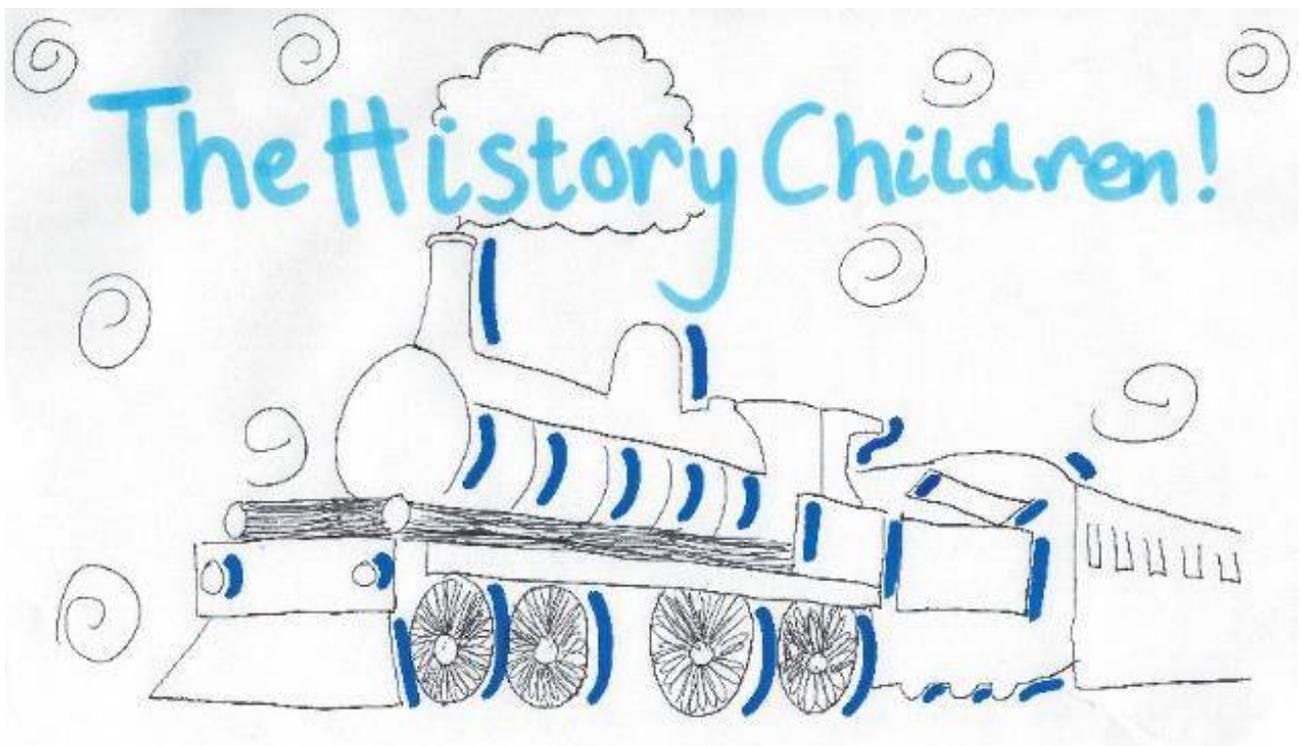




Leeds School Library Service

Delivering resources, inspiring discovery



Tom Palmer

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Chapter one

Three children walked on to the park. They were going so fast they might as well have been running. But there was a good reason for that. **They were excited. They had just arrived at Leeds's famous Bramley Carnival.**

Three children. And one dog.

The dog **was called Bailey. He was Mohammed's mum's dog**, an ex-police dog. Bailey walked obediently alongside Mo, calm and at ease in the crowd.

And what a crowd it was. Grace thought there must be a thousand people there at least. Eating burgers and candyfloss. Screaming on the ghost train and the roller-coaster. Some of them queueing calmly to have their faces painted by two teenage girls in a tent.

'Seen him?' the boy next to Grace said.

Kian. **Grace's brother.**

Kian looked older than he was in his Nike baseball cap, trainers and tee-shirt. Grace wore a **bow in her hair. She wasn't into brands.**

Kian was pointing at a man. The man was thin. Wearing what looked like cyclist trousers, tight and shiny. But the peculiar thing about him was his face. It was painted. Like a clown, but not like any clown **they'd seen before**. The face paints looked more like bruises and scars than anything else.

Grace shuddered. 'He's weird,' she said quietly.

Mo nodded, then gasped. Because Mo was pointing at three children staring back at them from in front of the ghost train. His arm was trembling.

Grace looked. Then Kian. When Bailey looked he barked. And no wonder. Because the three children facing them looked exactly like Grace and Kian and Mo.

Bailey barked as the three lookalike children boarded the ghost train.

'Come on,' Kian said. 'Let's follow them.'

Grace, Kian and Mo jumped onto then next four-seater ghost train carriage. Bailey next to Mo on the back seat. Immediately they were shunted into a dark tunnel.

They listened and felt the rattle of the ghost train as it sped up. Trails of cloth brushed their faces. A pair of red lights that were meant to look like eyes flashed.

'This is lame,' Kian said.

Grace was about to agree with her brother: then the car stopped.

And that man was there.

The man with the painted face. Standing in front of them, his boot stopping the carriage. Grace could smell sewage. Something like that. She felt sick.

'Time to die,' the face-painted man grinned, his face closer now.

Mo noticed what looked like a baseball bat in his hand.

Bailey was the first to react. He pushed his large muzzle between Grace and Kian and growled a low deep growl, every muscle in his body tensed to attack.

But the man didn't flinch. Instead, he leapt forward and struck Bailey hard across the head with his club.

Bailey's legs collapsed. He went down with a thud. Unconscious.

'Now listen to me,' the man growled. **'Are you children of Leeds?'**

'What?' Grace said, paralysed with shock.

'Are you children of Leeds?'

'Yeah,' Kian said, putting his arm across his sister to move her back, so that he was protecting her.

'Then it's time for you to die,' he snarled.

What happened next happened quickly.

Three blurry shapes emerged to the side of the ghost train carriage. At first the children thought it was a mirror. Three children looking like them, facing them. But it was not a mirror. The aggressive man had stumbled backwards. He was afraid of the three newcomers. And that was good.

'I said I saw...' Mo started.

But the identical Grace held up a hand to stop her. Then pushed a mask towards the man. The mask was bright, seeming to shimmer with a hundred different colours.

The man scrambled to his feet and ran. Into the darkness of the tunnel. Until he disappeared.

'We don't have long,' identical Grace said. **'We have seconds. So don't speak.'**

Grace, Mo and Kian said nothing. They could see the three new children were beginning to fade as if all colour was draining from them.

Identical Grace went on. **'That man. He hates the children of Leeds. He has a grudge against us. Against you. Only you can stop him now. You'll have dreams. They're clues. They'll take you around the city. Back in time...'**

And then she was gone. All three of them were gone.

'Or what?' Kian shouted. **'Or what will happen, Grace, you idiot.'**

Identical Grace appeared in a flicker of light. She scowled at Kian.

'Then you'll be letting down the children of Leeds in the past and the present and the future...'

They walked away from the carnival once Bailey seemed to be okay. After they'd come out of the ghost train Mo had reported the man to the fairground organisers. They told the community police officers too. But no-one could find him.

They were away from the Carnival now. Just long streets with cars going up and down. Everything normal.

'What do we do?' Kian said.

'I'll talk to Mum about it,' Mohammed replied. **'She'll know what to do.'**

'And, so long as one of us doesn't have a weird dream tonight,' Kian added, **'it'll be fine.'**

'Yeah,' all three children said at once, none of their voices like they usually sounded. They were all a little shocked.

Mo woke up with his bedsheets gripped in both hands. He was sitting, pushing himself back against the headboard of his bed. He was staring into the dark.

Mo had had a dream.

He'd been in an old-fashioned village. And that man was there. The face-painted man. And **he'd** been coming towards Mo. Through the water. Grinning. Swimming. Because the whole village was no normal village. It was deserted. And it was under water.

Mo shook his head.

What **now...**

Chapter two

Mohammed led Grace and Kian along a track to the edge of the water. He hoped he had brought them to the right place.

As soon as he woke up, he searched Google. He remembered what the children from the carnival had said the day before about dreams.

Dreams were clues.

Mo typed in 'underwater village' and 'Leeds'. **The first thing that** came up was a reservoir at Eccup in the north of the city. A reservoir where there had once been a village.

Around the reservoir the children looked at fields of cows, great bushes of nettles and a gate leading to a muddy farm track. The reservoir had a feeling of abandonment about it.

'It's lovely here,' Grace said.

Kian shrugged. 'It's just a lake,' he muttered.

'A reservoir,' Grace corrected him. 'Not a lake.'

'Do you really think there is a village down there?' Mo asked.

'I do,' Grace said. 'I think it's exciting.'

The wind that was blowing across the water was wuthering harder now. Flecks of water were coming off the reservoir, feeling like rain. They stared as the water rippled, reflecting the darkening sky.

'What's that?' Kian said. He pointed into the water about twenty metres from the edge. 'Is it a stick?'

As soon as Kian had said the word 'stick' Bailey was off, barking, scrambling to the bank and diving in. A big splash. Just Bailey's head powering through the water to retrieve whatever it was.

They stood on the edge. All with their feet in the reservoir. When the dog returned, Mo took the object out of Bailey's mouth.

'It's a scroll,' Kian said. 'Like from one of those films about ancient mysteries. Read it.'

Mo lifted it up and unscrolled it.

'Read it,' Kian insisted.

Find the pieces of the mask.

Put them together: that's your task

To save his soul and save your city.

If you don't: it'll be your pity.

'What does that mean?' Kian asked.

'We have to find parts of a mask?' Grace suggested.

'The mask!' Mo shouted. 'The mask those children like us used to scare him away.'

'But how do we find it?' Grace asked.

Before she had finished her question, the reservoir began to churn more wildly than ever. It seemed to be spiralling round and round. And they knew. It was a whirlpool. A sudden overpowering terrifying whirlpool

It grabbed Kian first. Then Grace. Then Mo.

They all cried out, hearing Bailey barking from the edge of the water.

They all knew they were being dragged to the bottom...

They knew no one could save them.

Kian stared at his sister. She was okay. Wet, but okay. That was the most important thing to him.

'I thought you were dead,' he said.

'Me too,' Grace put her hand on Kian's and smiled.

Then Mo interrupted. 'We can speak,' he said. 'And breathe.'

The three children stared at each other. Then at their surroundings. They were under a huge dome of water. In a village. Dry as a bone. It looked like it had not rained for a year. Or a century.

'What...?' Kian spluttered.

Grace stood up. 'Let's not panic. We need to find a piece of the mask. To get out of here.

That's what the scroll meant. That's what we do.'

All three children agreed and began to search the village.

Small houses, a church, outdoor toilets, a fountain in the middle of a square. Then a huge house. The biggest of them all. They approached it cautiously.

The children had no idea they were being watched.

The only door they could open to the big house was in the cellar. They had to force it. Inside, they saw a table and a chair. Some shelves with rusting tins of food and bottles balancing precariously. And on the table, a notebook. It was open at the last page that had been written on.

Mo picked it up. 'It's a diary,' he said, frowning.

'Read it,' Kian suggested.

So Mo read.

I've been here for three days now. Those beastly

children from Leeds have gone. They locked me in this cellar. I'm scared. Mother thinks I am on the train to our new home in London. Father said that we have to move house. Move house because they are flooding the valley, that our village will be under water. Nobody knows I am here, locked in this cellar with father's mask that he brought back from his trip to the West Indies. I hate that mask! I hate it...

There! I've smashed it. I've thrashed it against the walls and now it lies around me in pieces. But... what... there's water! Water coming in! So it was true. They are flooding the village. They are making our valley into a reservoir... Oh my days... it's up to my knees now... Those children from Leeds They've done this. I hate them. I'm frightened. I want mother...

The diary stopped there.

None of the children spoke. But fear crept around them like rising floodwater.

'The boy was him,' Kian said. 'The man.'

Mo and Grace agreed.

'And what's that?' Kian pointed to the back of the diary. There was a pocket there. Inside, a splintered piece of blue-coloured wood.

Grace gasped. 'The mask,' she said. 'It's part of the mask he smashed. The one we have to put together.'

Suddenly, a shadow appeared in the doorway. They all looked up at once. It was him. The man. The man with the marks on his face. His hands were bleeding, fingernails hanging off, jagged and torn.

'Now you die where I died,' he bellowed. 'Children of Leeds. Your time has come.'

'Not so excited now, are you?' Kian muttered to Grace.

Mo dropped the diary, but stuffed the piece of mask into his pocket. Just as he felt water around his ankles, his knees. The reservoir was pouring into the cellar.

The man looked around him in alarm. He smirked. 'This is how I died. This is how you die.'

Instinctively Mo pulled the mask piece out of his pocket and held it towards the bloodied man.

The man flinched. Then a great wave swept him out of the doorway.

'We should go,' Kian said, grabbing his sister and friend by the arms and hauling them away. 'We get out of this cellar and hope the force of the water takes us up to the surface or that this is a terrible nightmare.'

The next thing they knew Grace, Kian and Mo were on the water's edge again. Bailey was licking Mo's face. **There was no sign of the bloodied man.** Kian had been right. They were saved.

That night they all knew that one of them would have a dream. A dream to tell them where they had to go next. What they had to do.

As they slept each of them dreamed.

Grace about Nicola Adams.

Kian, Jonny Brownlee.

Mo, Alistair Brownlee.

When they woke up the next morning they would try to work out what on earth their dreams could mean. The only clue was that they were all Olympic stars. And whether they should help or hide from the man with the bleeding hands.

Chapter three

They met in Grace's front garden. Each had a glass of orange juice. The sun was shining, but the wind was blowing, making the trees dance and meaning the morning still felt chilly.

'So,' Grace started. 'We all dreamed about Olympic stars? Nicola Adams. Jonny Brownlee. Alistair Brownlee.'

'What does that mean?' Mohammed asked, while ruffling Bailey's head. 'I just don't get it.'
Silence. All three of them. Because the dreams made no sense. Why would they dream of people who had won Olympic medals? What did that have to do with a crazy man who hated the children of Leeds?

Then Kian stood up, knocking over his glass. 'From Leeds,' he said. 'They're all from Leeds.'

'Yes,' Grace agreed. 'So?'

'That means they're all children of Leeds,' Mo spluttered. 'The bloodied man will have it in for them.'

'When?' Grace asked.

'The race!' Kian shouted. 'Today is when. It's the Leeds Triathlon. And it's happening today. Maybe the bloodied man is going to do something there.'

All three were standing now. And the wind was stronger. Bailey was pulling at his lead. He knew there was something up. He wanted a piece of the action.

'Let's go,' Grace said.

The three children checked the route map of the Leeds Triathlon. It started with a swim across Roundhay Park lake, followed by some road racing on bikes. The last leg was a running race from the park, down Roundhay Road into Leeds city centre.

They decided to watch it from Roundhay Road. It was near the end of the Triathlon. It was **the best place to be. They'd look for the bloodied man and try to find another piece of the mask, like the scroll they'd found in the reservoir had suggested.**

The roads where the race was coming through were strange. There was no sound of cars like there usually was, so Mo could hear birds signing and the wind in the trees. But you could hear people cheering and see flags being waved. The Union Flag and the Yorkshire white rose were two of the flags.

The trio got there just in time to see Alistair and Jonny Brownlee running down Roundhay Road, the brothers in first and second position. They heard the noise of footsteps hammering the

tarmac. And – because they were close – the strained breathing of several men as they ran past. It was thrilling to see two such amazing athletes here in their home city.

Kian could see that Grace and Mo were mesmerised by the race. He knew he had to keep an eye out for the bloodied man. He did his best to keep a look out, but it was Bailey who alerted them.

‘Woof!’ Bailey barked, pulling his lead in the direction of the road that goes up to St James’ Hospital.

Kian stared in the direction the ex-police dog was looking.

‘It’s him,’ Kian shouted. ‘The man.’

They all began the chase as one. Three children pursuing the man with his strange painted face and his still bleeding hands. They had no idea what he was doing. They hoped that the Brownlee brothers were far enough out of the way. They crossed the road where the race was coming through. There had been a gap between the runners making it safe to cross, meaning they were close to the man now as he shuffled along.

Then – just as the runners appeared – the man shot across the road just before it was blocked. Now he was moving fast. But the children could do nothing. They had to wait for hundreds of runners going past before they were allowed through to follow where he had gone.

As they waited, Grace saw a young woman in a blue cape. She appeared to be searching for something in the bins along the road. But, as soon as they were allowed through, she forgot the girl and raced across Roundhay Road.

‘Which way?’ Kian asked, angry now.

Grace shrugged. ‘We’ve lost him.’

They stood at the junction of the road that goes up to St James’. **Now what? Now where?**

The cheering of the crowd was overwhelming now, flashes of colour going past. The runners’ tops.

‘Nicola Adams!’ Grace said.

‘She’s not a runner,’ Kian scoffed.

‘I know that, idiot. She’s a boxer. And the gym where she started to box is up there. I’ve seen it from the bus. Burmantofts Boxing Club.’

‘Oh no!’ Mo said. ‘It’s the gym the bloodied man was going to all along. He’s tricked us. We have to get there.’

And then the children were running again. Faster and harder than they had ever run before. But would they get there in time?

Grace pushed the doors of Burmantofts Boxing Club. All of her senses were hit hard as she saw the gym.

The smell of sweat from the boxers' bodies.

The thump thud smack of boxing gloves hitting punch bags.

Bright colours and shafts of light coming through the windows.

And – **Grace couldn't be sure** – but water dripping from several places in the ceiling.

Grace watched a man hitting another, making him fall down. It shocked her and gave her a queasy feeling in her stomach.

And then she saw him. The bloodied man. He was cutting a hole into one of the punch bags with a short sharp knife. But now he had stopped, too surprised to go on. Like he never imagined the children would have been able to work out how to find him.

But they had.

And Grace could see in the hole he had cut a slither of blue. Of the mask.

She was aware of more water now, too. Bursting through gaps in the walls. Some coming from under a door.

'The water,' she said.

'The mask must be in the punchbag,' Kian ignored her.

'Go, Bailey!' Mo shouted.

And – **without a moment's hesitation** – the large dog sprinted across the gym floor, up into a boxing ring, then down at the bloodied man. He stumbled backwards, as Kian and Grace ran to retrieve the piece of mask.

Water was pouring into the gym now. All the boxers had stopped their training. Some were watching the water in horror. Others were about to come to help the children.

'The water,' Kian shouted. 'It's to do with the man. You need to do something with the mask pieces.'

Mo didn't need telling twice. He held the two pieces of mask and touched them together.

There was a flash. A blue flash.

The bloodied man stared at Mo and scowled. But he didn't flinch. Then he looked slightly over Mo's head. Now he flinched. He looked terrified.

'We can help you,' Grace called out. 'We've read your diary. We know you were drowned.'

But the man was not listening now. He was retreating. Past a pair of punchbags. And away.

Mo felt good **that he'd scared the man again. He had no idea that Nicola Adams was** standing behind him looking hard at the bloodied man and that it was maybe her he had run away from. Not the mask pieces at all.

That night, Grace's dream was different to the others so far. She was in her bedroom. The door creaked open. And she saw a girl wearing a blue cape with the saddest face she'd ever seen. A waft of freezing cold air followed her in.

The girl didn't look at Grace. She was too busy. Searching Grace's room. Looking for something. Grace kept quiet. But her mind was frantic with questions. Who was this girl in blue? Was she the same girl she'd seen before in Leeds? Was she looking for the next pieces of the mask too?

And, if so, why?

Chapter four

Grace, Kian and Mohammed were outside the local library before it opened in the morning. They needed to find something out. And fast.

When Grace had woken from her dream about the Blue Lady she could hardly breathe. After watching the ghost search her bedroom, the lady had turned to Grace.

'Help me,' she croaked desperately. 'Help me find them. Oh please. Without them I must search for eternity.'

'Who are you?' Grace asked.

But the lady had already vanished.

Grace had no doubts what she had to do. That was why they were where they were now. If you wanted to know something you went to the library.

Inside the library, they couldn't find anything about the Blue Lady in the books on the shelves. They asked a librarian and he suggested they go online. Kian booked a computer and searched, using the words 'blue lady Leeds'.

'Here!' he gasped in a loud whisper, not wanting to disturb other library users.

Grace read what her brother had found.

'Lady Mary Ingram was a fourteen-year-old girl who was travelling home to Temple Newsam in a carriage many years ago. The carriage was held up by a highwayman and he took her precious pearl necklace, a christening present from her grandfather. She was so upset that she had lost something that could never be replaced. Sadly she went mad and would search the house, trying to tear up floorboards, unpick cushions and clawing at the edge of the lake. She died soon after.'

'That's sad,' Kian said. Grace was shocked to see her brother's eyes were a little red, like he might be about to cry.

'Let's go to Temple Newsam,' she said. 'Now.'

Temple Newsam house was spectacular. They travelled up a bumpy, muddy road towards a massive old fashioned house. It was the biggest house any of them had ever seen.

'It's ancient,' Mo said, shocked.

They walked up a flight of glorious stone steps and into the extravagant house. They saw chandeliers, oil paintings on the walls, huge halls and a magnificent spiral staircase that seemed to go up forever. It reminded Grace of the house that Elsa built in *Frozen*.

And it was cold too. Just like in *Frozen*. All of the children seemed to shiver at once. It was like a cold breeze was around them, even though they were inside. What was it about this place?

They went from room to room searching for something to do with Lady Mary Ingram. At last, in a bedroom with a huge bookcase that had giant decorated books on it, they saw a painting so big it would not have fitted in any of their houses. And it was no ordinary painting: it was of Lady Mary Ingram, the Blue Lady.

Mo put his hand to his mouth.

'What is it?' Grace asked.

'Her eyes,' Mo replied. 'They moved. They're pointing at that huge book on the bookshelf.'

'Move the book,' Kian said.

'What?'

'Move the book,' he insisted. 'I saw it on Scooby-Doo once. Shaggy moved a book and a door opened.'

'Like that's going to happen here,' Grace laughed, pulling the book from the shelf. 'It'd never...'

Grace did not finish her sentence because a passageway had appeared to the side of the large bed.

The three children glanced at each other. **They didn't need to talk about what to do next.** Grace led them through the door. There was no way they were going to ignore a secret passageway.

First, a series of flights of steps took them down into a tunnel made through dark grey rock. It was lit with candles.

'How is it lit with candles?' Kian asked.

Mo and Grace shrugged. They had stopped questioning all the weird stuff that was happening to them this week.

They walked along a straight passage, the air cold and damp, candles flickering like they could go out any moment. Because there was still a chill breeze fluttering around the backs of their necks.

Bailey was leading the way now. Grace had had enough of being the brave one.

After a good ten minutes walking, they saw a different kind of light to candle light. It was daylight.

At first, they couldn't see because the outside light was so bright. They could only see shimmering light and a vague blue shape ahead of them. It was hard to make out what it was or where they were: until their eyes adjusted and it was clear what they could see.

A lady dressed in a blue cape.

A lake behind her, the water reflecting the morning sun in sparkles.

'You're here,' the lady said.

None of the children spoke. Even Bailey remained silent.

The lady smiled. **'I've been waiting centuries. You are part of my destiny.'**

But then the sun was blocked out. Shadow fell across the lake and the grounds of Temple Newsam House.

Wearing a black cloak, his face scarred and hands filthy, it was him. The bloodied man. In one hand, he was holding something white, something that was glittering. In the other, the club he had struck Bailey with.

'This is what happens to the children of Leeds,' the man cackled. 'You'll all be like young Mary by the time I am done with you.'

The Blue Lady flinched, staring at the man's hand. At what was in his hand. A pearl necklace. He had Lady Mary's pearl necklace!

'Recognise me?' the bloodied man said, staring like a maniac into Lady Mary's eyes.

'You!' she swore. 'You were the highwayman! You were the one...'

'I am,' he laughed. 'You paid for being a child of Leeds. And you'll go on paying for my loathing of your city.'

'But I need it,' she moaned, 'Let it Go.'

'Never,' the bloodied man said. 'My life's purpose it to make you suffer.'

The Blue Lady fell to her knees. The bloodied man laughed even louder.

'See how you suffer!' he gloated.

But he gloated too much and did not see that Mo had released Bailey's lead and the dog was heading straight for him.

In horror, he raised his club to hit the dog again. But Bailey was too fast. Bailey dodged the club and grabbed the pearl necklace gently in his jaw. The bloodied man fell to the ground.

'I'll make you all suffer for that,' he cursed.

Bailey was next to the Blue Lady before he had stopped speaking. He placed the necklace in her hand and immediately Lady Mary Ingram was shining with a spectacular light, as if a spotlight from the sky had been shone on her.

'Please?' she said to Mo, handing him the necklace.

Mo took the necklace and **placed it round Lady Mary's neck.**

You have never seen a smile like the smile Lady Mary Ingram made when the necklace nestled around her neck. Happiness shone from her like the rays of the sun .

'He's coming,' Kian warned.

The Blue Lady looked up to see the Bloodied Man approaching, his cloak like a shroud of black silk.

The children looked in wonder as she raised her hand and a blast of blue light came from her. The bloodied man was thrown backwards into the lake. The water fizzed as it closed around him.

Each of them heard him call out 'mother... help me mother' but none of them would mention it. it was too sad. A terrible man like that who did such wicked things calling for his mum. It made them feel almost sorry for him.

'He's gone,' Mo said.

'But we'll see him again,' Kian said. 'I know it.'

Grace nodded. 'Until we have all the pieces of the mask.'

The light around was changing again now. Blue everywhere. Blue, but not cold blue. A warm summery blue. **The three children looked to see the Blue Lady's cape fall to the ground, the light fading now.** She was gone.

Next to her cape was a piece of light wood. It was blue, yellow and white. It was shining.

'She's given us the next piece of the mask,' Mo grinned. 'That's our reward.'

It was Kian's turn to have the dream that night. When he opened his eyes, it was pitch black around him. But he would never forget what he had seen in the dream. It was a giant building. But it was nothing like the house at Temple Newsam. It was just windows and boards reflected in the water below.

Water! Kian thought to himself. Why is there always water?

Chapter 5

After Kian and Grace had listened to Mo recounting his dream about the huge building with hundreds of windows, they asked him some questions. There were a lot of buildings like the one he had described in Leeds. They needed to work out which it was.

Mo mentioned water in front of the building. And a great wheel turning. Also, he had seen the initials AM on a wall. That was all he could remember.

But those details were enough for Grace.

'Armley Mills!' she said. 'I've been there. On a school trip. It was fab!'

They took the bus from Leeds city centre. It didn't take long. Down Wellington Street. Over Armley Gyratory. Through busy streets. Until the trio was faced by a large building, brown-stoned, windows reflecting the bright blue sky.

Armley Mills.

In the entrance to mill's museum Kian, Grace and Mo studied some pictures on the wall. They knew that their quest was to do with the past; the Bloodied Man was travelling through Leeds' history so he could do harm to the city's children. They figured these photos would be a valuable source of information.

They were right.

Kian had a look round the shop. He found a postcard of one of the pictures on the wall. It was an image of dozens of children, sitting facing the camera, all smiling broadly, the mill looming behind them. Kian liked it so much, he bought the postcard and slipped it into his pocket.

'Let's go outside. To the water,' Grace suggested to Mo. 'That's what you saw in the dream, isn't it? The water and the mill wheel?'

'It is,' Mo agreed. 'And they won't let us take Bailey in the museum, so outside sounds good.'

Armley Mills was massive. The three children stood there, the water and weir between them and the building. It was awesome.

For some reason, Bailey was tugging on his lead. He barked at the water. Mo assumed he was looking at a duck swimming there and yanked him back as he continued to look up at the mill.

'It's stunning,' he said.

Kian nodded. 'Imagine how many people would have worked there. What did they all do?'

'They made fabric out of sheep's wool,' Grace said. 'Like for clothes.'

Bailey continued to interrupt their conversation, barking and pulling at his lead, still staring down at the water.

All three children gazed to see what the dog was so upset by. What they saw in the water sent a chill down their spines. Kian felt the hairs go up on his arms.

They were looking at reflection of twenty, maybe thirty, children, in the water. All staring back at them. All wearing shabby brown clothes. All with short cropped hair: girls and boys.

'What?' Kian said. Then his voice dried up. He recognised them from the postcard he had bought. They were all the same children. Except that they were not smiling now: they were frowning.

'They were pushed in,' a faint voice said.

Kian stepped back to see a girl. As tall as he was. A pale complexion. Her eyes were sparkling. He couldn't take his eyes off her.

She put her hand on his shoulder. Kian could feel the freezing cold of her flesh even through his T-shirt.

She was a ghost. Kian knew it. The other two knew it too.

The girl spoke, her eyes fixed on Kian's. 'They were pushed in. They were murdered. By one of the masters. My brother is one of them. They are all caught in there as reflections. The man won't let them go. He keeps them there. He hates us.'

'Does that man have scars on his face and – sort of – bloody hands?' Mo asked.

The girl nodded.

'I don't know how we can help you,' Grace said, seeing that her brother couldn't speak, so hypnotised was he by this ghost of a girl.

'You have magic,' the mill girl said, pointing at Grace's rucksack. The bag where Grace kept the pieces of mask they had retrieved – and that seemed to be linked to the bloodied man – was glowing.

'The mask,' Mo gasped.

'What do we do?' Grace asked the girl.

The mill girl ghost had no answer. But, now, Kian had come back to his senses. 'I used to play this game online,' he said. 'You had magic items. If you touched them on locks and things like that, they opened up a new level. Maybe...'

Grace slipped the rucksack off. 'It's worth a try,' she said.

Mo and Grace took a piece of mask each and held it towards the reflections of the children in the water below. And – as they did – Kian felt a burning sensation in his pocket.

The postcard!

He took it out. It was glowing the same blues and yellows and whites of the mask.

And then it began. The children seemed to float like steam off the surface of the water, towards Kian and into the postcard.

All three children grinned. They were rescuing the ghost mill children

Kian heard an angry cry of ‘Noooo’ as soon as this started – felt a cloud obscure the warm sunshine at the same time.

It was him. The Bloodied Man! In releasing the children, they had brought him back. But where was he?

‘I’ll kill you all this time,’ he growled, seeming to come out of the sky, like a dreadful bird of prey.

Bailey was ready for him. He lunged at him, and dog and man were caught in a terrible struggle on the edge of the water. Grace watched as Mo and Kian joined in. Four figures fighting next to the edge of the weir. And she watched too as she saw the two boys and Bailey fall in, sucked down into the bottom of the weir, the currents too strong for them.

The bloodied man on his hands and knees, grinning up at her.

‘Three down,’ he cackled. ‘One to go.’

It was just Grace and the bloodied man. She backed away towards the edge of the water. She knew she had no chance.

Mo had no idea that Kian and Bailey were there with him in the freezing churning water. But he did know that, however hard he tried to swim up towards the light, the current dragging him down was stronger. And he did know that there was no air left and his chest felt like it was going to explode.

The last thing he saw before he lost consciousness was a piece of the mask they’d been searching for all week, and a hand, maybe Kian’s, reaching for it.

Then nothing.

Just as she thought she was going to fall back into the depths with her friends – Grace heard a rush of water. Like a giant wave crashing on the rocks.

She turned.

What she saw astonished her. Kian and Mo coming out of the water as if they were riding a wave. In their hands, they were carrying the pieces of mask. But they were not in pieces now. It looked like one half of a giant mask, that you might see at Leeds Carnival. And it was glowing.

The wave set the two boys on the water's edge, then seemed to gather force, tripping the Bloodied Man, and dragging him away into the water. Just like the last time, water was defeating him. His face and legs had already dissolved. It was taking him away again, rescuing the children from danger.

The Bloodied Man had been defeated again.

The mill children were safe.

Grace and Kian and Mo were safe too.

But where was Bailey?

The three children looked deep into the water. There was no sign of Mo's dog. Just the strong currents pulling forever downwards into the weir.

Mo struggled to sleep that night. He lay there staring at the street light coming through the curtains. But he must have gone to sleep because he had a dream. He saw an animal. At first, he thought it was Bailey. He woke. Sat up.

'Bailey,' he called, his voice cracking.

But he knew he'd not seen his dog in his dream. He'd seen an altogether different animal.

Chapter six

'So what did the animal look like?' Grace asked Mo gently.

Mo tried to remember his dream about the strange animal. But it was hard. He tried to think of the animal's features, but all he could think of was Bailey. His dog. His best friend. And, really, he found it hard to talk, let alone think. Grief had drained all his energy away. But he wanted to help Grace.

'It was smaller than a sheep or a pig,' Mo tried. 'It had short tusks and a dark wiry coat. Like a small rhino or something.'

Grace frowned. She had no idea what that could be.

'A boar!' Kian exclaimed. 'It sounds like a boar.'

'What's a boar?' Mo asked.

'A small pig. They were wild. Like there were deer and badgers and wild boars around here in the olden days.'

'Then, that was it,' Mo said. 'It was a boar.' But he didn't care anymore about the quest and the bloodied man and all of that madness. That was over for him.

'I don't want to do this anymore,' he said. 'You can carry on. But I'm going home.'

Grace and Kian walked Mo home across the small park between where they lived. Just as they were coming to his house, Mo's phone rang.

'It'll be Mum,' he sighed. 'She's away with work.'

Mo looked at the screen of his phone. It wasn't his mum. It was a number he didn't recognise. But he picked up anyway. Sometimes his mum phoned from landlines at work and she said he had permission to answer numbers he didn't recognise when she was away with work.

'Hello?'

Grace and Kian watched their friend listening to his mum talking. Mo's face dropped, then he nodded.

'Okay,' Mo said back.

Grace looked at her brother. Both wondered what the call was about.

'Yes,' Mo sighed, his voice cracking like he was about to cry. 'I'll leave now. My friends will come with me. Thanks.'

Mo put his phone back in his pocket. He looked at Grace and Kian. Both his friends were uncomfortable. Like they knew the call was more bad news.

And it was.

'A woman phoned from a part of Leeds called Rothwell,' Mo said. 'She's found Bailey. He's dead. She got my number off his collar. She said we could collect him from the church in Rothwell. Please...' Mo stopped talking. He rubbed his eyes.

'We'll come with you,' Kian said. 'Won't we Grace.'

Grace nodded, but did not speak.

The churchyard was creepy. The soil, dusty and barely any sunshine was making it through dark-leaved trees that hung over the grass and some patches of dull flowers. They could hear nothing except bells tolling a depressing series of chimes, as they walked towards the church. And Bailey.

Grace had nothing to say. Nor Kian. They didn't want to make Mo feel any worse than he already did.

Kian opened the heavy wooden church door.

'Shall I go first?' Kian asked Mo. 'Or should I get him for you?'

Mo shook his head. 'It's okay. I can do it. I want to.'

Kian and Grace stepped aside and watched Mo enter the church. He was staring straight ahead and his jaw was rigid, like he was clamping his teeth together hard. Ahead of him, although it looked clean and colourful with light coming through the stained glass windows, the church still felt daunting. And it was cold. Like walking into a fridge – or another season.

There was a table at the rear of the church. On the table was a blanket. Mo walked towards it.

He knew what was wrapped in the blanket.

Mo had loved his dog. He still loved his dog. How could all that love he had just disappear even if Bailey was dead?

Mo stood over the blanket. He reached out and moved the corner so that he could see **Bailey. He saw his dog's ear. The side of his mouth. Bailey's eyes were closed.**

Mo fell on top of his dog and sobbed.

Grace and Kian stood at the end of the aisle and watched their friend. Mo was crying now. But the **siblings didn't go to Mo. They felt somehow that he needed to be alone. They looked the other way** at what looked like a stuffed animal on a stand. But it was no animal. It was the coat of an animal: a rough tangled mess of whiskery brown hair.

'A boar!' Grace gasped.

They read the sign next to the boar coat.

Here hangs the coat of the last wild boar in England.

It is said that John o' Gaunt killed it at Stye-Bank in

Rothwell.

'It's the animal!' Kian whispered – still not wanting to disturb his friend. 'The boar that Mo dreamed of.'

Grace put both her hands to her mouth. 'Is that why we're here? Something to do with Bailey? Something to do with this boar?'

Kian shrugged. And then a priest was standing with them. He was tall with dark hair and severe look on his face.

'Do you like the coat?' he asked them.

'Er... yeah,' Kian said. Although he didn't.

'It reminds me of the Greek Myth,' the priest went on. 'You know, the Golden Fleece that had special powers and could bring people back to life.'

'Yeah,' Kian repeated, not really sure what he was supposed to say.

The priest smiled. 'I wonder if this coat has such powers?' Then he was gone, walking through a door, his footsteps not making a sound.

Grace and Kian stared at each other. This couldn't be a coincidence. It had to mean something. They both grinned at the same time.

Mo was talking in a low voice to Bailey. But he stopped when he sensed his friends standing next to him.

'What's that?' Mo asked.

'It's a boar's coat,' Kian replied. Grace had carried it up the aisle of the church.

'The priest said it reminded him of the Golden Fleece,' she said.

Mo steadied himself on the corner of the table. 'The one that...'

'The one that can bring things back to life,' Grace smiled.

'Do you mean...?' Mo started.

'It's worth a try,' Kian said. 'But it's up to you.'

Mo nodded. 'I'll try anything,' he smiled sadly.

Mo pulled the rest of the blanket away from Bailey's body. Parts of him were still soggy from the canal. He had that wet dog smell.

Grace hesitated.

'Go on,' Mo said. 'Do it.'

Grace put the boar's coat on Bailey.

All three children watched Bailey's face. His eyes and mouth. To see if anything changed.

It didn't.

The dog was still dead.

Mo sighed. 'It was worth a try,' he said. 'What happened to the priest?'

The three children glanced to look down the aisle of the church to see if they could spot the old man, turning their back on Bailey for a moment.

The rest of the church was silent. No priest. It was as if he had never been there.

As they looked for the priest, Mo felt Kian's hand nudging him.

'What?' he said to his friend, irritated.

Kian turned to face him, both hands in his pockets.

Mo felt the nudge again.

He turned, then called out, Bailey's name echoing off the walls and ceiling of the church.

Then a bark. A loud rough familiar beautiful magnificent bark.

'Oh my goodness!' Grace cried. 'It worked!'

'And look!' Kian gasped. 'The piece of mask. It's there! Under Bailey!'

Mo, Grace and Kian walked out into the graveyard, Bailey bouncing along next to Mo. The sun was shining through the leaves of the churchyard trees, forming spectacular patterns on the ground, lighting up flowers coloured blue and white and yellow.

As they left the churchyard, the bells began to peal again, a beautiful sound of ringing echoing round Rothwell and across the hills into Leeds.

Grace woke up the next morning. The only thing she had dreamed of was of her eating a packet of Jelly Tots. Small multi-coloured jelly sweets coated in sugar. She was pretty sure that was nothing to do with the bloodied man and hoped that one of the boys had had a better dream than she'd had.

Chapter 7

In the morning, Grace asked Mo and Kian if they'd had dreams.

Neither of them had.

'Didn't you?' Mo questioned her in a quiet voice. He felt tired after all the emotion of Bailey dying, then coming back to life the day before.

Grace nodded. 'I did have a dream. About Jelly Tots. You know? Those sweets.'

'What sort of a clue is that?' Kian said, confused.

'Let's find out,' Mo insisted. 'It's all we've got. We'll go and buy a packet.'

They went to Tesco and bought a bag. Grace thought it felt lighter than it should be. When they opened it, she realised why. The pack was full of the sugar that usually coats the sweets, but there were no actual Jelly Tots. Just a piece of crumpled paper.

She opened the piece of paper up to find writing on it.

'What does it say?' Kian asked.

Grace read:

Please help. I am a prisoner in my own factory.
A man with strange scars and injured hands
is keeping me captive.

*Dr B Boffey,
Inventor of Jelly Tots
Horsforth, Leeds.*

The children caught the train to Horsforth. They walked down the lovely high street, past the Brownlee Arms, Costa Coffee and Horsforth Featherbank Primary School to the factory Grace had found out about on her iPhone. Bailey liked the smells of the street. He could smell that a cat and fox had been along the road this morning. And he liked the smell of coffee from Costa too.

Bailey felt good to be alive.

The factory was an old building with high windows that only the children could see through.

'Look at that weird machine,' Mo said. 'It's going round and round and round and...'

Bailey was unable to see anything, let alone the machine Mo was describing. And he didn't like that. Nor did he like the way Mo and his friends had gone quiet and were walking like sheep into **the factory building...**

What was going on?

He pricked up his ears. When he had been a police dog he could sense danger before he saw or smelt it. And he felt a bit like that now.

The doors to the factory were wide open.

There were dozens of children and two adults operating machines, heaps of sweets and wrappers being processed. It smelt too sugary to Bailey. And there was another smell too, overwhelmed by the sugar. Bailey sniffed hard to work out what it was.

Bailey studied the children. Was it them who smelled? And why, he wondered, were they all quiet, like they were in a trance, just making sweets? And why was Mo like that too? And Grace? And Kian?

One of the adults came over to the three newcomers. A man. He was holding a gigantic bowl of Jelly Tots, offering them to the children. Mo, Grace and Kian went to take the sweets just as the factory doors slammed shut, making a booming sound that echoed round the building.

And the smell – not the sugary one, the other smell – was stronger now.

Bailey felt himself growl, the hairs on his back go up.

Danger.

Mo was in danger.

Bailey had to do something. Every muscle in his body was tensed. That smell. It was poison! **He'd been trained to smell poison like that when he was a police dog.**

Bailey turned and leapt at the bowl of sweets. The bowl flew out of the man's hands. And then, when the sweets hit the floor, they fizzed suddenly, turning into liquid.

What was this? Bailey couldn't understand.

Some of the liquid spilled onto the man with the bowl. He tried to brush the liquid away, but Bailey could see it was doing weird things to his skin. Was his hand dissolving? Were those scars forming on his face? He was the Bloodied Man. He was struggling on the floor. His legs seemed to be disappearing too, as he lay in the pool of water.

Grace, Mo and Kian smiled. The other children in the factory – who seemed to be slaves – were no longer operating the machines. They were sitting in small groups, dazed, as if they had just woken from a long sleep. But the machines were still grinding on, making sweets, pouring them into trucks waiting at the far side of the factory.

And the Bloodied Man had disappeared before their eyes. Once again.

They *thought* that they had saved the day. But they had not.

Bailey, for one, could still sense danger. That smell of poison remained. And that meant the danger was not over.

And, now, the other adult who had been in the factory was shuffling over to them, a piece of rope still attached to his legs. He looked anxious. He glanced at the machines.

‘Children,’ he said. ‘I still need your help. I am Dr Boffey. I sent you the letter. The machines. They’re still working. That dreadful man who captured us all has poisoned the sweets. They’re about to be delivered to thousands of children in Leeds for free. It’s a catastrophe.’

‘How?’ Grace asked.

‘You need to go to the end of the conveyor belt and pull the lever there,’ Dr Boffey said.

Bailey wagged his tail.

Mo, Kian and Grace did not need telling twice. They were running already, Kian and Mo down the sides of the conveyor belt. But that was too slow. And Grace could see it. So she jumped up onto the conveyor belt, among the Jelly Tots, struggling to keep her feet, realising there was a vat of molten jelly beneath her. **If she fell...**

But Grace she did not have time to worry about falling. She ran. And ran hard! Stumbling twice and then – a final slip – as she saw the lever she had to pull to stop thousands of Leeds children being poisoned.

Her knee hit the conveyor belt.

Her leg *dangled* over the edge, the heat of the molten jelly burning through her shoe.

Then her hand on the lever. She pulled it, stopped the conveyor belt and lifted herself to safety.

Just before the first sweets were about to fall into the waiting trucks and head out into the city.

‘Thank you,’ Dr Boffey said. ‘You have saved me. And you have saved countless children in Leeds from this dreadful man.’

Grace, Mo and Kian smiled as the inventor of Jelly Tots patted Bailey’s head.

‘We read your note,’ Mo said. ‘We had to come and see if we could help. We’re on a sort of mission against...’ Mo looked in the direction of where the Bloodied Man had stood.

‘Yes,’ Grace said, taking the mask out of her rucksack. ‘And every time we stop him, we find a piece of this mask. It’s nearly complete.’

Dr Boffey nodded.

'Well, good luck,' he said. 'And thank you again.'

They parted at the doors to the factory, the children walking back through the Horsforth sunshine.

'Have you still got the note from Dr Boffey?' Kian asked Mo.

Mo nodded and put his hand in his pocket. Then he stared back at his two friends.

'What?' Grace asked.

Mo pulled something from out of his pocket. But it was not the note from Dr Boffey. It was blue, yellow, white and black.

'The mask!' Grace gasped excitedly.

Mo attached the latest piece to the whole mask. It glowed brightly.

'It's nearly complete,' Kian said.

'It is,' Mo agreed. **'Maybe tomorrow we'll have it all?'**

'Then what?' Mo wondered.

Kian had the dream the next night. He was in the middle of the road somewhere in Leeds. But there were no cars. There were just hundreds, maybe thousands, of people coming towards him, dancing and singing, dressed in beautiful extravagant clothes, bright colours. Stalls in the parks. The smell of spicy food cooking. And at the front, a mask. A great blue and white and yellow mask.

Kian woke up knowing that today had to be the day they finally stopped the Bloodied Man. **That they couldn't just keep drenching him in water. They had to make it permanent.**

Chapter 8

Kian, Mohammed and Grace caught the bus from Leeds up to Temple Newsam for the second time that week.

At first they intended to go to Potternewton Park because Kian had told Grace and Mo his dream about people dancing down the street in colourful masks.

Then Kian said one more thing. 'I saw the pearl necklace too.'

'What?' Grace asked.

'I saw the Blue Lady's pearls as well,' Kian went on. 'And I think it means something.'

Silence.

Confusion.

Indecision.

Mo looked at his watch. 'We've got time before the carnival starts. I think we go back to Mary Ingram's house, then on to Potternewton Park.'

It was strange returning. The house was still as big and beautiful, but there were clouds gathering over the city now. Dark menacing clouds. The kind you get before a storm.

Inside the house, they made straight for Mary Ingram's bed chamber. It looked just the same as it had a week ago. The same books on the bookcase. The same four-poster-bed. The same dusty air.

'That's new.' Mohammed pointed at a framed oil painting on the bedroom wall. The frame was made of wood, inlaid with gold and jewels.

The children huddled round the picture. Bailey too. They gulped in unison. The picture was of a boy aged about the same age as them. And there was no mistaking who he was.

'The Bloodied Man,' Kian gasped. **'When he was a boy.'**

'What's that in the back of the picture frame?' Grace asked, noticing a slip of paper behind the painting.

She picked at the back of the picture frame and took it out.

'Another message?' Kian questioned.

Grace read:

The place you have to trace

Is the room

With the blue lady's tomb.

'Tomb?' Mo asked. 'Where's that?'

No reply. The three children stared at each other in awe, then at Bailey who was facing down into the secret corridor the children had found the week before, pulling at his lead.

*I know where the tomb is, Bailey thought. **Let's hope they get the hint and follow me.***

'I think Bailey knows,' Mo said. 'Let's follow him.'

Bailey wagged his tail and led the way.

Down the stone steps. Underground. And – just before they reached the outside and the lake where they had first met the Blue Lady – another door. It seemed to be made of stone.

Grace pushed it hard. It moved, making a grinding sound. She pushed again. And it swung slowly open, an ill-lit stone chamber revealed to them all.

There were two things in the chamber. A stone coffin. Cold to the touch. Slightly damp. And, on the coffin, a piece of blue, yellow and white mask.

'The last piece,' Kian grinned.

Grace took the rest of the mask out of her rucksack and placed the last piece into it, completing it.

Nothing happened.

No glow. No sparks. No great revelation.

But then a voice. Behind them.

The three children swung round. The Blue Lady, Mary Ingram, floated there. Shimmering. The light around her pulsing and fading. Her string of pearls dangling in her hand, limp at her side.

'That is not the mask you and my son pursue,' Lady Mary said. 'There is another.'

'Your son?' Grace exclaimed.

'Yes. My son. My poor troubled lonely miserable son. He who you call the Bloodied Man. But there is no time for me to tell you about that, my sweet ones. There are two things you must know. And know now. Will you hear me?'

'Yes,' the three children said at once.

'I had a son,' Lady Mary announced. 'He was young. His father was a dreadful man. A thief. A bully. An evil man. He made my son miserable. He hurt his face. You've seen his face, my beloved ones?'

The trio nodded.

'When my husband died, I hoped my son would be released from his father's dark power. But he seemed to become more like his father than less like him. And now he stalks the streets of our city, seeking revenge on the children of Leeds.'

'That's terrible. But...' Kian said, hesitating as he spoke to the ghost. **'... but... what was the second thing you wanted to tell us.'**

At that moment Lady Ingram's blue light turned cold, like a door to the winter had just been opened and a draught sweeping in.

'That you must go now. To the Leeds Carnival. He has plans to spoil it for everyone. And spoil it so that it can never happen again. But, please, give this to my sweet one **and only boy.'**

As the Blue Lady faded away, the pearl necklace fell with a gentle rattle that echoed around the tomb.

'Bring it,' Grace said to her brother.

Kian picked it up.

Out of the tomb. Away from Temple Newsam. Onto a bus into Leeds. Then another bus back up to Sheepscar Junction.

To the Leeds Carnival. That celebration of everything that is good about Leeds, where all its communities come together as one spectacular community of colour and music and singing and joy and fried chicken.

Except it was not like that.

It was grey. No rainbow of colour. No stalls. No hook a duck.

It was utterly silent.

No music. No singing. No steel pans. No laughter.

And no smiles.

It was like looking through death's window © HRSA.

The only person who was not grey was the man sat at the centre of it all. On a chair of bones in the middle of the grass.

The Bloodied Man.

He stared at the children, but didn't move.

Grace could see that he looked exhausted, as if, she hoped, he was tired of his crazed campaign against the city of Leeds. She hid the mask they had put together behind her and decided to take a risk.

'We spoke to your mother,' she said.

'Mother?' the Bloodied Man looked at Grace with dread. His face was still scarred. His hands still raw and bleeding.

Kian held out the pearls. 'She wanted you to have these.'

And then the Bloodied Man's expression changed. His eyes opened wider. Some of the lines around his face seemed to disappear.

'For me?' he whimpered.

'Yes,' Mo said, as Kian handed him the pearls.

'She told us about you and your father,' Grace said. 'We'd rather help you than fight you.'

The Bloodied Man gripped the pearls. His hand was no longer bleeding. It was as if he was beginning to heal.

But then he shook his head.

'The mask behind your back,' he said. 'That is a decoy to confuse people. It is not the dangerous one. My father's real mask is in a museum in Morley. He put it there. If you want this carnival to have colour, if you want this carnival to happen again, you need to go to Morley and retrieve it.'

The children frowned. When would this nightmare end? And could they really trust the Bloodied Man after all that he had done to them...?

Chapter 9

Kian, Grace and Mo thought they'd – at last – beaten the horrific Bloodied Man when they had confronted him at Leeds Carnival. They thought they had beaten him, even though he had given them one last problem to deal with.

A final quest.

They had to travel to Morley to find the mask that he said was causing all this chaos in Leeds.

But the children did not know they had made an error. An error that would prove to be fatal...

It was a red-hot day. A blisteringly exhausting hot day.

Mo led Grace, Kian and Bailey under the dark arches beneath Leeds railway station. There it was cool. The shade and the nearby river chilling the air.

'I wish it could be this cool all the way to Morley,' Grace moaned.

'It can,' Mo replied, glancing at Bailey who was panting heavily in the June heat.

'How?' Kian asked.

'Follow me,' Mo grinned.

He led them deeper under the dark arches, through a doorway and down some stairs. The sound of water dripping echoed off the walls, as the three children were faced with a long dark tunnel.

'What is this place, Mo?' Grace asked.

'Tunnels,' Mo explained. 'My mum told me about them. The police use them to move around the city and take criminals by surprise. The tunnels run under loads of places in Leeds. They were built during the Second World War in case the city **was invaded.**'

The three children walked for an hour, using the torches on their phones to light the way.

The gloomy tunnels were desolate. Except for water trickling down the walls, puddles, small underground streams. At one point – when they were passing underneath Elland Road Stadium – they found a football. Grace kicked it powerfully for Bailey to chase.

'There's a lot of water,' Kian said.

'So?' Grace frowned.

'Well, when there's water, we often meet... you know... the Bloodied Man!'

'But he said...' Grace didn't finish her sentence.

None of them spoke for a few minutes after that. They just walked. Faster. Every now and then looking back into the dark, as if they were worried that someone was coming.

But no one was coming behind them. **That wasn't the problem.**

It was who was waiting for them at the *other end* of the tunnel that would be the problem.

The tunnel came out at Morley Train station, just to the edge of the steep steps you had to walk up to reach the platforms.

From there, the three children and one dog walked up Ackroyd Street towards town. And – off Commercial Street – hidden behind the back of one of the shops, they found what they were looking for on a small sign:

THE MORLEY MUSEUM OF DREAMS

'Of dreams?' Grace murmured, opening the heavy stone door. 'I just thought it was a normal museum.'

Kian and Mo smiled. A Museum of Dreams? That sounded quite interesting. **They didn't** think for a moment about why the door was made of stone. When were doors ever made of stone?

Grace let the others pass, then released the door. The ear-splitting slam was followed by a grinding sound.

The children then entered the museum through a low door.

The Morley Museum of Dreams was peculiar. On one side, there was colour and bright lights, making the children feel happy and relaxed. On the other it was dark and gloomy, shadows obscuring shapes and momentary glints that could have been eyes reflecting light back at them from the darkness.

Kian could even feel himself trembling. He was afraid. Really afraid.

'He's here,' Kian stuttered.

'Who?' Grace and Mo looked around them, searching the shadows of the dark side of the museum.

'The Bloodied Man,' Kian said. 'He tricked us. I can just tell that he's here.'

Then a click.

A door opened in a wall.

And there he stood surreptitiously.

There was no mistaking him because of the marks on his face. Kian was right: it was him. He was wearing a mask, like a warrior's. **And** – by his side – there was a sword. A long silver sword that looked heavy and sharp enough to slice through them all at once.

'Welcome,' he said.

None of the children replied.

'Welcome to my Museum of Dreams. You came. I'm so pleased, I could sing.' But the Bloodied Man did not sing: instead, he burst into peals of deep and terrifying laughter. Tears streamed down his face. Blood dripped from his bitten fingernails down the blade of his sword.

Still the children did not speak. They were waiting to see what madness this man was planning next.

'In my Museum of Dreams I am omnipotent,' the Bloodied Man declared. 'Do you know what that means?'

'All powerful,' Mo said.

'That's right. Well done. I have all the power. In here, my dreams can become real. I can make anything come true that I wish for. And that means you are mine now. There is no way out. **I have won.'**

Kian noticed his sister had closed her eyes. That her face was screwed up. Why was she doing that? He looked at Mo. Then back at his sister. That was when he felt it in his hand. Cold. Metal. Heavy. He looked down. He had a sword. All three of them had swords.

The Bloodied Man stepped back. He looked surprised.

'It looks like our dreams come true here, too,' Kian smiled, stepping forward.

The fight began. A sword fight. All three children advancing as one, striking at the Bloodied Man with all the strength they could muster, Bailey snapping at his legs.

Mo could see the panic in the man's face. He parried attacks, dodged sword strokes, always on the defensive, never able to raise his sword and attack them.

It was over quickly. Three against one. It was only in story books where one swordsman could hold off three others. But this was no story. It was real. Real and terrifying.

The Bloodied man looked up from the floor. The children had expected him to be angry. Even afraid. But he was still smiling.

'You know,' he said. 'That you will never get out of here alive.'

'Really?' Grace put the blade of her sword across his neck.

He smiled again. 'Yes, really. When that door slammed behind you it was like you hammered nails into your own coffin. **Except it wasn't a wooden coffin and there are no nails. This is a tomb. A stone tomb. And you are here with me forever.'**

Kian looked around him. He could see no doors or windows. Only darkness. And cold.

'How?' Mo coughed suddenly.

'You are in my dream now. And I am dead already, so you cannot kill me. Look.'

The Bloodied Man swept his hand in front of him and they were surrounded by jungle, all noises of birds calling and rustling in the undergrowth. Waving his hand again, they were in the desert. Heat, thirst and brightness,

'Stay with me and I'll be kind to you,' the Bloodied Man said. **'Keep me company.'**

'Why should we?' Grace snapped aggressively.

'I'll do you a deal,' the Bloodied Man sighed. **'Sacrifice yourself or sacrifice your city. If you stay here with me, willingly, then I will leave the rest of the city be. I'll stop my vendetta against the children of Leeds.'**

'No,' Kian said. **'We could never trust you again. How would we know Leeds was safe?'**

The Bloodied Man nodded. **'I'll let you go there.'**

'You just said we couldn't go,' Mo scowled.

'Definitely not as people. I won't let you go as people. Only after you die. Then you can go there as dreams – or ghosts – and see it for yourself. You can even talk to people. Warn them to watch out for me. Sometimes.'

Kian, Grace and Mo looked at each other.

They knew how they would reply.

They'd say yes. They'd pretend to agree.

Then they'd wait for their chance to escape. There was no way they were going to die here, no way the only chance they would be able to see their city again was as ghosts warning other children how to stay safe...