

VICTORIA'S CHILDREN OF THE DARK tells the story of Queen Victoria's invisible subjects – women and children who laboured beneath her 'green and pleasant land' harvesting the coal to fuel the furnaces of the industrial revolution. Following the real fortunes of seven-year-old Joey Burkinshaw and his family, Alan Gallop recreates the events surrounding the 1838 Husker Pit disaster at Silkstone, Yorkshire – a tragedy which helped lead to better working conditions for miners.

Chained to carts and toiling half-naked for eighteen-hour shifts in near darkness, children as young as four were employed by mine owners. Yet it was not until the catastrophe at Silkstone when twenty-six children were drowned in a mineshaft that Victoria and her subjects realised that many Britons were existing in virtual slavery. This powerful and dramatic account exposes the real lives and working conditions of nineteenth-century miners. A gripping human story, *Victoria's Children of the Dark* brings history, particularly the history of childhood, vividly to life.

ALAN GALLOP is an author, journalist and teacher of specialist writing courses. He has links with South Yorkshire, close to Silkstone and Barnsley, where many of his relatives worked in the mines until their closure in the 1980s. His books include *Buffalo Bill's British Wild West* and *Subsmash* for The History Press.



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