

Monologue

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I started working when I was

5 yrs old

8 yrs old

because I needed to support my family

because I had no family

They told me,

“I own you now”

They told me,

“Get to work”

I grew up in a small home with my mother and father. We had a farm that produced food for ourselves and a few locals. I was put to work on the fields at 5 years old, harvesting crops until my fingers bled, but when all the new machinery was invented we could barely get by. It was 1720. The rich farmers could afford to develop and change with the times, but the rest of us were left with nothing. My mother and father were given new roles, leaving home every day to put the food we used to grow back on the table. But it wasn't enough. Soon later, I too had to find work. A nearby mine let me in, I was only 7 years old and

I was alone.

That's all I knew. Alone in an orphanage, barely surviving with many other lonely children. Until one day a generous man dressed in the nicest suit my eyes had ever seen spoke of wonders. Of a house, food, and clothes. He took me along with 5 others. We thought he was our new family, but we were wrong.

I was mistreated.

The higher class only pushing us lower as we descend deep into the ground. People wanted coal to burn away their troubles, and cater to their newly steam run lives. If only the light that my days of hard work powered would shine just a little bit on me. But no, I see only darkness. My eyes never seem to adjust. Shivering and cold, crawling through tunnels

only wide enough for a child.

A rope tied around my waist, a chain linking me to my fate. When they told me I needed to pull my weight, I didn't know that they meant it literally.

I was abused.

I work to survive with no other choice. I am held hostage unable to break free from the man who made me his prisoner. *pause* Sweat beading down our faces, beading down the windows, beating up the children. Hitting us, whipping us, touching us. I don't mean to be vulgar but the situation just is...

You don't need to apologize.....

I run to the factory not daring to be late. An example would be made, tying weights to my neck,

I am out of breath.

Beat, broken & bruised. no one noticed. no one cared. until I could no longer pay my dues. Hidden behind these walls. Closing me in. No one to tell me

this is wrong.

We were all disposable. You may know about the canary in the coal mine, but it wasn't just birds trapped in the Capitalist's cage. I watched men fall from the rope that was pulling them to the surface, I saw women and children drown in the floods in the lowest corners of the mine. I am losing my mind, there is no more time for me only time for them. Buried alive, we strived to survive, like anyone would to feed their own child. But do you still think you're tired after an 8 hour work day?

I have no voice.

Silenced under the sound of rumbling machines. No scream loud enough to make them hear

I have dreams.

For every hour of fun and play that I will never experience

I accept it

Through every inch of height lost from bone deformation, making me even easier to ignore

I expect it

Through every beating, every punishment, every day without food or rest.

I can take it

but you don't have to make it... that way.

This is not just the past its present. present in your world. swept away, hidden from your privileged life, but found everyday in your clothes and cell phones. You live in a world here in 2016, where our homes are filled with children that learn and play while a few miles away, there are kids fighting with bombs and guns, hauling bricks upon their head and weaving until their fingers bled.

Behind your name brand cell phone there are children that have to work for 10 hours only to buy a single gallon of milk

Behind your Nike soccer ball, there are children working 64 hours per week for less than what you spend on a pair of pants

Behind your new trendy eyeshadow, there are toddlers digging through mines to find each sparkle you crave

Behind your, "boring, exhausting" school day there are 168 million children that will most likely never get an education or progress any farther than the physically, psychologically, socially, and emotionally detrimental jobs that they work now.

11% of the world's children between the ages 5 and 16 are put through this every single day.

Pause, count to 4

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5 yrs old

8 yrs old

What were you doing?

<http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/coalMine.html>

<http://arlweb.msha.gov/century/little/page1.asp>

<http://www.history.co.uk/study-topics/history-of-death/trends-in-death>

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/britain-1700-to-1900/industrial-revolution/coal-mines-in-the-industrial-revolution/>

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