



Ruby Hughes

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He was daydreaming again. He was just a small boy in a large crowd but his ideas were like mini fireworks in his mind; BANG, POW, FIZZ, POP, humans getting eaten by dinosaurs, battle ships falling into volcanoes, him dropping into the most amazing computer game and then suddenly...he wakes up to the reality of his mum trying to teach him times tables again, one times eight is eight, two times eight is sixteen- after all, that was all she ever cared about. He was pretty sure he could use a calculator as an adult anyway.

He often had arguments with his mother about what he was to be when he grew up. His mother wanted Michael to be a scientist or a mathematician as they both got lots of money and were both impressive jobs to have with high status. They required a lot of concentration but more importantly she could boast about his success and what a great job she had done raising him. Michael, however, desperately wanted to be a writer as he was great at using his imagination and he wanted to share it with the whole world. Writing books meant that he could.

From birth Michael had had a hard life. When he was born his father died at the shock of Michael being so small. He remembered it vaguely, he was put into this transparent box thing, wires stuck into him, separated away from his parents in an act of abandonment. Since then he had been subjected to a life of routine; it was his mum's way of proving that she was O.K, and everything was in order. On the bright side today was Monday and that meant "fish fingers" (even though he had to have them with broccoli instead of chips). Michael wanted something different, he dared for change but what...?

It was February and it was raining, Michael slowly dragged himself to school. In a deep puddle he found a smudged advertisement for the FIVE HUNDRED WORDS COMPETITION. Michael was intrigued and when he was walking home from school he took a different path to his only friend's house. Berty was the only friend he had ever known and luckily, he had a laptop. Michael had always wanted a laptop but of course his mother wouldn't let him have one because it would ruin his sight and "too much screen time caused mental health problems or a brain tumour", (the disease she picked depended on her mood that day). With Berty, he quickly searched on the website and found the details and the email address.

The next day, he pretended to be ill, waited for his mother to leave the house and started to write his story. Quickly and carefully, his ideas came alive. When he had finished he sent it to the Five Hundred Words Company and waited. Would he win? Could he be the lucky boy? Who knew? For he was the boy that dared.