

The novel 'Fair's Fair' by Leon Garfield tells the story of a poor orphan boy called Jackson. It is a freezing cold, snowy day, Jackson sits huddled in a doorway and is just about to devour a lovely hot pie when along comes a very large dog.

The Key

This is what happens next in the story.

He couldn't make up his mind whether it was better to be warm outside or in. He couldn't make up his mind whether it would be better to keep the pie and warm his hands, or to eat it and warm his insides. So there he was, thinking hard, with his face screwed up like a piece of paper, when the black dog came in.

Huge: as big as a donkey, nearly, with eyes like street lamps and jaws like an oven door. Down the street it padded, with a glare to the left, and a savage twitch of its great black nose. Somebody opened a window and threw a bucket of dirty water down; and the black dog snarled with rage. Up it came to the doorstep where Jackson sat and steamed. It glared and growled while the snowflakes fried on its nose.

"Shove off!" wails Jackson, hiding his pie and shaking in his shoes - or rather, in his feet as he had no shoes worth mentioning. "I got no food and I'm only skin and bone myself so I'll taste as sour as leaves!"

"Liar!" says the dog; not in words but with its terrible eyes and rattling teeth.

"I'm froze and hungry!" wails Jackson, wishing he'd eaten the pie.

"And I'm froze and hungry!" says the dog; not in words but with its lean sides and smoking breath.

"All right!" says Jackson, "seeing there's no help for it. Fair's fair. Half for you and half for me." And he breaks the pie and the dog swallows down half with a fearful guzzle and growl.

"Fair's fair," says Jackson; and eats what's left. "Now shove off!"

But the black dog just stands, and bangs at the snow with its tail. Then as big as the night, with its street-lamp eyes it comes straight at Jackson; and licks his face. Not because it loves him, but because Jackson smells as much of pie as he does of drains.

"You're spifflicating me!" howls Jackson, and tries to push the monster off.

He gets his hands round its tree of a neck and then cries out, "Hullo! You got a collar on! You must belong to somebody. Hullo again! You got something under your collar. What you got? Stone the crows! You got a key!"



The Key



Writing
Frame

Name: _____ Date: _____

The story setting:

Characters in the story:

The story begins when Jackson finds a key. What does he do next? What door does the key fit? Does the dog go with him?

What is the building like from the outside and then the inside?

Who does Jackson meet? Are they friendly / unfriendly?

How is the story resolved? Is Jackson taken in or rejected by the people in the house or building?