

Title: *The Brooklyn Bridge*
Author: Karen Hesse
Perspectives Category: Socio-Economic Differences

Response Submitted By: Carina G., 7th Grade

Date Submitted: September 5, 2020

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

“The Brooklyn Bridge” is set in the summer of 1903, and is about Joseph Michtom, who is 14 years old. All he wants to do is experience the thrill of Coney Island first hand, but that seems very unlikely. His parents, Russian immigrants, created the first ever teddy bears, and started selling them five months ago. Joseph’s parents used to own a quiet candy shop, but now all they do is sell teddy bears. Joseph has two younger siblings. Emily and Benjamin, who they call Benny. Joseph works for his parents, which he doesn’t like. He especially doesn’t like that they don’t pay him. Joseph argues with his parents a lot. In between the chapters of this book, there are stories of children who live under the Brooklyn Bridge.

2. *Which character did you identify with most, and why?*

I identify most with Emily, Joseph’s little sister. She is curious, and likes to read. She is always there for Joseph, and she always appears calm. She is also very responsible, as she always looks after Benny. I feel I share some of these qualities with Emily.

3. *What do you think the main message of this book was?*

I think the main message of this book was that you have to make your own luck. You have to work hard to be “lucky”. Luck doesn’t just come out of nowhere. You have to be persistent, and be willing to put in hard work to enjoy good things.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too “preachy”?*

I think the main message was both effectively integrated into the story, and also made very obvious by the author. The entire book centered around Joseph’s family working hard and saving up money so they could go to Coney Island. However, at the end of the book, the main message is stated directly.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/ presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Another perspective I believe was presented in the book was that there is always a less fortunate side of things. I agree with this perspective. I believe that it was very eye-opening and important to read about the less fortunate side of Brooklyn.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

I do not think my beliefs were changed by reading this book.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I do not think any perspective was missing from this book.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book has encouraged me to learn more about our country in the early 1900's, during the industrial period when many immigrants like Joseph's parents came to the country.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would suggest this book to readers fifth grade and up. I would suggest it to someone who is interested in historical fiction, and books about the past.

10. *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

I think the book "Out of the Dust" by Karen Hesse would make a good addition to this category of the perspectives bibliography because it is about a girl whose father is out of work because of the Dust Bowl. This book deals with economic differences just like "The Brooklyn Bridge."

Response Submitted By: Anton P., 10th Grade

Date Submitted: July 28, 2021

1) *What is the main plot of this book?*

The plot revolves around the Micholm family who created the teddy bear. The main character is Joseph Mitholm. He is worried that the community stopped liking his family because of their success. The Micholms used to run a candy store but since the creation of the teddy bear, they had to invest all of their work into producing teddy bears because of the toy's insane success. This means that the family is too busy running their business making it rare for everyone to gather together and Joseph no longer has a lot of free time because his father expects him to work and support the family. The family includes Joseph, his sister, his baby brother, his parents, and his aunts. The Micholm family used to include uncle Izzy who they believed to have died trying to save his son, Steven. The story pans to the Children under the bridge which are a group of homeless children who live under the bridge and are haunted by the Radiant Boy which is a ghost which takes some of the children at night.

2) *Which character do you most identify with and why?*

I identify with Joseph because his struggle of growing up and people wanting a lot from him is relatable.

3) *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

I believe that this book really emphasizes the importance of family connections.

4) *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across too "preachy"?*

I think that the family aspect of this book was integrated very well.

5) *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

The two main perspectives were of the Micholm family and all of the homeless kids living under the bridge. The Micholms had family and stuck together and the homeless kids had to stick together and be their own family. I do not think that I can agree with one of these perspectives but these perspectives reinforce the central idea of the importance of family.

6) *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about your topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

I think that the story is very good at reaffirming the belief in the importance of family with a lot of the characters risking everything for their family.

7) *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I do not think that any other perspectives are missing from the book

8) *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through reading, research, action, ect, and if so, how?*

No, it does not.

9) *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, ect.) would you suggest this book too?*

I would recommend this book to someone around 15 who likes mystery books and maybe a little bit of supernatural.

10) *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the perspectives bibliography, and why?*

I don't know any books that would.