

Young Writer Competition

Rotary
**YOUNG
WRITER**
COMPETITION



**Pankhurst
House**

Deeds not words.

The man stepped out of his earthen hut and gazed upon the land surrounding him.

Vibrant green grass, Rolling hills and the scurrying of small animals surrounded him. Off in the distance, he could see a deep, dense forest that seemed to go on forever. The air was crisp and fresh this morning and the dew still settled on the blades of grass.

He needed to collect some food today. Clutching his stomach, he felt a deep grumble. So off he went, with thoughts of a good meal.

Down by the river, there grew plenty of shrubbery and a peculiar looking berry bush. The man had never seen one like this before but he was sick of looking for food any longer. The branches were covered in shark-tooth like thorns and the berries gave off a pungent stench. However, This didn't dissuade the man from plucking a berry off and giving one a try.

Instantly, a wave of nausea flooded over him, and he felt like he was passing out. Then, darkness.

After what felt like an eternity, he opened his eyes and was shocked by what he saw. Around him was a bustling square full of people going about their day. Thatched buildings sat where rolling hills and dense forest used to be. But the people didn't even notice him. As if he wasn't there. Columns of marble stood where his hut once was and long paths of cobblestone snaked over the horizon.

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All of a sudden, a loud ringing pierced his ears. The world began to blur and fade. Darkness seeped in again.

This time he woke up to the sound of bells and shouting. He stood up and found himself on a packed, dense street. People filled every available space and shopkeepers shouted at passersby. There was a thick, foul stench in the air and the hills that once dominated the view from his hut were nowhere to be seen. Not one blade of grass could be seen and on the horizon there was nothing but farmland where the forest once stood.

Again, he felt the ringing return as the world around him drifted into haze.

Now, his eyes opened to the thick haze of smog. Massive chimneys stained with soot pumped goodness knows what into the sky. The man coughed as he breathed in the polluted air. The street was less busy this time, with run down brick buildings on each side. The people he saw looked ragged and soot covered and the man could barely take in what had happened to his land. Then, the darkness once again encroached.

He woke now to a changed landscape, now he saw huge buildings made of glass and concrete shoot up into the sky. Cars rushed down the streets and while the smog had disappeared the air still burned the back of his throat. People streamed around him and of

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what once used to be pastoral greenland, nothing remained. The rivers and hills he knew like the back of his hand had disappeared without a trace.

He blinked once, blinked again and everything around him disappeared. The noise had subsided and he found himself once again in the valley he knew. The stream lapped at his feet and he contemplated what he had just seen. A shiver ran down his spine.

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