

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Lesley Wolf	School:	Hyatts
Book Title:	They Cage the Animals at Night	Genre:	Memoir/Family
Author:	Jennings Michael Birch	Pages:	304
Publisher:	Signet	Copyright:	1998

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

One rainy day in Brooklyn, Jennings Michael Burch's mother, too sick to care for him, left him at an orphanage, saying only, "I'll be right back." She never returned. Shuttled through a series of bleak foster homes and institutions, he never remained in any of them long enough to make a friend. Instead, Jennings clung to a tattered stuffed animal, his sole source of warmth in a frightening world. This is the poignant story of his lost childhood. But it is also the triumphant tale of a little boy who finally gained the courage to reach out for love-and found it waiting for him.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres.

6. Write responses to literature that organize an insightful interpretation around several clear ideas, premises or images that support judgments with specific references to the original text, to other texts, authors and/or to prior knowledge.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Booklist

This heart-wrenching autobiographical account...has the power of a Dickens novel.

Review #2

Sandra D. Peters "Seagull Books" (Prince Edward Island, Canada)

This is the story of Jennings Michael Burch and it is not an easy book to read. It tells of a young boy's determination to survive despite abandonment, physical abuse and humiliation after being left by his ailing mother at an orphanage. He then experiences a variety of foster homes and some of these accounts will bring more than a single tear to your eye.

During his stay at an orphanage, the Sisters would allow the children to choose a stuffed animal to take to bed with them at night as a source of comfort. Goodness only knows, it was their only small comfort - every other aspect was a child's worst nightmare! However, in the wee hours of the morning before the children awoke, the animals would quickly be gathered up and locked away

(caged) and this is the source of the book's title. David's only source of acceptance, love and understanding comes from "Doggie", a tattered stuffed dog. Your heart will cry for this little boy whose only desire is to please, be loved and be wanted. The story does have a happy ending, if such stories ever really do. Despite all odds, Michael does survive, along with "Doggie". The hurt, rejection and loneliness felt as an abused child never disappear. The wounds heal, the heart forgives, but the mind never forgets. Anyone who has experienced abuse as a child, whether it be physical, sexual, emotional or verbal, will be able to relate only too well to the story of little Jennings Michael Burch. Often, reading the stories of other victims of abuse, help the adult survivor to realize they are not alone. If you have never experienced abuse, you will count your blessings that you have never had to live each and every day in a world of constant fear and rejection. ...

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **The Boy from the Basement**

Author: **Susan Shaw**

Title: **Ghost Girl**

Author: **Torey L. Hayden**

Title: **One Child**

Author: **Torey L. Hayden**

Title: **Of Nightingales that Weep**

Author: **Katherine Paterson, Haru Wells**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Multiple uses of the word "ass", "shit", "damn" as used in context with the plot of the book.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Grade 7

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 12-13-07

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

