

The Lost Man

I quickly scanned the edge of the trees for any signs of a bushfire. Flames licked the trees' high branches. I felt panic bloom in the pit of my stomach like a flower welcoming spring. This however, was definitely not spring. Me and granddad were having loads of fun and then suddenly a fierce dragon coiled up somewhere in the Outback. The dragon wanted us. I knew it. The old barn was made of wood and it could easily catch fire if it did. Mum didn't know yet that this is happening but I am sure she will soon. Granddad Dew didn't want to tell her. He's scared. The flames licked the tall tree around us and my tummy twisted and turned in beat with the roaring sound of the horrific flames. The sound flew into one ear and stayed there. You couldn't get rid of it, it would always be there echoing through your head. I had lost hope. Granddad Dew had lost hope. The fires were getting adjacent. The sweat dripped from my face like water. The blue sky had vanished. It quickly turned into Orange and Red thickness.

I was out with granddad Dew. We were scared. Granddad's eyes were full of fear. Fear is a horrible sound that comes crushing all your hopes and dreams. A voice inside Granddad's head whispered 'You can't do this, just give up. It's going to be easier if you do so.' My short sun bleached hair slapped me in the face. I didn't want to give up, I was only 9 and had so much of the world still to explore. I grabbed a piece of fairy bread, which we made earlier. I ran. Granddad screamed for help. I ran.

Smoke filled my lungs and I coughed vigorously. I felt light-headed and black spots blurred my vision, but I had to keep going. I tripped over a branch and fell to the ground, helpless as the flames closed in around me. The barn had caught fire. It went up in flames in a matter of minutes. We ran out, not able to retrieve our most important belongings. They were once ours and now they are the fires. The fire possesses everything. We were quick though, granddad dew was running and a piece of wood fell onto his hand burning it. Now we sit on top of the hill, I listen to Granddad's swearing and I observe how our house went up in flames. I know I might die soon but I still need to fight for Granddad and especially Mum.

Granddad Dew had everything, he had horses and llamas. I loved coming to him every summer. But this summer will be like no other. I saw the big gum tree go up into eye blinding flames. It was too late to Walk away from the roaring creature like fire. It Sounds like a freight train, the hole in my stomach got immense by the minute. All of Granddad's animals were dead or burnt, I had heard the screeching from the barn echo through the bush. We needed to get moving as the fire was getting closer and closer.

We had finally reached the firestation. It was the only place I knew that would help us. Granddad had lost so much blood on the way here so he collapsed on the side of the station. I hesitated on what to do. I ran. I ran into the station and started screaming for help on the top of my lungs. Hardly anyone was there. I suspected that they were all out helping other people. My scorching hot hand grabbed the cold metal handle which opened the door to go back out again as a soft voice offered help. I was so relieved. The words came spilling out of my mouth while Granddad Dew's didn't. He was mumbling quickly and no one could understand him. The rescue teams told me that he was under shock and more likely going through a panic attack. They tried to calm him down, I tried as well but the thought kept coming up in my head... What had I done? I should have phoned the police and rescue teams when we were on the hill...

My palms were sweating but I needed to help granddad. I slowly neared myself, at first I observed the situation. I had always been an Observer and everyone bullied me for it. The bullies cut through me. They tore me apart. I wanted to give up but here I am trying to keep my granddad alive from the soaring flames. He was the reason I kept fighting and now I need to be the reason that he keeps fighting. I put my hand over his shoulder trying to comfort him. His back was drenched in sweat. He wanted to give up. He wanted to kill himself. That cannot happen...

The firefighter I ran into before was called Jasmine. She helped us both and said that there is going to be a solution and we are going to be alright. My heart pounded. She was right. All of a sudden words of inspiration and motivation spilled out of my mouth and somehow my voice convinced Granddad Dew that he would not kill himself instead he would keep fighting for us. For me, Jasmine, all the families that lost a loved one in the fire, for mum, for dad and for grandma. Grandma would be very proud of Granddad Dew's decision. So am I...