

## **The End of the Story**

And this man, Barnie – well, I never seen a grown-up look so sad, and that's the truth. He just looked and looked, as if he couldn't believe his eyes. I was shivering next to him, and I thought he was never going to move or stop looking. I thought he was going to stay there all night.

'So this is where you live, is it, Jim?' he asked me.

'Yes,' I said, and I felt sad for him then, because he looked as if he felt as if it was all his fault. Know what I mean?

And then he said, 'Well, how about that meal I promised you?' and that cheered me up, because I thought he'd forgotten all about that. He started to climb down the wall, skidding a bit because he had boots on, and it's not so easy if you're not in bare feet. He took me to a house and gave me a meal and let me have a hot bath. And do you know what he said? He said, 'I'm going to give you a home, Jim.'

I went back with him next day to the roof-top, and I told the other boys about him. It wasn't long before they all decided to come with me. There's so many boys wanting homes now that he's asking rich people for money to open another house for them. That's why he wanted to know my story, see?

It's like having lots of brothers, living here. We all sleep in a big upstairs room with a roaring fire and swingy hammocks hanging from the ceiling. We get plenty to eat. He tells us about God a lot and he's kind to us. He gets us jobs to do like chopping wood and we get paid, fair and square, and then we pay him for our meals.

And there's nothing to keep us here. Can't believe that, I can't. No bars on the window or locks on the doors. No beatings. I could run away tomorrow if I wanted to.

But I don't, see? I'm Jim Jarvis, I am. And this is my home.

## **Author's Note**

Jim Jarvis was a real boy, but not very much is known about him. I've tried to imagine what his life was like up to the time when he met Doctor Barnardo in about 1866. Doctor Barnardo trained to be a doctor but never qualified as one. He gave up his career and his ambition to be a missionary in China, in order to help the poor children of London. First he opened up 'Ragged Schools' for them, and then he raised money from wealthy people to help him to set up homes for orphans. He often said that meeting Jim Jarvis was what made him aware of the real plight of destitute children in London.

Jim did run away from a workhouse after his mother died, and was helped by a woman who sold whelks and shrimps. He lived for a time on a coal lighter with a man and dog and was treated very

cruelly. After he ran away from them he lived in the streets and slept on the rooftops, until he went to one of Dr Barnardo's Ragged School classes and asked him for help.

Shrimps is based on Jack Somers, also known as Carrots, who actually came to Dr Barnardo's notice a little later. In real life Carrots died of starvation in a crate before Barnardo could give him a home. His tragic story was also a very significant event in the history of Barnardo's, and ever since that time there was a notice put on the doors of the 'Cottage Homes' as they were called, saying 'No destitute boy ever refused admission.' Soon Barnardo began to open homes for girls, too. Dr Barnardo's work became known throughout the world, and the charity still exists today as Barnardo's, to help young people in all kinds of ways.