

## English Elephant Homework Week 3

I've always lived here, and I suppose I always will. For the short time I have left anyway,

I'm Kyle. My friends call me K, or they would. Should I have any. And before you start making assumptions, I'm not some sad loner. I'm not some greasy-haired, geeky kid that no one wants to hang out with. Well, at least not that greasy-haired. Like, averagely greasy-haired for a 14-year-old boy. Anyway, I'm marked. That's why.

Good - you start by creating a protagonist the reader might sympathise with, so we care about them more

I'm marked with Flight. It's part of our way up hear, I guess you could say it's kind of a religion. Everyone gathers at the centre of the island once every two years. They form this giant circle around the Shift, and wait. The marked kid. They stand in front of the Shift. And then, when they step forward, the Shift rises. It rises into the sky, like a hot air balloon, with a small wooden basket hanging from it. Just scraping the ground. The marked kid steps into the basket, and it closes behind them. And that's it. For a while.

nice use of repetition here to create the sense of on-going elevation

The Shift just rises; it rises and rises. This is the stage of the Flight called The Great Rise, wonder why? Then, when it's reached its peak, it glides backward. The whole crowd, who have already gathered at the point at the Drop point, seeing how the rise takes four hours. Watch from the very edge of our floating island as the Shift moves over the edge. So from hundreds of miles above our island, which floats thousands of miles above the Threa (where all the normal humans live), the wooden basket opens at the bottom. And drops the kid. You see them plummet towards us, and then, faster than you can blink, past us. And they just keep falling. This point of the Flight is called, if you haven't already guessed, The Great Fall. Inventive, aren't they? Anyway, they're not supposed to fall. Well, not all the way. It's called the Flight for a reason.

The one special marked, the one who'll supposedly raise Thea, they fly. Makes sense, except from the fact that the Flight has happened every two years for the past six thousand and every marked kid has fallen. Either that or they just flew off.

Anyway, back to today. I have a couple 'surprises' for you. That's sarcasm, in case you didn't realise. Can you guess what day it is? Yeah, the Flight. And only one more surprise after this, I promise; can you guess? Yeah, I'm the marked kid this year. And the final surprise. It's my birthday!

I'm 14 today. And about to be dropped to my death. The Gathering will start in 10 minutes, and then I'll be up there for 4 hours until it drops me. I seriously doubt I'm the special marked, but maybe my birthday wish will come true. Maybe I'll fly. And then, when I do, I'll fly down to Threa and never come back. All this crap about how we're superior and how the special marked will raise Threa to our level, well not if the special marked is me! How the hell am I supposed to raise a whole land mass of earth and sea? Those old coffin-dodgers have lost the plot, I tell you! Anyway. I guess they're waiting for me.

Trudging up the path to the Shift I can see my mum in the crowd. I feel kinda sorry for her. I'm the second son she'll have lost to the Flight. My older brother Alex, it was his Flight four years ago. I was only ten as I watched him fall to his death. He was different from me. He wanted to fly; he wanted to raise Threa. I still don't understand why. Maybe I'm a defect. Well, either way, it won't matter much longer.

I step out of the circle. I try not to make eye contact with mum. She's crying, but I don't know why. She knew there was a possibility of her sons being marked before she had us. She practically chose this. The shift begins to rise. It's even bigger the closer I am to it. I wait, not really thinking of anything. I feel kinda numb. Nothing really matters anymore.

I get in the wooden basket; it looks like it's weaved out of thick tree branches. The island did this. Supposedly, the Shift is the making of the island. That the basket was made inside it, and that the shift rose itself. I don't believe that. I believe some old, messed-up human did it just to hold power over us. But what does it matter now? I'm gonna die either way.

The basket closes behind me, roots binding together. The sides are too tall to climb out of. And no ones ever done that before, so who knows what they'd do to me? Instead, I sit down and strunch myself up in a corner of the basket. Wrapping my arms around my legs. I'll be hear a while. I should probably try to sleep.

There's a thud. And the whole basket shakes. I can't hear anything; it's quiet up hear, peaceful, even. I press my face into the side of the basket, and through the narrowest gap, I see everyone right at the edge of the island. They look smaller than ants from up hear, but I can see the edge of the island and then nothing beneath it. Just clouds, fog, and nothing. I take a deep breath. The basket will open any second now. These will be my last peaceful moments alive. If you can call them that.

I wait; still nothing. I thought maybe you could feel the basket open; maybe you could feel a stirring as the roots untangle from one another and drop me. But there's nothing. And then I hear something. It sounds like humming. No, a whisper. I can almost make out words. "Tua sint casus tui renascentiae." It's said in a soft voice, not male or female, not even something in between. And I don't really hear it as such. I feel it. We were taught Latin at camp, I believe Threa has a similar thing, which they call school. It's not fun, and it wasn't fun to learn, but it was something to do when you were sat alone. I think back to those lessons now. 'Tua sint casus tui renascentiae', meaning, Let your fall be your rebirth. I don't understand. And I don't have time to understand because the basket has opened and now I'm plummeting towards the island. I know I'll fall past, but from the view hear it looks like I'm going to scrape the edge. I spread out my arms and legs, the winds battering my face, so I try to turn onto my back. I want to slow down. I want time to work our was the feeling ment.

were they hoping to be? this sentence feels out of place

And then I'm hurtling past the edge and down to Threa. So I'm not the special marked. I'm just another fallen. I feel sad, disappointed, dejected even. I'm not sure why, though; I knew this was going to happen. I knew I was going to die today. I close my eyes and think of my brother. The one person I truly loved, seeing as how I could never forgive my mum for bringing me into this world, and I'd never met my dad I think of my brother's laugh, of his smile, and then I stop thinking. I stop thinking all together. I just let myself fall in peace.

The idea of the fall and inevitable disappointment is built up well through the repetition of the hopeless tone of your narrative voice. This would have made a better resolution i think.

I wake up in bed; the room I'm in is all white, it smells foul, and it burns my nose. So this is the afterlife. I'm a bit disappointed, to be honest. And then someone enters the room. It's a woman, her dark hair tied up in a neat bun and a light blue mask covering her mouth. She's dressed in a white coat that stops just above her ankles.

"Welcome, Kyle." She says. I look at her in disbelief.

"You passed the test; the simulation worked. And your the only one who saw through it." She looks at me like I should remember something, but my brain's just blank. So she continues.

"You won, Kyle. You won the money, the scholaphip. You'll be working here in only a few months. So, welcome back to" She gives me a wink, 'Threa'. She laughs and leaves.

I look down at my definitely not fourteen-year-old body. It's starting to come back to me. This room, I've been here before. I remember the smell of cleaning fluid. I remember them staring the simulation. I remember the voices fading away. I remember flying up to the island, I remember landing. I remember The Flight.

I'm, not sure about this last bit - if you are going to have a twist like this, you need to use structure to somewhat hint towards it throughout, or the story ends up feeling disjointed.