

## TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

# HARBOUR THIEVES

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Canadian cities in the nineteenth century had children who lived on the street without their families. When Jamie and Meg come to Toronto in 1875 they cannot get work. Jamie sells newspapers in the street and falls in with a group of street kids. Soon these children become part of a theft ring and get in trouble with the police. Although *Harbour Thieves* describes the social conditions of the time, the lessons Jamie is forced to learn are relevant to kids today.

Ideas for stimulating classroom discussion and student projects based on the novel:

### THE NOVEL

- At first Jamie trusts Stinger and enjoys the friendship of Bud and Paddy. What changes his mind?
- Stinger is the leader of the gang of boys. Why do you think the others are attracted to him?
- Why does Jamie turn against Stinger?
- Jamie decided the only way to get out of trouble is to find the loot – the stolen property. Do you think that was a smart move?

### CANADIAN HISTORY

- In *Harbour Thieves* a number of children live on the street, away from their families. Are there children living like that in Canadian cities today?
- Toronto was a city of 65,000 people in 1875. How many people live in the city today? Why do we use the term the Greater Toronto Area and how many people live in the GTA?
- The book describes the life of Toronto as being centered around the harbour. Why was the harbour so important in the nineteenth century and much less true today?
- In *Harbour Thieves* a depression has caused unemployment and hardships for the people in Toronto. Do depressions and recessions create hardships for people today?

### GEOGRAPHY

- Why was Toronto's port so important to the city in the nineteenth century?
- Jamie and Meg come to Toronto from Montreal by the Grand Trunk Railway. Did the railway take away business from the port?
- The first roads built in Toronto early in the nineteenth century were Yonge, Dundas and Kingston Road. Why were they so important?
- Draw a map of Toronto showing the harbour and wharfs, the railway and the major roads. What does your map illustrate about the importance of transportation to the city?

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Write a play that dramatizes the conflict between Jamie and Stinger, and act it out for the class.
- Draw a picture of Jamie selling newspapers on the street or locked up in jail.
- Collect photographs of Toronto Island and try and imagine where the loot was stashed. Why did you pick that location?

- Many of the ships that came into Toronto harbour were side-wheelers. What does that term mean? Draw pictures illustrating the difference between ships propelled by side-wheels and propellers.