

Start here.

Marie cringed as the soddy water seeped into the sores on her knuckles and stung. A nightingale landing on a nearby tree lifted her spirits slightly as her heart now ~~starts~~ she sighed, but ~~was~~ rather and looked up into the sky and imagined the sun's rays attempting to break through the thick cotton clouds. ~~The~~ The washboard slipped from her fingers and felt water splashed onto her apron.

A call from ~~the house~~ Mr. Smith beckoned her to the house where Mr. Smith lived in solitude.

"More tea". Marie ~~rustled~~ rustled to fill the half empty before returning ~~to~~ the lounge room. Her eyebrows rose in surprise as Mr. Smith pointed to the lounge ~~op~~ chair opposite him. ~~She~~ She sat down and placed her hands in her lap.

"Your brother has the consumption and is in a bad way"; ~~the~~ a message just came. Marie's eyes filled with tears and turned away hoping to

hide her obvious distress. Her heart was filled with ~~but~~ a wish, but ~~as~~ what hope was there of it being fulfilled?

Mr. Smith's gaze ~~of~~ was relentless. ~~William and~~ Jack ~~Jagger~~ Jack and Marie lived on the edge of the village with the other poor, this was enough of a risk factor to his health. Furthermore ~~was~~ ~~Jack~~ Jack was only ten and was small for his age. Surely ~~the~~

Mr. Smith's young servant must not be surprised? What are we

born for if not to die?

~~Marie had learnt that on the violent street~~

Marie rose and ~~walked~~ began to work out the back door, but Jagger stopped her in her tracks.

"You may go home now, to visit him."

"Thank you," Marie replied with a nod of her head and ran to ~~see~~ pick up her bag.

After she had left, Mr. Smith ~~of~~ returned to work, he had just picked up another child from the other side of town

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who had also die of consumption, Mr. Smith always buried the bodies that died of Consumption, to be sure it could not be passed on.

Marie reached her home within ~~far quicker~~ in only twenty minutes, though it ~~was not~~ usually took her an hour to walk there. Jack lay in the bed he shared with Marie, looked unusually ~~small in the do~~ ^{small}, buried beneath the covers. Marie rushed to his side and made a wish once more. if only she could ~~to~~ escape this pain.

"Marie?" ~~Jack~~ ^{Jack} opened his eyes with confusion. Marie was ~~shock~~ choked with tears and could only hold him and wipe the sweat from his face.

They lay like that for many hours until Jack ~~no longer~~ felt ~~hot~~ in Marie's arms.

looked up into Marie's face with sweet innocence.

"Can you take me to the garden?"

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Though hesitant at first, Marie only wanted to make her little brother happy. And so she took him up in her arms and carried him out into the garden that they shared with the four families that lived in the house. Marie chose a nice spot in the sun that had finally broken through the clouds.

Meanwhile, Mr. Smith was busy digging a hole for the child's ~~fire~~ fire. After it was about 3 feet deep he filled the bottom of it with dead leaves and sticks that he kept stored in the shed. Mr. Smith nurtured the fire, watching it grow up until the heat from it caused his droplets of sweat to drip from his nose. The child's body of the child lay covered in a sheet on the ground next to Mr. Smith's shovel. As he lifted the child that felt with too tight to ease and dropped him into the ~~ditch~~ hole, the sheet slipped from the child's face and chest and Mr. Smith stared in differently at the

tiny flame as it turned black. Smoke billowed from the hole ~~as~~ and the distinctive ~~smell~~ sweet smell of it penetrated ~~the~~ his nostrils. ~~As~~

Mr. Smith paused a while, waiting for the body to completely disintegrate. The child's hand, raised slightly, was the last to be destroyed. The dampened flames did not quite reach it and it was the incredible head that eventually caused the skin to blacken and melt away, exposing the bone. Mr. Smith turned and picked up his shovel. He treated this flame as he would any other, breaking a part of the ~~the~~ charcoal body as he ~~was~~ would a ~~of~~ log in ~~the~~ the fireplace.

Marie's stomach churned when she smelt the smoke ~~was~~ reaching her nose ~~of~~ from across town. The smell was all too familiar and he pulled Jack closer to her. He was ~~usually~~ sleeping, but occasionally woke to stare in wonder ~~at~~ at the Nightingales, "the light-winged drips," that flew about the trees of the garden.

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Take in those moments, all ~~the~~ sign of illness and pain were washed from Jack's sweet face and ^{Marie's} ~~big~~ eyes filled with hope as that ~~it~~ perhaps ^{her} ~~big~~ wish would be granted. But, as the Nightingales disappeared from view, Jack would collapse again into a fitful slumber, with the sweat again covering his face. As

As the sun that had emerged finally fell below the horizon, and the Nightingales no longer returned to the Garden, ~~Jack~~ Jack ~~no longer~~ woke up no more, and grew cold in Marie's arms. The night ~~as~~ came and Marie carried her now lifeless brother into her room. She could not call for Mr. Smith yet, that must wait until the morning. Marie must ~~and~~ enjoy her final night with her precious brother in her bed. Even though Marie was well-aware of his soul having left the body, the sweet face remained and the child's ~~own~~ body was still her brother.

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She dreamed of their adventures in the garden, before her ~~pa~~ mother had died, and before her father had left. Those memories remained fresh, with the sun warming her back and lighting up the sparkle in Jack's eyes.

With the morning, came reality and ~~she~~ she left William in her bed; staying strong by imagining he was just sleeping. ~~She~~ Marie reached Mr. Smith's house and the ~~sorrow~~ perceived sadness in her eyes informed her of ~~a~~ the message. Words ~~were~~ ~~not~~ from Mr. Smith were neither necessary nor wanted.

As Mr. Smith left drove down the road in his carriage, Marie busied herself with her usual chores, cleaning up breakfast and ~~and~~ fixing the beds. She rushed outside when she heard the sound of the carriage arriving.

~~She~~ Marie could not contain her tears as she saw the casket of her brother ~~buried~~ covered by the dirt. ~~Then~~ This ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~just~~ ~~an~~ was not just another unknown and insignificant child to die of

consumption; this was her brother for goodness sake.

Mr. Smith carried the body to the back of the house and upon perceiving Marie observing from the house, ~~getting~~ lowered the child to the ground as gently as possible.

He had already dug a hole the night before in anticipation, ~~and now~~ ~~felt a pang of guilt for his~~ no child would live through the consumption.

The fire ~~begin~~ started easy and he was careful in ensuring the child's face remained covered upon lowering him ~~to~~ into the grave.

As always, the ~~smoke~~ black smoke poured out of the grave. Unaware of Marie's presence, Mr. Smith made the sign of the cross. She looked up into his face and saw his ~~eyes~~ sorrowful expression mirrored ~~him~~ her own.

His eyes were filled with tears, as ~~the~~ were Marie's.

~~He~~ ~~though~~ ~~she~~ ~~did not~~
"May this sweet child rest in peace," ~~she~~ said Mr. Smith

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solemnly.

"Amen," they said together. In that moment a Nightingale flew past and Marie smiled up into Mr. Smith's face.

"My wish came true".

With Jack was happy, ~~and~~ free from pain and had escaped with the Nightingale.

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