

## **Happenings in Packer's End**

### **Tarka Liddle 9N**

The moonlight tickled the tips of the leaves on the trees and undergrowth, growing as the night went on, although only dim shafts of light could be seen through the cracked branches of the trees. The silvery white, tingling mist lay across the ground, as if it was trying to hide the moss carpet that ran through the forest. The dark unkempt trees here, loomed over you, their gnarled fingers and faces twisting into a million knots and wrinkles and their robe of damp moss and overgrown draping vines, hung on the trees shoulders, like a thunder cloud, hung in suspense, and least expected when the lightning drops like a stone. These trees had long thin wastes that stretched metres above the ground, but there were so many, so close together that you had nowhere to run, nowhere to go, but forward.

The air was heavy, full of the whisperings of these trees. It felt like everything and nothing was alive, in the sense that it was much too quiet for a forest with so many rumours and mysteries, that at least one of these dark, terrifying tales must be true. Although, the strangest thing about this place was its tendency to be unpredictable. I didn't believe any of this until now, when I went there for myself. Through the monstrous amount of mist, a shadowed figure arose.

The very trees seemed to hold their breath and hide, as he glided towards me. As he got closer I noticed his black robes that seemed to sink into the mist, like a drowning creature. This 'thing' wore a hood that covered his slits of eyes that gleamed a golden light. Around his shoulders, a snake was coiled, its eyes piercing your soul and rummaging through your thoughts. It looked as though it smiled with a strong, unbreakable hatred. I felt like I could just crumble from within, from the pure fear that rampaged my brain, like a bull, when it sees that cruel, bright red, polished cape.

I was completely frozen. The hooded human-like being sort of glided, inhumanly, like a dying creature, with no morals and thoughts but to live or kill.

As he approached, his crooked fingers rose from the mist, searching for an entity. Within his lumpy black skin, being the only part of his body visible, veins leapt around his wrist. A hole stretched between his index and middle finger, allowing you to glimpse the black fleshy substance within him. From this gap, a twisting, hex, golden, vine like structure ruptured, like an ashy, explosive, active volcano. It split into different directions, seeking a victim to play with, a weaker being it can manipulate. I froze along with my mind, personality and heart. I darent breathe for a second. The two carving strands dug their path around me, circling me, like an eagle and its unlucky prey miles below.

The snake slithered down the creature's neck and its hood fell back to reveal air. Thin air. No head. I could no longer watch it. As I swallowed my tongue and looked

through an empty shell, I moved. The seemingly magic vines darted, the speed of a bullet towards me, piercing through my body. I clutched the wound staggering to my knees, speechless, but my hands just sunk through the vine. Blood gushed like an endless river from the open wound and as I fell backwards, I snapped some bones in my legs, not that it mattered anymore. I knew I was gone. I gurgled up what seemed like a gallon of blood, and breathed my last exhausted breath.

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### **The Darkness Out There (from the Pilot's Perspective)** **Jonah Struthers 9W**

My eyes open, bleary, my vision dancing, vision doubled, barely able to see past heavy lids, to see the wreckage strewn around me. What happened?

Smoke rushes past the windshield, obscuring my view of the enemy plane bearing down on us like a greyhound, dark silhouette drawing out from the black night sky. The heavy rattle of gunfire and flak deafens me, the pounding drums of impending doom.

There's a lurch. The plane tips. The sudden motion launches me forward in the seat. We're going downwards, down, down to the doors of death. The canopy of the woods below is hurtling ever closer; I'm thrust forward, head crashing into the rear cockpit.

My vision darkens, fading out of consciousness...

My head throbs, pain rattling around like a monster against bars. The pain. The pain. The first thing I notice. It runs down my back, claws at my leg. The tang of blood is heavy in my mouth, and the scent heavy in the air. Stiffly, I move my head. One eye swollen shut, hair matted with blood, my face turns, battered and bruised to view the sight. My leg is trapped, crushed by the warped metal, smashed as if a hurricane had passed over. Pieces of plane were tossed all around, blood splattered everywhere. I looked away: the sight is too much to bear. I faded out, eyes closed...

Their shouts and cheers rouse me. A jubilant noise, a foreign language. I try to shout for help, but my words won't make it past my dry, hoarse throat. I find myself mumbling, muttering, wishing for home...

I cast my mind to better times. It was just a few years ago. Green hills, blue skies. A peaceful place. My countryside, my home. I cling to that sweet memory, a life raft thrust out into the stormy sea of pain...

Now, though, I'm lost. The life raft drifts away.

I'm aware of the heavy beat of rain around me. Two figures stand above me, the glow of their lamp descending upon me like celestial radiance.

Saviours?

There's a brief snatch of conversation. They look at me, towering above my meek and pitiful form, like giants. Then, they turn away.

Executioners.

I let out a hoarse cry for help, primal and indecipherable, as the lamp turns away, babbling and murmuring for help, left for dead.

I lie, life a blur of pain and sorrow. It all seems unreal; time is removed from existence.

The figure is back, dark and heavy rain whirling around them like a cloak. They just stand there. Silent. Watchful. Evil. I try to cry for help, but they do not respond. Then they turn and go, leaving only the heavy downpour of rain and rattling thunder of the storm in their wake.

That is the last thing I remember.

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### **Lost Light**

#### **Tom de Wilde 9S**

They walked through flowers, the children, coarse dirt, thistles, and an array of various weeds strangling the vetch, cow parsley, and ox-eye daisies. She saw the cottage in the distance, still shrugged down into the dip beyond the hedge, and yet; it seemed to bulge out larger than everything. Kerry walked next to her, uncharacteristically quiet. In the background, a melancholy choir of birds sang of grief and despair.

Round the field, they walked, over the rotten gate and over the bridge. Packer's End still remained there, but somehow it had changed. The once foreboding walls of trees seemed almost friendly and the dark shadows wilted out of sight. The forest now seemed less like a fortress of darkness but more like a monument of anguish to the lonesome soldier doomed to die by the darkness in humanity. The body long lost among the trees after response crews failed to locate it.

Sandra and Kerry veered off the beaten path, through the thick grass to the edge of the wood. They paused for a moment (wondering what horrors they might find) before taking another step forward and being engulfed.

The inside of the forest was surprisingly well lit with shafts of light breaking through the canopy and colliding with the ground, spreading out into splotches of gold. The forest floor was covered by a thick layer of mulch squelching underfoot. The children moved steadily through the forest, searching for a sign that the plane crash site was nigh. The pair eventually reached the precarious brink of failure and prepared to turn around and give up, when Kerry tripped and tumbled to the floor letting loose a wail of surprise before hitting the mulch with a soft thud. Sandra hurried over and assisted Kerry who wasn't injured, just surprised. They looked at what Kerry had stumbled over. It seemed to be a tree root, jutting out of the ground at an inconspicuous angle. Kerry, irate at having stumbled, grabbed the root and tugged at it trying to break it. That was when he fell over again.

The item had been ripped cleanly out of the ground and the children came to the sudden realisation that the root was actually a spade, rusted by the combination of time and lying in a bed of mulch. "Why is there a spade here?" he asked with a tone that hinted that he already had ideas. Sandra looked at Kerry and slowly, shakingly said, "I think it was used to bury something."

The pair scrutinized the area, hoping against hope that there would be some sort of sign that a hole had been dug. However, the forest had done a good job covering all possible traces.

The pair were oblivious to the passing of time and soon the sun started to fall from the visible sky. The light beams slowly reduced to light frostings, trying to fight off the cold embrace of darkness. The children turned around to leave just as nigh on all the light fell away into nothingness. All that remained was a lone ray, beaming down onto a mound of soil at the base of a huge pine. As the children studied the beam, spectating the demise of the final light of the day, Kerry moved forward and said, "This earth looks fresher than the surroundings, almost as if it was moved!"

Sandra replied, "It's already dark, we must leave before we get lost." Kerry reacted by hesitantly laying down the spade near the mound and backing away to Sandra. The pair turned and left.

Behind them, the mound covered a mangled body. Mostly decomposed by time leaving a humanoid form of bones encrusted with dirt and a sole scrap of clothing with a symbol on it. The darkness was everywhere in everyone and everything. Light swallowed by development of knowledge and emotions of spite.

The children exited the forest, winds blowing a melancholy tune through the trees. Birds silent in the pitch black, flowers curled away by frost and yet only displaying the surface of misery and cruelty of nature.

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## **Last Plane Over Packer's End**

**Sam Dykes 9W**

It was a bright day as I worked in the garage. Standard Honda Accord so it should've been a simple job. However, my mind kept going back to that day. I was sat at her table with Sandra and Mrs Rutter. Then I brought up that plane. Why did I have to bring up the plane. That witch then proceeded to tell the story of what happened to the plane and it's poor passengers. She could have easily saved him, he would probably be alive today had she done something. The fact that he was laying there for 3 whole days and nights in agony while she just stood and stared at him while spouting about how he deserved it and "that there's a war on". I tried to get it out of my head but it just kept coming back to me. I told Ralph that I needed to take the rest of the day off. I began to walk towards the field where I met Sandra last year. As I looked up I was surprised to see her in front of me staring towards packer's end. As I got closer she didn't even notice me and was stood motionless staring at packers end like a ghost. I tapped her on the shoulder and asked "What's going on?" Her reply made a chill run through my body.

"I saw it go down".

I didn't know what she meant so I probed further.

"What do you mean you saw it go down?"

"The plane. I saw it go down in packer's end." she replied

I was confused as Mrs Rutter said that the plane went down during the war, 40 years ago.

"The plane went down during the war. That was 40 years ago." I told her.

"No. Another one came down. I don't know what we should do."

I knew what we had to do. We had to go see the plane.

We ran through the field like bullets from a gun. We knew that time was of the essence as the longer that we took, the higher the chance that somebody like Mrs Rutter would find the pilot.

Then I saw the dark twisting woods of Packer's End and all the memories from my childhood came rushing back like the floodgates of my memory had been opened by the Packer's End key. I hesitated for a moment before remembering what was at

stake. Every minute we took could be one minute closer to death for anyone alive or capture by other people who saw it go down. The large winding trees turned the bright flowery field into a dark and damp mess of dumped utilities and rotting wood. As we got closer, we began to hear the sound of shouting over a radio before we pushed past some bushes as we reached a large clearing in the woods.

I heard Sandra shout as we saw what was in front of us, the wreck of a Soviet plane was sprawled out near us. It wasn't like any plane that I had ever seen so it must have been either a prototype or a plane that the Soviets didn't want anyone to know existed. I thought back to Mrs Rutter's description of the downed German plane and immediately thought of her and her sister finding the 3 dead Germans in the front of the plane along with the one alive in the back. I told Sandra "We have to go and check to see if anyone is alive in there". She seemed hesitant but as I reminded her of Mrs Rutter and the downed German plane, we both knew that we had to go and check.

As we clambered over the wreckage of the plane, we heard groans coming from behind some rubble. We rushed over and saw a man who only looked about 20-21 with an airman's uniform on with a red star with a yellow hammer and sickle. Then I saw a large metal sheet pinning him to the floor. We had to save him but the metal was too heavy and large to move so we needed to go and get help from the village. I could see the terror on the man's face as we began to get up and leave. I knew that he feared us leaving him here to die so I told Sandra to stay here with him while I got help. She asked me "What if he gets taken prisoner?" "It's a far better fate for him to be taken prisoner than die in a dark gloomy wood like that poor German airman."

I ran as fast as I could through Packer's End and The Field before I finally reached the police station. As I was explaining what happened to the plane, the policeman started to laugh before telling me "How absurd, there's no way a Soviet plane came down here. Why on earth would they fly a plane over our small village. I could arrest you for wasting police time so next time you come to the police it better be for an actual emergency." I knew that it was not worth arguing but I was running out of time so I bolted to the pharmacy as fast as my legs could carry me. As soon as I got into the shop, I began grabbing as many different medicines as possible along with bandages and alcohol rub and ran out the shop before anyone saw me. I ran through the woodland and reached the plane. I tried to lift the sheet off the man but it was no use. Then I realised that we could slide the man out from underneath the wreck but it would be difficult without hurting him. It was our only option so we began to pull.

As he began to shout, we felt a wave of guilt fall over us but we knew we had to keep pulling. It seemed as though we were pulling a mountain but soon the metal began to shift. After what must have been an agonising amount of time, the metal began to slide away. We stood up and stepped back to give him some space. He began to

speak in russian but transitioned to broken english “Спасибо тебе за  
помощь...Thank you.You saved me.Why?” I thought back to the story of the downed  
german plane and all I could say was “It’s the right thing to do.”