

# **SURVIVAL**

Or,

**Tales Of Hope And Villainy  
From A Time Of Plague**

**A Mercia Blakewood Special**

**DAVID HINGLEY**

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# **SURVIVAL**

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**INSTALMENT THREE**

## IV

Nicholas stood back, as far as he could in the cramped room, grown uncomfortable from the day's heat. Taking a deep breath, he watched his sister busy herself with the pile of washed laundry that had been lying untouched since his arrival.

'Why do you want to take her at all?' she said abruptly, folding a small pair of woollen breeches. 'She's safe here. She's always been safe.'

'I'm not sure it is safe here, Eve. You must have heard things. I saw at least three houses with crosses painted on their doors just two streets back.'

'There aren't any crosses in this street, Nick. And if folk do get it, they'll be shut up.' She paused in her folding. 'Poor things.'

'That doesn't mean it won't spread. People get out. The smells get out. I just want her to be well.'

'And what will folk think when they hear Eliza's been taken away? Why haven't all the other kids been taken, that's what they'll ask. Why is Eliza so special, they'll ask. Half of them don't realise she's yours, not mine.'

'Eve, I think most everyone round here knows she's mine, whatever story we put about. And if we're honest, 'tis hard to know who's father or mother to quite a few of these kids round here.'

'You make it sound like we live in a whorehouse.'

'Well, there is that one down –'

'Don't get clever with me, Nick.' She glanced away. 'I just don't think. . . I don't think she should go to some strange big house where she won't fit in.'

‘Eve, ‘tis more than just keeping her safe, if she goes to Halescott for a few weeks she’ll have the chance to learn things. Jesus, Eve, she can learn to read. A child of mine!’

‘Aye, well.’ Eve shrugged. ‘Learn to read, eh? Lot of good that’ll do when she’s older.’

‘Don’t mock. I never thought it was worth it either, but since I’ve been with Mercia and I’ve learnt a few letters, it opens your eyes.’

Eve snorted. ‘How is the lady benefactress?’

‘Big word, Eve! You must have picked up a book yourself.’ He softened his tone. ‘No need to be bitter. Her family worked hard for what they’ve got, and her especially.’

‘I work hard, Nick, and look at what I’ve got. Six children, one of them yours – yes I know I agreed to it, and I’ve never regretted it – a husband who’s barely home and this palace.’

Nicholas surveyed the familiar room. It was small, barely space enough for the two of them and a table and chairs, let alone when the children were home instead of in the streets. A kitchen of sorts was adjacent, its one glass-paned window letting in what light the street could afford, its shelves stacked with herbs and papered blue as a remedy to ward off flies. Above, a partitioned bedroom provided sleeping space, which the residents often shared with smaller, furrer midnight intruders. Above that, on the second floor that jutted so far into the street its residents could reach through the window to touch the hands of the neighbours opposite, a barely lit garret space had been given over to another couple, a young butcher and his pregnant wife, who had moved in last year when the previous tenant had been taken much against her will to her new accommodation in Newgate.

‘Where is John?’ asked Nicholas.

‘Working in the yards, where do you think? Where he is from sunrise to sunset.’

‘Out somewhere he can catch plague, then.’

Immediately the words were spoken he regretted them. Eve seemed to pale, and her composed face crumpled under her dry blonde hair.

‘All’s well for you, Nick, isn’t it? Now you’ve got that Mercia you can come in, take Eliza, and go. We have to stay here, and John has to work, and yes he could get

plague, and then I could, and the kids could, however hard I try to keep things clean. But if he don't work, we don't get money, we don't get fed, and we die any way. There's no charity round here, and if there was, I wouldn't want it.'

'I've tried,' said Nicholas softly. 'You know I've still not been paid for those years I served on the ships, same as everyone I know, despite all my petitions. Despite Mercia asking for me.' He sighed. 'Eve, she's paid me well these past few months, better than I could have earned here, and you know it. I'm sorry I've not been around, but – that money's been of good use to you, I hope.'

'Aye, well, I won't deny that's helped. I thank her for that.'

He took a small step toward her. 'You could all come with me. She said so herself.'

'I told you. I don't want charity.'

'Not even for the kids? I could take them all with me. Take you.'

'And how's that going to go down in the country, all these ragged folk from London showing up? Besides, Robert and Jem have their own work. As for the rest of them. . . oh, Nick, maybe. I don't think even Eliza needs. . .' Her cheeks seemed to go rigid. 'Look. We can see. As it is I'm not going anywhere. I can't.' She held up the sheet she had unknowingly scrunched in her fist. 'Someone has to look after John.'

'John's big enough to look after himself. Damn it, Eve. Why are you always so stubborn?'

'I've had to be to cope with you, little brother.' Her eyes, pale brown to Nicholas's green, suddenly fixed on his. 'Everything. . . everything will be fine, won't it? There's no need to worry. . . surely?'

'I don't know, Eve. That's why I want to take her.' He frowned, noticing the uncertainty in her darting pupils. 'Is anything wrong? Is John –'

'Of course not,' she said, turning back to her laundry. 'She's yours, Nick. Do what you want, I won't stop you. Maybe you're right, maybe it is for the best.'

'What's that mean?'

'Oh, nothing.' She jerked her head towards the door. 'Now go and see Dapps and the rest of them. They'll be throwing them drunk out of the Star afore you get there.'

‘They will that,’ he agreed, reaching for the jacket he’d left lying on a chair. ‘You’re sure there’s nothing amiss?’

‘I’m sure. Will you be wanting supper?’

‘I’ll buy a pie out, don’t worry about me. And I’ll see what lodgings there might be for when I’m back again from Halescott. Thanks for letting me sleep down here tonight.’

‘*Don’t worry,*’ she repeated under her breath. ‘That’s the problem. I always do.’

Eve was right: little in her crowded street seemed different from the narrow thoroughfare of aging hovels Nicholas knew of old. But when he passed through an alley and turned the corner into another, wider street, he was confronted by a scrawny teenager with a pole tucked into his belt, and opposite the boy, a succession of doors daubed with a red cross and the phrase ‘Lord have mercy upon us’ in variously jagged lettering.

‘Hey’, the lad called. ‘Don’t walk over that side. ‘Taint safe.’

‘No fear,’ said Nicholas, stopping beside him. ‘How long those houses been shut up?’

The boy shrugged. ‘That far one, I’ve been watching it since I started a few days back. These two here, only yesterday.’ He drew himself up. ‘A right. . . pother it was when that one was shut up.’

Nicholas took in the way the boy was striving to hold himself erect, evidently keen to impress. In other circumstances the attempt would have been worthy of a jest.

‘What kind of pother?’ he asked instead.

The boy didn’t answer, instead peering at Nicholas until –

‘Are you Nick Wildmoor?’

Nicholas paused. ‘Why ask?’

‘You are, aren’t you? Lord above!’

‘Why say that, Lord above?’

‘Because everyone round here knows you! God’s truth!’

The admiration in the boy’s eyes was as bizarre as it was unexpected. ‘Erm, do they?’

'I'll say. Who else round here's been in the King's palace, or sailed to America and back? Besides, I'm Robert's mate.'

'Robert?'

'Your nephew.'

'Ah! The lad been talking, has he?'

'All the time! He's told everyone about that highborn gentry-mort you work for.' He leant in closer. 'What's it like at Whitehall?'

'Full of arsworms as you'd expect. And she's not that highborn.'

'You've spent too long away, mate! Have you seen this shithole of a street? She is compared to us.'

'Well, you're right there. Robert behaving himself?'

The boy smirked. 'Out bousing ale, most nights, when he's not tiffing with some wench.'

'Where's he get the coin? No. Don't tell me.' He jerked his head in the direction of the boarded-up doors. 'Aren't you a bit young to be a watchman?'

'Kiss my blind-checks!' the boy retorted. 'All the crossed doors are to be watched after those orders came down last week. But the normal watch don't have enough men to do their rounds and stay on the doors too. So they need new people. In this street, that's me.' The same as before, he drew himself up. 'And I'm sixteen.'

This time Nicholas couldn't suppress a smile. 'Very well, watchman. You seem a fine one for babbling, so why don't you tell me how things stand?'

## **THE WATCHMAN'S TALE**

'I've been here four days now, Nick. Day watch I am, six in the morning til ten at night, then night watch takes over, Gerard's his name, strange lad but honest, though I don't see how it stands I get sixteen hours and he gets eight. I'm ready for bed by ten, I tell you, but don't fear, I'm not about to fall asleep, no one leaves them houses. Your

family's safe. It's devil hot, mind, when the sun's right over. Morning's good – shade from that side; evening's good – shade from behind, but at noon, God's wounds, it's hot! Never known a summer like it.

A month or so back, we started hearing word from St Giles way that folk were taking ill, though we thought nothing of it til some old 'uns started getting sick here. You know what it's like, aside from them who's got to, most stay right near where they are. I mean everything's here, isn't it, and if we did need anything from down St Giles, we'd just fetch it from somewhere else.

But now it's here, don't know how, but it's here. I've heard tell 'tis bad smells cause it, so my ma's made this posy for me to keep beneath my shirt. Some of the lads banter me for that but I say fuck them, they won't laugh when they're shut up and I'm not.

A week back, the alderman gave word he needed men to watch the houses, same as women to search the bodies to be sure it were plague that took them and not something else. Why that has to be women I don't know, but that's the way of it. 'Tis not a task I'd want, but I reckon they get something from it, from the pockets and the fingers of the dead, if you know what I mean. Still, what else is going to draw them to such godless work?

So I said I'd help with the watching, 'cos I reckon them who can help should, and my dad says we've got to look after our own. Folk've been cleaning the roads, not waiting for them to get done, and I tell you, shovelling shit's not pleasant, whether it's from a man's arse or a horse. In truth 'tis a worry, we try to stop up the smells by wearing cloth round our face, but the smell still gets through, and no one knows if covering our noses helps any way. And 'tis funny, before we all used to walk at the edges of the street so as not to walk in the muck, but now we walk right in the middle of the road to be away from the houses, to guard some little distance from the sick. Odd how life changes like that.

But – 'tis hard, Nick, I don't mind saying so. I look at that ken where I'm supposed to keep them in, yes that house there, but I see the hands pressed on the window, and. . . I don't know. Down near the market, the night watchman got in trouble for letting this mort out to get food for her young 'uns, and I heard tell of another lad who got beaten half to death by some cull who wouldn't listen that he had

to stay home. Smashing him like the devil, they say this cove was, but you won't catch no one culp'ing me. Aye, that's why I've got my own stick at my side, I'll give anyone what he deserves, you know what it's like, and we don't want plague on the streets.

Here's another thing queer. A girl came by before, a wench like, and when she went past another stopped in front of me, saying I had rum ogles and would I like to take her out? Well, I do have good eyes, but not like she meant, for I could see that as she was talking the other lass was trying the door of the middle house yonder. So I had to go over to make her stop, and it got hot then, with the two of them in a fury, but I sent them on their way. Though. . . the girl at the door had been holding a basket of bread, and in the house, the old woman was looking out, and she started to cry. I. . . don't know what's best, Nick. I don't want folk to suffer, but. . . there's many more would if this gets out. That's right, Nick? That's right?

When I started this seemed like a rum bit of sport, but I'm starting to get. . . no, not afeared! Uncertain, perhaps. Two days back, the searchers came as I was finishing my time, into the house at the very bottom of the row, do you see, down there, and then a half hour later a cart came past, the driver ring'ing his death-bell, and they took a body out and drove it away. Then they shut up the house again, so there must still be folk inside – do you see that lad down there? He's the watchman for that corner. Those girls would have wheedled him.

And that pother I was talking of, in that house right here. I was on watch, as usual, when a doctor came round, two men with him, and they went in. Then there was a scream, and I looked up, and a woman ran out with a baby, begging for mercy for her child, and one of the men came after, and then her husband, with some sort of black boil on his face, cursing and shouting, but the man who'd come with the doctor just took hold of the woman, harsh like, it must have hurt, and he started to drag her back, while her husband, he couldn't stop him, he didn't have the strength, though he looked like he should have, and then the doctor and the other were by him, not too close like they didn't want to touch him, and you should have seen the street then, suddenly everyone's running, there's this hawker drops his knives, this milkmaid splashing all over, and the man, the husband I mean, he collapses, like that, and the doctor he don't know what to do, but the husband, I don't know how, he just stands up again, like he's found his strength, and he walks towards his house, calls his wife to

come back, and she starts to cry, shaking the man holding her off, but the husband says they have to think of folk, and she says what about the baby, and then a woman comes up, a friend from down the way, it seems, and she lets out a great sob, I'll never forget it, and she gives this woman the baby, and as quick as that like she's scared she'll change her mind she follows her husband in, and they shut the door, themselves, and the doctor turns to the woman who took the baby, but she's gone, who knows where, and out comes the paint, the red cross and the Lord have mercy, and the house is locked.

I keep thinking about that woman, and her baby. About how she got the child out, while they chose to lock themselves in, knowing they'll both be dead by next week. She could have run, that woman, in the hubbub. And I think, Mark – that's me, Mark – sometimes God is hard, sometimes people are, but in the midst of it there's folk prepared to do what's right. Good folk, putting themselves in harm's way to save their child, to save the rest of us.

Good folk like me? No, Nick, I'm no saint. I just watch. I don't know as I'd have the courage to shut myself up like those two did, or to go inside those houses like that doctor does. I think. . . I think I would, but knowing I'd face death so close, so soon. . . I can't be sure.

Can you?'

'I don't know, lad,' said Nicholas. 'I think I'd do what was best.' He clapped the boy on the back. 'What are you supposed to do if people try to get out?'

'Bring them back any way I can. Call the hue and cry if I have to.'

'Well, then. That would put you in harm's way, for certain.' He smiled. 'You're doing a good job, I'd say, better than some would.'

The boy shrugged, looking embarrassed. 'It's the doctors who have it worse. The ones that haven't run away, that is.' He looked up. 'I'd love to do what you did, once this is all over. Leave this shithole and sail to America. I think I'd stay there if I could.' He leant in. 'Got anything you can tell me about your gentry mort friend? Robert says she's got right nice –'

Nicholas snorted. 'You keep those rum ogles on the girls round here. And tell Robert to stop prattling. He's never seen her.'

'Aww!'

'Goodbye, watchman. You take care.'

'Bye, Nick. You take care too.'

Nicholas walked off, taking the young watchman's advice and sticking to the middle of the road. As he made his way to the inn where he was meeting his friends, the teenager's last words brought Mercia to his mind, and as he walked, avoiding the carts and the crowds, he wondered how she was faring in the country, and what she would think when he told her what he had decided he must do.

## V

In a candlelit room at Halescott, Mercia sat back, letting her arms drop to her sides. She took a long breath, then turned to face her audience.

‘I told you I could not play,’ she said, raising her voice. ‘I am surprised I remembered even that old tune.’

‘Nonsense. You were marvellous,’ Tanner shouted back, illuminated by torchlight as Luis and Alena applauded politely alongside. ‘It is good to hear music in times like these.’

‘If only the music were better performed.’ She rose from the instrument, a polished virginals she had practiced on since she was a girl. ‘Luis, will you not change your mind and play? I have not heard a violin for a long while.’

‘I cannot while Simon is missing.’ Luis turned from the window the three were standing outside, looking in at Mercia from a cautious distance. ‘We should have stayed searching longer.’

Alena touched his shoulder. ‘You and Joshua were out all day, Luis, today and yesterday. There was little else you could do.’

‘No?’ he said, barely audible in his soft Spanish accent. ‘We may have had good fortune to find this sanctuary, you two and I, but he is still out there. Where is he?’

‘You are sure you saw nothing else?’ said Mercia as she approached, her shadow looming across the wainscot as she held her nosegay towards her face. In reality two days had passed since the musicians’ arrival, nearly a fortnight since they had left London, but she had promised Bethany she would use the sweet-smelling bunch.

‘No more than –’ began Joshua in reply, but Alena lightly shook her head. Joshua paused, trying to hide the interruption in a cough, but Mercia had noticed.

‘No more than what?’

‘Oh. Nothing.’

She looked between the three players. ‘I have learnt that any detail is important.’

Luis looked out into a darkness he could not have seen through. Joshua sucked in his lips.

‘There were some footprints in the mud where Simon was washing by the river,’ he said. ‘It does not do to dwell upon it.’

‘What footprints?’ said Mercia. ‘My man, Tom, did not mention any in his report.’

‘We. . . do not much get on with your man, truth be told. And we did not wish to trouble you with tales of false hope.’ Under her curious gaze, he flicked a seemingly carefree hand. ‘The footprints led off briefly but quickly disappeared. The ground is bone dry when you move from the river. We found them yesterday when we looked, and made a wider search of the area today. There was nothing.’

‘Indeed?’ Mercia frowned. ‘How many footprints? Were they of just one man?’

‘Yes,’ said Alena. ‘One man, Joshua, that’s what you said?’

He glanced at her. ‘One man, a few prints, nothing more.’ His mouth opened wide, finishing in an exaggerated yawn. ‘Mrs Blakewood, thank you for your music and for letting us near the house. But I fear we are tired, and should sleep. We hope to ride to some of the nearby villages tomorrow, if they do not turn us away.’

‘You are sure you are comfortable in the barn? I would have you in the house, but. . .?’

‘Quite comfortable.’ He doffed his close-fitting hat. ‘Well, ‘tis a fair walk, so I think we best start.’

He picked up the torch he had rested in one of the sconces set into the back of the house. As they wandered across the lawn, Mercia watched the flickering light fade into the dark as her suspicions flickered bright within her mind.

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At very first light she got up, washed quickly in the rosewater Phibae had left in a jug in her bedroom, and dressed herself in a practical outfit that required little attention: a pair of men's breeches and a plain shirt, suitable attire for what she had planned. Taking what remained of yesterday's bread, she looked in on Daniel before leaving the house without a word to anyone, feeling alert in the sharp morning air as she walked out of the gates and towards the adjoining village. Once there, she climbed the path of a small cottage whose occupant would doubtless be preparing himself for his day's work. But when she knocked and heard footsteps approach, the door swung open to reveal he was not so ready as she had presumed.

'Tis barely past dawn!' he began. 'What do you mean by – ?'

Recognising his visitor, he cut himself off. With nowhere to hide, he folded his arms across his naked chest. 'I'm sorry, my lady. I didn't. . .' He looked her up and down. 'Why are you dressed as a man?'

'Forgive me, Tom,' she said, ignoring his tone of disapproval. 'I will wait until you are dressed.'

Stepping outside, she waited on the short path, looking down the dusty street. The sun's rays were yet to fall on the orange stone from which most of the houses were built, or the golden thatch of their rooves, but the scene was pleasing all the same. Just out of sight was the cottage she owned herself, the largest in the village where she had lived with her husband before the death of her father and her elevation to the manor house. What places she had seen since she had last left that cottage, she marvelled, where she and her friend Nathan had uncovered the hidden clue that had set them on her strange adventures in the first place! Indeed, she had been wearing similarly odd clothes that night, and maybe, she thought wryly, she had done better to stop then, to accept her fate and to remain in that cottage, than to become the peculiar creature she was sure she was now considered to be, rightfully restored to the manor house or no.

She laughed at the absurdity of the notion. And then her laughter ceased, and she found herself thinking of Nathan, how she had left him behind in America, and for the first time since returning home a dull melancholy took her, a sense that the village was somehow emptier now, without Nathan, without her husband Will who

was dead too soon, without herself in that old cottage. But then the door pulled open behind her and her reflections vanished.

'I'd never thought to see you here, my lady,' said Tom, now fully dressed. Behind him, his wife and children stood at the back of the one dark room, peering out despite the early hour. Swiftly, he pulled the door shut. 'How may I help?'

'I am sorry to disturb you,' she said. 'But I have need of a guide.'

'How so, my lady?'

'Tom. Can you not call me that? Mrs Blakewood will do. Now. I want you to take me to where our musician friends were attacked. I want to see for myself.'

Tom frowned. 'In truth? 'Tis not fitting, surely?'

'Come, Tom, I have done and seen too much to be bothered by such niceties. Perhaps you can tell from the attire I have chosen to wear.' She raised an eyebrow, trying to draw him into the conspiracy but merely succeeding in making him stare. She cleared her throat. 'I would be most grateful for your help.'

'I searched that area myself, Mrs Blakewood. That man they claim they've lost was nowhere to be found.'

'Claim?'

He scoffed. 'Them three aren't telling us the whole truth, by no means. Maybe they don't have the plague, I'll grant, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were no other man, or they've done for him themselves.'

'Indeed, Tom, but then why would they have told us about him at all?'

'I don't know. But I don't trust them, all the same.'

'Certainly they are not telling us the whole tale. They mentioned they had found footprints, but it seems they said nothing to you.'

'About footprints?' He cocked his head, at last taking an interest. 'No, Mrs Blakewood.'

'Well, then. Who knows what else may have been withheld, or overlooked?' She gave him a smile she knew full well would disconcert him. 'Come then, Tom. I am eager to start. Let us gather what provisions we need and be on our way.'

They rode quickly, their horses swift on the track that served as the first part of their journey, but as the road became rougher while winding through a wood, Tom signalled

they should leave it to pass among the trees. Immediately the going slowed as the horses picked their way through ferns and roots, and in the mounting heat, Mercia was soon glad of the weak ale they had brought to quench their thirst. Maggie, her faithful steed, was just grateful to reach the river where she could sate her own.

‘Not far now, Mrs Blakewood,’ said Tom at the water’s edge. ‘We should leave the horses here and finish on foot if you’re able.’ He looked at her. ‘You’re sure you want to carry on?’

She leapt from the horse, barely remarking the twinge in her side.

‘Of course. Would you like something to eat before we walk?’

She offered him a chunk of bread which he gladly took. Then she laughed.

‘What is it?’ he said, biting into the small loaf.

‘I took that from the pantry while no one was there. I am imagining the look on Bethany’s face when she reads the note I left. Hopefully Phibae will calm her down.’

Tom merely grunted. ‘Tis good bread still. Now, we go this way.’

Tying up the horses, he led her along the riverbank for several minutes. The wood was calm, no breeze today to ease the closeness. She looked at Tom’s back as they went, and thought how strange he must think it for the two of them to be out here together deep in the wood, and she found she was missing Nicholas in his place. But then Tom stopped.

‘This is where they say that Simon was washing.’ He gestured to his right. ‘And a little through there is a sort of clearing where they say they were attacked.’

‘*Where they say,*’ she repeated. ‘You are very mistrustful, Tom.’

‘I don’t see reason to trust folk who turn up uninvited in your barn, is all.’

‘No.’ She looked around. ‘Tom, what do you think of the plague?’

‘I think I don’t want to get it.’

‘What do you feel about it, then? When I was in London last month, I could tell people were becoming scared.’

‘It is something to be scared of, Mrs Blakewood. That’s why we don’t want folk from London stopping here.’

A niggling doubt entered her mind about the ease of Nicholas’s return; although he was hoping to stay elsewhere for some days first, if people everywhere felt

like Tom, he would not receive a warm welcome on the way. And would the Halescott villagers be happy to learn she was taking in his daughter here?

‘What would you have done to the musicians had I not arrived?’ she asked. ‘You were menacing them with a rake.’

‘I just mean to protect you, Mrs Blakewood. As I protected your father before you. As I mean to protect my own family. I would have sent them on their way.’

‘You imply I fail to protect my own son.’

The strong man swallowed. ‘I didn’t mean. . . I’m sorry. My wife’s always saying I don’t think before I speak.’

‘Don’t be sorry. I prefer to hear opinions firmly expressed. As for Daniel, you can be sure I would always hope to shield him from harm. Now.’ She turned her attention to the riverbank, looking up and down the meandering watercourse. ‘Does this not strike you as curious? Mr Tanner said there were footprints here, but I see nothing. Yet there has been no rain to wash them away, and if the mud had dried, it would have preserved the prints with it. But – ah, look here! This mud has been flattened, as though someone were deliberately erasing what was there.’

Tom came across. ‘It could have been an animal. A deer perhaps, rummaging near the river.’

‘I doubt it. And look there.’ She pointed up the far bank. ‘Another patch of mud, flattened the same. And another just past it, before the ground turns hard away from the running water.’ She looked at him. ‘You say you examined this place yourself?’

‘Yes. But we were searching for a man, nothing else. A body we thought most like.’

‘Did you look in the direction these flattened patches lead?’

‘I didn’t notice them.’

‘Wait here a moment.’

She walked a short distance in the direction the tracks had started, but there was not enough of a trail to be sure which way she should go. She turned this way and that, walking back and forth while peering at the ground, but the dense undergrowth revealed nothing. Then returning towards the riverbank, she raised her eyes and –

‘Tom!’ she exclaimed. ‘Look at this!’

Into the mutilated bark of an old chestnut tree were etched five words, carved in small, ragged letters, some barely discernible, but the message they delivered was stark. Five pleading words beneath a gouged-out cross, words that spurred a shiver through her heart:

†  
*Lord*  
*Have*  
*Mercy*  
*Upon*  
*Us*

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