

Unexpected

by Adem Boyaci

James came from a long line of hard workers, generations of men and women who were insignificant, all working hard but never really earning. Sometimes it seemed death was their only escape. They worked hard and were exploited for their efforts. James' fathers grandfathers father was the first in the line to commit suicide from his horrible life and since then every man has left their wife widowed from the same cause. James was a quiet, 12 year-old boy, living in 1772, 12 years after the industrial revolution began, and was already a victim to the dangers and effects of child labour.

James had received letters, letters from a man claiming to have known his father. The letters had been coming for a year now. The mails would take more than a month to be delivered because James lived in a town out of the main city of London. When there was

someone going to town or a Raven available only then did the mail go in or out. The mail that came contained information about his father but the man said he could only talk about what his father has left him in real life. To lure James to London he provided proof about property his father owned. The man was a merchant from London who owned a coal mine. James who was working on a farm decided to be rid of his job and look to seek his wealth in the great city of London.

James arrived in London and was shocked at the sight. A place plagued with sick people and children the same age as him running around carrying things for a little bit of money. Every visitor to London was impressed by the noise and the throngs of people. But the city itself was neither quaint nor clean. Most residents lived in appalling conditions. After the Great Fire of 1666, which destroyed more than 85 percent of the city, London was rebuilt in a hasty and haphazard manner.

He went to the address of where the mail from the man was sent from and James came to a little hut ran by an old man and several little kids who James had realised were used as messengers and sometimes spies. People would refer to them as little birdies. James came to the man's coal mine and saw many kids running around working. A tall man with a dark beard and a menacing smile came to James. He said, 'Hello there. This is me sanctuary. Do you like your new job yet?'

James was staggered and felt dizzy.

'Well sir, I came to get me dad's land back,' James replied.

The man chuckled, 'You actually believed that, little lad? I have your dad's farm and lured him into the same trap as you. He committed suicide because he couldn't take it, the lil' pansy.'

James was furious and yelled at the man. Within seconds, James had suffered a blow to the back of his head and woke up in a cell. In

the cell he found some clothes and shovels. He got debriefed by the other kids and shockingly they all knew about the legend of James's ancestry. The men who committed suicide were known as the Lost Ones. The Lost Ones were targeted by the evil men who had beards dry and black as old coal, symbols of death. The evil men were supposedly waiting for a new heir to the Lost Ones' lineage. The other kids figured out that the new heir was James. However, the overseer and leader of the kids was a boy named Conor. He was a big child who did not look his age. He was as tall as a mountain and had muscles the size of boulders. Well, at least that's how James saw him. Conor informed James that Blackbeard was in fact his uncle but was not under his protection anymore because Conor's had father died. Blackbeard found the opportunity to employ him in the mine. Conor stole every night to feed his sick mother and also to spy for another master. The coal mine had employed men as old as 70. All that was heard in the mine was deep coughing and crying women. Truly a dark place to work.

James worked for a couple of days, eager to find out his father's secrets and expose Blackbeard. One day James crept into Blackbeard's office and searched through his documents. Blackbeard caught him and had the file James was looking for in his hand. They had a scuffle and out of nowhere Conor came in. He punched Blackbeard and the document fell to James. James rushed through the door and peered into the office from the window to see Blackbeard stab Conor. Filled with fright, James ran away from Blackbeard's goons and had jumped on a train to Whitechapel, a poor city in the north of London. James cried all the way to the address marked on the document. It was a farm with lots of cattle. He was intelligent though. He sold the land and moved back to the original farm he was working on to throw Blackbeard off his trail.

James set up his new life, a journey that took 3 years to complete. He worked at the farm for a year and met a girl. The girl and James established a bond. She was a tailor taught by her mother. The pair

became lovebirds and, when they were 16, decided to invest in going back to London to set up a tailor shop.

The tailor shop was a booming business and everything had been going well. Blackbeard had paid off the authorities to not go to jail but lost his coal mine and business. He was out to get James but little did he know James and the rest of the workers at the coal mine were going to stop him once and for all. All this time since he first got mail from Blackbeard James had known the kids there. They invited him to the mine to get his land and help them create a gang to kick child labourers off the street. Their plan was working.