



## Dave at Night

*By Gail Carson Levine*

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### Dave at Night By Gail Carson Levine

If nobody wants him, that's fine. He'll just take care of himself.

When his father dies, Dave knows nothing will ever be the same. And then it happens. Dave lands in an orphanage—the cold and strict Hebrew Home for Boys in Harlem—far from the life he knew on the Lower East Side. But he's not so worried. He knows he'll be okay. He always is. If it doesn't work out, he'll just leave, find a better place to stay. But it's not that simple.

Outside the gates of the orphanage, the nighttime streets of Harlem buzz with jazz musicians and swindlers; exclusive parties and mystifying strangers. Inside, another world unfolds, thick with rare friendships and bitter enemies. Perhaps somewhere, among it all, Dave can find a place that feels like home.

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## Dave at Night By Gail Carson Levine Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

"Gideon the Genius" and "Dave the Daredevil," their father called them: two Jewish boys growing up in 1920s New York, playing stickball and--in Dave's case--getting into trouble. But when their father dies, Dave finds himself separated from his older brother and thrust into the cold halls of the HHB, the Hebrew Home for Boys (which he later dubs the "Hopeless House of Beggars" and the "Hell Hole for Brats," among other things).

Eager to escape the strict rules, constant bullying, and tasteless gruel of the orphanage, the Daredevil hops the wall one night to explore the streets of Harlem. He hears what he thinks is someone--or something?--laughing, but traces the sound to a late-night trumpeter shuffling backward into a wild "rent party." And just as quickly as he'd found himself stuck in the HHB, Dave is immersed in yet another world--the swinging salons and speakeasies of the Harlem Renaissance. Cramped, crazy parties packed with the likes of Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen give Dave refuge from life at the orphanage and awaken his artistic bent. And Dave's new friends, among them a grandfatherly "gonif" ("somebody who fools people out of their money") and a young "colored" heiress who takes a shine to him, help turn things around for him at the HHB.

The skilled Gail Carson Levine, Newbery Medal-winning author of *Ella Enchanted*, clearly tells this tale from her heart, as the story is based on her own father's childhood spent in the real-life HOA (Hebrew Orphan Asylum). (Ages 8 to 12) --*Paul Hughes*

### From Publishers Weekly

In a dramatic departure from her fairy tale fare, Levine (*Ella Enchanted*) creates a chiaroscuro effect as she contrasts the bleak days and colorful nights of Dave Caros, an orphan growing up amid the Harlem Renaissance. When his woodcarver father dies in October 1926, Dave's older brother, Gideon, goes to live with their Uncle Jack in Chicago, but none of Dave's relatives can afford to take him. Dave's stepmother places him at the Hebrew Home for Boys (nicknamed Hell Hole for Brats), and the 11-year-old vows to run away. But first he must retrieve his most prized possession, his father's carving of Noah's Ark, which was stolen by the superintendent Mr. Bloom (aka "Doom"), who is infamous for beating up boys. In the meantime, Dave finds a way to sneak off the grounds for the evening. Thus begins Dave's secret life, revealed through his first-person narrative. On his first night out, he meets Solly, a self-proclaimed "gonif" with a heart of gold, who uses Dave as a sidekick in his fortune-telling gigs. Solly introduces him to an avant-garde group of thinkers, painters, writers, musicians and Irma Lee, the young niece of a prominent African-American socialite. As Dave waits for the opportunity to reclaim his carving, he settles into his double life. His fellow "elevens" at the orphanage emerge as distinct, colorful personalities who come through for him time and again. Mr. Hillinger, the unwittingly hilarious art teacher who cannot complete a sentence, becomes a champion for Dave's artistic talents. And his nocturnal adventures lead to an abiding friendship with pretty and kind Irma Lee as well as shed light on a fascinating corner of American history. In describing 1920s Harlem from a child's perspective, Levine articulates what it might have been like for anyone exposed to such innovation in art or the sounds of jazz for the first time: "It was wide-awake music, nothing like the waltzes Papa used to whistle. If I could have painted it, I would have used bright colors and short straight lines." This poignant and energetic novel, inspired by the author's father's childhood, comes with an all's-well-that-ends-well conclusion that brings a sense of belonging to Dave and his orphan friends, yet delivers a surprise as well. The Artful Dodger has met his match in Dave. Ages 8-12. (Sept.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9-A cross between *Oliver Twist* and a fairy tale, this charming story set on the edge of Harlem in 1926 features feisty troublemaker Dave. His father has died; neither his stepmother nor his poor, immigrant relatives feel they can support him. Thus, he is sent to the Hebrew Home for Boys, known by its "inmates" as the "Hell Hole for Brats," and is stripped of all of his possessions, most importantly an exquisite Noah's Ark that was carved by his father. Most of the adults Dave encounters are petty and brutal. He forms an alliance with the other "elevens" but vows to escape as soon as he recovers his carving. He sneaks out at night, and the sound of a "laughing trumpet" lures him to a nearby building where a dollar bill, a veritable fortune, wafts down from a window. He meets Solomon Gruber, a fortune teller, who makes Dave an unofficial grandson and whisks him off the streets into a party where he meets Irma Lee, a young black heiress whose mother runs salons for artists, authors, and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance. This chance encounter proves to be the boy's ultimate salvation. As in all fairy tales, characters are clearly good or evil, and Dave's story ends almost happily ever after. The magic comes from Levine's language and characterization. This novel will provide inspiration for all children while offering a unique view of a culturally diverse New York City. Readers will celebrate life with Dave and will recognize that fortitude and chutzpah are keys to his success, with a generous helping of good luck and good friends thrown in for good measure.

*Alice Casey Smith, Sayreville War Memorial High School, NJ*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Chris Barrentine:**

Precisely why? Because this *Dave at Night* is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will jolt you with the secret it inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I had been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

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#### **Michael Davis:**

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**Lynne Silva:**

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