



# Shoeshine Girl

by Clyde Robert Bulla

## Teacher's Guide

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## Synopsis

### Palmville

Ten-year-old Sarah Ida has arrived in Palmville to stay with her Aunt Claudia while her mother is ill. Furious about being sent away, Sarah Ida refuses to cooperate with her aunt. Sarah Ida's parents have also sent her to stay with her aunt because the child is rude and has been getting into trouble, shoplifting with her friend Midge. Rossi The next day, Aunt Claudia calls Rossi Wigginhorn, a girl Sarah Ida's age, to come over. Sarah Ida wants Aunt Claudia to give her money so she can buy things and go places without supervision. When Aunt Claudia refuses, Sarah Ida convinces Rossi to give her \$4 from her \$5 savings.

### A Game?

When she learns that Sarah Ida has taken money from Rossi, Aunt Claudia forces her to return it. Aunt Claudia realizes that Sarah Ida is pushing her to see how far she can go before Claudia loses her temper and sends her back home. Determined to push her aunt to the edge, Sarah Ida goes to Grand Avenue, the shopping district, to find a job.

### On the Avenue

She first approaches the pet store owners, who laugh at her and tell her to come back in about six years when she's old enough to work. They direct her to Al's Shoeshine Stand on the corner, because Al has been advertising for help. Sarah Ida is convinced that her aunt would never let her work at a shoeshine stand so she's delighted at this idea.

### The Shoeshine Man

Contrary to her expectations, Al hires her and her aunt is very pleased with the idea. Al knew Aunt Claudia from the library where she worked. The next day, Al explains how to shine shoes and Sarah Ida gets to work. She earns two dollars and wants more money but Al is fair and firm.

### The Boy on the Street

Al demands she have good manners with the customers and tell him whether or not she is going to come to work.

Sarah Ida is very pleased when Al gives her a canvas apron. A boy named "Kicker" comes by and is angry at Sarah Ida because she has the job that he thinks he should have.

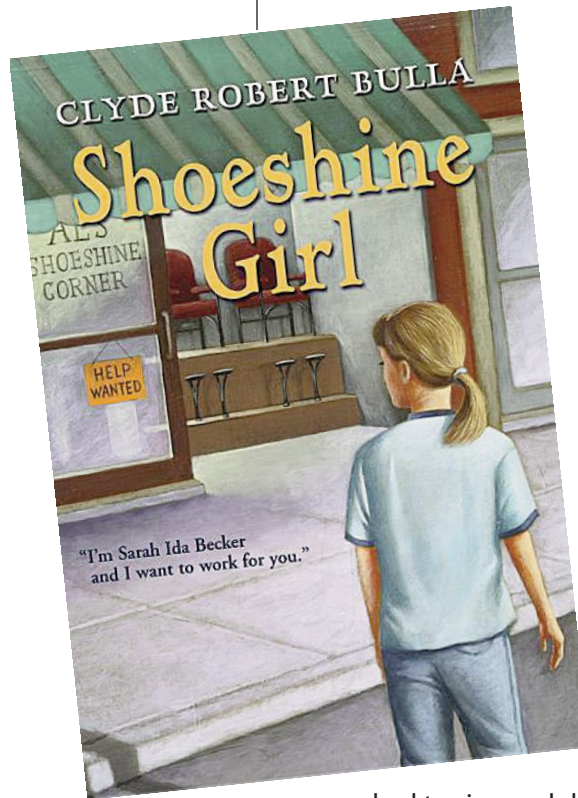
### The Medal

Sarah Ida finds pleasure in her work. Al explains that his father sold patent medicines and they traveled all over the country. Al

had to sing and dance to attract a crowd, which he hated. He was never able to get an education because they did not stay in one place very long. Miss Miller, the best teacher he ever had, gave him a medal for starting the fire every day in the classroom stove. The medal means so much to Al that he still wears it on his key ring. Sarah Ida mocks the medal as "an old piece of tin." When she realizes that she has hurt Al deeply, Sarah Ida apologizes and they go out for ice cream and patch things up.

### The Accident

When Al is run over by a car, Sarah Ida takes over the shoeshine stand. She brings him all the money she earns, including the generous contributions from long-time customers.



# Shoeshine Girl

Clyde Robert Bulla

## Across the Railroad Tracks

A newspaper reporter writes an article about Sarah Ida keeping the shoeshine stand open, which attracts even more customers. Rossi brings her lunch that Aunt Claudia packed. When Sarah Ida walks to the wrong side of town to bring Al and his wife their money, Kicker comes with her to protect her against gangs.

## A Letter

Al comes back to work in a week, although he is still not fully healed. Sarah Ida's parents need her to come home because her mother is very ill. At first, Sarah Ida refuses but since she has matured, she realizes that she must help her parents.

## The Package

As the train pulls away, Sarah Ida opens Al's farewell gift. It is his medal, his most precious possession.

## Timeline

### Arrival

Ten-year-old Sarah Ida arrives in Palmville to stay with her Aunt Sally. Her mother is sick; her parents have sent her away both so her mother can heal and in hopes that Aunt Sally can turn the rude and ungovernable Sarah Ida around.

### The job

After various incidents in which Sarah Ida tests limits and gets into trouble, she decides to find a job, thinking this will really show Aunt Sally. Instead, she gets a job with Al, helping him at his shoeshine stand.

### Al's accident

Through Al's training and friendship, Sarah Ida learns to work, to be responsible, and to care for and appreciate others. When Al is injured, she keeps the shoeshine stand going and delivers all the proceeds to him and his family.

### Leaving

Sarah Ida's parents send for her to help with her ill mother. A newly mature Sarah Ida agrees to go. As she leaves the train station, she opens a package from Al. It is his prized possession, a medal, which he gives to her as a sign of friendship and a job well-done.

## Author Sketch

Almost as far back as he can remember, Clyde Robert Bulla wanted to write. Born on a farm in a small town in Missouri in 1914, Bulla's first school was a one-room country school-house. One day his



teacher asked each first grade student what he or she would do with a thousand dollars. Young Clyde answered that he would buy a table. His classmates laughed heartily, and his teacher was puzzled. "What I really meant," says Bulla, "is a desk or other flat surface on which to write my stories!"

As a student, Bulla continued to write stories, plays, and poems. After years of rejection, Bulla sold several magazine stories. Soon after, he wrote a novel and a publisher accepted it. Unfortunately, his next two books did not find publishers and the publisher of his first book went bankrupt. For several years, he worked at a local weekly newspaper.

In 1946, several of Bulla's weekly columns caught the attention of a well-known children's book writer, who suggested that he try writing a children's book. He immediately sent her a manuscript for a children's book he'd written a year before. Within a week, the book—*The Donkey Cart*—was accepted for publication. Since then, Bulla has written many books for children, as well as the music for children's song books.

## Critic's Corner

*Shoeshine Girl* received the Charlie May Simon Award, the Sequoyah Children's Book Award, and the South Carolina School Children award. A critic called the novel "psychologically sound, well structured, and satisfying in its realistic development of character."

## Other Books by Clyde Robert Bulla

*These Bright Young Dreams* (1941)

*The Donkey Cart* (1946)

*Riding the Pony Express* (1948)

*The Secret Valley* (1949)

*Surprise for a Cowboy* (1950)

*A Ranch for Danny* (1951)

*Song of St. Francis* (1952)  
*Johnny Hong of Chinatown* (1952)  
*Eagle Feather* (1953)  
*Star of Wild Horse Canyon* (1953)  
*Down the Mississippi* (1954)  
*Squanto: Friend of the Pilgrims* (1971)  
*A Dog Named Penny* (1955)  
*White Sails to China* (1955)  
*The Poppy Seeds* (1955)  
*John Billington: Friend of Squanto* (1956)  
*The Sword in the Tree* (1956)  
*Old Charlie* (1957)  
*Ghost Town Treasure* (1957)  
*Pirate's Promise* (1958)  
*The Valentine Cat* (1959)  
*Stories of Favorite Operas* (1959)  
*Three-Dollar Mule* (1960)  
*A Tree Is a Plant* (1960)  
*The Sugar Pear Tree* (1960)  
*Benito* (1961)  
*The Ring and the Fire: Stories from Wagner's Niebelung Operas* (1962)  
*What Makes a Shadow?* (1962)  
*Viking Adventure* (1963)  
*Indian Hill* (1963)  
*St. Valentine's Day* (1965)  
*More Stories of Favorite Operas* (1965)  
*Lincoln's Birthday* (1966)  
*White Bird* (1966)  
*Washington's Birthday* (1967)  
*Flowerpot Gardens* (1967)  
*The Ghost of Windy Hill* (1968)  
*Mika's Apple Tree: A Story of Finland* (1968)  
*Stories of Gilbert & Sullivan Operas* (1968)  
*New Boy in Dublin: A Story of Ireland* (1969)  
*The Moon Singer* (1969)  
*Jonah and the Great Fish* (1970)  
*Pocahontas and the Strangers* (1971)  
*Joseph the Dreamer* (1971)  
*Open the Door and See All the People* (1972)  
*Noah and the Rainbow* (1972)  
*Dexter* (1973)  
*The Wish at the Top* (1974)  
*Marco Moonlight* (1976)  
*The Beast of Lor* (1977)  
 (With Michael Syson) *Conquista!* (1978)  
*Keep Running, Allen!* (1978)  
*Last Look* (1979)  
*Daniel's Duck* (1979)  
*The Stubborn Old Woman* (1980)  
*My Friend, the Monster* (1980)  
*Almost a Hero* (1981)

*A Lion to Guard Us* (1981)  
*Dandelion Hill* (1982)  
*Poor Boy, Rich Boy* (1982)  
*Charlie's House* (1983)  
*The Cardboard Crown* (1984)  
*A Grain of Wheat: A Writer Begins* (1985)  
*The Chalk Box Kid* (1987)  
*Singing Sam* (1989)  
*The Christmas Coat* (1990)

## Bibliography

### Books

*American Bicentennial Reading*, Children's Book Council, 1975.  
 Arbuthnot, May Hill, *Children and Books*, 3rd edition, Scott, Foresman, 1964.  
 Roginski, James W. *Behind the Covers, Vol. II; Interviews With Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults*. Libraries Unlimited, 1989.  
*Books for Children, 1960-1965*, American Library Association, 1966.  
 Bulla, Clyde Robert, *A Grain of Wheat: A Writer Begins*, Godine, 1985.  
*The Children's Bookshelf*, Child Study Association of America, 1965.  
 Hopkins, Lee Bennett, *Books Are by People*, Citation Press, 1969.  
 Huck and Young, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*, Holt, 1961.  
 Larrick, Nancy, *A Teacher's Guide to Children's Books*, Merrill, 1966.  
*Major Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults*. Detroit: Gale, 1993.  
*Something about the Author*. Vol 91. Detroit: Gale, 1997.  
*Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, Vol 6, Detroit: Gale, 1988.  
*Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, fourth edition, St. James Press, 1995.

### Periodicals

*Booklist*, Jan. 1, 1996, p. 832.  
*Cricket*, November 1980.  
*Elementary English*, November 1971.  
*Horn Book Guide*, spring 1996, p. 53.  
*Kirkus Reviews*, Oct. 15, 1995, p. 1488.  
*School Library Journal*, December, 1995, p. 102.

### Internet

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 <[www.edupaperback.org/authorbios/bullacl.htm](http://www.edupaperback.org/authorbios/bullacl.htm)>  
 "Lucky,"

<teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/authors/bulla/bio.htm>.

## General Objectives

1. To analyze childhood rebellion
2. To understand the causes of Sarah Ida's anger
3. To understand the novel's title
4. To recognize the importance of setting
5. To assess each character's personality
6. To recognize the novel's theme
7. To explore the ways kindness can be shown
8. To find examples of compassion
9. To understand the importance of meaningful work
10. To describe how Sarah Ida matures over the summer

## Specific Objectives

1. To analyze how working can make people appreciate the value of money
2. To see how Sarah Ida deals with her mother's serious illness
3. To understand how Aunt Claudia tries to help Sarah Ida
4. To probe Al's difficult childhood to see why the medal means so much to him
5. To examine the relationship between Sarah Ida and Al
6. To see the effect of setting on a person's life
7. To understand the plot structure
8. To grasp the extent of Sarah Ida's rebellion
9. To understand why Al gives Sarah Ida his medal at the end of the novel
10. To visualize the story's action

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Clyde Robert Bulla's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

**Conflict** in literature is a struggle or fight. Conflict makes a story interesting because readers want to find out the outcome. There are two kinds of conflict. In an *external conflict*, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an *internal conflict*, characters battle a force within themselves. Stories often contain both external and internal conflicts. In *Shoeshine Girl*, Sarah Ida experiences an internal conflict when she realizes that she has hurt Al by disparaging his medal. She apologizes and says, "That medal- it doesn't matter if it's tin or silver or gold. It doesn't matter *what* it's made of, if it's something you like." Sarah Ida has external conflicts when she rebels against her parents and her Aunt Claudia.

**Characterization** is the different ways an author tells

readers about characters. Sometimes, writers tell about characters directly. Other times, writers let readers reach their own decisions by showing the comments, thoughts, and actions of the other characters. Bulla uses indirect characterization to suggest that Sarah Ida is spoiled, rebellious, and insolent at the beginning of the novel. We see this when she refuses to call home, takes Rossi's money, and pushes her aunt to her limits.

**Style** is an author's distinctive way of writing. Style is made up of elements such as word choice, sentence length and structure, figures of speech, and tone. An author may change his or her style for different kinds of writing and to suit different audiences. In poetry, for example, an author might use more imagery than he or she would use in prose. Bulla uses a deceptively simple style to convey his story. His style is characterized by simple sentences, few figures of speech, and sparse description. Instead, he relies on dialogue to tell the story of Sarah Ida's maturation.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Novels

David Almond, *Skellig*  
Orlando Araujo, *Michael Vincent the Shoeshine Boy*  
Beverly Cleary, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*  
Sharon Creech, *Walk Two Moons*  
Roddy Doyle, *The Giggler Treatment*  
Jack Gantos, *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*  
Hilary McKay, *The Exiles*  
Jean Merrill, *The Toothpaste Millionaire*  
Richard Peck, *A Long Way from Chicago: A Novel in Stories*  
Daniel Manus Pinkwater, *The Werewolf Club: The Magic Pretzel*  
Louis Sachar, *Holes*  
Elizabeth George Speare, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*  
William Stein, *Abel's Island*  
Mildred D. Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*  
Arvella Whitemore, *The Bread Winner*

### Nonfiction

Harman, Hollis Page, *Money Sense for Kids!*  
CD-ROM  
*Money Making 101: The Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs* (World of Money, 1997)

### Video/DVD

*Shoeshine Girl* (Learning Corporation of America", 1980)

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Clyde Robert Bulla's *Shoeshine Girl* should include these aspects:

**Themes**

- family problems
- friendship
- hardships, especially in childhood
- illness and accidents
- maturity
- money
- rebellion
- responsibility
- self-realization
- the value of useful work

**Motifs**

- helping others when they need it
- taking responsibility for your own actions
- showing family love and support
- coping with family illness
- the importance of sacrifice and selflessness
- random acts of kindness
- work as a means to maturity
- self-awareness and maturity
- growth and change
- teenage rebellion and behavior problems

**Meaning Study**

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers

indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. "You had a friend named Midge, didn't you?" asked Aunt Claudia. "And Midge got into trouble. The way I heard it, she was taking a dress out of a store. It was a dress she hadn't paid for." (p. 7)  
*(Sarah Ida is experiencing a difficult time, likely as a result of her mother's illness. She and her friend have been shoplifting items, even though Sarah Ida explains that "it was like a game." Further, since she wasn't the one holding the stolen item, Sarah Ida refused to take responsibility for it: "Anyway, what does it have to do with me?" she asks. This scene reveals that Sarah Ida is very immature and refuses to take responsibility for her actions.)*
  
2. "You're trying me out, to see how far you can go." (p. 22)  
*(Aunt Claudia wisely realizes that Sarah Ida is deliberately misbehaving to see how far she can push the situation before Aunt Claudia loses her temper and sends her niece back home. Sarah Ida doesn't realize that Claudia has a very deep well of patience.)*

3. "But you can't be seen working at a shoeshine stand on Grand Avenue," Aunt Claudia would say. "I'll give you some money." (p.29)  
*(Sarah Ida has worked out an entire scenario in her head: she is convinced that she can twist Aunt Claudia's arm to get an allowance and not have to work. However, she misjudges her aunt completely. This is a subtle indication of Sarah Ida's immaturity.)*
  
4. In the drugstore she looked at magazines. She looked at chewing gum and candy bars. None of them seemed to matter much. Her money was the first she had ever worked for. Somehow she wanted to spend it for something important. (p. 42)  
*(After Sarah Ida starts work, she begins to realize how much effort it takes to earn money. As a result, she is not as willing to spend it freely as she had with her parents' money. We see in this scene that she is maturing, even though she is not aware of it.)*
  
5. "One more thing. You didn't say yesterday if you were coming back or not. This time I want to know. Are you coming back tomorrow?" (p.44)  
*(Al is not willing to put up with Sarah Ida's rudeness and lack of manners. By forcing her to be civil and commit to the future, Al is helping her to mature. As a result of Al's lessons, when he is injured in the accident and needs her help, Sarah Ida reacts with grace and generosity. )*
  
6. It was nothing but a canvas apron. She didn't know why she should be so pleased with it. But it was a long time since anything had pleased her so much. (p. 45)  
*(The apron is a symbol of acceptance and trust. Al trusts Sarah Ida enough to give her a tangible sign that she belongs at the shoeshine stand—the apron. Since Sarah Ida is young and inexperienced, she does not understand why she is so pleased with the apron, but discerning readers understand that it pleases her because of what it represents. )*
  
7. "That's a medal?" she said. "That little old piece of tin?" (p. 54)  
*(Al cherishes the medal he received for building a fire because it was the only recognition he has gotten in his life and it was genuine. By disparaging his accomplishment, Sarah Ida is disparaging Al.)*
  
8. "I didn't mean what you think I did," she said. "That medal—it doesn't matter if it's tin or silver or gold. It doesn't matter what it's made of, if it's some-

thing you like. I said the wrong thing, but it wasn't what I meant." (p. 56)  
*(Sarah Ida quickly realizes her insult and apologizes. She cherishes Al's friendship because it is genuine and makes her feel good. The apology is a significant step in Sarah Ida's road to maturity.)*

9. "I brought you this," Sarah Ida took the money out of her pocket and put it down on a chair. "It's what I made today. I kept out some change. I'll need that for tomorrow." (p. 64)  
*(When Al is injured in a car accident, he instructs Sarah Ida to lock up the shoeshine stand. Instead, she decides to keep it open and give all the money to Al and his wife. This is Sarah Ida's first selfless act and shows that she has grown up as a result of living with her Aunt Claudia and working with Al.)*
10. She said to herself, I'm ready. I think I'm ready, and she felt the star on the medal she held in her hand. (p. 84)  
*(Sarah Ida is ready to face her immediate problems—peer pressure to misbehave, her mother's serious illness, having to keep house for her father—as well as all the other trials that life presents. Armed with Al's love and faith in her, Sarah Ida is ready to deal with her life.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Why has Sarah Ida been sent to live with her Aunt Claudia?  
*(Sarah Ida's mother is ill and her father cannot handle the child. In addition, Sarah Ida has been getting into some serious trouble—shoplifting—and has been disrespectful to her parents.)*
2. What happens between Rossi and Sarah Ida when they first meet?  
*(Rossi is very friendly toward Sarah Ida, even making her cupcakes, but Sarah Ida is rude and abrupt. She takes \$4 of Rossi's \$5 by intimidating the gentle child.)*
3. Why does Sarah Ida take a job with Al?  
*(Sarah Ida wants her Aunt Claudia to give her spending money. When Aunt Claudia refuses, Sarah Ida*

*decides to force her hand by taking a job. She never imagines that her aunt will agree to let her work; instead, she is convinced that her aunt will give her all the money she wants to avoid the embarrassment of having her niece shine shoes on the corner.)*

4. What happens to Al as he is crossing the street?  
*(He is hit by a car while crossing the street and injured badly enough to have to stay in the hospital for a week.)*
5. Who is Kicker? How does he help Sarah Ida?  
*(Kicker is a preteen boy who had applied for a job with Al. Al had agreed to hire him, but Kicker had never shown up. When Sarah Ida decides to take the money she earned to Al and his wife, Kicker warns her that the neighborhood is not safe. Since Sarah Ida does not listen, Kicker accompanies her to protect her against gang attack.)*

### Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. Why does Sarah Ida keep the shoeshine stand open?  
*(Sarah Ida feels an obligation to help Al as he has helped her, even though she never directly voices her affection to him. At first, she simply continues working because she is numb with shock over Al's accident, but soon she makes a deliberate commitment to help Al and his wife.)*
7. Why does Al give Sarah Ida his medal?  
*(Al cherishes his medal, the only true recognition he has ever received—or is likely to receive. He gives his medal to Sarah Ida to recognize her efforts on his behalf. By giving her the medal, Al is telling Sarah Ida that she has behaved admirably and should be very proud of herself.)*
8. How does Sarah Ida change as result of her experiences?  
*(She matures into a polite and responsible pre-teen. She discards her selfishness, anger, and rudeness to become considerate, kind, and selfless. At the end of the novel, she is a much nicer person than she was at the beginning.)*

### Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. How would you describe the writing style of this novel?  
*(Bulla uses a very simple and direct style, what readers would expect to find in a newspaper article. The sentences are brief, the words are plain, and the action clear. In addition, there are very few figures of*

*speech or other stylistic embellishments.)*

10. What do you think the apron symbolizes?  
(Possible responses: *belonging, responsibility, maturity.*)

**Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)**

11. Writing as Sarah Ida, draft a journal entry that describes your life ten years in the future.
12. Working with a small group of classmates, discuss some ways that you might have coped with Sarah Ida if you had been Aunt Claudia.

**Across the Curriculum**

*Art/Music*

1. Make Al's "help wanted" sign. Display it in the classroom.
2. Draw a map of Palmville, including the area from Aunt Claudia's house to the downtown area. Be sure to include all the landmarks mentioned in the novel.
3. Select a dramatic scene in the book, such as Sarah Ida's confrontation with her Aunt Claudia or Al's accident. Choose background music that reinforces the scene's mood or atmosphere. Read the scene to the class as you play the music in the background.
4. Rossi makes cupcakes for Sarah Ida. Make a homemade gift to share with your classmates. It might be a drawing, painting, or song, for example.
5. Aunt Claudia tells Sarah Ida that she is playing a game. Recast this novel as a board game. Include a playing board, playing pieces, and rules. Then demonstrate the game for the class.
6. Make the medal that Al received from his teacher. Include a scroll that explains why Al is getting this honor.

*Language Arts*

1. Al knew Aunt Claudia from her work at the library. She always recommended books for Al to read. List five books that you think your classmates would enjoy. Next to each book, write a sentence explaining why you recommend the book.

2. Writing as Sarah Ida, draft three letters or e-mails that you might send to your parents over the summer. In your letters, show how Sarah Ida changes as a result of her experiences.
3. Read another book by Clyde Robert Bulla and compare and contrast it to *Shoeshine Girl*. Show how they are the same and different from each other.
4. List five rules that good workers in all jobs should follow. Be prepared to explain why each rule is important.
5. Al teaches Sarah Ida good manners, such as saying "Thank you" and not demanding a tip. Make a booklet entitled "Manners for Children" and distribute copies to your classmates.

*History/Social Studies*

1. Write a travel brochure for Palmville, the city where the novel is set. Include words and pictures that make people want to visit Palmville for a vacation.
2. Al is a shoeshine man. Around the turn of the century, all major cities and towns had shoeshine men' working daily. Report on people who worked outdoors a century ago. What special problems did they face?
3. Sarah Ida travels by train to visit her Aunt Claudia. Explain the history of the railroads in America.

*Speech/Debate*

1. Sarah Ida is not willing to spend the money that she earns, because she now realizes how difficult it is to make money. However, she is very willing to spend her allowance. Debate whether or not pre-teens and teenagers should receive an allowance.
2. Working with a partner, role-play a scene in which you are being interviewed for a summer job. Use the interview between Al and Sarah Ida as a model.
3. Speaking as Aunt Claudia, explain to the class why Sarah Ida must return Rossi's money to her.

*Science/Math*

1. Al is injured in a car accident. Find out how many children and teen-agers are hurt or killed every year in car accidents. Make a pamphlet offering suggestions to cut down on the number of injuries

and fatalities, such as wearing seat belts, crossing at green lights, and not drinking and driving.

2. What is in shoe polish? How does it work? Answer these questions and share your findings with the class.
3. List emergency first aid procedures to deal with accidents, injuries, and other health problems. Be sure to check with the school nurse as you prepare your list.
4. Sarah Ida brings all the money she earns to Al and his wife. How much money does a couple need to be considered "middle class" in your community? Make a chart showing the average monthly expenses for two people. Include such expenses as rent, food, utilities, medical, and clothing.

## Student Involvement Activities

1. Shine a pair of shoes according to Al's instructions in this novel.
2. In your own words, state the novel's theme or message.
3. Create a TV panel discussion explaining how Al helps Sarah Ida mature.
4. Explain why Sarah Ida won't spend the money she earns. Recall that before she started earning her own money, she spent very freely and even shoplifted objects that she wanted.
5. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main elements.

## Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of difficulties that Sarah Ida faced. Then rank these hardships on a scale from most to least difficult. Be ready to justify your rankings.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate how Sarah Ida rebels.
3. Compose a scene in which Sarah Ida visits Al ten years after the action described in the novel.
4. Make a character list and describe each character.



## Vocabulary Test

Fill in each blank in the following sentences with the best word from the list below. Place your answer in the blank provided. Use each word only once.

ambulance  
canvas  
coldly  
crick  
customers  
dazed  
embarrassed  
fierce  
fussy  
jig  
jingled  
nudged  
numb  
platform  
polish  
relation  
shack  
sprinkled  
squawk  
stingily

1. Sarah Ida rubbed the thick black \_\_\_\_\_ on the shoes with her hands.
2. She bent down so long that she had a bend or \_\_\_\_\_ in her neck.
3. Aunt Claudia was Sarah Ida's \_\_\_\_\_ but Al was not a family member.
4. Sarah Ida looked at Aunt Claudia \_\_\_\_\_ and rudely.
5. Sarah Ida had ten \_\_\_\_\_ in one hour, so she was very busy shining shoes.
6. The money \_\_\_\_\_ in her pocket, making a musical sound.
7. Sarah Ida did not get \_\_\_\_\_ when Al told her to use good manners. She did not even blush with shame!
8. Sarah Ida and Al built a wooden \_\_\_\_\_ so their customers had something to sit on.
9. She \_\_\_\_\_ a few drops of water on the shoes before she put on the polish.
10. Al was taken to the hospital in an \_\_\_\_\_, the siren roaring.
11. The apron was made of a stiff white fabric called \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Sarah Ida was \_\_\_\_\_ and confused that Al had been injured.
13. She heard a parrot \_\_\_\_\_ in the nearby pet store.
14. None of the customers treated Sarah Ida and Al \_\_\_\_\_; they all gave big tips.
15. Sarah Ida was \_\_\_\_\_ and unfeeling when Al was injured.
16. Al's father wanted him to dance a little \_\_\_\_\_ to attract customers, but Al could not dance at all.
17. The rain was \_\_\_\_\_, like pieces of rock bouncing on the sidewalk.
18. Kicker \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah Ida with his shoulder.
19. Sarah Ida did not like the curtains because they were too \_\_\_\_\_ and flowery. She preferred simple designs.
20. Sarah Ida locked up the small shoeshine \_\_\_\_\_ with the key.

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Sarah Ida's aunt, a former librarian                     | A. Sarah Ida Becker   |
| 2. Al's wife  | B. Kicker             |
| 3. Rossi's mother   | C. Al Winkler         |
| 4. the novel's setting                                      | D. Claudia Becker     |
| 5. a customer at the shoeshine stand                        | E. Mr. Naylor         |
| 6. boy who believes that he should have Sarah Ida's job     | F. Doris Winkler      |
| 7. the girl who bakes cupcakes for Sarah Ida                | G. Rossi              |
| 8. matures from a rebellious preteen to a mature young lady | H. Palmville          |
| 9. the author of Shoeshine Girl                             | I. Clyde Robert Bulla |
| 10. the owner of the shoeshine stand J.                     | Mrs. Wigginhorn       |

### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements. Place your answers in the blanks provided in the sentences.

1. Ten-year-old Sarah Ida has come to stay with her Aunt Claudia while her mother is \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sarah Ida's parents have sent her to stay with her Aunt because the child was \_\_\_\_\_ with her friend Midge.
3. Sarah Ida convinces Rossi to give her \_\_\_\_\_
4. Determined to push her aunt to the edge, Sarah Ida decides to get a \_\_\_\_\_
5. She first approaches the \_\_\_\_\_ who laugh at her and tell her to come back in about six years when she's old enough to work.
6. On her second day at work, Sarah Ida is very pleased when Al gives her a \_\_\_\_\_ to wear.
7. Miss Miller, Al's teacher, gave him a \_\_\_\_\_ for starting the fire every day in the classroom stove.
8. When Al is in the \_\_\_\_\_, Sarah Ida takes over the shoeshine stand.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ writes an article about Sarah Ida keeping the shoeshine stand open, which attracts even more customers.
10. Rossi brings Sarah Ida the \_\_\_\_\_ that Aunt Claudia packed.

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Sarah Ida is fifteen years old.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Furious about being sent away, Sarah Ida refuses to cooperate with her aunt.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Aunt Claudia realizes that Sarah Ida is pushing her to see how far she can go before Claudia loses her temper and sends her to prison.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Sarah Ida is convinced that her aunt would never let her work at a shoeshine stand.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Sarah Ida earns twenty dollars a day and wants more money but Al is fair and firm.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. The customers do not like Sarah Ida because she is not doing a good job.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. Sarah Ida does not enjoy the work but she wants the money so she stays.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Al explains that his father sold patent medicines and the man and child traveled all over the country.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. Al was never able to get an education because they did not stay in one place very long.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. Sarah Ida's parents need her to come home because her mother is very ill.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Argue that children should or should not work in the summers and during school vacations, as Sarah Ida did.

## **Shoeshine Girl** Clyde Robert Bulla

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2. Describe how Sarah Ida changes as a result of her experiences with Aunt Claudia and Al.
3. Explain how Aunt Claudia deals with Sarah Ida.
4. Analyze why Al helps Sarah Ida.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase from the list below to complete each of the following statements.

1. Sarah Ida's parents have sent her to stay with her aunt in part because the child was (shoplifting, running away) with her friend Midge.
2. Sarah Ida convinces Rossi to give her (\$4, \$40) from her savings.
3. Determined to push her aunt to the edge, Sarah Ida goes to the shopping district to find a (bus home, job).
4. She first approaches pet store owners, who tell her to come back when (they have work, she's old enough to work).
5. Al knew Aunt Claudia well from the (library, school) where she worked.
6. Sarah Ida earns about (\$2, \$20) a day.
7. Sarah Ida is very pleased when Al gives her a (raise, canvas apron).
8. Al's father sold (medicines, shoes) and they traveled all over the country.
9. Al received a medal from his teacher for (good grades, being helpful).
10. Al's farewell gift to Sarah Ida is his (apron, medal), his most precious possession.

### Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each and explain why it is important in the story.

1. the apron
2. Rossi's cupcakes
3. Al's accident
4. the shoeshine stand
5. the medal

### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each phrase below with a reason or justification.

1. Sarah Ida stays with her Aunt Claudia because
2. Sarah Ida refuses to cooperate with her aunt because
3. Aunt Claudia calls Rossi Wigginhom the first time because
4. Aunt Claudia calls Rossi Wigginhom the second time because
5. Sarah Ida wants a job because
6. Sarah Ida applies for a job at the shoeshine stand because
7. Al demands she have good manners with the customers because
8. "Kicker" is upset at Sarah Ida because
9. Al was never able to get an education because
10. Sarah Ida apologizes to Al because

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Compare and contrast Sarah Ida in the beginning of the novel and the end.
2. Explain the novel's theme or main idea. What lesson does it teach?
3. Describe the novel's setting.
4. Aunt Claudia, Rossi, and Al all try to help Sarah Ida. Which person do you think has the greatest influence on her? Why?

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY TEST

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. polish      | 11. canvas   |
| 2. crick       | 12. dazed    |
| 3. relation    | 13. squawk   |
| 4. coldly      | 14. stingily |
| 5. customers   | 15. numb     |
| 6. jingled     | 16. jig      |
| 7. embarrassed | 17. fierce   |
| 8. platform    | 18. nudged   |
| 9. sprinkled   | 19. fussy    |
| 10. ambulance  | 20. shack    |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part II: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. B  |
| 2. F | 7. G  |
| 3. J | 8. A  |
| 4. H | 9. I  |
| 5. E | 10. C |

#### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ill              | 6. canvas apron       |
| 2. shoplifting      | 7. medal              |
| 3. money            | 8. accident           |
| 4. job              | 9. newspaper reporter |
| 5. pet store owners | 10. lunch             |

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F  |
| 2. T | 7. F  |
| 3. F | 8. T  |
| 4. T | 9. T  |
| 5. F | 10. T |

#### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- shoplifting
- \$4
- job
- she's old enough to work
- library
- \$2
- canvas apron
- medicines
- being helpful
- medal

#### Part II: Identification (20 points)

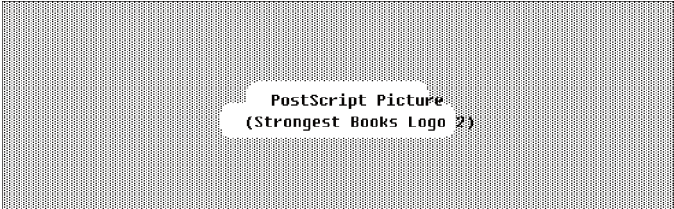
- The apron represents maturity and acceptance.
- Rossi's cupcakes show welcome and compassion. They reveal that Rossi is kind and generous and would be a good friend.
- Al's accident is the test that helps Sarah Ida mature. She takes responsibility for the shoeshine stand, which helps her grow up and think of others rather than just herself.
- The shoeshine stand represents community and the family feeling often found in small towns.
- The medal is Al's most precious possession. By giving it to Sarah Ida, he is acknowledging her maturity and congratulating her for making the leap.

#### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

- her mother is ill and her parents can't handle her rebellion
- she is furious about being sent away
- she wants Sarah Ida to have a friend
- Sarah Ida is coming to return the money she has taken
- she wants to force her aunt to give her an allowance
- she is convinced that her aunt would never let her work at a shoeshine stand. That way, she will get an allowance without any work
- it is bad for business if she doesn't
- she has the job that he thinks he should have
- he and his father did not stay in one place very long
- she has hurt his feelings and she is becoming mature enough to know that she has been rude and hurtful

#### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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