

**YEAR 6 – WEEK 5 – ENGLISH –
CHAPTER 10 FOR ‘COMING TO
ENGLAND’**

Chapter Ten

Land of Hope and Glory



I skipped out of Southampton Docks with my feet not quite touching the ground. My head felt light with excitement. As I dodged out of the way of the throngs of people I began to tell my mother all the news, my brothers and sister also talking at the same time. Marmie looked so happy and smiling, more beautiful than I remembered her. She told us Cynthia and Junior were waiting for us with a friend in London, Dardie was at work and he was not allowed to take time off from the garage where he worked as a mechanic during the day.

Nothing she said quite sank in, I was too elated. I hardly noticed anything around me. The first thing that registered, though, was the sight and sound of a grey metal train winding its way towards me. It travelled on a maze of lines that criss-crossed each other. As it came closer Marmie had to raise her voice



Land of Hope and Glory

pounce again. A loud distorted voice suddenly spoke and the sound nearly made me jump out of my skin. It was the announcer telling us that the train would soon be leaving for Waterloo.

We climbed onto the train excitedly and sat on the cushioned seats. Marmie told us we didn't have to clutch on to our luggage and she put our bags up on the racks provided. I felt like a princess, travelling in style. We all rushed over to the window as the train pulled out of the terminal building. As it started to build up speed, the noise got louder and louder and we could hardly hear ourselves speak so I just gazed out of the window. All four of us had fought to get to the window seat but Marmie said we could each sit by a window in the small carriage. I gazed out breathlessly and tried to take in all the new sights.

The grass was so green, and so many different shades. The cows and the sheep looked like toys in the open fields. Some of the trees looked like the ones I had seen on Christmas cards. I felt as if I was in heaven. I looked over at Marmie, rushed to her and hugged her. I was so happy I could have cried.

The journey took nearly two hours and as we

to tell us to keep away from the edge. The engine roared and hissed as it came to a standstill. Heavy metal doors were opened and people clambered out onto the platform. This train was so unlike the smaller wooden ones back in Trinidad that I almost didn't recognize it as one. It stood there hissing and panting on its tracks, resting like an animal getting ready to



neared London the scenery changed dramatically. Rows and rows of red brick buildings with black slate roofs and smoking chimneys dominated the skyline. I had never imagined anything quite like this. The houses had such a cold, lifeless look about them, not like the colourful, attractive ones I had left behind. But the sight of Waterloo station, standing there palatial and majestic with its numbered platforms stretching into the distance, convinced me that I was truly in England, the land I had loved from afar.

We finally stopped and carefully climbed down

from the high carriage. I thought I would fall down the gap between the platform and the train and was relieved to feel solid ground beneath my feet. We gathered up our luggage and as we passed through the ticket barrier and wandered into the cathedral-like booking hall crowds of people started to swarm around us. They came from everywhere, carrying briefcases and umbrellas, wearing bowler hats, marching like ants, briskly and purposefully. Marmie told us we were in 'the rush hour' and to stay close to



her as we made our way down a moving staircase. At first I thought I was experiencing another earthquake but Marmie reassured us that it was safe. Still I hung on tightly as the escalator took us deep underground to another kind of train. I was beginning to feel a little bewildered. It was all becoming too much to take in as we dodged the oncoming passengers along the narrow winding corridors. When we got to the platform we had to wait for a while for the train to arrive. Then all of a sudden out of the dark tunnel shot a train, as quick as an arrow. I jumped and panicked a little because the noise was so frightening and deafening.

I began to feel drugged on a cocktail of different sounds. New sounds that my head and body would have to get used to. Only my excitement kept me going. I had only been in England for six hours but I had experienced more than I thought imaginable.

Here I was travelling deep under the ground on a fast-moving train with automatic closing doors which made it feel as if I was travelling in space. None of us spoke but our eyes were open wide with amazement. Eventually we got to our stop. Marmie told us it was

Turnham Green station. I saw it written up on the wall in big bold letters surrounded by the round blue, white and red symbol of the Underground. As we came out of the station the sunlight dazzled my eyes and the noise of the rush-hour traffic made me freeze like a scared rabbit.

My new world seemed like a fast-moving jungle as Marmie led the way home and we all trailed along behind her on the hard concrete pavements. It was only safe place to be, away from the cars, heavy lorries and big red double-decker buses that sped along the wide roads. I sometimes had to run to keep up with Marmie because I had stopped to marvel at a shop window. I was also fascinated by the red pillar boxes that sat regally on some of the pavements and by the tall red boxes with glass windows and telephones inside. In Trinidad you had to go to the post office to post a letter or use the telephone – you couldn't do it anywhere and everywhere. England was certainly different, perhaps her streets were paved with gold, although I hadn't seen any yet!

I soon began to notice people staring at us. I thought it was because we were wearing brightly

coloured clothes, our very best clothes. They all had on such dull, drab colours: black, navy and grey, as if they were going to a funeral. What I didn't realize was that staring was something I was going to have to get used to.

At last we turned into the road which was to be our home for the next month: 1 Mayfield Avenue, a two-storey semi-detached red brick house with a brown door. I felt nervous and anxious as Marmie opened the door with her key. She led us up the narrow staircase and along a landing. Then she unlocked another door. As she opened it she said, 'Welcome to your new home.' I slowly crept into the dark, dingy room and looked around. I took in the contents of the room: a double bed, table, couch, some chairs, cupboards and a wardrobe. Was this it? Surely this couldn't be what we had travelled thousands of miles for. Was I to start my new life living in this cluttered room? I felt a swell of disappointment rising inside. The whole day had left me emotionally drained and to crown it all I had ended up in one room which all of us would have to share. I hadn't considered the fact that it was all my parents could afford, that they

had saved every penny to send for us to be together. All I knew was this was not what I wanted my new home to be. My dreams were shattered and scattered. I suddenly burst into hysterical tears. Sandra started to cry too, then the boys joined in. Nothing Marmie said could comfort us. She started to cry as well and began to prepare a meal. At least that was the one thing that hadn't changed – Marmie and her cooking.

