

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## The Golden Ticket

by Stuart Carruthers

Rosie didn't move a muscle. Afraid to wake her sleeping sister on this bitterly cold December morning, she stared at her freezing breath as it was caught in the meagre light from the street lamp outside. The winter storms showed no signs of retreating and for the residents of Vincent Street, this had been a particular harsh past few months.

The fading embers from last night's fire struggled to heat the living room as Rosie pulled back the curtain that separated the room from the stairs. Tip-toeing across the creaking floorboards, she released the door latch and entered the kitchen. Carefully lifting the box from the back of the cupboard, Rosie smiled nervously as she removed her mother's dress and shoes.

Quickly changing into her new uniform she returned to the living room and the only mirror in the house. She was lost for words as her mother's reflection smiled back at her from the old mirror above the fire place. The church bell signalled it was time to leave and Rosie glanced upwards as the men of the house stirred for the start of the working day.

Gingerly closing the back-yard gate she carefully emerged onto the frozen cobbled street. The chilling wind took her breath away as she buried her hands deep inside her father's coat and walked briskly into town.

The few hardy souls who braved the bitter winds on this dark morning paid no attention to the young girl hidden beneath her father's coat. The distant hum from the factory generators was barely audible as the wind and snow forced Rosie to take shelter in Mr Johnson's shop doorway. Stamping her feet to remove the snow she knew it had been a wise choice not to wear her mother's shoes on the walk across town; they were safely hidden inside her coat.

Aware that she couldn't hang around the streets for long, Rosie adjusted her coat and hat and bravely faced the worsening conditions. Turning the corner into River Lane she saw the tall Victorian houses lying in darkness except for No 89. On the steps that lead up to the imposing red door, Rosie quickly changed her shoes and brushed the snow from her coat. She didn't want Mrs Finnegan to think she hadn't made an effort on such an important occasion.

This was her big day and despite being over three hours early for her appointment, it was important that everything was right, she couldn't afford any mistakes today. As the door opened Rosie stepped into the warm atmosphere.

"You look very smart," remarked Mrs Finnegan as she took Rosie's coat and placed it by the fire to dry off.

"I'm sorry I'm so early Miss, but I couldn't sleep," replied Rosie in that familiar shy tone of hers.

"You can achieve whatever you want from today's meeting Rosie, I have every confidence in you," said a smiling Mrs Finnegan.