

Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy Study Guide

**Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy by Horatio
Alger, Jr.**

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Contents

Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Ragged Dick, Chapters 1-4.....	5
Ragged Dick, Chapters 5-8.....	7
Ragged Dick, Chapters 9-12.....	8
Ragged Dick, Chapters 13-16.....	10
Ragged Dick, Chapters 17-20.....	12
Ragged Dick, Chapters 21-24.....	14
Ragged Dick, Chapters 25-27.....	16
Mark the Match Boy, Chapters 1-4.....	17
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 5-8.....	18
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 9-11.....	19
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 12-14.....	20
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 15-17.....	21
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 18-20.....	22
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 21-23.....	23
Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 24-26.....	24
Characters.....	26
Objects/Places.....	29
Themes.....	31
Style.....	33
Quotes.....	35
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy, by Horatio Alger, is a book intended for young boys. The author, a late nineteenth century writer, is concerned with social values and steering boys into a healthy and good life. His books tell the typical rags to riches story of the poor boy who studies and works hard, lives a clean life and becomes successful. The message to boys is not to drink or smoke or waste their time and money on frivolous entertainment. Apply themselves to their studies and work, and they will be able to improve their lot in life. This is the story told in Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy.

Ragged Dick is the story of an orphan who is a boot-black. He lives on the streets and has to fend for himself. One day he offers his services as a tour guide to the nephew of a prosperous man. They outfit Dick in new clothes and Dick and Frank, the nephew, spend the day talking as they sightsee. Frank encourages Dick to make changes in his life. His own uncle began poor and made himself into a success. That night, Frank's uncle gives Dick five dollars and advises him to find a room in a boarding house, save money and study. Dick follows his advice. Henry, another boot-black, can read and write and agrees to tutor Dick in exchange for lodging.

The two boys live frugally and work to help one another. Instead of spending time and money on entertainment, they use it to study and improve their situations. They eventually both find good jobs.

Mark the Match Boy basically continues the story some three years after Ragged Dick ends. Both men have progressed in their jobs and education. They eventually help a match boy named Mark, who becomes Dick's ward. While this is happening, they are trying to locate the grandson of the wealth Hiram Bates. It turns out that Mark is the missing grandson.

Two characters in the book, Roswell Crawford and Ralph Graham, show what happens to those who don't live the kind of life promoted by Alger. Both have low paying jobs because they can't hold a job for long. Ralph talks Roswell into stealing from his employer. This is the only way that they can afford the kind of entertainment that they want. Roswell is caught stealing and loses his job.

Horatio Alger is known to have been a proponent of social values. The message of his books is loud and clear for boys. Don't smoke or drink or spend time and money on wasteful entertainment. Work hard, study hard and save money. This is the path to improving social status and one's financial position. The stories, which are intended for boys, are interesting reading for adults.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 1-4

Ragged Dick, Chapters 1-4 Summary

Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy, by Horatio Alger, is a book intended for young boys. The author, a latter nineteenth century writer, is concerned with social values and steering boys into a healthy and good life. His books tell the typical rags to riches story of the poor boy who studies and works hard, lives a clean life and becomes successful. The message to boys is not to drink or smoke or waste their time and money on frivolous entertainment. Apply themselves to their studies and work, and they will be able to improve their lot in life. This is the story told in Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy.

Dick is awakened by a man. He earns his own money giving shoe shines since his guardian, he says, doesn't give him money. He tells the porter that he doesn't steal. The boy had slept in a wooden box with straw in it. He begins his day of shining shoes. His first customer is Mr. Greyson and Dick, who doesn't have change for a quarter, promises to leave the change at the man's office.

In Chapter Two, Dick has three other customers in the next hour. He goes to a nearby restaurant for breakfast. Dick buys breakfast for a hungry boot-black named Johnny Nolan. When they leave the restaurant, Johnny hides in a doorway to avoid a man who is walking by. When Dick asks why, Johnny explains that the man had secured a place for him at a farm. Johnny didn't like having to get up early and ran away. They go their separate ways for work.

Dick's next customer pays him with a two dollar bill and tells him to go to a store for change. When Dick does, the store clerk tells him that the bill is counterfeit.

In Chapter Three, Dick tells his customer what happened with the store clerk and the gentleman returns to the store with Dick. The clerk had switched the good bill that Dick had given him with a bad bill and for this he is fired by the store owner.

Back on the street, Dick overhears a conversation between a man and his nephew. The boy is visiting New York and wants to see the sights, but his uncle has business meetings. Dick promptly offers his services as a tour guide. The older man, Mr. Whitney, comments on his clothing and takes him into the hotel.

In Chapter Four, Mr. Whitney and Frank give Dick a suit of Frank's clothing and tell him to bathe. Dick doesn't recognize himself in the mirror in the gray suit they have given him. The boys leave the hotel and bump into Johnny Nolan, who doesn't recognize Dick. Dick begins to show Frank the sights.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Dick is a young boy of fourteen who earns his own income by shining shoes. He amuses his customers with the stories he tells and usually spends what he earns on entertainment at night. He is generous and helps his friend, Johnny Nolan, by buying him breakfast when he has no money.

Dick is always alert to any business opportunity. When he overhears a conversation between Mr. Whitney and his nephew Frank standing outside the hotel, he offers his services as a tour guide. They outfit him with Frank's clothing and Dick begins to show Frank around New York. Dick projects a quality of genuineness that allows people to trust him or Mr. Whitney would never have entrusted his nephew to Dick's care.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 5-8

Ragged Dick, Chapters 5-8 Summary

The boys walk to Chatham Street where there are many clothing stores. Merchants are standing in the doorways trying to entice customers into their stores. Dick explains the scams of the different merchants as they walk. Frank buys a new cap for Dick and then they continue their walk around the city, with Dick pointing out the different sights. They stop at Taylor's Saloon for ice cream.

Chapter Six has the boys resuming their walk on Broadway, with Dick pointing out the sights. Frank says that if he lived in the city, he would teach Dick to read. He invites Dick to visit him at his country home, which is about fifty miles away on the Hudson River. Frank encourages Dick to find a job. He tells him stories of other people who have gone from rags to riches.

In Chapter Seven, the boys reach Broadway and Fifth Avenue. They discuss the Fifth Avenue Hotel and then Frank asks Dick where he sleeps. Dick tells him about the Newsboys Lodgin' House. Dick explains a scam called the drop-game to Frank as they walk.

Chapter Eight reveals Dick's early history. His mother had died when he was three and he had been kept by the proprietors of his mother's boarding house until he was seven. He has been living off the streets ever since. Dick had worked first as a newsboy and then had sold matches. Frank is amazed at the story. He tells Dick that he needs to attend school and since Dick has to work during the day, he suggests night school. Dick says that he will look into it. Frank says that he believes Dick can be successful in life.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Frank is from the country and more or less awed by the city. He is naive and doesn't have the street smarts that Dick has. The boys are from different walks of life and they acknowledge this fact. They are very honest with each other. Dick notices how differently he is treated when he is clean and dressed in a suit. Frank encourages him to find a job and improve his circumstances and invites him to his country home. Frank is amazed to find that Dick has lived on the streets and provided for himself since the age of seven. It is a way of life that he can't imagine. He encourages Dick to attend school so he can find a good job.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 9-12

Ragged Dick, Chapters 9-12 Summary

Frank says that he wants to see Central Park. Frank decides that the mile and a half distance is too far to walk so they ride on a horse car. The boys view the sights as they ride. The woman sitting next to the boys accuses Frank of stealing her purse and calls the conductor. The conductor searches both boys and finds nothing. Some of the other passengers defend the boys. The pocket book is found in the woman's pocket. The boys go on to Central Park.

In Chapter Ten, Frank says that he will help care for Dick. Since Central Park is still under construction, Frank is not very impressed with it. He says that he is tired so they decide to return to Astor House. Standing outside Astor House, Dick asks Frank if he would like to see Wall Street. They go to the roof of the Customs House and view the scenery. On the way downstairs, they meet a young man who has been victimized by a swindler. The young man describes the swindler to the police. The boys leave the Customs House and decide to ride the ferry to Brooklyn. On board, Dick identifies one of the men as the swindler who had cheated the young man who they had met.

In Chapter Eleven, Dick asks the man if his name is Ephraim Smith, the name the swindler gave to the young man. The man says no. Dick continues to ask questions until the ferry reaches Brooklyn and tells him to return the money to the young man. The man gives the money to Dick and quickly leaves the boat. The boys remain on the ferry and ride back to New York. They find the young man and give him the money.

Dick walks Frank back to Astor House. Frank tells him to come inside with him. Mr. Whitney tells Dick that he began as a poor boy. He encourages Dick to read and to save his money. Frank and Dick go upstairs to retrieve Dick's old clothes. Mr. Whitney gives Dick five dollars as Dick is leaving the hotel.

In Chapter Twelve, Dick dines at a nice restaurant. He decides to change his habits. He goes to a rooming house and rents a room for seventy-five cents a week. He knows the landlady's son.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Frank is having a real learning experience with Dick. Being from the country, he has never experienced the things to which city kids are exposed and it amazes him that Dick recognizes all of the scams and swindles and knows how to deal with them. Frank feels sorry for the kind of life that Dick has. Dick says that he wishes he had a mother and father to care for him. Frank promises to help care for Dick.

Dick decides to make some changes in his life. Mr. Whitney tells him how he began as a poor boy and became successful. With the five dollars Mr. Whitney gives him, Dick rents



a room in a boarding house. He decides to stay in that night instead of hanging out at his usual haunts. He is impressed by Mr. Whitney and Frank and encouraged by what they tell him.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 13-16

Ragged Dick, Chapters 13-16 Summary

Dick moves into his room that evening and immediately goes to bed. When he awakens the next morning, he has to remind himself where he is. He decides that he should be able to afford the weekly rent since he usually spends more than that in one evening.

Dicks wears the suit when he goes out. He has a busy morning but when business slows down, two other boot blacks named Mickey Maguire and Limpy Jim notice his new clothes. They decide to teach him a lesson for putting on airs.

In Chapter Fourteen, Mickey and Jim ask Dick about his new clothes and accuse him of stealing them. Feeling that they could intimidate Dick, they challenge him to a fight. After a brief scuffle, Mickey and Jim leave when a policeman approaches.

The next morning, Dick opens a bank account. He gives his name as Dick Hunter. Dick decides that he will save as much money as possible and will do what he can to learn to read and write.

In Chapter Fifteen, Dick remembers that he didn't take the change from the quarter to Mr. Greyson's office so he walks to the Fulton Street address. He returns the fifteen cents and impresses Mr. Greyson with his honesty. The man invites him to join his Sunday school class.

That night he treats a less successful boot-black named Fosdick to dinner. He then invites him to sleep in his room. Fosdick has attended school and can read and write. They make a deal where Fosdick will teach Dick to read and write in exchange for sleeping in his room. They buy a paper and go to Dick's room to begin the lessons.

In Chapter Sixteen, the tutoring begins. The two boys decide to help one another. They both want to be respectable. The next morning, Dick makes arrangements with Mrs. Mooney, the landlady, for Fosdick to lodge in his room. It is an extra twenty-five cents a week. By the end of the first week, Dick adds to his saving account and Henry Fosdick opens his own account.

On Sunday, Henry accompanies Dick to Mr. Greyson's church. When they arrive at the church, Mr. Greyson sees them outside and shows them to their seats.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 13-16 Analysis

Dick begins to change his life. He opens a savings account with five dollars, most of which he had received from Mr. Whitney. When another boot-black named Henry Fosdick, doesn't have enough money to eat, Dick buys dinner for him and invites him to sleep in his room. When he finds that Henry can read and write, they make

arrangements for Henry to tutor Dick in exchange for lodging. Both boys want to improve their status in life and are willing to work to do so. They decide that they will help one another since they both have the same goals.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 17-20

Ragged Dick, Chapters 17-20 Summary

Mr. Greyson seats the boys in the pew with himself, his wife and their daughter. Dick feels strange during the service and cannot read the words in the hymn book. After the service, the Greysons invite the boys to dine with them. The Sunday school class is in the afternoon. They walk to the Greyson house. Nine year old Ida takes a fancy to Dick.

Dick is uncomfortable in the Greyson home. He is afraid of doing something wrong and offending them. Henry is a little more at ease than Dick is. After the meal they attend the Sunday school class with Mr. Greyson who invites them to attend the following week.

As they are walking home, Mickey Maguire throws a rock at them, barely missing them.

In Chapter Eighteen, Dick chases Mickey, who falls during the chase. Dick threatens to hurt Mickey if he throws stones at him again. Mickey doesn't attack him again.

Dick no longer frequents his evening entertainment spots. He studies for two hours every evening. Dick says that Henry should find a different job with his schooling, but Henry says he doesn't have the clothes. Dick tells him to take the money in both of their saving accounts and buy clothes. The next day, they withdraw the money and purchase clothes for Henry.

Chapter Nineteen reveals that Henry looks for a job during times when the shoe shining business is slow. Mr. Greyson happens to be at a store when Henry is interviewed and recommends him for the job. Henry is hired.

In Chapter Twenty, Henry begins his new job at the hat store. Nine months later, Henry is still working at the store and has received a raise in pay. Dick and Henry work hard and live frugally. One day Henry tells Dick that he has taught him everything that he knows. He suggests that they both attend evening school and that it is time for Dick to find another kind of job.

Dick helps another boy out with his rent because his mother had broken her arm. He has to draw from his savings account to pay his own rent now.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 17-20 Analysis

The boys keep to their promise to work together and they work as a team. This improves conditions for both of them. When they decide that Henry should find another kind of job, they pool their savings accounts so Henry can buy new clothes. Both are hard workers and live as cheaply as possible. When they reach a point where Henry has taught Dick as much as he knows, they decide to attend evening school together to

improve both of their educations. They both have faith in their own and each other's ability to succeed.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 21-24

Ragged Dick, Chapters 21-24 Summary

When Dick goes to take his bankbook from the drawer, he finds it is missing. Henry took his that morning and says that Dick's was there. They tell the landlady about the missing bank book and ask if anyone had entered the room. She wonders about Jim Travis, their across the hall neighbor. He had been home during the day. The locks on both bureaus are identical so Travis's key would fit the lock in Dick and Henry's bureau. They decide to contact the bank in the morning. Travis comes to their room to visit that night.

In Chapter Twenty Two, it is revealed that Travis needs money to go to California. This is why he had stolen Dick's bank book. He did not go to the bank immediately after taking the bank book. When they say nothing about the loss when he visits their room he figures they hadn't discovered it. He makes sure that he talks to them the next morning for the same reason and tells them that he is missing a pearl handled knife. When he asks if they are missing anything, they say no.

Dick goes to work, eats breakfast and then goes to the bank. The cashier at the bank recognizes Dick, who is a regular customer. Dick reports the bank book as stolen and tells him the story. Dick is told that the thief will receive no money from his account and that they will wait for Travis. Dick hides as Travis enter the bank.

In Chapter Twenty Three, Travis enters the bank and tries to withdraw the money. The cashier questions Travis several times about his claiming to be Dick Hunter and signing that name. Travis is arrested. Dick says he only wanted his bank book back but the policeman says he can't let Travis go. Travis receives a nine month sentence.

Dick gives Tom, the boot-black, the rest of the money for his rent and tells him to let him know if he or his mother needs any more money. Dick feels good about helping Tom and his mother.

In Chapter Twenty Four, Henry comes home with a newspaper that has Dick's name in it. There is a letter for him. Dick collects the letter the next day. It is from Frank Whitney.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Dick and Henry continue their hard work. Dick is always generous and willing to help those in need among his boot-black friends. He helps a boot-black named Tom Wilkins whose mother broke her arm and couldn't work. They would have been evicted if Dick hadn't given Tom the rent money. Dick is surprised at how good he feels for helping Tom and his mother.

Dick is also happy to receive a letter from Frank Whitney. He owes his changed conditions to the advice of Frank and his uncle. He is proud of himself and wishes Frank

could see him as he is now. There had been few people in his life who had cared about him enough to give him advice and their advice helped him a great deal.



Ragged Dick, Chapters 25-27

Ragged Dick, Chapters 25-27 Summary

Dick shows the letter to Henry that evening. Henry says that he wishes he could meet Frank and asks when Dick is going to write back. Dick has never written a letter before. Henry says he can do it that evening instead of studying. He will help if Dick needs help.

Dick writes to Frank about his changed life. He says that he has followed the advice that Frank and his uncle had given him.

Chapter Twenty Six finds Dick looking for a position in a store. Merchants aren't doing much hiring at the time and he isn't having much luck. One day he decides to accompany Henry who is sent to Brooklyn on an errand for his employer. A little boy falls off the ferry and into the water. Dick dives into the water to rescue the child and a passing rowboat picks them up. The child is returned to his father who insists that Dick come to his friend's house to dry his clothes.

Dick waits in a bedroom and a servant brings him a suit of new clothes purchased by Mr. Rockwell, the child's father. There is also a note asking Dick to come to his Pearl Street address the next day.

In Chapter Twenty Seven, Dick visits Mr. Rockwell. Mr. Rockwell asks Dick to tell him about himself and hears how Dick is looking for a job. He offers him a job as a clerk at ten dollars a week with opportunities for advancement.

That evening, Dick and Henry decide to find another place to live. They can now afford a more respectable address.

Ragged Dick, Chapters 25-27 Analysis

Dick is proud of the progress that he and Henry have made in the past year and he says so in a letter to Frank Whitney. His life is totally changed because he has followed the advice of Frank and his uncle. He is thankful to them for caring enough about him to offer advice.

Dick is now ready to give up his boot-black business and find a different kind of position. He does not have much luck in his interviews. One day he accompanies Henry to Brooklyn and rescues a child who falls into the water. The grateful father hires him to a clerical position with possibilities for advancement.

Both Henry and Dick are on their way to the kinds of lives they want. They have done this by hard work, sacrifice and their willingness to help each other along with other people.



Mark the Match Boy, Chapters 1-4

Mark the Match Boy, Chapters 1-4 Summary

Dick tells Henry that he should try to collect the two thousand dollar debt that Hiram Bates had owed his father. Dick says that the man is now in New York and staying at the Astor House and he will go with Henry to see him. Dick is now a book keeper at Rockwell and Cooper. They continue their studies as they seek to improve themselves.

In Chapter Two, the two men go to the Astor House. Henry does not feel comfortable about the task. They go to Hiram Bates' room. Bates remembers Henry's father and is interested in Henry's story. He tells Henry about the investments he had made and how he has lost all of his money.

Chapter Three reveals that Bates never intended to cheat Henry's father and writes out a check for the amount plus interest. Bates says that he will accompany Henry to the bank for the money. When Henry asks for investment advice, Bates recommends investing in a bank. He offers to handle the matter for Henry.

Bates tells them that he is looking for his grandson. His daughter Irene had eloped with his clerk, John Talbot. Bates opposed the marriage and disowned her. She had appeared two years later to show him his grandson and he had thrown her out. He has heard that Irene and John are dead and he is now looking for the boy. Both Dick and Henry say they will help Bates.

In Chapter Four, Henry and Bates visit a stockbroker to invest Henry's money. He buys twenty bank shares and listens to Bates' advice about not touching the principle. They have lunch together. That afternoon, Bates is called back to Milwaukee on business. He leaves his contact information with Henry.

Mark the Match Boy, Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Both Dick and Henry have done well in the last three years. They have continued their studies and have progressed in their jobs. They still help each other in any way that they can because that is what friends are for.

Henry had always believed that Hiram Bates had cheated his father out of two thousand dollars. When Dick finds that Bates is in town and suggests that they talk to him about the money, Henry finds that this isn't true. Bates repays the money with interest and Henry becomes an investor in a bank.

Bates is in New York to find his missing grandson. The child may be living the same kind of life on the streets that Dick and Henry used to live. They agree to help Bates look for the boy.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 5-8

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 5-8 Summary

The boy is carrying a box of matches. He is near the end of his work day and has not sold many matches. He has eaten nothing but an apple. The boy's name is Mark and he enters a shabby house and tells Mother Watson that he had tried to sell more matches but couldn't. He gives her the money and she finds that he had purchased an apple. She is about to beat him but is stopped by a visitor, Mrs. Flanagan. Mother Watson sends him out to beg and tells him not to return until he has twenty five cents. Mrs. Flanagan feeds him before he leaves.

In Chapter Six, Mark knows that Mother Watson will beat him with a leather strap if he doesn't come home with twenty five cents. He walks in the chilling rain wondering how he is going to come up with twenty five cents. He meets another street boy named Ben Gibson and they talk. Ben tells him about the Old Bowery and finds that Mark has never been there. He also tells him about other places to sleep. Ben suggests that Mark try begging at the Fulton Market.

In Chapter Seven, Mark goes to the Fulton Market. The market is inviting to him because it is warm and dry. The first man he approaches is a reporter who gives him a dime. Next, he approaches Mrs. Crawford and her son Roswell, and is rudely rebuffed.

In Chapter Eight Mark is afraid to go home because he would be beaten. Remembering his conversation with Ben, he decides to spend the night riding the ferry. He finds a seat on the ferry and quickly falls asleep.

Dick and Henry are riding the ferry that night and notice the sleeping child. They slip one dollar into his pocket. They are still looking for the Bates grandson.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 5-8 Analysis

This section introduces the character Mark. He is a ten year old orphan who lives with a cruel woman named Mother Watson. He sells matches but does not bring home enough money and is sent out to beg or he will be beaten. Begging is not something that comes easily to Mark and he finds it very distasteful. He is also opposed to stealing. When his mother had been alive, she had taught him to be honest.

Dick and Henry see the sleeping Mark on the Brooklyn ferry. Remembering their days as boot-blacks, they slip one dollar into the sleeping boy's pocket. They don't wake him and ask who he is even though they are looking for the missing Bates grandson.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 9-11

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 9-11 Summary

Mark is allowed to sleep the night on the ferry. He awakens at six the next morning and gets off the ferry in New York, wondering about Mother Watson. She'd probably beat him harder for not having come home. Mark realizes that he doesn't have to live with her. He could stay on his own and keep his money. When he finds the two half dollars in his pocket, he decides that he won't return to Mother Watson.

Mark meets Ben and tells him how he had spent the night and that he isn't going back to Mother Watson. Mark says he will loan Ben the money for breakfast and the two boys go to eat.

In Chapter Ten the boys discuss Mark's situation. Mark uses the half dollars to purchase matches which he begins to sell. He is now working for himself. Unknown to him, Mother Watson is angry that he didn't return home. She has tea with Mrs. Flanagan before going out to look for Mark.

Chapter Eleven finds Mark having a good day. He goes to tell Ben about his good fortune. As they talk, Mother Watson approaches them. The boys tell her that Mark isn't living with her anymore. When a policeman approaches and finds that Mark is not a relative of Mother Watson, he tells her to leave the boy alone. Mother Watson leaves.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 9-11 Analysis

Ben's talk with Mark inspires the boy to change his situation. He tells Mark about sleeping on the ferry. When the boy wakes up, he finds two half dollar pieces in his pocket not knowing from where they had come. The money from Dick and Henry allows Mark to change his situation just as the money from Whitney had allowed Dick to change his situation. Mark realizes that he doesn't have to remain the circumstances in which he has been living. This is what Ben had been telling him. Ben also helps him to stand up to Mother Watson and to break with her completely.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 12-14

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 12-14 Summary

Ben and Mark decide to finish their workday and go to dinner. They decide to spend the night at the Newsboys' Lodging House. This is the first time that Mark has ever been there. Mark leaves his money in the bank the proprietor keeps for the boys. The boys can withdraw the money once a month. Mark is happy with the arrangements at the lodging house.

Chapter Thirteen reveals that in the next three months, Mark lives at the Lodge and saves a total of ten dollars. When Ben asks him how he saves so much, he tells Ben that he doesn't spend money on cigars and other things like Ben does.

Mark isn't feeling well but decides to sell matches on Pearl Street. He faints outside the offices of Rockwell and Cooper. Mickey Maguire, who now works there for Richard Hunter, finds the boy when he goes out on an errand. He carries Mark inside and Dick revives him. Dick lets the sick boy sleep in the warehouse and says he will take him to his home that night. They ride to St. Mark's Place in a hired hack.

In Chapter Fourteen, Mark meets Henry. Henry and Dick recognize him as the boy sleeping on the ferry. Dick offers to be Mark's guardian and Mark accepts. A doctor called by Dick, recommends rest for the boy.

The next day, Dick stops at a bookstore to buy books for Mark. Roswell Crawford is the clerk who waits on him.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 12-14 Analysis

Mark's life changes considerably in this section. He spends three months living at the Newsboy's Lodging Hall and saves his money. He is a hard worker who lives frugally foregoing most forms of entertainment. When he faints in front of the offices of Rockwell and Cooper, he is taken in by Dick Hunter who becomes the boy's guardian. Both Dick and Henry know what it means to be orphaned and living on the streets. One piece of advice that Dick had received from Mr. Whitney is to help others in his situation. Dick does just this.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 15-17

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 15-17 Summary

When Mark wants to return to work, Dick suggests he find a job in a store. He can use Dick, his guardian, as a reference. Dick buys clothing for the boy. Mark wants to return to live at the lodging hall but Dick reminds him that he is his guardian. He talks to him about the value of hard work and studying.

Mark retrieves his money from the lodging hall and then finds Ben and tells him of his new circumstances. While walking home, Mark sees a sign on a bookstore advertising for a delivery boy. He secures the position at the same bookstore where Roswell Crawford works.

In Chapter Sixteen, Crawford learns about the boy whom the bookstore has hired. When Roswell talks to Mark, he learns that Richard Hunter is Mark's guardian. Mark recognizes Roswell from his night at Fulton Market when he had been begging. He doesn't like Roswell or the attitude he has about Dick.

The proprietor, Mr. Baker, returns and finds Mark dusting books while Roswell is sitting there reading. He reprimands Roswell in front of Mark.

Chapter Seventeen reveals that Roswell is jealous of Richard Hunter, who has a much better job than he has. When he arrives home, he tells his mother and uncle that he is tired of the job at the bookstore. He tells them about Mark who is Richard Hunter's ward. Roswell hopes to cast suspicions on the honesty of Mark so he will be dismissed.

Roswell meets a friend that evening. They both complain about the low wages they receive.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 15-17 Analysis

Mark spends three weeks recuperating from illness. Dick talks to him about the value of studying and improving his situation. He convinces the boy to find a position in a store instead of working as a match boy. Mark finds a position at the same bookstore where Roswell Crawford works and secures the position without the help of Richard Hunter.

Roswell is jealous of Richard Hunter. Roswell considers himself to be the son of a gentleman and entitled to more than he receives. He is a snob who considers himself better than Dick or Mark. He is jealous of the fact that Richard has a much better job than he, Roswell, has. Roswell doesn't see that his biggest problem is himself and his attitude.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 18-20

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 18-20 Summary

Roswell's friend, Ralph Graham, suggests that Roswell supplement his income by stealing from his employer. Ralph explains how to take a wax impression of the lock on the money drawer and have a key made. The other way would be not to turn in all of the money from sales made when Mr. Baker isn't there.

The next day, Roswell begins to pocket some of the money from sales. He pockets other money and he and Ralph use it to go to the theater.

In Chapter Nineteen, Mark greets Dick with the news of his job. Dick says that Roswell will probably try to make it unpleasant for Mark.

Dick and Henry still attend Mr. Greyson's Sunday school class and now take Mark with them. Mr. Greyson says that one of the teachers is leaving and they want Dick to take over the class. Henry would be assigned to the next vacant position. Mark is assigned to Dick's class. After class, they have dinner at the Greysons and Ida has to hear the story of how Dick had become Mark's guardian.

In Chapter Twenty, Ralph tells Roswell that he has been elected to Ralph's club called the Madison Club. The initiation fee is five dollars which Roswell has to somehow raise. He tries to obtain the money from his mother saying he needs a new hat, but she says no. Roswell takes a wax impression of the lock on the cash drawer and takes it to a locksmith to have a key made.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 18-20 Analysis

Roswell begins to steal from his employer at Ralph's urging. They use the money for entertainment thinking that their low wages and situations entitle them to it. Roswell probably wouldn't have thought of this on his own. Ralph has to help mastermind the scheme so the two could go out on the proceeds of the crime. When Roswell can't secure the five dollars he needs to join the Madison Club, he takes a wax impression of the cash drawer lock to have a key made. He is immature and wants instant gratification of his wants. It doesn't dawn on him to save the money on his own.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 21-23

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 21-23 Summary

It is several days before Roswell obtains the key for the cash drawer. When Roswell has his first opportunity to use the key, Mr. Baker's uncle comes into the store and decides to wait for his nephew. Roswell needs the money the next day.

The next day Roswell takes five dollars from the cash drawer. If Mr. Baker is suspicious, Roswell plans to blame Mark. That evening, he and Ralph attend the club meeting. Ralph introduces him to the members and Roswell pays his dues with the five dollar bill.

In Chapter Twenty Two, the club meeting is held. After the nomination of another new member, the men begin to party. They gamble and drink. Roswell doesn't feel well and Ralph walks home with him.

In Chapter Twenty three, Roswell is late for work. He slips the cash drawer key into Mark's pocket without Mark knowing it. Mr. Baker notices the absence of the five dollar bill from the cash drawer. The key is found in Mark's pocket and the boy says he doesn't know how it got there. He insists that he didn't take the money. Roswell says that he had left Mark alone in the store for a few minutes the day before. Mark denies this.

Mr. Baker decides to keep Mark employed until he can talk to Dick Hunter and sends him out on a delivery. After Mark leaves, a member of the Madison Cub comes in and says that the five dollar bill Roswell gave him is a counterfeit, just as Mr. Baker's customer had said it was.

Mr. Baker takes the bill and confronts Roswell. He admits that the key belongs to him. Mr. Baker fires Roswell and tells him he must repay the money he has stolen.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 21-23 Analysis

Roswell uses the key to open the cash drawer to take the five dollars he needs to join the Madison Club. He doesn't realize that the bill he has taken is a counterfeit. Roswell plants the key in Mark's pocket and implicates Mark for the theft. Mr. Baker is an individual who is not impulsive. Instead of firing Mark immediately, he says he will talk to Dick Hunter but he doesn't have to do so. A member of the Madison Club walks in and complains that the bill Roswell had given him the previous evening is counterfeit. Roswell is fired.

Roswell is a very disagreeable character and most readers will agree that he gets what he deserves.



Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 24-26

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 24-26 Summary

The men decide to visit Fort Hamilton when they all have a holiday off. Mark particularly looks forward to the outing. On the Fulton Ferry, they meet Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, who Dick and Henry know from the previous boarding house where they had lived. They decide to join Dick, Henry and Mark in their excursion. After dinner, the Clintons depart to visit friends.

On their way home, Henry sees a carriage overturned. When they stop to help, they find out that it is Frank Whitney's carriage. They drive Frank's uncle to the house of friends. Frank says he will be attending college in New York and looks forward to seeing them.

Mark receives a raise in wages in Chapter Twenty Five. Henry receives a letter from Mr. Bates. He has not found his grandson and wants Dick and Henry to keep looking for him. He is becoming very wealthy and wants to find his heir.

They question Mark who says his name used to be Talbot. When they show him the picture of Mr. Bates' daughter, he begins to cry. It is his mother. They explain the situation to Mark, who says that the man had been cruel to his mother. They send a telegram to Hiram Bates who immediately boards a train for New York. He plans to take Mark to Milwaukee with him

In Chapter Twenty Six, Mark begins to feel comfortable with Hiram Bates and begins to look forward to moving to Milwaukee. Bates buys Mark a new wardrobe and says he will enroll him in the best schools. When asked who had been good to him and had helped him when he had been a match boy, he says Mrs. Flanagan and Ben Gibson.

They visit Mrs. Flanagan and give her one hundred dollars. Mr. Bates invites Ben to come to Milwaukee with them. Bates will find a job for him. The boys leave for Milwaukee and find a good home there. They keep in touch with Mrs. Flanagan and Dick Hunter.

Mark, the Match Boy, Chapters 24-26 Analysis

In this last section, Dick becomes reacquainted with Frank Whitney and his uncle and they promise to keep in touch since Frank will be attending college in New York.

After receiving a letter from Hiram Bates, Dick and Henry do something they never thought to do. They ask Mark if he knows someone named Talbot. He says that his name used to be Talbot. It turns out that he is the missing grandson of Hiram Bates.

The book has a happy ending for those who are honest and dedicated to hard work. Even Ben Gibson quits smoking in his new life in Milwaukee. The moral of the book is that dedication to clean living, hard work and studying pays off.



Characters

Dick Hunter

Dick Hunter is a young boy who says he lives with his guardian. Since the guardian doesn't give him money, he earns his spending money giving shoe shines. He is a hard working boy who earns enough to support himself. Dick is fourteen years of age at the opening of the novel. He earns his money during the day and spends it at night at the theater or club. Dick is always alert to business opportunities and when he overhears Mr. Whitney and his nephew Frank discussing the fact that Frank wants to see the sights of New York City, he promptly offers his services as a tour guide. Dick's mother had died when he had been three years of age. His father had been a seaman who had gone off to sea and never returned. The proprietor of his mother's boarding house had cared for him until he was seven years old when the woman had died. The woman's husband had then left for the West and Dick had had to fend for himself. He had worked at various jobs. As a newsboy he had sold papers by calling out false information since he couldn't read, and had been forced to quit. He had also sold matches for a while. Both Mr. Whitney and Frank tell Dick that he can be successful if he wants and that he could attend school, read and save money. Dick decides to make some changes in his life. He rents a room in a boarding house, opens a bank account and hires another boot-black, Henry Fosdick, to teach him to read and write in exchange for lodging. They work together as a team and help one another. One day, Dick rescues a child who falls off of the ferry to Brooklyn. The grateful father hires Dick for a clerical position at a good salary with the possibility for advancement. He becomes the book keeper.

Mark Manton

Mark Manton is an orphan who survives by selling matches. He had lived with his mother until she had died the year before. Since he had had no place to go, he had gone to live with Mother Watson in the shabby rooming house. She is very cruel to him and he rarely has much to eat if Mrs. Flanagan, the downstairs neighbor, doesn't feed him. Mother Watson takes all of the money he earns and sends him out to beg for money. She cares nothing for him and is only interested in the little money that he can bring her. Mark's discussion with Ben shows him that he can change his circumstances. He spends the night sleeping on the ferry rather than face another beating from the Watson woman. When he awakens, he finds two half dollars in his pocket, a gift from Dick and Henry, who had slipped the money into the pocket of the sleeping boy. He buys matches with the money and decides he is better off in business for himself than living with Mother Watson. Ben helps him to stand up to Mother Watson and to terminate his relationship with her. Ben helps Mark learn how to survive on his own. When Mark becomes ill and faints in the doorway of Rockwell and Cooper, he is taken in by Dick Hunter who becomes his guardian. When Mark recovers, he secures employment at the bookstore where Roswell Crawford works. He does this without any help from Dick. When Dick and Henry question Mark about a boy named Talbot, they



find that he is the missing grandson of Hiram Bates. Mark goes to Milwaukee to live with Bates.

Frank Whitney

Frank Whitney is the nephew of the machine inventor. When he visits New York, Ragged Dick acts as a tour guide. He encourages Dick to better himself. Frank lives in the country on the Hudson River about fifty miles from New York City and attends boarding school in Barnton, Connecticut.

Mr. Greyson

Mr. Greyson is married and has a nine year old daughter named Ida. He is a customer of Dick Hunter and is impressed with Dick's honesty. He invites Dick to his Sunday school and home. His recommendation results in Henry obtaining a job at the hat store.

Hiram Bates

Hiram Bates is a businessman who had once owed money to Henry's father. He repays the money to Henry and asks Henry and Dick to help locate his missing grandson. Henry and Dick find the grandson is the boy who is Dick's ward, Mark. Mark and his friend Ben Gibson go to live with Bates in Milwaukee.

Roswell Crawford

Roswell Crawford is a clerk who is a snob who feels that he is better than other people. He steals from his employer and is caught and fired from his job. He and his friend Ralph Graham lead the kind of life that Horatio Alger cautions against.

Henry Fosdick

Henry Fosdick is a boot black and friend of Dick's. He agrees to tutor Dick in exchange for lodging. The two work together and help one another. Henry obtains a job at Henderson's Hat Store on Mr. Greyson's recommendation and leaves the shoe shine business.

Ben Gibson

Ben Gibson is a boot black and friend of Mark. He helps Mark break away from Mother Watson and adjust to life on his own. He goes to Milwaukee to live with the assistance of Hiram Bates who finds a position for him.



Mother Watson

Mother Watson is the woman who provides lodging for Mark after his mother's death. She treats him cruelly and he finally runs away and lives on his own. She is eventually arrested and sent to prison.

Mr. Rockwell

Mr. Rockwell is a businessman whose child falls off a ferry and is rescued by Dick. He hires Dick as a clerk at a good salary and the opportunity for advancement.



Objects/Places

New York City

New York City is on the East Coast of the United States and where Dick lives.

Astor House

Astor House is a fine hotel in New York City where the Whitneys have a suite.

Mott Street

Mott Street is the location of the boarding house where Dick first rents a room.

Fulton Street Office

Fulton Street Office is the location of Mr. Greyson's place of business.

Pearl Street

Pearl Street is the location of Mr. Rockwell's warehouse where Dick secures employment at Rockwell and Cooper

Henderson's Hat Store

Henderson's Hat Store is located on Broadway and is where Henry finds employment.

St. Mark's Place

St. Mark's Place is the location of the room that Henry and Dick rent.

The Fulton Market

The Fulton Market is a fish and goods market area bordered by Beekman, Fulton, South and Front Streets.

Newsboys Lodging House

Newsboys Lodging House is located at Fulton and Nassau Streets and is where many homeless boys stay.

Baker Bookstore

Baker Bookstore is the place where Roswell Crawford and Mark Manton are employed.



Themes

Concern for Others

Concern for others is a major theme of the book. Most of the characters, no matter how poor they are, are concerned for others and willing to share and help. Whenever Ragged Dick has money, he buys meals for other boys who can't afford to pay for a meal. This is how he becomes roommates with Henry Fosdick. The same is true of Mark who buys a meal for Ben Gibson when he can't afford one. They all know what it means to be hungry and not have enough money for food. Ben doesn't like the way that Mother Watson treats Mark and helps Mark make the break with the cruel woman. He helps Mark learn how to survive on his own by showing him where to beg, how to sleep on the ferry and bringing him to the Newsboys Lodging House. Dick never hesitates to help a boot-black in need. When Tom Wilkins' mother breaks her arm and can't pay the rent, Dick gives Tom the money and tells him to come to him if he needs more help. This makes Dick feel better than anything else he has ever done. When Dick and Henry have good jobs, they don't forget what it was like when they lived on the streets. They slip two half dollars into the pocket of the sleeping Mark when they are all on the ferry. This allows Mark to begin to change his life. Dick eventually takes Mark in as his ward to help the boy achieve a better life. Mickey Maguire, who used to try to bully Dick, ends up working for him at Rockwell and Cooper. All of them look out for one another and are always willing to help each other.

Determination

Determination is another theme of the book. It takes determination to succeed. Dick and Henry are successful because they want to be successful. They are willing to make the necessary sacrifices and spend their time working on self-improvement because this is what their goal is. Because they have the same goals, they are able to work with each other and help one another. Instead of spending their evenings at the theater or club, they spend their evenings studying. This is a big change for Dick who used to spend everything he earned, even if it meant sleeping outside. He has a goal of wanting to be respectable just as Henry does. They know that they have to be better educated and better dressed in order to get out of the boot-black business and secure the kinds of jobs that they want. Dick follows the advice he is given by the Whitneys and Henry follows the advice he is given by Dick. Their determination to succeed means helping each other even if it means a sacrifice on one of their parts. Dick gives Henry the money from his savings account to buy clothes so he can secure employment at Henderson's Hat Store. They could have spent their money on the theater and clubs and eaten fancy meals, but this would not help them achieve their goals. Neither one of them would have been able to make the sacrifices that they did if they weren't determined to change their lives and become respectable.



Social Values

Another major theme of the book is the expression of the social values promoted by the author, Horatio Alger. Alger had been well known for his promotion of social values during the era in which he wrote. His books had promoted the rags to riches story by showing young boys how to lead the correct life. Ethics, honesty and clean living are central to Alger and his theme of social values. Boys should not drink, smoke or steal. They shouldn't waste their time and money on these and other forms of entertainment like the theater and clubs. This isn't the way to get ahead in life as shown by the character of Roswell Crawford. He is a lazy snob who can't gain advancement in any position he holds. He is eventually fired when caught stealing from his employer. The way to get ahead in life is to study and work hard. Both Dick and Henry spend their evenings studying and engaging in activities that result in self-improvement. They attend and then teach Sunday school. Henry teaches Dick to read and write in exchange for lodging. They are both willing to help others. Dick obtains more satisfaction from helping Tom Wilkins and his mother pay their rent than he has from anything else he does. Making the changes that they make in their lives gets them out of the rags they had been wearing and into respectable clothing and job positions. They live according to the author's proscribed set of social values and go from rags to riches.

Style

Point of View

The points of view in the book *Ragged Dick* and *Mark the Match Boy* are the points of view of the author, Horatio Alger. The book is written in both the first and third person points of view with the author functioning as the narrator in each case. Most of the book is written in the third person point of view which allows the author to provide the background information that the reader requires. The reader's knowledge is not limited to the knowledge of the story teller which is the limitation of the use of the first person point of view. The author uses the first person to express his own views on social values in telling boys not to smoke or drink or to waste time and money on certain kinds of entertainment. In this way the author is talking directly to the reader. Writing the book in this way is consistent with the purpose of the author. The purpose of the rags to riches stories is to influence the views of young men so they work and study hard and live ethical and clean lives. He does this by stories told in the third person and by talking directly to the reader in the first person.

Setting

The setting of the novel is in New York City and in the different boroughs. There are scenes at the Astor House which is a fine hotel where the Whitneys stay and where Dick is given advice by Whitney. This is also where Dick and Henry meet Hiram Bates. There are scenes at the various boarding houses where the different characters live. Dick first rents a room on Mott Street. He and Henry later rent a room on St Mark's Place. Mark also lives in a boarding house with Mother Watson and then resides for three months at the Newsboys Lodging House. There are also scenes at the different business locations like the Pearl Street address of Rockwell and Cooper and the Fulton Street office of Mr. Greyson. Henry secures employment at Henderson's Hat Store and Roswell and Mark both work at the Baker Bookstore. There are also scenes at the Fulton Market when Mark is sent to beg for money by Mother Watson. The setting also includes scenes on the ferries and in Brooklyn as the characters move around. Since many of the boys live and work on the streets, there are scenes on various streets.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning are consistent with the characters and the time period of the novel. Many of the characters are boys who live and work on the street. Many, like *Ragged Dick*, do not have a formal education and this is reflected in their manner of speech. Much of the dialogue is given in the vernacular of the streets which sometimes slows down the reader who must try to figure out what the character is saying. However, this manner of speaking also adds to the realism of the character and to the character of the novel. This style can make the book more appealing to younger people. There are



no terms with hidden meanings or meanings that the reader must try to understand. The meaning of the novel and the meaning of the terms is very clear. This makes the book quick and easy reading even for a youngster for whom the book is intended. The style of the author seems to be a little formal or stiff but this can be because it was written in the late eighteen hundreds. The reader should have no problems with the language and meaning of the novel.

Structure

The novel consists of two stories, Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy. Each novel has its own chapter numbers and titles with the titles being descriptive of the content of the chapters. The second story is basically a continuation of the first. The title of each chapter is printed on the top of the right hand page. Most of the chapters are less than ten pages long.

There is a very lengthy Introduction written by Richard Fink. This section discusses the concern with social values and the philosophy of the time and also presents background information on the author. There is a two page section of Notes pertaining to the Introduction.

There is a detailed Table of Contents for both Ragged Dick and Mark the Match Boy. This presents the chapter numbers, titles and page numbers. The titles accurately describe the content of the chapters. There is no jumping around in time since the stories and events are chronological.

The structure of the novel is appropriate for the book. It results in quick and easy reading for the reader.



Quotes

"Mr. Greyson didn't understand Dick. Our ragged hero wasn't a model boy in all respects. I am afraid he swore sometimes, and now and then he played tricks upon unsophisticated boys from the country or gave a wrong direction to honest old gentlemen unused to the city." (Dick, Chapter 1, pg. 42)

"'I ain't used to genteel society,' said Dick. 'I shouldn't know how to behave.' 'Then I could show you. You won't be a boot-black all your life, you know.'" (Dick, Chapter 6, pg. 72)

"I felt as if life was sort of tough, and I'd like it if some rich man would adopt me, and give me plenty to eat and drink and wear, without my havin' to look so sharp after it. Then agin' when I've seen boys with good homes, and fathers, and mothers, I've thought I'd like to have somebody to care for me." (Dick, Chapter 10, pg. 99)

"I wish I knowed as much as Frank. He's a tip-top feller. Nobody ever cared enough for me before to give me good advice." (Dick, Chapter 13, pg. 119)

"'I couldn't room with a better friend, Dick,' said Fosdick, affectionately, throwing his arm round our hero. 'When we part, it'll be because you wish it.'" (Dick, Chapter 19, pg. 163)

"There were two reasons why Dick would like to have seen Frank. One was, the natural pleasure he would have in meeting a friend; but he felt also that he would like to have Frank witness the improvement he had made in his studies and mode of life." (Dick, Chapter 24, pg. 199)

"It was indeed a bright prospect for a boy who, only a year before, could neither read nor write, and depended for a night's lodging upon the chance hospitality of an alley-way or old wagon. Dick's great ambition to 'grow up 'spectable' seemed likely to be accomplished after all." (Dick, Chapter 27, pg. 215)

"He had observed that those young men who out of economy contented themselves with small and cheerless rooms, in which there was no provision for a fire, were driven in the evening to the streets, theatres and hotels, for the comfort which they could not find at home." (Mark, Chapter 1, pg. 222)

"But from the surrounding comfort Mark's thoughts were brought back to the disagreeable business which brought him here. He was to solicit charity from some one of the passers-by, and with a sigh he began to look about him to select some compassionate fact." (Mark, Chapter 7, pg. 259)

"Somehow it seemed a great deal more profitable as well as more agreeable to be in business for himself, than to be acting as the agent of Mother Watson. Mark determined



that he would never go back to her unless he was actually obliged to do so." (Mark, Chapter 11, pg. 281)

"Mark started with his few remaining matches. The feeling that he was his own master, and had a little hoard of money for present expenses, gave him courage, and he was no longer deterred by his usual timidity." (Mark, Chapter 12, pg. 289)

"Sometimes I've thought I should like to spend the evening at some place of amusement rather than in study, but if I had, there'd be nothing to show for it now. Take my advice, Mark, and study all you can, and you'll grow up respectable and respected." (Mark, Chapter 15, pg. 309)

"The temptation was too much for poor Roswell. I call him poor, because I pity any boy who foolishly yields to such a temptation for the sake of a temporary gratification." (Mark, Chapter 18, pg. 329)

"'Mr. Baker,' said Mark, quietly, more at his ease now, since he began to understand that there was a plot against him, 'I cannot confess what is not true. I don't know what Roswell means by what he has just said, but I was not left alone in the store for a moment all day yesterday, not did Roswell go out to speak to a friend while I was about.'" (Mark, Chapter 23, pg. 358)

"So the trials of Mark, the Match Boy, as far as they proceeded from poverty and privation, are at an end. He has found a comfortable and even luxurious home, and a relative whose great object in life is to study his happiness." (Mark, Chapter 26, pg. 382)

Topics for Discussion

What kind of life does Dick Hunter have before he meets the Whitneys? Why?

In what way does Dick's meeting with the Whitneys change his life? What advice do they offer?

In what ways did Dick change his life? How did Dick and Henry Fosdick help one another?

Dick and Henry live frugally but insist on having comfortable accommodations. What is their philosophy on this? Why is this in keeping with their goals?

Who is Mark the Match Boy? What is his story?

What do people like Dick and Henry represent in the book? What do people like Roswell and Ralph represent?

What is the moral or message of author Horatio Alger to young boys? Do you think it is relevant today?