

6th October 1869

Dearest Diary,

I woke up to the rain trickling on my muddy windows. The glass panes are cracked making them serve me with shallow cuts. My legs and arms ache from the constant whipping and blisters. Yesterday, I got lucky to see my dearest parents for 30 minutes. Although it is a very short time, I am grateful to see them.

Like all the other children, I woke up due to Master Thomas' commands for us to get to work. Breakfast was... Predictable... gruel again. At least I won't have my stomach screaming all day. We have gruel 7 days a week, at this point most of us are used to it due to how many times we eat it. After breakfast, we were ordered to get to the mines. Usually we put a canary down there to make sure it was safe. If it died, it was not safe. Unfortunately, my task for today is to shift the heavy coal carts. I have to make sure I do my job properly because Master Thomas is watching me menacingly. Like always, whip in hand ready to use it. After hours of unbearable pain, it's lunchtime! I find myself devouring a ham sandwich covered in coal dust, it gets everywhere! There is no point in trying to avoid it because it is impossible.

Suddenly, disaster struck. A large, deafening crash could be heard from the south. Everyone knew what this meant... A cave-in!

Everyone rushed towards the exit while trying to cover their ears from the blood-curling screams of young children being crushed by the unbearable weight of the boulders crashing down. Luckily, most of us were far enough to make it out of the mines alive.

At last, work is over. I felt like I was going to collapse. I ran towards my stiff bed covering myself in the wet towel acting as a blanket. My hands are trembling due to the amount of pain and exhaustion I went through in the coal mines. I can finally sense the fresh air around my cold and trembling body. Now I wish to be released from this exhausting pain and suffering.

- Joanna