

ALADDIN

***Rogue... naïve scoundrel... lazy wretch** – just some of the names I've been branded with all my life. In fact, my name is Aladdin and, although some of these attributes may be true, the truth of the matter is that I am bored. I'm bored of the monotony of my life. I'm bored of always being seen as a disappointment. You know what? I'm just simply bored of being bored. So the day the Moor entered the bazaar, I knew my life would never be the same again.*



I spotted him in a nearby coffee shop, twisting his beard into a point and listening to everything that was going on. His pencil-thin moustache twitched with excitement when he heard my name. I should have noticed the way his ears pricked up, his sharp eyes glittered, and his long fingers curled like claws – but I didn't.

*"Aladdin, bring me the lamp and the world is ours!"
My instructions were clear.*

Diving into the hole like a terrier, I felt my way along the passage and prised open the cast iron door. I could hardly breathe for astonishment; a garden of wonders stood before me, luring me in. In the distance, I saw the lamp: the key to owning the world. My fingers trembled in anticipation as I reached for it; my life was about to change.

As I approached the mouth of the cave, my mother's words echoed once more in my mind: Naïve scoundrel! Staring into the moor's devilish eyes, I could see that he now thought the same. Discoloured greed grew sinisterly across his face. That's when I knew it was a trap.

Refusing to hand over the lamp sealed my fate: the Moor trapped me in the cave. I beat and beat at the stone above me, screaming and shouting to be let out. The darkness got right into my eyes and the earth absorbed my shouts like water. Sobbing with fear, the reality of my situation struck me – I had been buried alive.

Jamie Thomas