

BOOK KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – SKELLIG BY DAVID ALMOND

Important Information

Plot

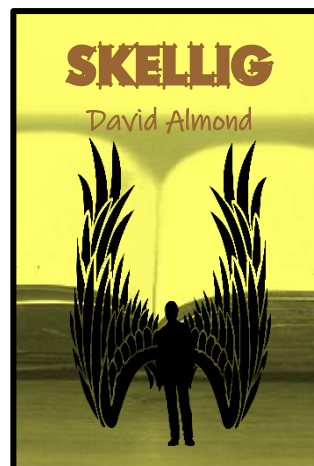
A family are concerned about the welfare of a newborn baby so a lonely young boy befriends his neighbour and they uncover a strange creature in his garage.

Themes

Nurture, Kindness, Faith, Schooling vs Home-Schooling, Pain and Suffering, Life and Death, Evolution/Change and Growing Up.

Setting

Set in England (Europe) in the North East. Michael and his family have moved to a housing estate in Newcastle. Much of the book is set between Michael's garage/house, Mina's house or in Michael's school.



Name of Book: Skellig

Date Published: 1998

Author: David Almond

Reading 'Reconsidered' Spine: Year 5/6 and Symbolic/Plot text

Genres: Magical Realism, Fantasy

Characters

Michael	Protagonist - 10-year-old boy who loves football and cares about his newborn sister. He also helps Skellig.
Mina	Home-schooled neighbour with a creative flair and a love of poetry, drawing and an interest in birds.
Skellig	Antagonist? Depicted as a homeless man but Michael and Mina discover his wings and consider that he might be something else.
Michael's Parents	Names are never given but they deeply care for Michael and the newborn baby.
Dr Dan/Dr Death	A family doctor who visits throughout the book.
Mrs Dando	A caring auxiliary teacher at Michael's school.
Coot and Leakey	Michael's best friends from school.
Mina's Mother	Mrs McKee is a warm and friendly character.
Dr MacNabola	An arrogant but friendly doctor who Michael talks to.
Rasputin	Michael's science teacher.

What Can the Book Teach Us?

Emotional nurturing can improve our lives. Change takes time and may not be what we expect. There is not an answer for everything.

Quotes

"They say that shoulder blades are where your wings were."

"Sometimes we think we should know everything. But we can't."

Key Vocabulary

demolition	the act of destroying something completely
evolution	the scientific theory that creatures change over time
arid	lacking significant water or rainfall and thus very dry
shudder	to shake, as if from cold or movement
ragged	having an irregular outline
fossil	the stone remains of a plant or animal from the past
famished	extremely hungry
sufficiency	an adequate amount or quantity of something
congealed	turned into a jelly or made solid from cooling
ancestor	someone from whom you are related and directly descended from
thrive	to grow vigorously
derelict	worn and broken down by hard usage
adapt	make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose
ascend	to travel upwards
hoarse	deep and harsh sounding as if from shouting or illness
sarcasm	witty language used to convey insults or scorn
regurgitate	feed through the beak by bringing up swallowed food

Context – Although the setting of the book remains incredibly normal, David Almond is keen to create a 'dream-like' sense in the opening of the book. The constant ambiguity of Skellig and of the health of the newborn baby keeps the reader in a constant state of the 'unknown'. The juxtaposition of the derelict and the safe keeps us in two separate worlds at all times. William Blake is also mentioned throughout the book as a metaphor for freedom from restraint.