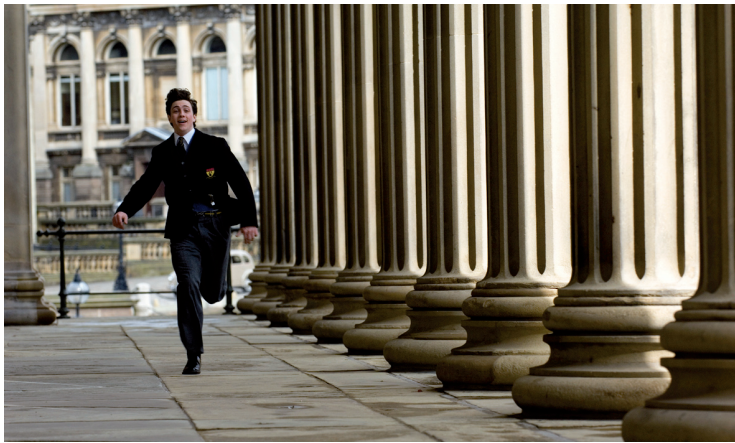


NOWHERE BOY

CHAPTER 1 'Glasses, John!'



John was running.

He was wearing his school uniform and he was running as fast as he could past the stone entrance of one of the grand old buildings in Liverpool's city centre. He looked quickly over one shoulder. There was nobody behind him, but he could hear them – hundreds, thousands of people – and they were all shouting and screaming for him. John laughed as he ran down the steps. He had never felt so alive.

'John! John!'

John's eyes opened to early morning light. His aunt was standing over his bed, and as usual she did not look happy.

'Do I ignore you?' Mimi said. There was a note of anger in her voice. 'No. So please do not ignore me. I have called you twice. Now hurry up or you'll be late for school.' She sighed and left the room. School ... School wasn't one of John's favourite places.

Fifteen minutes later, he was dressed and sitting at the breakfast table alone with the newspaper. The room was extremely tidy. Everything had its place. John had never seen newspapers on the floor, or dirty plates left on the table. Aunt Mimi liked order.

John looked up from his paper as Uncle George walked in, singing to himself as he always did in the mornings. He pulled something from his pocket and placed it in front of John – a shiny, new harmonica.

George nodded at the instrument. 'Very expensive,' he said.

'Really?'

'No.'

They both laughed.

