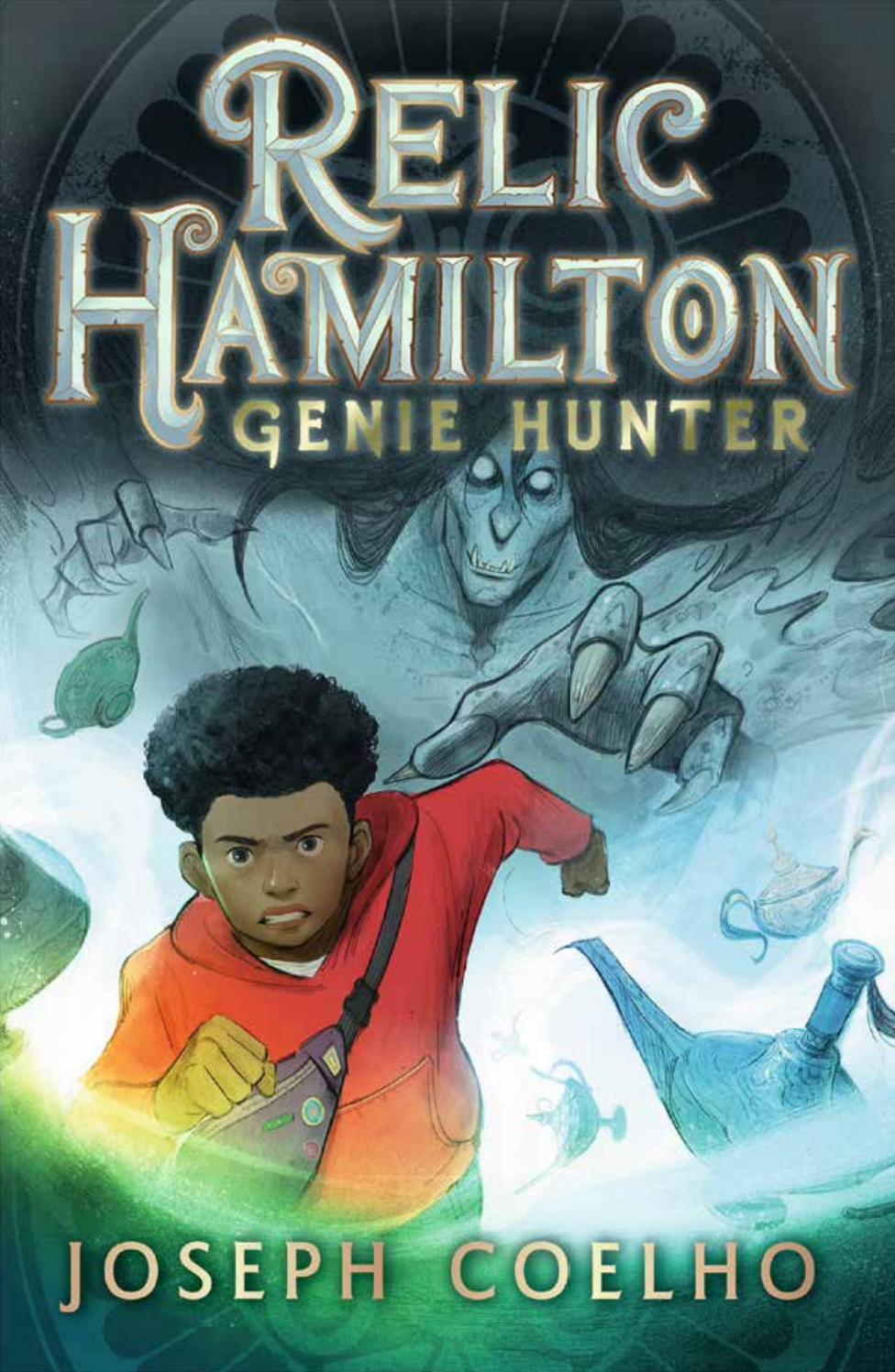

RELIC HAMILTON
GENIE HUNTER
JOSEPH COELHO




JOSEPH COELHO

**Dedicated to every reader with hope in their hearts … what will you wish for?**

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# RELIC HAMILTON
## GENIE HUNTER

JOSEPH COELHO



WALKER
BOOKS

# The Professor

**Full name:** Professor Laurence Latimer, but everyone calls him The Professor

**Age:** 63 (but honestly he doesn't look it)

**Wardrobe:** Very cool tweed suits

**Special skill:** He's like a walking encyclopaedia and knows everything about genie history, lore, spells and charms.

**Surprising skill:** Great cane-sword swisher



# Raphaela

**Full name:** Doctor Raphaela Gillan

**Age:** 27 (and a half)

**Wardrobe:** She calls it cyber-punk-vintage-chic. I call it AMAZING!

**Special skill:** She can build literally anything (like, anything!!!).

**Surprising skill:** Coming up with genie-related acronyms



# Rania

**Full name:** Rania Latimer

**Age:** 13 and three quarters

**Wardrobe:** Anything, everything purple and blue!

**Special skill:** The youngest doctor ever! Oh yeah and she's half-genie!

**Surprising skill:** Classified!!!



# Me, Relic

**Full name:** Relic Hamilton

**Age:** 12

**Wardrobe:** I'm still finding my style.

**Special skill:** Top Secret!

**Surprising skill:** I know a lot about history,
I guess it's kinda my thing.



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# PROLOGUE

# THE ANONYMOUS GENIE HUNTER

*Present Day*

Welcome to the YouTube channel
of The Anonymous Genie Hunter.
That's me.
Run by my trusted adult team.
Thanks for subscribing.
Follow me as I hunt genies...
Find out all you need to know about evil genies
and what to look out for.
If you're new here,
let me tell you how this channel came about.
I was supposed to keep all my genie hunting secret
but then things kinda got public,
in a big way.
And so, The Anonymous Genie Hunter
channel was born.

Here I will keep you up to date on all the things
you need to know about genies.

Genies grant wishes!
That's all anyone ever cares about.
They forget that genies were imprisoned
in those lamps for a reason.
People never think about the chaos
left behind when a wish is granted.
People never think of the consequences
of messing with the fabric of space and time.
People never stop to ponder
what a genie has to gain from granting wishes;
they never think about the genie's motives.
If they did, they would think twice
before wishing for anything…



# 1
# MUDLARKING

## *One Year Earlier*

*I'm happiest by the river*
*lost in my thoughts*
*just me, Grandfather and the tide.*

*We search the Thames foreshore,*
*hunt for new objects*
*whispering with the tide.*

*Searching for the treasures*
*that history has left behind.*

After school I head to the river. The River Thames is old, ancient in fact, and it's been the lifeblood of London since tribes first settled on its banks centuries ago, and then Romans and eventually modern Londoners. Grandfather and

I hunt out that history every day. We search the same stretch of river looking for pottery and coins, bones and trinkets. We have found loads here, anything that is real old or valuable we always take to the Museum of London to add to their collection, but anything else we keep, adding to our understanding of the deep history of London. I look down at my feet and spot a coin … well a pirate cob – the rough money that pirates would take from ships carrying (or stealing!) gold from South America. We find lots of these. This cob is brass and on one side I can just make out a number 8. I turn it over in my hand and gasp. Someone has scratched letters into the surface, an R and an H. What are the chances?

"Look, Grandfather," I say, "a pirate cob with my initials on."

Grandfather smiles. "No way, Relic! That's got to be good luck." Grandfather rinses the coin in a puddle of Thames water and makes it shine.

"Oi look, Relic's in the mud again!" I hear them before I see them, up on the road alongside the river pointing and shouting, laughing and staring. It's Trevor and his fellow trolls – horrible to everyone

but especially me. Trevor runs his fingers through his wavy strawberry blond hair like he's on a catwalk. A lot of people in class fancy him for some reason. Then there's troll number two, Abigail, she wears her 'fro in a tight bun and is forever staring at her phone, never looking up from it, not even when calling a first-year names! Loads of people fancy her too. It's like no one cares about their personalities. And then there's troll number three, cool, silent Peter … he's always with them, and rarely joins in … oh but loads of people fancy him too, so I guess there's that.

"What you doing, Relic … searching for dinner?" Abigail starts snapping photos and I hide my face.

"You friends with them?" asks Grandfather.

I shake my head as my cheeks and forehead heat up.

"You got somewhere to be?" Grandfather asks them, with that deep Jamaican-teacher voice he sometimes uses.

I squint, waiting for them to shout back, but they don't, and I can see why. I look up at Grandfather. I forget how big he is, how, despite his health, he's

still got the body of a strong man. Even with wellies on, you know not to mess with my grandfather. I feel a jolt of pride swell up in me as the trolls cat-walk off down the road. Then Grandfather bends down so his face is level with mine. His locks are neatly tied together and hang in a long heavy rope down his back, all but one that has worked loose. He pokes this back in with the others and fixes me with that stare adults give when they want you to know that everything will be alright.

"There will always be bullies, Relic, but they bully you because they see everything that you are, and everything you can become, and it scares them, so don't you ever … ever pay them no mind." I nod, and he pats my shoulder. "Now let's get back to the shop and I'll rustle us up something warm."

But as he stands he starts coughing and I have to help him up, and that sinking feeling spreads over me again. That feeling of loss and despair.


ANANSI ANT



# 2
# ANANSI ANTIQUES

*We wind away from the river*
*to our home above*
*Anansi Antiques.*

*You can feel the whisperings*
*of generations of Hamiltons*
*in our home above*
*Anansi Antiques.*

*As grandfather cooks*
*I sit in my nest in the basement*
*breathing in the history of*
*Anansi Antiques.*

We live above our shop, Anansi Antiques, in Soho, London on Air Street. Just me and Grandfather. Grandfather says that one day he will find that trinket or antique that will make our

fortune, but it hasn't happened yet.

Every day after school, I help out in the shop. Grandfather gets me to sort through the mountain of old stuff we have in the basement, looking for things to display in the shop's window. Grandfather has been collecting this stuff for years from his journeys all over the world. But he doesn't travel so much now his health is bad and, besides, we have no room for any more things.

"There's always room for more treasures, Relic," he'll say.

He always says my name with a flourish, like he's announcing me to a room full of people. I know my name is weird, Grandfather says Mum and Dad named me Relic because I was their greatest treasure. Cheesy, right? But I like it. It's my name and mine alone.

Anyway, where was I? Oh yeah, Grandfather's treasures.

I'm always saying that maybe we should have a clear-out, sell up shop and move, if it would help Grandfather now that his health is suffering, but Grandfather won't do it, and to be honest

I'm relieved. The shop belonged to my great-great-great-grandmother and has always dealt in treasures. I'm not sure who we are without our little shop.

Grandfather always says, "I cannot leave. This is my home. It is our home. It was your mother's home. And I hope it will remain in our family for generations to come."

The idea of the shop one day being mine feels unreal, but I know what he means – there are so many memories here, happy and sad memories, but all ours. There's no way we could ever leave.

Today I'm down in the basement polishing the metal treasures collected over the years and preparing our best treasures for sale. Tourists don't always see the value in what we have. I once had to spend a whole afternoon proving that what one tourist was calling junk was actually an original 'pieces-of-eight' coin like the one I found this morning, one that was likely used by real pirates! But they weren't having it, and they left without buying a thing… Their loss.

When things do sell, it's normally the shiny things that are our best sellers, and boxes of silver-

plated cutlery are really popular too. Grandfather gets me to make up complete sets from the tons of incomplete boxes of knives and forks we have lying around. It's hard work, like doing a puzzle without ever knowing if you have all the pieces. Often the handles don't match, or the knives and forks are different sizes. But I know what I'm looking for and can often recreate complete sets from the individual pieces we have found over the years, it feels great putting together an original set and giving all these separate pieces a home again. Grandfather often says, "You have a good eye for this, Relic."

I know he says these things to make me work harder. But to be honest, I like doing it and I want to help him as much as I can. He's getting old and he does too much already. Mrs Chen next door always comes in and checks on him. She often brings us something hot and steaming to eat. I think she feels sorry for us. She always looks at me with sad eyes. I know she's just being kind, but sometimes I just don't want to be looked at with sad eyes.

Over the last few weeks I have found lots of brass oil lamps in the shop and, today, I thought

that if I could find some more and polish them up a bit, we could make a great display for the window. Something to catch the eye of the London tourists and maybe even sell as a collection. Many of the lamps are old Moroccan tourist gifts, bought by Victorians on their travels, but some even I can't identify.

I take the brass polish off the shelf and sit down on top of the suitcases in the corner of the basement. This is my nest. I've covered the suitcases in some comfy rugs I found lying around and have everything I need at my fingertips. I sometimes even do my homework here. I do have my own room upstairs but I like sitting amongst all the old stuff. I love the smell down here; I sink into it like it's a well-loved beanbag, musty and mysterious. My friend David isn't a huge fan, he thinks it's haunted and whenever he comes round he is only happy when we go to my room to play computer. It's kind of cool knowing that Mum sat here too when she was my age, polishing and sorting. There are generations of treasures down here in the basement, and

every now and then I find something that even Grandfather hasn't seen before – something put here by my mum or perhaps even Grandfather's mum or Grandfather's mum's mum!

I start my search in a corner of the basement that has unearthed some treasures in the past. I'm making a dent in the amount of stuff in this corner and, after moving some old books and some massive brass serving dishes, I reach the floor. This is a big achievement – there is not much floor on show in the basement of Anansi Antiques. The floorboards here are loose and there are two wooden boards that shift and creak when I press them; they're not nailed down like the others. I lift them up and find a space underneath. I make a gasp that is somewhere between a woah and a wow.

"Wow-woah!"

In that space is a beautiful, carved wooden box a bit smaller than a shoe box. The metalwork on its edges looks like wisps of smoke coming together to form a clasp on the top. There are clear wear patterns on the bottom, this box definitely has some age to it. I've hit the jackpot!

There is a strange lock keeping the box closed, gears inside gears, levers and ball-bearings all surrounding a keyhole. To my luck, the key is still in the box. I turn it, and the mechanism clunks into place. It reminds me of those old fairground machines with dummies behind glass that move and speak when you feed them a coin. Grey ash and sand fall from the box and cover my trousers, my new school trousers. Grandfather is going to be well annoyed. Underneath the ash and sand are six small brass oil lamps surrounding a much larger one in the middle. These will be ideal to add to my window display.



I take the largest one out. It's heavy and really nicely designed. The spout of the lamp and its handle look like arms – thick, muscled arms. The brass is etched and I can just make out some sort of pattern underneath. I get hold of the polish and start to rub…

It's gleaming. I will need to ask Grandfather about the age, could be three, four hundred years old … no, older for sure. Strange writing covers the body of the lamp. I'm not good with languages but maybe Hindi or perhaps Tamil? I bet Grandfather would know. I'm rubbing the lamp and I'm starting to feel cold, which is weird because it's been boiling all day. It always takes ages for the heating to be turned off in school, so I was sweating in every class. But man, it feels really cold now, *bbbbrrrrr*! And I don't know if it's the light in here but it's getting harder to see what I'm doing…

…

…

…

WHAT HAPPENED? I think I had a blackout. I am freezing, my teeth are chattering and my

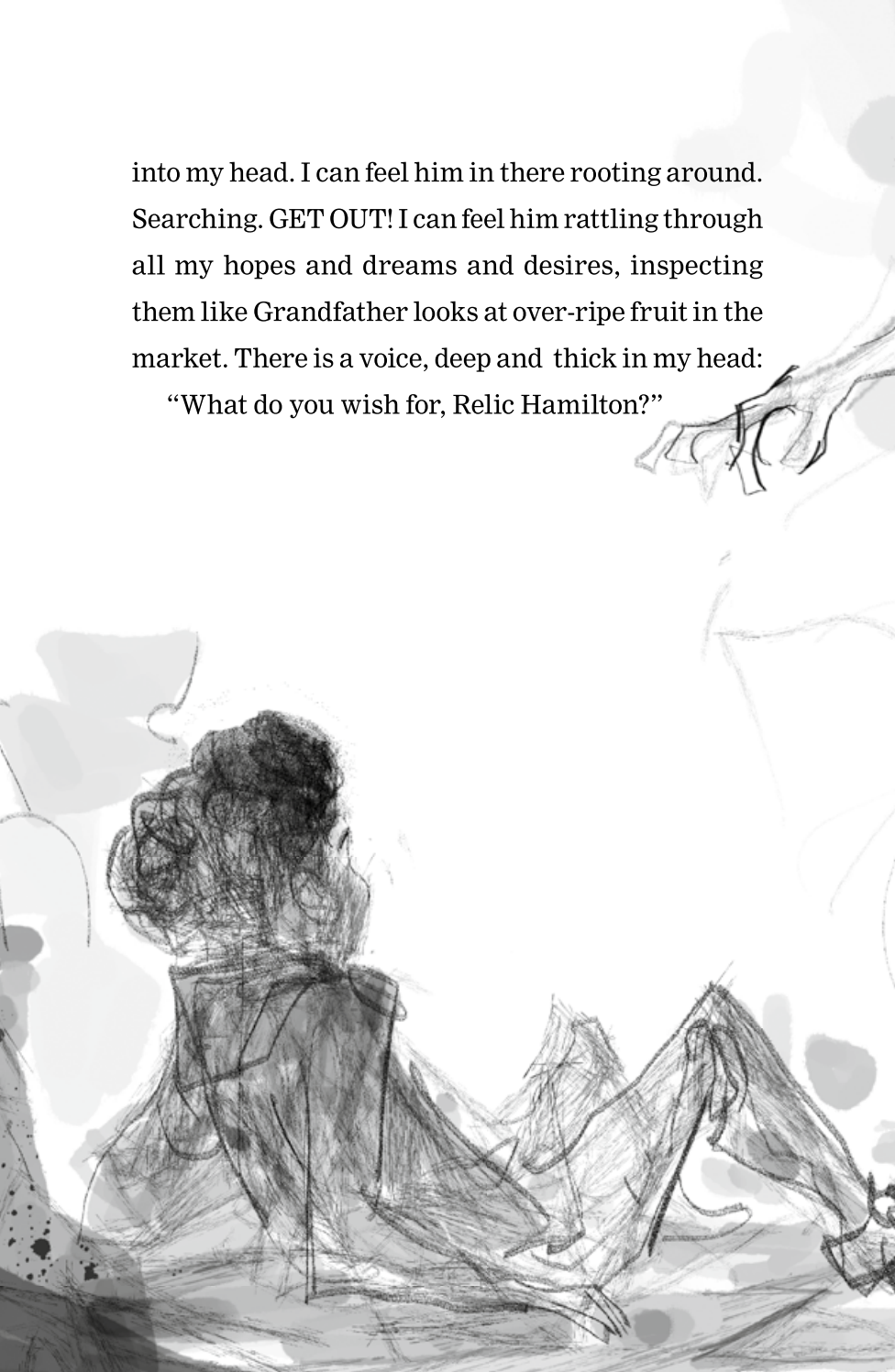
eyesight is all wonky, like I'm staring down a long tunnel. My fingertips feel numb with cold… Something isn't right. The lamp in my handfeels much lighter than it did before. And I can hear breathing!

A deep, heavy breathing, almost a growl, is coming from the opposite corner of the basement, the dark corner that Grandfather says was the old coal store. I'm scared to look that way. Don't be silly, Relic. It's just a basement. But what if David is right … maybe the basement is haunted! Probably just the wind…

But it's not the wind. OMG … there is a huge man, and he is ripped like a body builder! Sitting there in the corner, on top of all our stuff. He's dressed in rags, his bulging muscles showing underneath, his skin bone white. He has his back to me but his head is slowly turning. Lank, greasy hair falls over his face and down his massive muscly back. Through his curtain of black hair his ice-white eyes pierce through me. I want to run and scream but it feels like all hope has left me. It feels like I've got no choice but to just sit here and be swallowed by his gaze. His eyes are glowing now, whiter, spearing

into my head. I can feel him in there rooting around. Searching. GET OUT! I can feel him rattling through all my hopes and dreams and desires, inspecting them like Grandfather looks at over-ripe fruit in the market. There is a voice, deep and thick in my head:

"What do you wish for, Relic Hamilton?"





He knows my name, saying every syllable like it hurts! And he knows what I want. He has caught hold of my deepest wish. But I don't want him near it, so I'm pulling it back. I'm burying it deep…

"I can make it so."

NO. My head is hurting, all my dreams and desires jostling around, but he's pulling at one in particular, making my dream, my wish, fill up my entire mind. I can feel it bubbling up inside me, getting brighter and richer. I can feel every part of me wanting it more and more. He's making me hunger for it like I have never hungered for anything before. And I don't like it, it feels wrong … I WANT MY WISH … but not like this, everything inside me is telling me to run but I can't. He's smiling. I can feel him smiling in my head with a mouth that is too big, with teeth that are too fat for any smile…

"I can grant it for you, Relic Hamilton," he says, and a whoosh is lifting me into the air.

It feels like my brain is on fire with the sugar-rush joy of having the thing I always wanted. But it's a sickening feeling. It's too much; it feels fake.

He's not granting a wish; he is taking something away.

The man is laughing now, pulling on the weird hungry pleasure I feel when thinking about my wish, like he's feasting on it. It hurts and I want it to stop and I want to scream out. Then, I hear footsteps running down the stairs behind me.

I see the big man's lips curl over his huge teeth and he extends his arm. A ball of electric blue fire shoots towards me but I am pushed to the ground and I hear a shout that sort of sounds like Grandfather… There is a flash of light as the man transforms into a thick cloud of smoke that zaps into the large lamp, kicking it out of my hands, into the air and through the basement window. It all happens so quickly. My head is clouded and it's hard to breathe, like I'm rising up from underwater. And then … darkness.



I awake for a moment, eyelids heavy. The basement looks like a bomb has hit it, all our stuff scattered everywhere, and blurry people rushing about with flashlights. Grandfather is on the floor and I can hear someone saying his name again and

again: “Carl, Carl can you hear me?”. His breathing is ragged, I try to call to him, but my head feels like the school bell. Grandfather’s eyes are closed. He doesn’t look like himself. The people are rushing over, talking quickly. My head blooms as a deep sickening feeling takes me over. And once again all goes dark.