



Zinnia's Revolt

by Lila P

Age 10

Year 6, Coleridge Primary School

June 25, 1820

Montego Bay

My name is Zinnia. I am ten. I was named after the flower that can grow in any season but so far none of the seasons have been good. It has been a hot summer. All the crops have just sunk into the earth and disappeared. The sugar canes are starting to go brown and remind me of Ouma's dried up hands. This morning, earlier than usual, master emerged from Rose Hall and came on his horse with two assistants. He had come to make sure we were working. Mama had been sick yesterday so she couldn't be on the field when the master came. I ran ahead of him, as fast as my ten year old legs could go. But by the time I got home, he had begun to hit her with his whip. I could see blood trickling down Mama's body. "Stop!" I screamed. "I will let her go but the Overseer will be back in the afternoon. You better get your boudas back to work," he roared. My heart floods with sadness as I know it's about our skin colour. In the dark I see Mama's beautiful skin with red polka dots of blood.

You would probably want to know how I am writing this. Slaves like us are not allowed to read or write. This was my revolt. You see, when the mistress from Rose Hall orders me to go and sweep the library on Sundays, I steal a book or two, hiding it in the secret pocket of my dress. My favourite books are written in verse by Wordsworth and Coleridge. I love the line "I wandered lonely as a cloud", dreaming of the day I would be set free.

June 6, 2020

London

I attend a Black Lives Matter protest in Crouch End with my mum. It is time to take the knee. A man with a megaphone is asking the crowd to “say his name”. We take the name of George Floyd, the man who was killed by a policeman in Minneapolis, USA. I listen to all the names being called but I want to find names that today we do not know about.

June 7, 2020 15:00/London

10:00/Cambridge, Massachusetts

I have been running a podcast series called Lockdown with Lila because school has been shut due to Coronavirus. Today I am interviewing Professor Vincent Brown. He teaches the history of slavery and I learn a lot about how slaves revolted against their masters when slavery was still legal. After the podcast, he sends me a document via Whatsapp. I open it with excitement but the writing is so faint I can hardly make out what it’s saying. I call up Professor Brown and ask him what it is. He tells me he found it in the Harvard library and thought I would like to see it. It is a diary of a young slave girl but there is no more information. I give her a name.

(500 words)

Apart from my attending the BLM protest and my podcast interview with Professor Brown, all incidents and characters are fictional.