

looked more grandfather than father.

I narrowed my eyes, deciding not to trust him. A man so old who had lured my mother away from her family to ride horses? What respectable gentleman would behave in such a manner?

William dug deep into his waistcoat pocket. "Here." He brought out a small paper bag. "For you boys."

I took the bag and peered inside. "George!" I held it out to him. He poked his nose inside and sniffed but stayed silent. With his cough, it hurt him to speak much. Poor George. Even though he was the elder, I usually spoke for both of us.

"What are these?" I asked, wrinkling my nose.

"Sweets," William said. "These ones are called . . . 'unclaimed babies', I believe." He chuckled.

What a grim name. Was he teasing us? I picked one out and rolled the soft, powder-dusted figure between my fingers, before tentatively putting it into my mouth. George did the same. As we chewed through the sweetness, William watched us, smiling and smiling. He put his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets and leaned back.

Did he think we were won over so easily?

How dare he go off on circus adventures, leaving us to struggle? We could barely afford coal. The fact that we were mixed race with no man around the house to