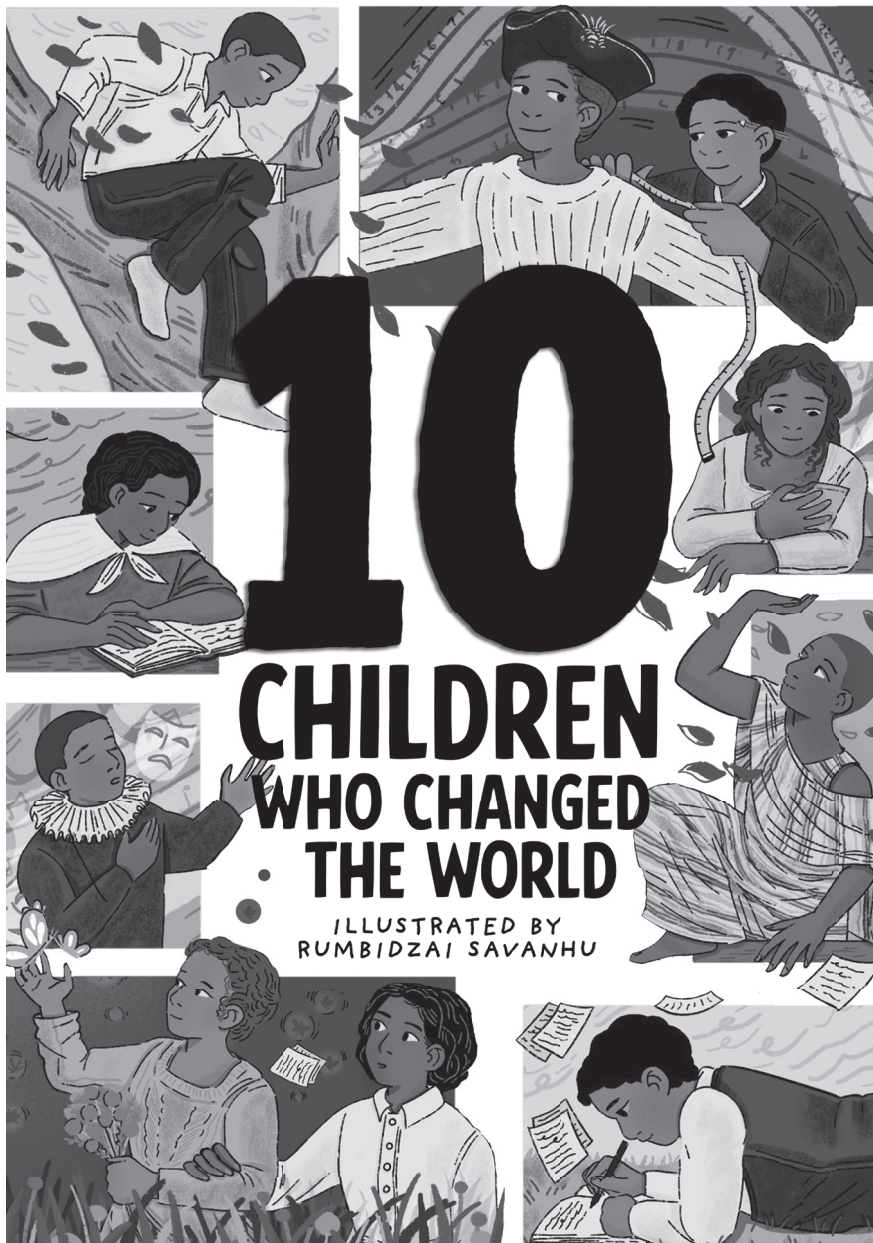


# PATERSON JOSEPH



10

CHILDREN  
WHO CHANGED  
THE WORLD

ILLUSTRATED BY  
RUMBIDZAI SAVANHU

First published in Great Britain in 2025 by Wren & Rook  
Text copyright © Sancho Productions Limited 2025  
Illustrations copyright © Rumbidzai Savanhu 2025  
All rights reserved.

The right of Sancho Productions Limited and Rumbidzai  
Savanhu to be identified as the author and illustrator  
respectively of this Work has been asserted by them in  
accordance with the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988.

ISBN: 978 1 5263 6695 5

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

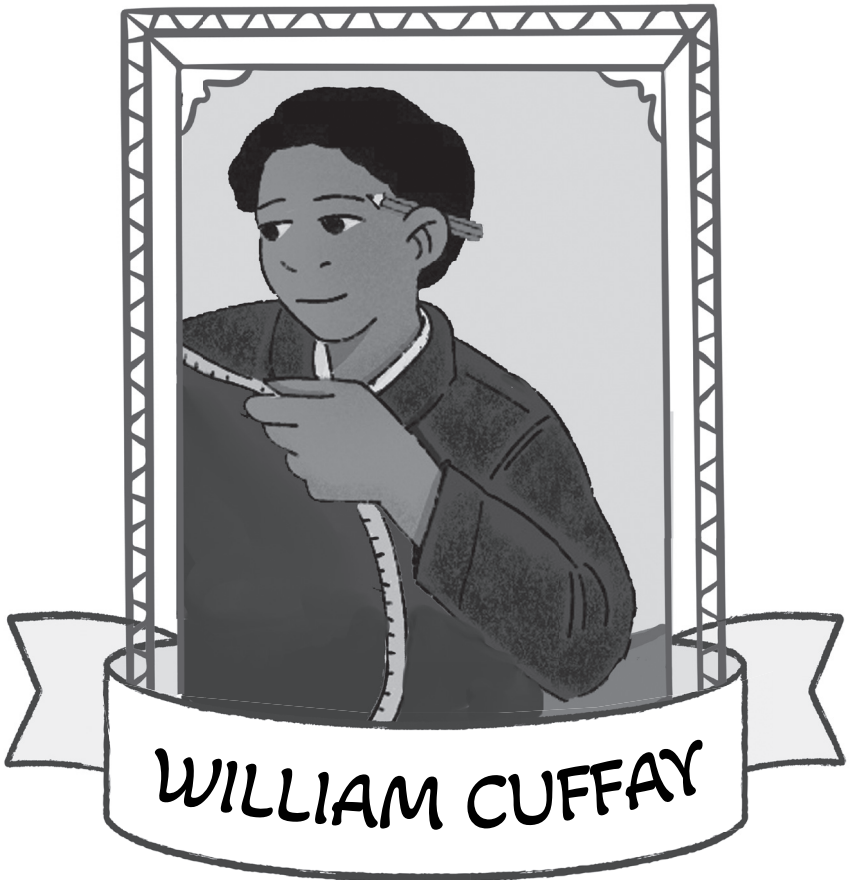


Wren & Rook  
An imprint of  
Hachette Children's Group  
Part of Hodder & Stoughton Limited  
Carmelite House  
50 Victoria Embankment  
London EC4Y 0DZ

The authorised representative in the EEA is Hachette Ireland,  
8 Castlecourt Centre, Dublin 15, D15 XTP3, Ireland (email:  
info@hbgie.ie).

An Hachette UK Company  
www.hachette.co.uk  
www.hachettechildrens.co.uk Printed and bound in Great  
Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

# CHAPTER EIGHT



**Monday 24 December, 1798**

**Chatham, Kent, England**




Ten-year-old William Cuffay heard raised voices coming from downstairs. It wasn't unusual.

The folks of Chatham Docks often gathered on doorsteps or in living rooms to talk and drink and dance with great enthusiasm. For these were hardworking folks who deserved every moment of relief from work that they could get. Still, there was something different about these voices. Something more urgent and more passionate than William had ever heard.

He had been practising writing out the alphabet on a sheet of old brown paper that his father had rescued from the dockside, after a careless worker had dropped a case of them and the contents had spilled out on the ground. People helped – they always helped – but they also always helped themselves. It was a kind of 'helpfulness tax'.




William was grateful, as it wasn't easy to get hold of paper or a pen to write with, and he loved to write. His younger siblings hadn't reached the age where they wanted to draw things and needed paper, so anything that could be written on was usually given to William by his mother, Juliana, or his father, Chatham. William smiled. He often smiled when he thought of his father's name. It tickled him that his father lived in Chatham and was called Chatham.



William used to imagine it was a made-up name, and not a very clever one. He pretended to his pals that he must never speak his father's real name or bad things might come to the door. He could see his friends' eyes widen as if they were afraid for William's father, and they never asked any further questions, though he could see they burned with curiosity.


William and his best pal, Tommy, had guessed that since both their fathers had fathers from the West Indies, and both those grandfathers were enslaved at one time in their lives, the story might not be so far-fetched after all. But really, anyone hearing Chatham Cuffay's Kentish accent would know it wasn't a likely story.

It had to be said that even if slaves were not used in Britain, the country was still not safe from that terror. There were too many stories of runaway enslaved people being recaptured and sent back to the plantations in America or the West Indies.



William limped over to the window to look down on the street; his limbs had stiffened from sitting down for too long. Below, on the lightly snow-dusted cobbled street, were a man and a woman. William couldn't see the woman very clearly as he looked down from the window, but he recognised the man facing the doorway. He wondered why he was looking so serious. This man nearly always had a smile on his face and a tune on his lips. His best friend's father was known for being a jolly person. Not today, it seemed.

Tommy's father was called Caesar Phillips and had sailed with the British Navy just as Chatham had. Caesar was huge and his son Tommy was like him in this way. William, on the other hand, was tiny. He always would be, he knew. His twisted spine and shortened, weakened left leg meant that he would not grow much taller than his current height. His father had told him to walk tall and never let anyone take advantage of him for his . . . disadvantages. William needed no telling; he'd been fighting back



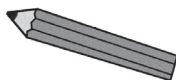
on the streets of Chatham ever since he could walk. And most children in the neighbourhood knew him as peaceful yet fierce if crossed or insulted for his disability, as they called it, or his brown skin.

Being of mixed heritage was never a problem for most of the people in William's street or the neighbouring ones. Chatham was a port town, and like most port towns, it had all the people that Britain ever visited, troubled, fought with and traded goods with here in small and large numbers. He knew quite a few children with one white English or Irish parent and one parent from China or India, from Brazil or Arabia, from Africa or Russia. Everyone knew that every nation had just as many good and – in a few rare cases – bad people among them as everyone else.

Chatham had always told William, 'Treat everyone as if they are your friends, first. If they prove themselves your enemy, then at least you know who you are dealing with. Never hate before you *know*.'

~~~~~

Down below, William could see that Caesar was angry. He had never seen him like this, and so he had to find out what was causing it.



Leaning over the banister when William came out of his room was his sister, Juliana, named after their mother. Juliana was a dark-eyed girl of eight. Those eyes seemed to see more sharply than most people's and, sure enough, she never missed a thing. Frankly, Juliana's stare had a quality to it that could stop a grown man in his tracks. She had frizzy black hair that was the length of her back and braided into a single plait. William used to pull on this plait until one day Juliana turned to him and punched him full on the nose. The rest of the family had laughed at that, but William felt humiliated. Especially as it hurt so much. It had the desired effect. William always respected his sister after that, despite the two-year age gap.