

## 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.

I'm marked with Flight. It's part of our way up here, 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.

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 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 for 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.

As I walked up the path, well not a path as such, more a wide, long stretch of dead, chewed-up grass. To be fair, most of the grass is like this on the island, dead and patchy. Kinda like me. I haven't ever really put full effort into my life. I mean, what would the point be? I was always going to die today. Anyway, further up the path, near 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 remember standing, huddled close to my mum, the biting wind gnawing away at my nose and cheeks and the night air stinging as it clawed its way down my throat. The tears that streamed down my face seemed to freeze in place. I was only ten as I watched him fall to his death. He was different from me.

Nice - this idea works, although you can develop setting rather than stating it is like him. a good reader will interpret that

Great use of language to describe the weather and show pain and trauma of the moment

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.

The fog, thick and clinging, seemed to be trying to worm its way down my throat. Trying to stop my breathing now, well, that might be something I'd welcome at this point. 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. The ground shakes a bit. It's almost trembling. Maybe it's sorry; maybe it regrets starting this stupid ritual. It's even bigger the closer I am to it. I can see little bits of stone and rubble falling from underneath the giant floating mass of land. It's dark, and with the fog I can't see more than two metres in front of me so I wait where I am. I wait, not really thinking of anything. I feel kinda numb. Nothing really matters anymore.

Lovely idea to have falling stones - what else could be there to reflect this idea?

I get in the wooden basket; it looks like it's weaved out of thick tree branches, which are roughly coated in a grey sludge, like the clay soil that envelops the basket when it's underground is still trying to hold it down. Unfortunately it has failed in it's half hearted endeavour.

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 scrunch myself up in a corner of the basket. Wrapping my arms around my legs. I'll be here for 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 here, peaceful, even. Although the cold hits me like a tonne of bricks and I'm glad I curled up earlier. I'd reserved my heat well. Now the night was coming to steal the sun, and it seemed like it was going to take me too. 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 here; the grey fog from earlier has cleared, but only slightly. Maybe I was the cause of it; maybe the island's happy I'm going; maybe the fogs coming with me. It doesn't really matter because I can see the edge of the island and then the nothing beneath it, the nothing into which I'm going to fall. 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.

nice!

nice!

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 here 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 out what the feeling meant.

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.

I removed the previous added ending after reviewing your comments. I was worried previously that I hadn't created a clear enough ending. But after reading through it again, I realised that this ending was unnecessary and decided to remove it altogether.

I think this was a good structural choice - now how could you use setting in this final moment to emphasise your ending?