

# TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

## WILLIAM CONROY 8P

**J**ames Wilkinson was a horrible man. He was a millionaire and got his wealth by trampling over others. He only thought of himself and didn't appreciate anything he had. He had a wife and two daughters and he rarely got anything for them, if he ever did it was something cheap and nasty. He thought more of his sports car than he did of them. He never gave to charity, they were always phoning him asking if he and his company would like to sponsor them but he always said that he did not have enough money.

It was a freezing winter morning and James was walking to work, it was very icy and James was terrified something might happen to his car. As he past an alleyway a vagrant called out to him, "I'm sorry but I can't give you any money at the moment" James said. "You don't have to give me any money" the vagrant replied, "I just need to tell you something", "I don't have time for this!" James replied angrily "You will lose everything you have if you don't change your ways" the vagrant said. James sniggered, "Do you really think that I will lose everything I have with the way I live now, that's a load of rubbish, get out of my face!" James pushed the vagrant out of the way "You'll regret you didn't listen to me!" the vagrant shouted.

The next day James went into work as usual, he parked his expensive sports car in the parking lot and walked in. Immediately one of his financial advisors came up to him, "We've lost a lot of orders on the new laptops and the cost is massive". James took a piece of paper from his advisor which showed a spreadsheet with all the costs on it "£650,000 !?" James was not happy but not too worried. "They'll come back soon; they won't get a better deal anywhere else."

As the months went by lots of smaller orders were lost. To keep things going James transferred more and more money from his other ventures. This put

more and more pressure on him. Over the months he started to drink heavily having massive arguments with his wife and being rude and horrible to everybody.

After having a meeting with his accountant he had to make 20 people redundant. This hit him especially hard as it was coming up to Christmas. Christmas Eve he came home from work to find that his wife had prepared a party with all of his friends and family. He was so drunk he fell over the dog and took a swing at his brother in law for no reason. It was the worst Christmas ever.

When he woke up Christmas afternoon there was no one else in the house. He had been so drunk he'd slept until 3.00pm. He went downstairs to make coffee and found a note from his wife. She had left him and taken the girls with her. She said she could not put up with him and his alcoholic behaviour.

Back at James' business, almost all of the sales had stopped coming in. Over a space of two months James' company collapsed and with no money the bailiffs came and took all of his belongings and before long he was thrown out of his house. None of his family would take him in or help him all he had left was park benches and cardboard boxes. He spent two years on the streets, sleeping on cardboard in front of shop windows only to be sent away, and begging people for money.

One day he saw a massive charity event in the street. He looked up to the podium and saw a man signing a giant cheque for the charity. James recognised him; he was the vagrant, standing up there on the podium in an expensive suit, James' ex wife and children clapping and smiling alongside him on the podium.

That was where James could have been.....

If he had changed his ways.