)</td>
<td>worried to my bones</td>
<td>Possible answer: I am soaked in sweat and deeply worried.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether the boys without names would help or hinder Gopal as he tries to escape. What has happened so far that supports or refutes your prediction? Answers will vary.

Possible answer: Thick Fingers hindered Gopal’s first attempt at an escape, and the other boys seem unfriendly and mistrusting of each other.

Analyzing the Writing: Setting and Its Effect on Plot
The setting of a story is the time and location in which it takes place.

1. How does Gopal know he is still in the city?
   Possible answer: He can hear traffic outside the window.

2. Where do the boys work and sleep, and what does the room look like?
   Possible answer: The boys work and sleep in a cramped upstairs room with one window, one source of light, and one way out, an opening in the floor with a ladder propped against it.

3. What is Gopal disappointed to discover about Scar’s downstairs area?
   Possible answer: Though there are two doors leading out to the street, the back door is locked from the outside, and the front door is locked as well. Also, none of the windows will work as a means of escape, because they all have metal grills on them.

4. Given what you know about where Gopal is imprisoned, what do you think Gopal will need to do, if he is ever to escape?
   Possible answer: He will either need to hurt Scar badly enough that he can steal Scar’s keys, or he will need to trick Scar into letting him outside or leaving the doors unlocked.
**Getting to Know the Characters: Reactions**

A character’s **reactions** to what happens to him or her are sometimes more telling of the character’s traits than what the character says about himself or herself. Complete the chart below by telling what insight a character’s reaction gives into his character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Situation and Reaction</th>
<th>What the Reaction Shows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers</td>
<td>Thick Fingers orders Gopal to sit down, when Gopal says he needs to use the bathroom, but then he lets Gopal go, when Gopal refuses to sit down.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Thick Fingers is not as much of a bully as he appears to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scar</td>
<td>Scar allows Gopal to eat a piece of <em>roti</em> he dropped, so that he can avoid a “bellyache from [Gopal’s] evil eyes.” He believes he dropped the <em>roti</em> because Gopal was staring at him.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Scar’s superstition is a weakness that Gopal might be able to take advantage of again in the future. His fearlessness in looking at Scar gives him power over Scar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers and GC</td>
<td>When Gopal makes subtle suggestions that a scratching noise on the wall could be a rat, the boys resolve to go downstairs immediately and then make Gopal go back up to check for the rat.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Thick Fingers and GC are gullible, and they aren’t as tough as they first appeared to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scar</td>
<td>When Dimpled Chin smiles at Gopal, Scar punishes Dimpled Chin.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Scar doesn’t want the boys to become friends, because he fears they will team up against him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers</td>
<td>When Scar punishes Dimpled Chin, Thick Fingers becomes angry with Gopal.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Thick Fingers is protective of Dimpled Chin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers</td>
<td>After Gopal shares the story of how he came to be at the sweatshop, Rocking Boy begins to tell his story, but Thick Fingers cuts him off.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Thick Fingers doesn’t want the boys to get to know each other too well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responding to the Story
1. What does Gopal blame for his capture and enslavement at the bead place, and what lesson does it teach him?

Possible answer: Gopal blames his capture and enslavement on his impatience about finding a job and his stupidity in relying on a stranger. He takes from this experience a lesson in patience and cunning, and he resolves to be careful in his plan to run away.

2. Who was Annasaheb Kotwal, and what did Gopal learn from him?

Possible answer: Annasaheb Kotwal was an Indian freedom fighter who never gave up his fight. Gopal learned from him that when facing an enemy, one can never back down. Gopal uses this lesson to help him stand up to Thick Fingers.

3. How does Scar help ensure the boys continue in their distrust of each other?

Possible answer: Scar punishes the boys for being friends, and if one boy falls behind in his work, all the boys get punished.

4. What are some of Gopals’s strategies for gaining power within the group of boys?

Possible answer: Gopal uses the rat trick to diminish Thick Fingers in the eyes of the other boys, he tries to turn Thick Fingers and GC against each other, he tries to befriend each boy individually, and he shares his story, so that the boys will know who he is.

Sweatshops
In Chapter 12, Gopal wonders how many children like him are enslaved to cruel bosses who force them to work long hours with little food. Sweatshops, or businesses such as Scar’s, are illegal, yet they exist all over the world. Find out more about how sweatshops got their name, what kinds of goods sweatshops usually produce, and how laws and organizations help deter businesses from abusing their employees. Write a brief report on your findings to share with your classmates.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Gopal will be able to gain Scar’s trust by becoming the best worker? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Gopal is smart, and he has good intuition about people. However, it’s unclear whether or not these are qualities that would impress Scar as trustworthy. It may be that Scar trusts a thug more than anyone else. If so, Gopal may be out of luck.

After You Read
Mastering Vocabulary
Complete the following chart by going to each page number indicated and finding a simile or an idiom on the page, as directed. Write the sentence with the figurative language in it and underline the idiom or simile. Note: Sometimes more than one example of the figurative language indicated can be found on the same page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Figurative Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 164</td>
<td>Idiom</td>
<td>“You think you can stompg your way up by making us look lazy and slow?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 166</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>They surprise me by not saying a word, which scares me even more because it means they will wait like a patient tiger and strike when the time is right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 167</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>As I work our conversation goes on and on in my head like a merry-go-round at the fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 171</td>
<td>Idiom</td>
<td>Shutting up has been Naren’s way of dealing with fear ever since he began talking, which was late, when he was about three years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 176</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>I want to kick Thick Fingers and the others into action, but the friction between us is as brittle as a dry twig.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Checking Predictions
Earlier, you made a prediction about whether or not Gopal would be able to gain Scar’s trust by becoming the best worker. What have you read that supports or refutes your prediction?

Possible answer: Gopal quickly found a way to increase the number of frames he produced per day by two. However, GC and Thick Fingers took credit for his extra work. He also thought to move the boxes of frames upstairs during the storm and lost credit for that, as well—and then was punished for trying to reclaim it. So far, Scar seems to fear more than trust Gopal.

Analyzing the Writing: Make Inferences
When readers make inferences, they use information from the text along with their own knowledge to answer a question they have about the text. Complete the chart below by writing a question and inference for each event provided. The first one is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers tells Dimpled Chin not to cry and whine the way he did when he was a baby. (page 164)</td>
<td>Possible question: How does Thick Fingers now how Dimpled Chin behaved when he was a baby?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Perhaps Thick Fingers is Dimpled Chin’s older brother or a family friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimpled Chin asks Gopal’s permission to eat. (page 173)</td>
<td>Possible question: Why does Dimpled Chin ask Gopal’s permission to eat?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Dimpled Chin thinks of Gopal as the leader of the boys, because Gopal always has smart ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thick Fingers compliments Gopal’s idea for getting the boxes upstairs, and then GC becomes angry and refuses to help. (page 177)</td>
<td>Possible question: Why is GC so angry?</td>
<td>Possible inference: GC feels threatened by Gopal’s intelligence and fears Thick Fingers will want to be friends with Gopal instead of him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopal thinks Scar knows it was Gopal who had the idea to move the boxes upstairs. (page 189)</td>
<td>Possible question: Why would Scar punish Gopal, if he knows Gopal is telling the truth?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Perhaps Scar views Gopal’s confidence and intelligence as a threat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting to Know the Characters: Relationships and Interactions

1. Each of the boys in the group has power over the others that he can use to protect himself. What is each boy’s power?

   Possible answer: Thick Fingers is the leader, and he has Scar’s favor. GC is strong and violent, and he has Thick Fingers’s favor. Rocking Boy mixes the glue for the picture frames, and he can give bad glue to boys who challenge him. Night Chatterer cuts the boys’ hair, and he can “accidentally” nip them with the scissors, if they hurt him. Dimpled Chin is a sweet kid, whom Thick Fingers protects. Gopal is the smartest of the boys, and he can use his intelligence to make them look bad.

2. Why does Gopal offer to slide down a jute bag to get the ladder during the storm, and how is his offer viewed by the other boys?

   Possible answer: Gopal makes the offer, because he wants to look for Scar’s pencil. However, the boys don’t know Gopal is working on his escape plan. They think he has offered to go after the ladder for the good of the group.

3. Reread pages 172–173. Why does power begin to shift from Thick Fingers to Gopal?

   Possible answer: Gopal knows to unplug the TV, so that the boys won’t be electrocuted in the storm, and he stands up to Thick Fingers, when Thick Fingers commands him to stop what he is doing with the TV.

4. On page 173, Rocking Boy suggests the boys could all take the blame, if Scar is angry about them drinking the last of the milk. How does GC react to his idea, and what is the resulting chain of events?

   Possible answer: GC takes Rocking Boy’s suggestion as a personal challenge. He threatens to beat up Rocking Boy and throws him against the wall. Gopal comes to Rocking Boy’s defense, and then GC hits Gopal, too. Then Thick Fingers steps between Gopal and GC and threatens to tell Scar that GC has been fighting with the others.
Responding to the Story
1. On pages 181–183, Gopal has a dream. In literature, dreams often play an important role, either by providing insights into the truth about a character or foreshadowing future events. What happens in Gopal’s dream, and what events might it foreshadow?

Possible answer: Gopal dreams that he is back with Aai, Naren, and Sita in Jama’s home, during a rainstorm that has flooded the house and streets. Though the water in the streets is very high and dangerous, the sun has begun to shine. The shining sun may foreshadow an opportunity coming to Gopal that will take him away from the danger of the sweatshop.

2. How does Gopal show that he can be a strong ally during Scar’s punishment of him and Rocking Boy on page 189?

Possible answer: When Scar offers to let Gopal out of his punishment earlier than Rocking Boy, Gopal refuses to leave. So, Scar lets both of the boys go.

3. On page 193, Gopal says he must “make [his] luck.” What does he mean by this?

Possible answer: He means that he can no longer wait in hope of an opportunity to escape. He must start taking some risks in order to help along his escape plan. Part of his plan involves the other boys, who he fears won’t come together, because they fear GC. Gopal fears GC, too, but he thinks the time has come to set this fear aside.

4. Other than Gopal, which boys have shared their names with the group, and what does sharing their names signify?

Possible answer: Night Chatterer, Rocking Boy, and Dimpled Chin all have shared their names. Doing so signifies an act of trust in the group and defiance against Scar, who outlawed use of names. It also signifies a reclaiming of their individuality and identity.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Gopal will be able to win GC’s friendship?

Answers will vary. GC is contrary with the other boys at every opportunity and he is especially competitive with Gopal. However, Gopal seems to be winning over Thick Fingers, someone GC trusts. Perhaps GC, too, will come to trust Gopal.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Before reading you made a prediction about whether or not Gopal would win GC’s friendship. What happened that confirmed or refuted your prediction?

Possible answer: Though Gopal won’t allow himself to trust GC, GC seems to be on the side of Gopal and the other boys. Like the others, he has shared his story with Gopal, and he also has done things to help the group.

Analyzing the Writing: Symbolism
A symbol is an object or action that stands for something more than its literal meaning. There are many ways to use symbolism in a story.

1. One way symbolism is used in Boys without Names is through the nimba tree. When Gopal first sees the nimba tree outside the sweatshop window, he thinks of it as a symbol of hope and imagination. However, the nimba tree also can be seen as a symbol of Gopal himself. How are Gopal and the nimba tree alike?

Answers will vary. Possible answer: Both have been through harrowing circumstances (the tree a storm and Gopal his enslavement), yet both continue to stand strong and provide comfort to those around them.
2. Gopal’s dreams are another source of symbolism. Reread the paragraphs on page 212. How does Gopal’s dream reflect events from earlier in the day, and what does its images communicate?

Possible answer: In the dream, Gopal walks with his best friends in a beautiful, fertile place. This part of the dream may symbolize how Gopal felt as he told stories with the other boys in the sweatshop. However, later in the dream, Gopal feels powerless and ignored. This part of the dream may symbolize how Gopal felt when GC threatened to tell Scar about the boys’ kahanis. Without stories and people to share them with, Gopal feels voiceless and powerless.

3. Yet another way symbolism is used is through Gopal’s stories. For example, reread the story Gopal tells about Giant and the calves on pages 225–226. Who do the characters in his story stand for, and what do you think is Gopal’s purpose in telling the story?

Possible answer: The Giant stands for Scar, and the calves stand for the boys. Gopal tells the story as a way of suggesting to the boys an idea for teaming up against Scar and escaping their imprisonment.

**Getting to Know the Characters: Motives**

A character’s motives are the reasons they behave as they do. In Chapters 20–22, much is revealed about GC’s character and the reasons for his prickly behavior. Complete the chart below by telling the motive behind each of GC’s actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC always belittles the others’ stories about their dreams and families.</td>
<td>Possible answer: The stories make GC sad, because they remind him of the hard life he has led and the fact that he has no family that cares for him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC does not want to share stories about himself.</td>
<td>Possible answer: GC believes that telling his story could make him vulnerable to Scar, who might use the story against him or punish him for befriending the other boys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC took credit for Gopal’s idea to move the boxes upstairs.</td>
<td>Possible answer: GC feared Scar would punish him if Scar knew that a new worker had the idea to save the boxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC wants to impress Scar.</td>
<td>Possible answer: Without Scar, GC has nowhere to live and no means of supporting himself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responding to the Story

1. Reread Roshan’s *kahani* about his family on pages 205–207. In what ways is Roshan’s background similar to Gopal’s?

   Possible answer: Like Gopal, Roshan comes from an agricultural background. His family was poor, but they had what they needed until their means of income (a nearby forest) was taken away. Roshan came to work at the sweatshop through a trick.

2. How does GC change over the course of Chapters 20–22?

   Possible answer: GC starts out by hating the boys’ stories and threatening to tell Scar about them but then encourages the storytelling, when Sahil becomes ill. He also goes from refusing to help in any of the boys’ team efforts to suggesting they all work together to ensure enough frames are made without Gopal or Sahil having to work. What is more, he deflects suspicion from Gopal and Amar, when Scar begins to believe they care about Sahil.

3. Why didn’t Barish admit his connection to Amar sooner, and what new fears does this raise for Gopal?

   Possible answer: Barish never admitted his connection to Amar, because family members aren’t allowed to work in the same shop. This makes Gopal think of Naren and Sita; he fears what would happen to them if they were captured and put to work apart from each other.

4. What does Scar threaten to do if Gopal tries to escape while he is out getting medicine for Sahil?

   Possible answer: Scar threatens severe punishment for both Gopal and his family.

Social Studies Connection

**Festival of Ganesha**

On page 216, Gopal mentions that part of his imprisonment takes place over the annual Festival of Ganesha. Find out more about the history of this festival and how it is celebrated in Maharashtra, where Mumbai is located. Create a poster about your findings to share with our classmates.
Chapters 23–25:  
The Ants and the Jackal  
pages 240–279

Before You Read  
Making Predictions  
If given another opportunity to leave the sweatshop on an errand, do you think Gopal will try to escape on his own? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Gopal feels very loyal to the boys in the sweatshop, but opportunities to escape are few and far between, and Gopal’s patience is wearing thin. If GC were not with him on his last errand, he may never have returned to the sweatshop.

After You Read  
Checking Predictions  
Before reading you made a prediction about whether or not Gopal would return to the sweatshop if given another opportunity to escape. What happened that confirmed or refuted your prediction?

Possible answer: Gopal had the chance to escape while out on an errand to buy sweets for Scar, but he couldn’t leave the boys in good conscience. Instead he wrote a note to a storekeeper requesting help for all of them and returned to sweatshop.

Analyzing the Writing: Pacing  
Pacing is momentum of action in a story. Changes in time, space, and mood create ebb and flow in the action that carry readers through to the story’s climax, when tension is greatest.

1. In Chapter 25, Gopal unexpectedly gets another chance to run an errand, this time on his own. Reread page 263. What does Gopal feel in addition to excitement, and how do you know?

Possible answer: Gopal feels a twinge of guilt. He shows this when he avoids looking at the other boys.

2. Reread pages 264–265. Where is Gopal when he decides that he can’t leave the other boys behind, and what does he do?

Possible answer: Gopal is already on a bus. When he sees the boys’ faces in his mind, he immediately hops off the bus into a crowded street and finds his way to a sweetshop.
3. What conflicts create tension while Gopal is in the sweetshop?

Possible answer: Gopal is accused of trying to steal and almost kicked out of the sweetshop. Then he is given a larger box of sweets than he can pay for.

4. Why does the shopkeeper's reaction to Gopal’s bill create further suspense?

Possible answer: His reaction to the bill is ambiguous; he pockets it and says, “Don’t worry.” (Does this mean he has read and understood Gopal’s note, or is he merely telling Gopal not to worry about paying the full price for the sweets he just purchased?)

Responding to the Story

1. Why does GC react badly to Gopal’s story about the ants and the jackal?

Possible answer: GC knows Gopal is using the story to suggest a way for the boys to escape. GC is nervous about this plan, because he worries it won’t work and the group will be punished. He may also be worried that if it does work, he won’t have anywhere to go.

2. In Chapter 25, many of the boys finally share their most difficult stories. Why is this significant?

Possible answer: It is significant in that it shows they have come to trust each other with their deepest secrets. It’s also a sign of their growth as individuals; it shows they have come to terms with shames and sorrows they once thought were too painful to speak of.

3. GC tells the others his kahani, but he continues to keep his name a secret. Why do you think this is?

Possible answer: The fact that he won’t share his name may show that he isn’t yet ready to own his name again. He struggles with forgiving himself for his grandmother’s death.

Science Connection

Home Remedies

To help Gopal heal from his injuries, GC gives him turmeric water, and Sahil places nimba leaves on his wounds. Also, earlier in the story, the boys treated Sahil’s fever by applying cloth soaked in salt water to his head and having him eat nimba leaves. Find out more about what properties turmeric, salt, and nimba leaves have that make them useful as medicines. Share your findings with your classmates.
Chapters 26–28:
A String with Six Beads
pages 280–305

Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think the shopkeeper will come to rescue Gopal and the boys? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Gopal’s impression of the shopkeeper is that he is a good person. However, Mumbai is a big city with a lot of people, and Gopal’s description of the sweatshop was not very specific. Even if the man wants to help, he may not be able to find the boys in time.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Based on what you read, did you predict accurately about the shopkeeper? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary. Possible answer: Yes; I was correct in my prediction that Gopal could trust his intuition about the shopkeeper. When he kept Gopal’s bill, I knew it was a sign that he intended to help Gopal and his friends.

Mastering Vocabulary
On the lines below, write a summary of events from Boys without Names that includes three foreign words studied in this Reading Guide and one example of each of these types of figurative language: onomatopoeia, simile, and idiom.

Answers will vary.
Responding to the Story

1. Gopal thinks his story about the marble is cursed and he is not meant to finish it. However, what if Gopal’s inability to finish the story is actually a sign of good things to come? What might it foreshadow?

   Possible answer: Gopal may not be able to finish the story now, because he is meant to finish it with Naren and Sita, when he is reunited with his family.

2. Though GC does many things to show he is loyal to the group, Gopal has a hard time trusting him. Why is this?

   Possible answer: Gopal can’t trust GC, because GC doesn’t fully trust the group. Gopal believes that if GC were trustworthy, he would share his name, like the other boys have.

3. The climax of a story is the point at which tension is greatest. What is the climax of Boys without Names, and what events before the climax cause tension to rise?

   Possible answer: The climax of the story is when the boys are finally discovered and rescued by the inspector. Events that cause tension to rise before the climax include Scar making plans to relocate the boys and then deciding to hide them instead. Scar hides them so well that the inspector almost doesn’t find the boys. But Gopal reaches his flashlight just in time to signal the inspector.

4. Now that the boys have been rescued, all are going separate ways, back to their families. Do you think it is possible they will ever see each other again? What kind of reunion do you imagine for them?

   Answers will vary.

5. At the end of the story, Gopal says he doesn’t want to ask where his father has been, nor does he want his family to ask where he has been. Why is this?

   Possible answer: Though both Gopal and Baba both have survived horrific circumstances, this is no longer important to Gopal. What is important to him is that his family is together again.
Wrap-up

Reviewing Predictions
Turn to page 5 of this guide to review your first predictions. How accurate were they?

Answers will vary.

Making Connections
1. When has sharing a story helped you to form a bond with someone else?

Answers will vary.

2. Throughout your life, you will meet people who come to feel like family. Who is an example of someone like this, and what makes your relationship with him or her special?

Answers will vary.

Thinking About Characters
Boys without Names is about a character that gains power by making friends rather than making threats. What is another story you know in which a character overcomes adversity by befriending someone? How does the friendship empower the character?

Answers will vary.

Thinking About Theme
1. According to Gopal, what must people do to make their dreams come true?

Possible answer: People must allow themselves to have dreams in the first place, and then they must use their dreams to guide their actions.
2. What roles do *kahanis*, or stories, play in *Boys without Names*?

   **Possible answer:** *Kahanis* provide fuel for Gopal’s imagination and lessons about how to surpass life’s challenges. However, they also serve much deeper purposes. They create a point of connection among people and become the glue that holds a group together. They also become a source of power. When the boys tell their personal stories, it is a way for them to release the hold their negative experiences and take ownership of their positive experiences.

3. What personality traits help Gopal the most in his escape?

   **Possible answer:** Though Gopal’s intelligence and ability to adapt serve him well, he has many other personality traits that also come to his aid, not the least of which are his natural fairness, loyalty, and generosity. These qualities inspire those around him and enable him to build alliances he can trust.

4. What does *Boys without Names* show about the importance of uniting people behind a cause? Could Gopal have succeeded in getting the boys rescued if he were working in isolation? Explain your answer.

   **Answers will vary.** Throughout much of the story, Gopal seems unsure about who he can trust and hesitant to share too many of his escape plans with the boys. However, Gopal’s friendships with the others go a long way toward boosting his morale, which helps him keep a level head while pursuing his goals.
Library Applications

Child Labor
In her Author’s Note for *Boys without Names*, Kashmira Sheth tells about the children in India who inspired her novel about boys forced to work in a sweatshop. Read and discuss the Author’s Note with students, and then have them conduct research about child labor using the Internet. Encourage students to use Web sites Sheth provides in the Author’s Note as a springboard for their research. Have students report their findings to the class.

India’s Geography
While in Thane Gopal and Baba meet a shopkeeper who tells them that people come from many states in India to find a better life in Mumbai. Some states he mentions include the following:

- Bihar
- Bengal
- Gujarat
- Karnataka
- Assam
- Madhya Pradesh

Have students locate these states, as well as Mumbai and its state of Maharashtra, on a map. Then have them use encyclopedia and other reference materials to learn more about the people and culture of these states. Have students collaborate to create a poster about each state that they can post in the library.

Escape Stories
*(See Recommended Reading for suggestions)*
*Boys without Names* is a thrilling story about how six boys escape imprisonment in a sweatshop. Have students think of other escape stories they know from film, literature, and world history. Discuss what the protagonists of these stories have in common, as well as the elements that contribute to a spine-tingling escape (such as a high degree of difficulty, creative use of materials, and so on). Then have students write escape stories of their own to share with their classmates.
Suggestions for Further Reading

Other books by Kashmira Sheth


Fiction books you may also like:


Real-life Stories of Escape and of Child Labor:

### Correlations to National Standards
#### For Grades 9–12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Standard Number</th>
<th>Standard Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.1</td>
<td>Reading for Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.2</td>
<td>Reading for Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.3</td>
<td>Evaluation Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.4</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.5</td>
<td>Communication Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.6</td>
<td>Applying Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.7</td>
<td>Evaluating Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.8</td>
<td>Developing Research Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.12</td>
<td>Applying Language Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NS.9–12.6</td>
<td>Personal and Social Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS-G.K–12.1</td>
<td>The World in Spatial Terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS-G.K–12.2</td>
<td>Places and Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS-G.K–12.4</td>
<td>Human Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS-G.K–12.5</td>
<td>Environment and Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>