



## Orphan Train: Summary and Analysis

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In the 1850s, it was estimated that over 30,000 children were homeless and roaming the busy streets of New York City. Charles Brace saw a need for the children to have homes of their own. He founded the Children's Aid Society. Brace theorized that the children would have a better chance at becoming contributing members of society if they were raised by "God-fearing" farm families. The "Orphan Train" Movement started in 1853 and continued into the early 1900s.

*Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline follows Niamh (pronounced Neev) who lived with her family in New York until her father and brothers are killed in a fire and her mother is sent to a mental hospital. Niamh is left to the Child's Aid Society and eventually placed on an Orphan Train to be transported to the Midwest in search of a new family. Many years later Niamh's name is changed and changed again. She is now 91 and twice widowed. Molly is a girl on a crash course with disaster. She has been passed around in the modern day foster system since she was a young girl. Her father died in a car accident and her mother was taken to jail. Molly is sentenced to spend 50 hours of community service for stealing and is sentenced helping Vivian clean out her attic. Somehow the unlikely duo become close friends.

Here is a preview of what you'll learn:

- General Overview and Summary of *Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline
- Analysis of *Orphan Train*
- The Historical Significance Behind *Orphan Train*
- Learn About The Actual Practices That Were Taking Place In The United States

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