

LOUISE ANDREWS KENT

He Went With

# John Paul Jones



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He Went With  
*John Paul Jones*



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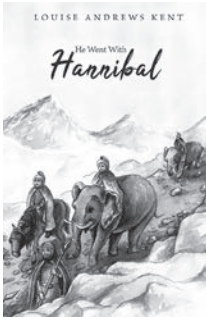
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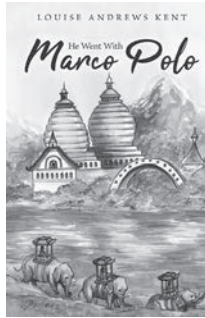
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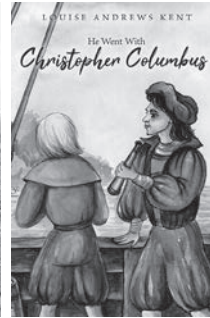
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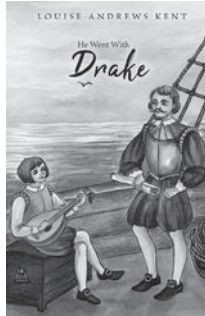
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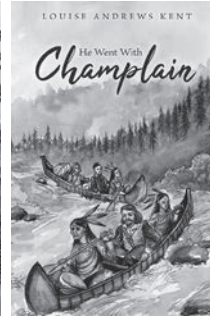
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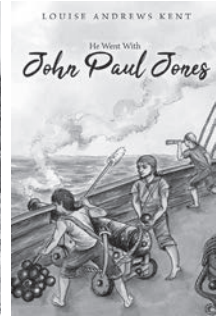
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CHAPTER 1

## UNDER THE COUNTER



“NICK! YOUNG Nick! Nick Young! Wake up—time to get up—six o’clock—six o’clock...”

Nicholas Young Caryl half opened his weary eyelids. Then, for a moment that was like a dive into green water, he drifted back into sleep. Yet he still heard the river noises—wind chuckling over the water, gulls screaming, sails being hauled up, oars clanking in rowlocks.

He thought: Those must be the oars of the barge. That’s Richard Dale calling. This is the morning we’re going fishing... my birthday, June 5... 1767... twelve today... fishing on the island... barge waiting... get up, must get up... foggy morning, I reckon. Cold too... sleep a minute longer...

“Nick—Nick Young! Six o’clock...”

The voice was getting louder and harsher. No Virginia voice was ever like that, Nick thought, yet there was still a moment when he expected to open his eyes in the big, airy bedroom of his Uncle Nicholas’s house in Portsmouth, Virginia. The tall magnolias between the older Nicholas Caryl’s house and the Dales’ house would be in bloom; white flowers bigger than

teacups opening out of great silky, furry buds. The mist from the Elizabeth River would be dripping off the shining leaves. Redbirds would be crimson flashes among the flowers. At the plantation, roses would be in bloom.

“Nick Young!”

He knew the voice now. *It was Mr. Gribble’s.* He could hear those heavy feet starting down the twisting stairs.

Nick rolled out from under the counter into the dark shop. He could smell cheese—not roses. The river outside was the Thames. This was England. This was London—not Portsmouth.

“Coming, sir, coming,” he called.

He tugged Pambo by the collar and dragged him out from under the thin, tattered blanket that was their only covering. Pambo felt the cold even more than Nick did, so Nick always made the Negro boy sleep next to the wall of the counter. After all, if it had not been for Pambo (short for Palambo, which was short for Paul Ambrose Caryl) Nick would, he remembered with a shiver, be sleeping next to his brother Sandy in the graveyard of the English Caryl family. But he must not think of Sandy’s grave or of the night he died. Not now. Not with Mr. Gribble’s buckled shoes and fat legs in thick gray stockings already showing on the stairs. The end of the grocer’s cane showed too.

Of course they were beaten. They were beaten most mornings but usually not until after breakfast. Mr. Gribble never struck in anger, he always said. He must do it, Nick supposed, for the exercise. It was the only kind he ever took. This time the beating came before breakfast. Nick was so used to it that it was no longer very painful, but it annoyed him. He considered it undignified to be beaten by a fat little man whose face grew as red as his waistcoat and who wheezed at every stroke.





Pambo howled when Mr. Gribble hit him. As he pointed out to his master, that was what the little old robin wanted. Pambo was always obliging.

“He hits you much more than he does me, Mistoh Nick Young. Because you stand there so quiet and proud. You ought to yell a little, Mistoh Nick Young.”

Back in Portsmouth, Virginia, everyone always called him Nick Young to distinguish him from his uncle, Nicholas Tabor Caryl. The night Nick and Pambo ran away from the house of Nick’s English cousins, the boys had agreed it would be safer for him to drop the name of Caryl. London was a vast city. Here, in this narrow, dark street that twisted away from the Thames, they were miles from Lawrence Caryl’s house in Bloomsbury

and from the garden with the graveyard at the end of it. Still the name of Caryl was not a common one. Somehow it might come to his cousins' ears that Nicholas Young Caryl was still alive, in which case, as Pambo remarked, they would not be alive long.

They had told Mr. Gribble that they came from Jamaica. This was true. It was off the coast of Jamaica that his Uncle Nick's ship, the *Pocahontas*, carrying tobacco from the Caryl plantation on the James River, had been wrecked.

In Jamaica, Nick had noticed, people sounded more English than they did in Virginia.

We must sound as English as we can—Nick had told Pambo—in case we meet anyone from Jamaica.

On the whole Pambo did better than his master. Only he always said "Mistoh" instead of "Mistah" like the waiters that night at Lawrence Caryl's. Pambo certainly did not sound English this morning as they pumped water into the wooden trough in the yard back of the grocer's house so they could get washed.

Nick said rather crossly—he was shivering from the cold water and the blows from Mr. Gribble's cane still stung—"Don't call me Mistoh. I've told you seven-eight times that it's silly for a grocer's boy to have a servant. Even old Gribble might think of that after a while. You call me Nick—hear?"

"Yes, Mist—Yes, Nick," Pambo said. "We'd better go and sweep the floor or we won't get any of that dee-licious breakfast, Nick. None of that moldy bacon that I smell cooking, Nick; not any of that tough old cold bread, Nick, left over from breakfast that morning King Charles got his head cut off, Nick. None of that chocolate they make with so much of the tasty water out of the Thames, Nick—"

“And don’t you call me Nick every minute either,” Nick said.

He was smiling now. Nick was never mad with anyone long, as Pambo knew. Indeed Mistoh Nick, as Pambo still called him in his mind, had hardly ever spoken harshly to Pambo in the nine years since Pambo had become Nick’s servant. Pambo had been a present to Nick on his third birthday. Pambo was then seven years old.

He could remember Nick’s uncle saying, “Now, Paul Ambrose, you are going to be Mistoh Nick’s boy. You look after him. Don’t let him fall in the river. Stay right with him, hear?”

So Pambo had stayed with Nick and here they were, eating moldy bacon and drinking watery chocolate under Mr. Gribble’s sharp black eyes. They were a mighty long way from Caryl’s Maze, Pambo thought. Nick thought about Caryl’s Maze too, and about the ruffled shirt he had on. It was getting too small for him. Wrapped up in another shirt were the book in which he wrote his journal, his box of colors, and his brushes. There was also a purse, netted of light green silk.

Cherry had hemmed the ruffles for the shirt and netted the purse. Cherry and her mother lived at Caryl’s Maze on the James River. Caroline Ashton was Cherry’s real name. They called her Cherry because of her bright pink cheeks. Her father, who had been captain of one of Uncle Nicholas’s ships, had been lost at sea. Mrs. Ashton and Aunt Dorothy Caryl had gone to school together in England. They had learned to speak French so that anyone who had learned to speak French in England could understand it. They had learned to net purses and make quill-work mirror frames and do embroidery and paint on ivory.

Luckily, Nick remembered, they also knew how to smoke hams and pickle oysters and spice beef and make almond cakes.

“Nick Young,” Aunt Dorothy would say, “you and Pambo take this basket and go out in the henhouse and find me twenty eggs, hear?”

Ambrosine, Pambo’s mother, was a fine cook but Aunt Dorothy had a lighter hand with an almond cake. When she tucked back her sleeve ruffles and covered her dress with a linen apron, even more wonderful things than usual were carried from the big kitchen along the colonnade into the dining room.

Mrs. Ashton and Aunt Dorothy tried hard to teach Cherry to cook and speak French and to color engravings. Cherry preferred sailing on the river, playing bowls, and chasing through the boxwood maze. For some reason she had taken a special dislike to paintbrushes, so Nick, who was happiest with a brush or a pen in his hand, used to do the hard parts for her. She could manage trees and sky and grass but when it came to faces and brocaded petticoats, she would groan loudly and pass the picture over to Nick. Cherry never learned to draw anything more complicated than a house with smoke coming out the chimneys. Often the smoke blew one way out of one chimney and the opposite way out of another. Nick would hurry through his fencing lessons—he hated the sight and sound of a foil—and rush back to his painting table.

Cherry would have liked to fence. She could bowl better than Nick. She could walk as neatly as a cat on the rail fence around the paddock. She was a fearless rider and the only girl Nick had ever seen who would take a fish off a hook without squealing. She was not afraid of mice, either. On the whole, Cherry was less tiresome than most girls. Some people might even consider her pretty, especially in her green silk with a

pair of cherries hung over her ears for earrings. Nick did not think she was pretty. He liked blue eyes; Cherry's were green. Her hair was no special color, just a warm brown with a lot of gold in it. Unlike the ladies in the engravings, she had a short, slightly turned-up nose. Her mouth was not the perfect cupid's bow Nick was in the habit of painting. It was also too big. She ran around in the Virginia sunshine so she had freckles.

Her mother and Aunt Dorothy were having a hard time making a lady of her.

I wonder, thought Nick, as he and Pambo finished their chocolate and started taking down the shutters of Mr. Gribble's shop, how they are getting on.

He had plenty of time to think about Caryl's Maze that morning. After the beatings were over, the morning was rather quiet.

Pambo had gone off to his work in the storeroom behind the shop, saying cheerfully, "Nice man, Mr. Gribble; saved us the trouble of dusting our clothes, Mistoh—I mean—Nick."

Mr. Gribble had already left for his favorite coffee house farther up the street, growling as usual to his wife: "Send for me at *once*, immediately, if any important customers come in." There had not been many important customers since Nick and Pambo had been working for the grocer. Mrs. Gribble waited on the kind of customer who wanted a pound of cheese or a jar of marmalade. It was only when some sea captain came in to order stores for the ship's cabin that Mr. Gribble was sent for.

It was Nick's turn that cold, rainy June morning—it was his thirteenth birthday—to stay in the shop. He must open the door when the knocker clanged, call Mrs. Gribble, be ready to run out into the rain for Mr. Gribble. It was Pambo's turn to

help squeeze lemons for Mr. Gribble's specialty, a concentrated lemon juice, and to paste labels on jars of black currant jam.

Before Nick and Pambo came, Mr. Gribble had had only one boy who helped in both the store and the shop. His name was Duncan and he had run away to sea as Mr. Gribble's shop boys often did for some reason. Mr. Gribble, an economical man with names as well as with other things, often called both Pambo and Nick "Duncan." If they did not answer promptly he naturally hit them with his cane.

What Mr. Gribble would like, Nick thought as he got out his drawing paper and began to draw a redbird on the branch of a magnolia, would be a clockwork boy. He would wake himself up every morning. His name would be Duncan. Nick had taken a dislike to Duncan because Mr. and Mrs. Gribble both spoke so well of him. Duncan, it seemed, jumped briskly out from under the counter every morning without being called. He preferred his bacon and his straw moldy. He liked his tea weak. Duncan minded neither cold nor heat. He loved cabbage. He did not play the fiddle, as Pambo did, keeping the maidservants from their work. He did not, like Nick, greet the customers with paint on his fingers. Duncan's appearance was always neat.

Nick knew, because he had seen himself in the only looking glass available—the outside of the shop window—that his own figure could well have been used for frightening the crows who pulled up the young corn shoots at Caryl's Maze. He had grown a couple of inches since they ran away from his cousins' house. He was a head taller than Pambo now. His bony wrists stuck out from under his sleeve ruffles. His green suit, the one made by William Paul, the tailor at Fredericksburg, the first suit of his that was not made at home, was too small for him

everywhere. There were holes in the stockings his aunt had knitted for him. The only thing that fitted him was his beaver hat. It had been a fine hat, three-cornered. It had cost thirty shillings. Nick wished he had even one of the shillings now. There were only pennies in the silk purse that Cherry had made and they belonged to Pambo, who had earned them playing his fiddle in the street. Mr. Gribble, of course, did not pay them anything. Their food was a great expense as he often pointed out, usually adding that in the kindness of his heart he had taken them off the street and given them a home.

If it had not been for the kindness of his heart, Mr. Gribble often asked, how would it be possible for two poor boys from Jamaica to be sleeping dry and safe and warm under the counter of a shop near London Bridge?

It was true at least that they were dry, Nick thought, shivering a little. How long they would be safe was another question.