

**TIME TRAVEL
TWINS**

THE
VICTORIAN
REVOLUTION

JOSH LACEY

ILLUSTRATED BY GARRY PARSONS



ANDERSEN PRESS

First published in Great Britain in 2026 by
Andersen Press Limited
6 Coptic Street, London, WC1A 1NH, UK
Vijverlaan 48, 3062 HL Rotterdam, Nederland
www.andersenpress.co.uk

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

The right of Josh Lacey and Garry Parsons to be identified as the author and the illustrator of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

Text copyright © Josh Lacey, 2026
Illustrations copyright © Garry Parsons, 2026

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available.

ISBN 978 1 83913 703 7

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

Collect them all!

The Viking Attack

The Roman Invasion

The Stone Age Clash

The Maya Sacrifice



NATIONAL WRITING COMPETITION

**OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN
BETWEEN THE AGES OF 7-13**

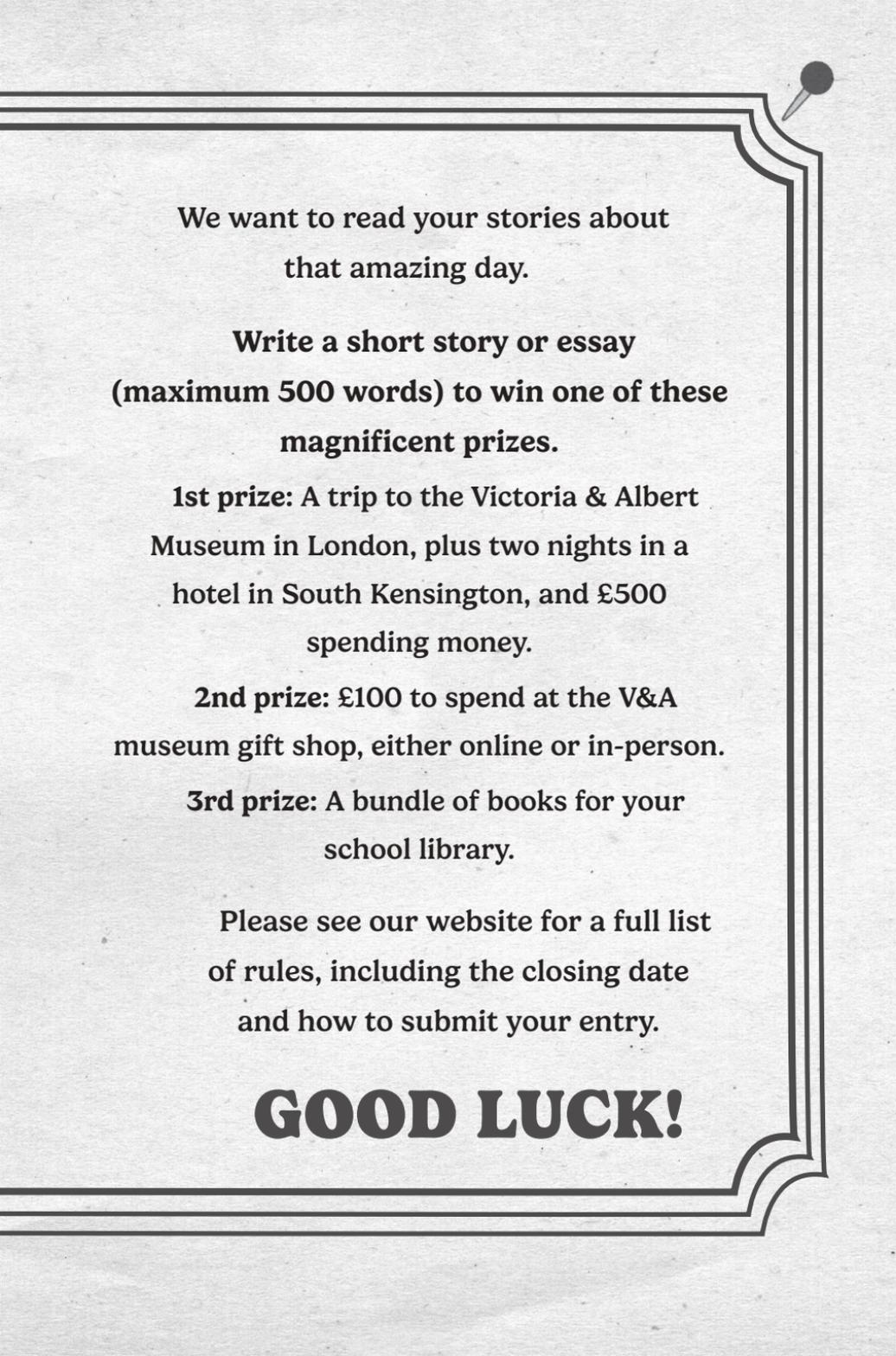
**Imagine you attended the first
day of the Great Exhibition in 1851.**

What did you see?

Who did you meet?

**Write a 500-word story for the chance
to win some amazing prizes!**

**On 1 May 1851, Queen Victoria and Prince
Albert attended the opening ceremony of
the Great Exhibition. Together they walked
around the Crystal Palace, which
contained 100,000 items from Britain
and around the world.**



We want to read your stories about
that amazing day.

**Write a short story or essay
(maximum 500 words) to win one of these
magnificent prizes.**

1st prize: A trip to the Victoria & Albert
Museum in London, plus two nights in a
hotel in South Kensington, and £500
spending money.

2nd prize: £100 to spend at the V&A
museum gift shop, either online or in-person.

3rd prize: A bundle of books for your
school library.

Please see our website for a full list
of rules, including the closing date
and how to submit your entry.

GOOD LUCK!



Scarlett made a decision.

‘I am going to win first prize in the writing competition,’ she said. Then she turned to her brother and said one more word: ‘Sorry.’

‘You don’t have to apologise,’ her twin brother Thomas replied. ‘I wouldn’t want to win it.’

To him, going to a museum sounded more like a punishment than a prize.

‘What about the five hundred pounds?’ Scarlett asked her brother. ‘Don’t you want that?’

‘I wouldn’t mind having five hundred pounds,’ Thomas admitted.

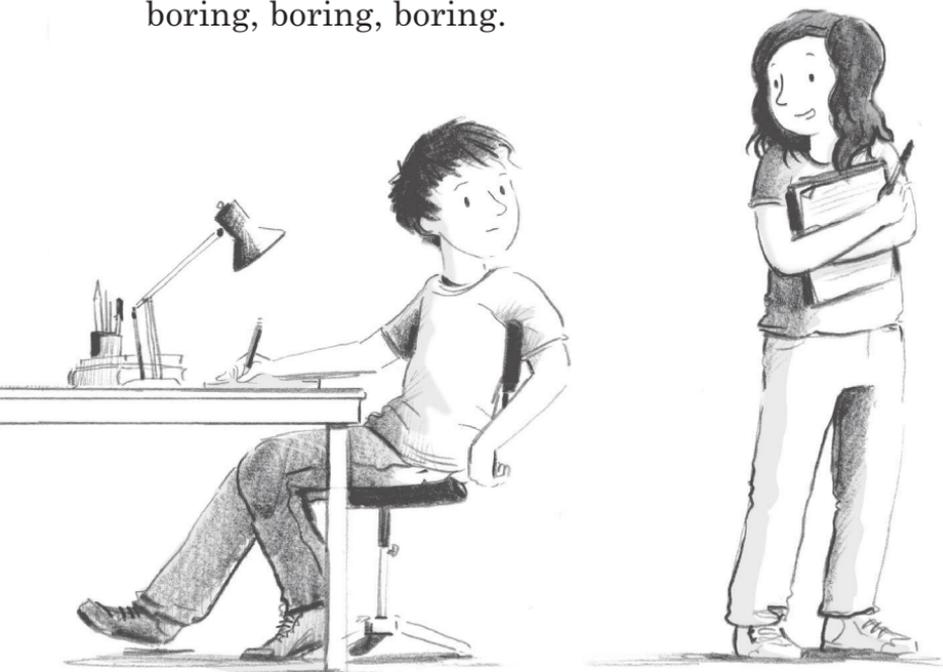
‘If you won, you could just keep the money

– and not bother going to the museum.’

Thomas knew there was no point getting excited. ‘I haven’t got a chance of winning. I’m rubbish at writing stories.’

‘You wrote a great essay about the Vikings,’ Scarlett said. ‘You won a prize for that.’

Thomas nodded. She was right – he had won a prize for best history project when he wrote about the Vikings. But that was different. He loved the Vikings. They were exciting and daring and bloodthirsty. But he didn’t care about the Victorians; they were boring, boring, boring.



However, he also knew that he would have to write a story anyway, because their teacher had set it as their homework. He would get in trouble if he didn't deliver a 500-word story to their teacher, Miss Wellington, first thing on Monday.

It was Saturday morning, and so far he had written exactly seven words:

When I went to the Great Exhibition

Only four hundred and ninety-three to go . . .

To research the subject of the Great Exhibition, and discover what had happened on its opening day, and fill their stories with lots of interesting and unusual historical details, Thomas and Scarlett could have spent the whole day on the computer, looking up information on the internet. Or they could

have visited their local library. Or they could have watched some history documentaries on TV or listened to some podcasts. They could even have taken a trip to London and visited the site of the actual exhibition.

Luckily they didn't have to do any of those things. Instead, they asked their parents if they could go and see their grandfather.

'He's always so busy, I don't know if we should disturb him,' Mum said.

'Don't worry, Mum, he always likes seeing us!' Scarlett replied.

Mum rang Grandad, and discovered that Scarlett was right and he was very keen to see his grandchildren. So they drove to his house, and after Mum and Dad had set off for a healthy walk through the forest, Thomas and Scarlett told Grandad about the competition.

The twins were lucky enough to have a grandfather who was a brilliant inventor.

He lived in the middle of the countryside, miles from anywhere, so he didn't have any nosy neighbours who might wonder what he was doing or ask any difficult questions about the strange noises coming from his workshop. Perhaps his greatest invention was a time machine, which would allow you to travel into the past. Thomas and Scarlett had used it several times before, always returning safely to the present, so Grandad was happy for them to use it again to research their stories for the competition.



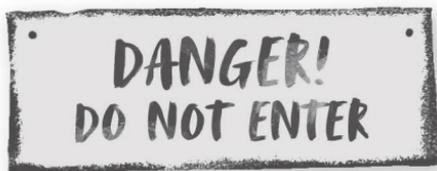
‘I can only think of one problem,’ he said.
‘How will you both win?’

‘She can win,’ Thomas said. ‘I’m not bothered.’

‘Maybe you’ll get second prize,’ Scarlett said.
‘But if I win, and you don’t, I’ll share the five hundred pounds with you.’

Grandad nodded. That sounded to him like a good compromise. ‘Come on, then. Let’s get you ready.’

Opposite his cottage was a large barn with a notice pinned to the front door.



Inside the workshop, alongside his tools, his equipment and his inventions, Grandad stored a large collection of old clothes, amassed over many years, which he kept in several black plastic bags.

While Grandad switched on the time machine, and made all the necessary preparations, Thomas and Scarlett searched through the bags, hunting for costumes which would make them look as if they belonged in 1851.

Scarlett found a beautiful long white dress, decorated with ivory buttons and silk ruffles, and a pair of leather lace-up boots, only slightly scuffed, which fitted her perfectly.

‘What do you think?’ she asked her grandfather.

‘You look extremely elegant,’ Grandad replied.

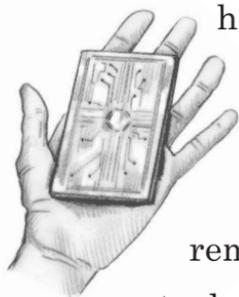
‘What about me?’ Thomas was wearing a pair of ragged brown trousers, an old shirt which was covered with dust and dirt, and a pair of flat black shoes.



‘You’ll fit in perfectly,’ Grandad said. ‘Although you’re probably too clean. Maybe you need to cover yourself with some dirt.’

Thomas didn’t need to be told twice. He darted out of the workshop, knelt by a puddle, and splashed muddy water over his face, hair and hands.

When he came back inside, Grandad handed each of them a device which was the shape and size of a mobile phone. He stared seriously at Thomas. ‘Don’t lose yours,’ he reminded him. ‘You don’t want to get stuck in the past again, do you?’



‘Definitely not,’ Thomas replied. He tucked the device into a pocket and Scarlett did the same with hers. If you pressed the button in the middle of the device, a wormhole would suck you out of the past and bring you back to the place and time where you had started.

‘What about translators?’ Grandad asked.

He had invented gadgets which you placed under your tongue and inside your ears, allowing you to speak and understand every human language.

‘We don’t need them,’ Scarlett replied. ‘We’re not going back very far in time. They’ll speak the same as us.’

Grandad sat down at the controls and turned the main switch from OFF to ON. Immediately the workshop filled with a loud humming noise.

‘What year do you want?’ Grandad shouted at the twins. ‘Eighteen-fifty, is that right?’

‘Eighteen-fifty-one,’ Scarlett corrected him.

‘The first of May,’ Thomas added.

Grandad spun the dial and settled it on the year 1851, then moved it forwards to the first of May.

Another dial allowed Grandad to choose the location, which he set to the centre of London.

The twins clambered up the ladder together. The time machine was shaking backwards and forwards by this point. A screw popped out and dinged on the floor. The air was hot. Lights flashed. The noise was extraordinary.

‘Wait!’ Scarlett called to her brother. ‘Hold my hand.’

On previous occasions when the twins had travelled back in time, they had ended up in separate places, usually because they had entered the machine at different moments, one of them walking through the doorway before the other. Today, they were determined to stick together.

Thomas gripped his sister’s hand in his. They laced their fingers together.

They both glanced back at their grandfather. He nodded. Everything was ready.

Thomas and Scarlett stepped forwards.

Holding hands, they walked through the doorway and into the darkness on the other side.

Neither of the twins really understood how the time machine worked. Grandad had explained it to them several times, using phrases like ‘negative mass’ and ‘fourth dimension’ and ‘spacetime continuum’, but his explanations always made them even more confused.

What they did understand was this: when you stepped through the doorway and entered the time machine, you entered a wormhole, which was a way of connecting two different points in time and space.

The wormhole transplanted them from the present to the past. From Grandad’s workshop to London. From today to the year Eighteen-fifty-one.

The wormhole also turned them upside down and shook them backwards and forwards.

Both of them clung desperately to the other, trying to hold hands, but the wormhole was stronger than them.

They were pulled apart.

They screamed one another's names.

'Thomas!'

'Scarlett!'

Their voices faded, then disappeared, until neither of them could hear anything except the rushing wind in their ears, drowning out all other noise.



