

HISTORICAL FICTION
A story based on true events from the past

WORKED TO THE BONE

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, MILLIONS OF KIDS LIKE YOU WORKED DAY AND NIGHT IN DANGEROUS FACTORIES, MINES, AND MILLS. THIS IS THE STORY OF THREE SUCH KIDS—AND THE BRAVE CRUSADER DETERMINED TO SAVE THEM. **BY MACK LEWIS**

CHARACTERS

Circle the character you will play.

***HISTORIANS 1 & 2 (H1, H2)**

***NARRATORS 1 & 2 (N1, N2)**

LEO: a child laborer

FLOYD: Leo's little brother

***MARTHA:** Leo's sister

OVERSEER

***LEWIS HINE**

CRUSADERS 1 & 2: leaders at the National Child Labor Committee

BOY: another child laborer

BOSS

MA & PA: Leo, Floyd, and Martha's parents

SARA: Lewis Hine's wife

**Starred characters are major roles.*



AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT:
THE POWER OF PICTURES

This is the story of one brave photographer and his crusade to end a terrible injustice in America. As you read, think about how a photograph can change the world.

Don't miss our amazing video on Scope Online.



A mill girl, photographed by Lewis Hine in 1908

SCENE 1

H1: An industrial boom swept across America in the late 1800s. Factories, mills, and canneries had sprung up in cities and towns.

H2: The wages at these factories were low; many kids had to go to work to help support their families. Their earnings put food on the dinner table.

N1: It's 5 a.m. on a spring morning in 1904. Leo and his sister Martha are trudging to work at a textile mill in Georgia. Their little brother, Floyd, skips along behind them.

N2: Leo is 10 years old. Martha is 9. Floyd is 6.

N1: Their parents are unemployed.

LEO: Why are you so giddy?

FLOYD: I'm finally gettin' to work!

LEO: You'll soon wish you were back at school.

FLOYD: Hope I get to be a spinner. Sounds like fun.

MARTHA: Spinners are usually girls, and there ain't nothin' fun about it.

LEO: You need to make sure you work hard. Ma and Pa are countin' on us.

N2: Once they are inside the factory, the overseer immediately puts them to work.

N1: Giant spinning machines wind cotton





Our writer used this photo as his inspiration for the character of Martha. Lewis Hine described her as “an emaciated little elf . . . who works from 6 at night till 6 in the morning.”



This image inspired the characters of Leo and Floyd. A boy working in a mill was half as likely to reach age 20 as a boy outside a mill. Girls working in mills had even worse odds.

thread around hundreds of large **bobbins**.

N2: Leo spots a bobbin filling up. He leaps onto the machine.

N1: The overseer watches him as he quickly takes off the old bobbin, slides a new one in place, and fastens the thread.

OVERSEER: Boy, you ain't workin' fast enough. Step it up!

N2: Down the aisle, a girl is having a coughing fit. Floyd pauses, curious.

LEO: It's her lungs. Get back to work before the overseer catches you nappin'.

H1: The air inside textile factories was heavy with dust and lint. Some kids developed serious or even fatal lung diseases, such as tuberculosis.

FLOYD: How much longer we gotta work?

LEO: You've only been sweepin' a few hours. You have 10 more to go!

SCENE 2

H2: In the early 1900s, it was common to hire children. Factory owners could pay children far less than adults. Plus, kids' smaller

hands often made them more **adept** at handling small parts on machinery.

H1: By 1904, more than 1.5 million children were working in America. They often spent long, grueling hours working in **deplorable** and even dangerous conditions.

H2: The National Child Labor Committee was created in 1904. It vowed to bring an end to child labor. It wasn't concerned with kids doing chores at home, but with what it called "child slavery."

H1: Its most important crusader was a former teacher named Lewis Hine. He traveled the country—covering 50,000 miles in one year—photographing kids at work.

N1: Hine is showing his latest photos to leaders of the NCLC.

LEWIS HINE: I took this at a factory in Pennsylvania. This child had terrible burns on his arms and legs from working around industrial boilers.

CRUSADER 1: Did you have any trouble getting the photograph?

CRUSADER 2: We worry about your safety.

HINE: I've had my scares, but it's worth the risk. Look at the boys in this picture. They were working 12-hour days in a coal mine. Not one of them knew how to read. They were **malnourished** and underweight too.

CRUSADER 1: Your photographs will show the public how miserable it is for these children.

CRUSADER 2: Your photos show what words can't.

HINE: If I could tell their stories in

words, I wouldn't have to lug around a camera.

CRUSADER 1: Be careful out there.

As you know, many would do almost anything to keep child labor hidden. If factory owners lose their cheap labor, their profits will shrink.

SCENE 3

N2: It's 1908. Floyd, now 10, is working in the aisle where Martha, now 13, is a spinner.

N1: Martha walks the long aisle brushing lint from machinery and watching for breaks in the thread.

N2: When a break occurs, she must quickly climb up the machine and tie the ends together. She has to be careful reaching into the spinners.

N1: As Martha climbs the machine to mend a break, Floyd begins coughing.

N2: Martha pauses. Floyd can't seem to stop.

MARTHA: You sick?

FLOYD: Naw. Just wheezy.

N1: Martha reaches into the machine, but she's distracted by Floyd's worrisome cough.

N2: Suddenly, there is a clunk and an explosion of loose thread. Martha screams and falls to the floor, clutching her hand.

N1: An overseer runs over.

OVERSEER: What have you done?

N2: The overseer **deftly** rethreads the bobbin and checks the mechanism for damage.

He barely glances at Martha.

OVERSEER: What's the idea? Get cleaned up and get back to work!

N1: Floyd helps Martha up.

FLOYD: How bad is it?

N2: She reveals her hand. Two of her fingers are badly **mangled**.

SCENE 4

N1: Hine enters a glassworks factory in Virginia. Because of the open furnaces, it's 125 degrees.

N2: A smoky haze fills the building. Shards of glass litter the floor. Boys run from place to place carrying searing hot glass.

HINE: Hey, young fella, how about a picture?

BOY: Sorry, mister. Can't stop. Gettin' paid by the piece.

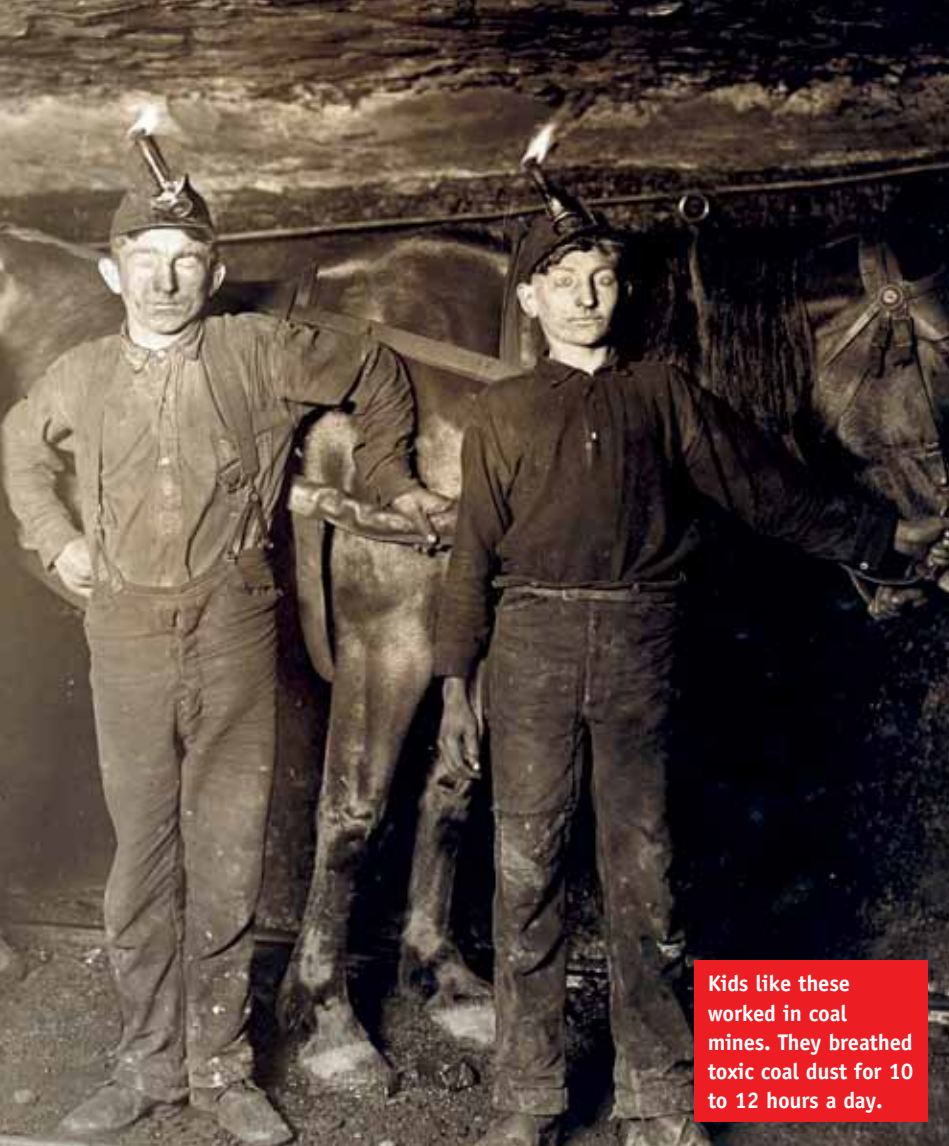
N1: Hine sets up his **tripod** and focuses his camera. He sprinkles powder on his **flash pan**.

N2: As the boy hustles past, Hine calls out.

HINE: Hold there!



Lewis Hine



Kids like these worked in coal mines. They breathed toxic coal dust for 10 to 12 hours a day.

N1: The boy wipes the sweat off his face and looks at the camera.

N2: Hine ignites the powder in the flash pan. There's a roar of flame, a shower of sparks, and a perfectly timed click of the shutter.

N1: The boy runs off, but the flash catches the boss's attention.

BOSS: Hey, you! What are you up to?

HINE: Just taking a photograph of one of your hardworking lads.

BOSS: There'll be no pictures! You'd best be on your way.

HINE: Do you think it's right for children to work like this?

BOSS: It's good for 'em. They're learning a skill.

HINE: They *should* be learning to read.

N2: The boss grabs a long paddle used to take glass from the furnace. He shoves Hine with it.

BOSS: Get outta here, or I'll run you out myself.

N1: He shoves Hine again, nearly knocking him down.

SCENE 5

H2: When Hine's powerful photos of **bedraggled** children started appearing in newspapers,

Americans were stunned.

H1: As public outrage grew, factory owners became more suspicious of Hine and his camera. It made getting inside factories harder.

H2: Hine often disguised himself.

N2: One day, Hine presents himself to an overseer at a textile mill in Georgia. He says he is an industrial photographer.

HINE: I'm supposed to photograph your spinning machine. I'm told it's the biggest and the best in the area.

OVERSEER: Best in the state, I'd say.

N1: Hine is led deep into the mill, where scores of children are working. There are no adults.

N2: He sets up his camera.

HINE: Let's put a worker next to the machine to give it a sense of scale. How about that young lady there?

OVERSEER: You there. Come here!

N1: As the overseer leaves Hine to his work, a barefoot girl shyly approaches.

N2: Hine directs her to pose. He has to yell over the din of the machinery. She attempts to smile.

N1: Hine ignites the powder in the flash pan. There is a roar of flame and a shower of sparks. He notices the girl's disfigured hand.

HINE: What happened?

N2: The girl hides her hand and glances down the aisle. She doesn't answer.

HINE: What's your name?

MARTHA: Martha.

HINE: How long have you been working here, Martha?

N1: Martha thinks for a moment.

MARTHA: I don't remember. A long time.

N2: Hine pulls out a notebook and jots down Martha's name, her age, and a few other details.

HINE: Have you ever been to school?

MARTHA: No. I'd like to go . . . but I work all the time.

HINE: What do you do here?

MARTHA: I'm a spinner. My older brother's a **doffer**. Had a little brother too.

HINE: *Had?*

MARTHA: Um, I better get back to work now.

N1: Hine takes more photographs. He is emotionally drained when he meets with the overseer.

HINE: Your machinery is quite impressive. Do you have many accidents?

OVERSEER: Naw. Once in a while a finger gets mashed, but it don't amount to nothin'.

HINE: You have a lot of kids working here.

OVERSEER: Sure, but they're not expected to work hard. They enjoy it!

N2: The frowns on their faces speak otherwise—frowns Hine has made sure to capture.

SCENE 6

N1: It's well after dark. Leo



UP CLOSE

A Modern-Day Camera Crusader

Tyler Hicks is changing the world, one picture at a time.

He's been shot at by the Taliban, kidnapped and beaten by Libyan rebels, and nearly killed several times in terrifyingly dangerous war and disaster zones. And yet for *New York Times* photographer Tyler Hicks, 35, risking his life is the price he pays for taking photographs that can help bring attention to some of the world's most tragic problems. Hicks

has shot photos in the most dangerous places in the world, from battlefields in Afghanistan and Iraq to earthquake-ravaged Haiti.

Most recently, Hicks photographed victims of a famine in the African country of Somalia, a nation with no government that is beset by violence and poverty. Visiting a hospital packed with dying people, Hicks was overwhelmed by the scenes of suffering. A picture he took of a little boy curled in agony appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*. It is credited with helping focus world attention on the victims of the famine.

Hicks believes that even today, in our age of YouTube and 24-hour news channels, a single photograph has the power to capture people's attention, to inspire, and to galvanize. "I think a photograph can change the way people think," he said recently. "It has a way of searing itself into your mind."



Tyler Hicks (inset) took this photograph of a woman and her child in Somalia, a country ravaged by war and famine. **What makes this photograph powerful?**





LEFT: An overseer at a mill in Gastonia, North Carolina, in 1908. **ABOVE:** Accident rates were two times higher among kids than among adult workers.

MARTHA: Forty-two cents.

PA: That's my little girl! Now finish eatin' so you can get some sleep.

MA: In just a few hours, you have to be back at the mill.

SCENE 7

H1: Hine spent 10 years tirelessly photographing kids at work. He took more than 5,000 photos.

H2: Though his work raised awareness and deeply affected public opinion, laws regarding child labor were slow to change.

H1: As the years passed, Hine's reputation faded.

N2: It's 1938. Hine is largely

forgotten. He is completely broke.

N1: He and his wife are sitting in the park reading a newspaper.

SARA: This article says President Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act into law. It finally outlaws child labor.

HINE: It's about time.

SARA: And look here. It says your photographs had a lot to do with it.

HINE: I remember watching two breaker boys fall into a coal chute, and little oyster shuckers with swollen, bleeding fingers.

I remember a young spinner with a mangled hand, and so many others.

N2: Hine turns away, overcome with emotion.

HINE: It's good to know the next generation will get to keep their childhoods.

H2: Hine died soon after the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed.

H1: Today, he is remembered as one of the nation's pioneering photographers and a determined crusader against child labor. ●

and Martha have just gotten home.

MA: Sit down and eat. The beans are gettin' cold.

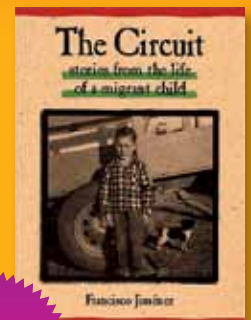
PA: Sure don't like seein' you kids workin' so hard.

MARTHA: A man came to the mill today and took a picture of the spinnin' machine. There was a flood of light.

MA: Is that right? How much did you make?

WRITING CONTEST

The Power of Pictures Lewis Hine's amazing photographs helped bring an end to child labor in America. What do you think makes an image powerful? Do you think photos still have the power to change the world today? Why? Write a paragraph answering these questions. Use details from the play and the sidebar to support your opinion. Send it to **LEWIS HINE CONTEST**. Five winners will each get *The Circuit* by Francisco Jimenez. See page 2 for details.



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