

**Write a story, set in a mountainous area, as suggested by the picture.**

An army of mountains surrounded the still lake, guarding the watery district from the threat of attacking elements, battling against suffocating mist descending from the ether. The glassy lake remained calm, sheltered from the impending invasion of greyness from above.

Nothing stirred.

Reaching out to the centre of the expanse of freshwater, was the arm of a wooden jetty: all ten fingers free from the tether of boats; upon one, a seagull balanced as still as a mythical marble edifice. This seagull, usually at liberty skating on air, seemed fixed, glued, frozen atop of the jetty stump: a white, feathered angel on an earthly mission from Heaven.

Slightly left of centre of the wooden slats, sat a boy – a teenager – curled foetal and vulnerable, at this moment oblivious to his plumed spectator. He stared towards the shimmers of light that managed to break through the ominous clouds to reflect upon the mirrored water below. He was fixated on this light. The light that beckoned him forward. Beckoned him over the edge.

The edge. Ha. The edge of all reason, the edge of sanity, the edge of all that had gone wrong for him over the past six months – no, year.

He did not see how he could go back. All the mistakes he had made had caused numerous, fractured repercussions. There was no reparation he could make to all the people he had hurt, albeit hurt passively through his stupid, impetuous actions. He was sorry. So sorry. However, his sorrow, his regret would not be enough of an amalgam to mend the path of destruction he had left in his wake.

He thought back to that fateful night. The night that was the culmination of the previous few months' misdemeanours; the night that led him to set fire to his family boat. (To say that it seemed like a good idea at the time sounds ludicrous now, but, back then, he had honestly thought it was!) The 'family' boat had created malign fragments between the generations: aunties, uncles, nieces, nephews... He doubted that when his grandfather had written his will, he had realised just how negatively his 'gift' would impact the family tree, splintering shards around kith and kin. The *only* way to stop all the fighting, the chaos, the sinister silences was to get rid of it.

Or so he thought.

Matches, kerosene and the blanket of night were all he needed. It would be fierce but quick. Nobody would get hurt.

Or so he thought.

That night, a strong prevailing wind whipped up almost out of nowhere, forcing the twisting dancing flames, thrusting up from the 'Allegro', to lurch across to 'The Singing Swallow' and 'Willow's End' and 'Swift Tide' and 'Annie's Song'.

Two people were sleeping below deck on the 'Swift Tide'...

With tears in his eyes, he noticed his spying friend, his guardian angel tilting its head to one side as if to say, 'Come on. Now's your time. Choose the light. Choose the light ahead.'

The mist had descended so far now it almost rested on the water's surface. Slowly, the boy ascended, stiltedly unfurling his legs from beneath him and rising to stand tall. Head up, shoulders back. He was going to do this. He just needed to put one foot in front of the other. He was going to fight on; win back the respect of his loved ones; face up to what he had done. He had to.