

## Year Seven winners 2013

### First Prize

#### DISASTER

By Alex Brownbridge

Tiny grains of sand stick to my feet as I walk across the beach. A beautiful crystal clear ocean washes up against the side of my leg. I look to my left and see wooden shack houses dotted all over the place. The market in the middle of our village is packing up for the day. As I gaze up my breath is taken away - this view from where I am standing will never grow boring even though I see it every day of the year. On all sides steep hills surround the village. They protect our village from outsiders, it's like a mother holding her baby in her arms and protecting it from the dangers of the world. Thick dense jungle grows wild on top of the hills. I almost feel like I live there because the amount of time I spend up there hunting for food to keep my mum and brother alive. A blood red sun is falling behind the hills just shining its last rays over the world. The jungle chorus will start soon; night is coming fast.

As night falls I try to get some sleep but once again I can't, it happens most nights. The memory of my father still lingers in my head. I can't help but think what he would be doing now, what he would be doing if he wasn't lying at the bottom of the ocean. They didn't ever find his body, at least that's what they say.

*It was a warm Saturday morning, a crisp blue sky. I remember it as if it was today. I was nine years old and dad and I were going out fishing in his new boat. While dad was preparing bait I was messing about on the edge of the boat, that's when I fell in. Dad jumped in to save me. I can still feel his arms around me. I still feel them slipping down my back and then letting go. There was red water all around me. His dying words were: 'climb in the boat son'. Then he was gone, eaten alive by a shark.*

I wake up in a cold sweat - thinking of my dad must have made me fall asleep. The small battered watch I wear reads 5:31 AM. It's time to get ready for fishing, I thought to myself, hopefully I'll catch some big ones today.

I rounded up my fishing kit. It was been a great day, the best for months in fact.

'EKO!' a shout from across the beach startled me and then I saw a ball flying towards me. I immediately dropped the fishing rod and controlled the ball on my knee. I then started juggling the ball on my feet. 'Hey Eko,' it was my best friend, Langit. 'Wanna play some soccer?' A smile crept across my face, he already knew the answer. My eyes looked down to the ball at my feet and then back to my fishing kit. This ball was special; it was one of Langit's prize possessions. I still remember the day it was given to us.

*My family was at the edge of starvation, all of us. My dad had died four months earlier and we badly needed him. One day a group of British soldiers drove into our village, they were on a training exercise and asked if they could use our village as a base. The adults agreed and the soldiers set up camp at once. All the kids used to play soccer with anything they could find that was around. The soldiers were great to us, especially me. They would always give me some of their rations because they could see I was starving. They saw us playing soccer with a soft jungle fruit one day and came over. A tall young man with deep brown eyes*

*called Paul (he was my favourite), gave me and Langit a proper soccer balls. It was the best day of our lives. Langit and I still use that soccer ball today.*

All of the kids from the village are on the beach today, it's low tide so we can have a big soccer match. I don't like to brag but I'm the best soccer player in the village. The ball is rolling and the match has started. The other team have the ball. They start an attack and win a corner. I see an opportunity for a goal as all but one of their players is up in the box. The ball is crossed in and Langit heads it away, the ball lands at my foot. I flick it backwards and I am off, the defender rushes towards me and I knock it through his legs. I am one on one with the keeper and certain to score. Suddenly I see my friend Adi on my left, I pretend to shoot but I slip the ball to Adi. He buries it. 'YEAH ADI!' I run over and ruffle his hair. He's the youngest player here but still one of the best. 'Well done mate,' I say.

As the team settles down I look sideways at Adi, there is horror in his eyes, pure horror. He is staring at something behind me. I turn around. A wave is rolling up the beach and it's not stopping. It just keeps on rolling in towards the land. This is no normal wave. 'RUN IT'S A TSUNAMI. 'I frantically grab Adi's hand and we start running.

My house sits next to the smallest hill in the village. That is where we are going. Everything around me is a blur, we pass my house. The usually shallow stream is higher than it's ever been, I jump across and my heels clip the water on the other side - I only just made it. I scramble up the hill in a blind panic. My ears are suddenly alerted to a cracking sound. I start to fear the worst. I reach the top and look down; Adi is struggling in the river. He stops, he knows he has lost. Our eyes meet for the very last time and I can see he is petrified; those big dark brown eyes are full of fear. Then he is under, he is being washed away to a possible death. I scream "Adi" but nothing comes out. My eyes cast over the destroyed village. The air is filled with the sound of screams and crashing. This is torture. A single tear drips down my cheek and into my mouth. It tastes of the salty sea that I have grown up with.

*The sea that has kept me alive with food in the hard times. The sea that I will never forgive. The sea that I now hate with a passion. The sea that has taken my father. The sea that has taken my brother. The sea that has taken my village. The sea that has destroyed my life...*

It is too much to take in. Houses lie in wreck and ruin. Carts, people and animals are being washed away. Once again a blood red sun is setting over the hills, just like me it cannot watch anymore and is trying to get away from all the pain. I will never forget this day for as long as I live.

The sound of a helicopter is filling my ears and suddenly I see it coming for me. A rope with a stretcher on the end is thrown down. A pilot up above is signalling for me to get in. Hesitantly, I climb in and strap myself up. Slowly and carefully they pull me up. At the top, a man pulls me in and wraps a blanket around me. "Are you ready, Steve?" The pilot is talking to the man who gave me the blanket.

"Yep I'm good, let's get going."

I look deep into the man's eyes. "Who has survived?" I ask him quietly. It's obvious he doesn't want to tell me. He turns around and looks at the pilot, the pilot nods.

"I'm afraid only you have survived," this new piece of information takes a while to sink in. Once again, a salty tear drips down my cheek, I realise this is only just the start.

What is going to happen to me? Who is going to look after me? Where am I going to live? Why has this happened to me? What is going to become of me?...

## Second prize

### A Village that went Under By Georgina Scouller.

Hi, I'm Eva Miller and I want to tell you about how we escaped an exploding volcano. We lived on a huge farm just outside a village that was next to a long gone volcano, or at least that what the scientists said...

My story starts on a lovely spring morning, Sophie (my sister), Mum and I were sitting at the table eating bacon and eggs on toast when a sudden rumble came from outside. Plates crashed on to the floor, you could hear a vase smash in the hallway. Dad was outside watching and helping a cow have a calf. 'Oh my gosh!' said mum sounding scared, 'what was that?'

'It could be an earthquake,' Sophie said.

'Or,' I butted in, 'it could be the volcano!'

Dad walked into the room. 'What *was* that?' he asked.

'We were just discussing that,' said mum standing up to clear the surviving plates.

Later, when we were at school, the rumbling happened again. My year 6 class was in the middle of a test and suddenly the whole classroom shook. My pen slipped and made a big scribble on my test.

That night, Dad was looking after us while Mum was at work (she is a chef). We were watching the news on TV when the lady at the news desk started to talk about our village! She was talking about the long gone volcano! She said that the scientists had been wrong and the long gone volcano was active!

That was what the rumbling was! The volcano! A sudden blanket of fear had come around me. If the volcano was rumbling then ... THE VOLCANO WAS GOING TO EXPLODE!! I turned to dad; he was as white as a ghost.

'Dad ...' I started to say, he turned to me

'I think you should go to bed, darling,' he said with a hint of fear in his voice.

'But dad, it is only 8o'clock!' I argued.

'No, you can read but only until 9, OK?' Dad said, a little bit more sternly.

'OK,' I said standing up.

As I lay in bed that night, I looked out my window to the now active volcano. After what seemed an hour of thinking about it, I fell into an uneasy sleep. That night, I dreamt that the whole village was walking around, not aware of anything and then the volcano exploded. I woke up sweating.

That Saturday, I went to my best friend Emma Jackson's house. I found out that she had watched the news as well last night. Emma lived smack bang right in the middle of the village. I adored her curly brown hair and bright blue eyes. Emma is always outside so she is really tanned and she is so intelligent. Anyway, we were inside (for once) playing truth and dare in her room when the doorbell rang.

Emma and I answered it. It was a guy from the council in Sunglow city. 'Can I please talk to your mother?' he asked to both of us, thinking we were sisters.

'Um,' said Emma, 'she can't come to the door.'

'Why?' asked the man, 'you could easily tell that he was getting angry.'

'Because she is studying, I think...' said Emma.

'Well, can you please go and get her?' said the man. Emma rushed off and came back a few minutes later with her mum at her heel. We left the man and Emma's mum and went back to our truth or dare game. About 10 minutes later Emma's mum came into the room and sat on Emma's bed. She told us that everyone had to evacuate because of the volcano.

'Scientists reckon that the volcano is going to explode in one week so we haven't got a lot of time,' Emma's mum said.

'So the man came just to tell us to evacuate?' asked Emma. She put on a deep voice 'Hi I'm from the council of Sunglow city and I just want to tell you that you are about to get burnt to death by a volcano so you should evacuate.' That made me crack up. Emma's mum was shaking her head. 'I think you should go home now,' she said to me once I recovered.

So I did, I had to walk home because one of my bike tyres was flat. All the way home I could see people getting ready for the move. Once I went past a house where a lady was shouting at the council man. 'THAT STUPID VOLCANO IS NOT GOING TO EXPLODE! WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT? I AM NOT EVACUATING!' I felt sorry for that lady.

I finally made it home. As I entered the front door I was greeted by dad. 'Your bus is going to leave tomorrow, so you'd better pack.'

'What bus?' I asked.

'The bus to evacuate you and all of the children,' he said.

'What!' I said.

'Mmm,' said dad, clearly not wanting to talk about it.

'Dad, are you going to come on the bus, as well?' I asked.

'No, we are going to drive up in our cars.'

'Why can't we come with you?' I asked again, I could clearly see that he was getting annoyed.

'Because the council wants to make sure that all of the children are taken away.' I started up the stairs, taking it slowly as I tried to make sense of all the things that dad had said.

Next morning I woke up feeling very happy. Mum was back, no more Porridge for breakfast for a while! I hate porridge. Then nervousness took over my happiness today was when the children get evacuated.

At 10:00am nearly everyone in the town was gathered at the village's only bus stop. Mum and Dad was holding Sophie and I's hand so hard that our hands were being crushed. Sophie and I had two suitcases; I had clothes and other stuff in mine. I heard the distant rumble of an engine above the noise of the crowd. It came closer and closer then two buses came rumbling in and came to stop. On the side of the two buses there was the words 'SUNGLOW CITY COACHES'. The doors of the buses slid open. The driver of the first bus was a tired looking man, I couldn't see the other driver because a man from Sunglow city council stepped out holding a clipboard.

"Good morning" The man from the council said through a megaphone that had appeared from behind his back. "My name is Bob Brown and I am from the Sunglow City Council. We are going into the other side of the country where there is another village. Please don't worry because this is well away from this volcano. Maps have been given out. If

you have got any questions come and see me. Now can the children please line up in front of this first bus, with their things."

Mum and Dad kissed us goodbye and then I grabbed Sophie's hand and made sure we had our stuff and headed off into the direction of the first bus.

Very soon we were on our way. I sat next to Sophie and Emma sat in front of us. Sophie really wanted to sit on the aisle side so she can talk to her 3 year old friends. We had just managed to get on the first bus with all of our friends.

At 10pm that night we stopped at a village with only a general store, a tiny Motel and only about five houses. It was not even a village! We stayed in the Motel. But they didn't have enough rooms so most of us had to sleep on the floor! The next morning the kids in that settlement hopped on the second bus. We travelled all that day and stopped that night at a little bigger village then the other one. That is where we met a third bus and the kids in that town hopped on. We travelled for half of that day and we came to a very big and we rented the whole only two in that town. So we had to live in a hotel for another one and a half years. To make sure it was safe.

In four and half days our parents came. I was relieved because there had been rumours going around that the volcano had exploded and they had all been killed. All of the children flooded out of the two hotels when the parents arrived. Sophie and I rushed up to our parents and hugged them so hard I thought they were going to choke. We helped them unpack and then we showed them our room. That night we heard the news that the volcano had erupted again. At least a hundred families had been killed and that number was going up as the lava kept on going. We were in our room when the announcement came over the loudspeaker. I was terrified that the lava could reach us and I couldn't go to sleep that night. But I woke up that morning alive. That morning there was ash everywhere and we were all told to stay inside.

ONE YEAR LATER...

We are in dad's four-wheel-drive. All the towns that we past though are just ash. We had just left the hotel that we had been living in for a year. We are now really poor. We have to have tinned baked beans every day. Once or twice we have toast on it. I am getting really sick of it. My family and I are now allowed to go and visit what is left of our small village. Mum and dad have only got the money that is in their wallets. We have lost everything. The car behind us is my best friends. She is called Emma Jackson. But she is not an only child any more. She has a baby brother called Thomas, he is very cute. Both her mum and dad have lost their jobs like my mum and dad.

Three and half days later both of our families were looking at what is left of our village. All we can see is blackness and ash. I look up at the volcano. It stopped smoking five months ago. Lots of people had been killed and lots more left without homes. Mum was crying into dad's shoulder, same with Emma's mum. She was holding the baby. Hot tears splashed on to the babies' small face. Sophie was holding mum's hand with one hand and her only Barbie with the other.