

Devilish rain hurtled from the gloomy morning sky and exploded into tiny, watery fragments on the grimy window. Each watery explosion was an echo of the last terrifying bombing raid. Robert's emerald eyes stared forlornly outside. Across his exhausted face, salty rivers had been smeared in an attempt to stop his uncontrollable sobbing. His father's words haunted his thoughts as he remembered last night like it was just seconds ago. . .

"You must leave," his father said gruffly. "First thing tomorrow. It ain't safe 'ere no more."

"But father please. . . I don't want to leave. . . don't make me. . ." Robert sobbed between gulps of air as he tried to swallow back the tears. Even in the flickering candle light of their small, untidy kitchen, Robert could tell there was no changing his father's mind.

"Robert? Are you ready?" Suddenly, his father's booming voice jolted him back from his thoughts. When he turned around, he saw his father stood with a filthy suitcase by the open doorway. Dragging his feet, he followed his father out the house and down the street: every step took him further from the only home he had ever known. When they reached the train station, it was difficult to push through the swarm of children waving their parents goodbye. Excited children sprang onto the train clutching ill-fitting gas masks with grins like Cheshire cats because they foolishly believed they were going on holiday: Robert knew better. Luckily, Robert followed his formidable father through the crowds. Dense smoke filled his nostrils and burned his lungs each time he inhaled. Before Robert knew it, his father had helped him onto the train.

Inside the carriage, grubby children in brown jackets were packed like sardines. Robert searched for a place to lean because there were no empty seats. He wasn't sure if it was the intense smell of tea or the fear of leaving his family behind but his head spun. There was a loud whistle from somewhere and he felt the rusting engine lurch forward as it began to pull away. Raising himself onto his tiptoes, Robert tried to catch a fleeting glimpse of his father but it was helpless.

For what seemed like an eternity, the train chugged along. To begin with, the towering blocks of concrete that populated London was all anyone could see out the dirt-smeared windows. After a while, the grey melted into a jade haze of fields. Robert couldn't remember ever seeing so much green before. One little girl, who had been fortunate enough to sit near a window, yelled that she saw an enormous dog in a field but Robert was sure it was just a cow. Screech! Brakes echoed around him as the train crawled into a tired looking village train station. A

weathered, wrinkly woman battled to open the train door before shouting, "Everyone off!" Robert felt her surprisingly strong hand shove him into an orderly line. In the distance, he could see golden fields of wheat dancing in the afternoon breeze and cotton-candy sheep frolicking nearby. Deep inside his chest, Robert could feel his heart hammering a drum beat nervously against his ribcage in anticipation of meeting his new family. Before long, he felt a warm hand on his shoulder and a quiet voice behind him mutter, "Are you Robert?" Slowly, Robert began to turn...