



Blackfort

L. Banks

⚔ Preface

Before the story unfolds, I'd like to thank the following people who have helped me write the story, all in their own way, but a way that decided the storyline, as I was writing it.

- ◆ **E. Kestens**
- ◆ **V. De Vijlder**
- ◆ **Y. Rombaut**
- ◆ **I. Waeghe**
- ◆ **D. Giesbergen**

I owe them a great deal.

The icons used on the cover and in the coat of arms are to be found on *freepik.com*

As I am not a native speaker, there are very likely errors in this story, for which I apologise in advance. None the less I hope you'll enjoy this book.

There is, however, one person who deserves some special credit.

Dear **Mrs Roelant**,

The very fact this book is out today is because you read those notes I handed you one day, just over a year ago. You didn't have to read them, but you did and told me to go and write a damn story. You were a real driving force when I started. When I wrote the first draft and made a little book out of it, you once again read it and gave your opinion, again motivating me to improve it and so I kept writing. Even when I seemed to be getting out on my own, you still were there to proofread and point out what you liked and what you found would be better if given a little more thought. If I keep writing it might all be because there was one teacher who took the time to read my drafts on paper. Thank you.

- L. Banks

Blackfort

Spark a revolution

Chapter 1: Spark a revolution

Dykeford, 12th of August 1857

The sun rises on a Sunday morning in August. Alexander Blackfort is on his way to the city hall of Dykeford, he had been looking forward to meeting the mayor of Dykeford, Sir Edward Campbell. Alexander was a boy who'd grown up in the poor part of the city, near the harbour.

Going to city hall was for him quite the walk. First going through the industrial district, then over the stairs leading into the higher part of the city and through Marble Street.

Marble Street was impressive, it had these huge white houses all lined up, leaving no gap for a side street or a garden.

Though there were no gardens on Marble Street, it was not just white either. Slim trees towered over the pavement and gave the street a green touch. A huge

square with a statue of Adam Callaway, an old king, awaited at the end of the journey through the street that was a symbol of the wealth of the city. This king had added Dykeford to his empire in 1720.

From Dunston in the west to Dykeford in the far east, every man and woman obeyed the Callaways, an ancient dynasty spanning back all the way to the 1400s and the arrival of the first settlers from the Old World.

Alexander had always found the statue impressive but had noticed since he was a boy it was leaning slightly towards the left. It came to mind every time he went onto Marble Street.

After walking past the elaborate shops decorated with flowers and banners he arrived at Callaway Square. The best word to describe the square is *white*. Leaning in from Marble street, the white aristocratic clubs and pubs surrounded the white tiled square. Behind the statue was the city hall. It had a beautiful façade; there were stairs leading up to big dark brown doors with golden doorknobs, pillars reaching to the roof and on top of the

entire structure was a bell tower that towered over the city, as a great beacon. Atop the tower was a red and gold coloured flag; the signature flag of the Callaway Empire.

After climbing the stairs he saw a couple of guards, dressed in their red and golden uniform standing by the doors. As he approached the entrance, he found the guards opening it for him. He nodded and went in, finding them closing the doors behind him again.

Alexander has never been in the city hall before so he was quite astonished at what he saw. The reception hall was huge, white walls decorated with kings and queens from times past. He recognised Queen Charlotte, and king Quincer, but the others weren't as familiar. Queen Charlotte had a kind expression on her face, like how a mother would look at her children. king Quincer wasn't gazing down as friendly. He had a brutal gaze, as if he knew what was about to happen, and he was strongly opposing it.

After a short while of gazing up, Alexander continued through the hall to the reception desk at which a brown

haired woman sat.

After crossing the space that seemed to be as big as the square outside he introduced himself to the lady.

“Excuse me madam, I’m Alexander Blackfort, I believe the mayor is expecting me.” The lady smiled kindly, checked the diary and looked up at the wall Alexander had entered from.

Alexander, curious of why she did that turned around and looked at the back wall as well. A huge marble clock was chiselled from the wall with golden hands that pointed towards five to twelve.

When Alexander realised the woman sitting at the desk was staring at him he turned around and she spoke: “Sir Campbell is waiting for you in his office, take the stairs here and go up two floors, then take the second door to your left.”

Alexander smiled and thanked her before he went up the stairs. Careful to remember every step the lady had described he arrived at a large double door. When he knocked, a voice answered: “Come in.”

He swung open the door and was amazed to find the first not white room for some time now.

“Sir Blackfort, I presume?” the man asked as he was sitting himself down at his desk. Alexander, still trying to make sense of the colours that weren’t white, nodded. The man behind the wooden desk asked him to sit down. As he walked over the dark wooden floor, Alexander saw the room was almost entirely made of wood with a dark green wallpaper.

Behind the desk in the wall was a window spanning from floor to ceiling leading out onto a balcony.

Sir Campbell was fatter than Alexander thought. His black coat was almost too tight for him and Alexander noticed he wasn’t wearing a top hat, like all the other rich folk.

“Mister Blackfort, I have checked the diary and know why you are here. However, the City Council of Dykeford has concluded, with a great majority, we can’t give you back what was taken from your father.”

Campbell said in a voice Alexander identified as fake

sentiment.

He had expected they wouldn't give back what his father had worked all his life for to gain. What little it was, it contained a bracelet of his mother who had died several years earlier to his dad.

His father was executed by the same prime minister still governing today from Dunston, the economic and political heart of the isle. "Campbell, you were a fool to ignore us this long."

Alexander stood up again and continued, keeping his eyes fixed on Campbell. "From today on, everyone has the choice to join a fair country, where poor and rich are but mere words, not classes. Everyone is equal and it is time people start to see that."

Campbell's mouth fell open of astonishment. A commoner talking to a noble about equality and fairness in such a way? He wanted to say something, but was distracted by a sound of shattering glass behind him.

From the window that lead onto the balcony behind Campbell, a man emerged. He was tall and slim, wearing

a black coat, black trousers and black boots, the black was nuanced by a white waistcoat.

The man's skin was white as snow and his eyes were bright blue, though only Alexander saw that due to his brown hair blocking the view for the mayor. Campbell stood up from his chair facing this new threat and forgot about Alexander.

“The revolution begins now.”

Campbell heard those words only vaguely as he was focusing on the brown haired man in black who was raising his hand holding a pistol. Suddenly all sound was drawn from the world for a split second, it seemed as if the entire world shut up. Then the sound of a bullet released from the pistol.

Campbell's eyes stared through the man who had just assaulted him in his own office as a hot red liquid started to escape his fat chest.

His hands tried to stop it and failed, so as a result of this leaking hole in his body, he dropped dead. Noon was chimed across the city as it was happening.