







JOSEPH WAS LOST.

Somewhere far away the headlights of a car swept through the snowy night. He stopped to rest beneath a low passageway off an ancient cobblestone street. A single rusting streetlamp flickered nearby. He put down his heavy suitcase, dried off his glasses, and coughed. He was shocked he'd made it all the way to London without being caught. But then again, the headmaster at St. Anthony's was probably relieved he was gone.

Joseph leaned against the wall and pulled out the map he and Blink had made. They'd marked his uncle Albert's house at 18 Folgate Street with a big red X, as if they were looking for treasure. All Joseph knew about his uncle were a few overheard words from his mother through the years and the line in her address book: *A. Nightingale*, as if they were related to a bird. He had no idea what his uncle would say if he showed up unexpectedly at his house. He prayed A. Nightingale was a generous man, more generous than Joseph's parents, anyway, and he'd let Joseph stay for a few days and help him figure out how to track down Blink.

Joseph had forgotten his gloves on the train, and his hands were shaking. He couldn't make sense of the map at all.

If only he had run away with Blink when he'd had the chance, then he wouldn't be standing here alone and freezing. The hazy blue light made Joseph think of the nights the two of them would sneak off to some empty room at school, light a candle, and read out loud to each other from one of Blink's books. They'd quickly get caught up in the adventures of characters with names like Pip and Mowgli and Prince Caspian.

It was while reading *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson that they first got the idea to run away together. Joseph knew it was just a game, but it was fun to imagine themselves on pirate ships or alone on desert islands. Soon their stories grew more complex. They dreamed of finding abandoned mansions in the woods and vanishing into secret chambers in ancient castles. Once, Joseph had mentioned he had an uncle in London he'd never met, and Blink insisted he get the address, just in case they were ever to really run away. Joseph had laughed, but as a surprise for Blink, he'd snuck into his mother's room during a visit home and copied down his uncle's address, which he proudly handed over when he returned to school.