

Years 9 & 10

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Books for Burning

The rubble crumbled underneath the feet of Owen Stockman as he trekked towards his destination. It was a horrifying sight to see the once beautiful city of Sydney in ruins, but it was normal for Owen. The air was thick and characterized by revolting scents. Nobody's lungs could handle it. *Tick, tock, tick, tock* . . . chanted the watch on Owen's wrist. It was one of the few analogue watches left in the world of AD 2099. Books had been replaced by computers and people had been replaced by . . . The thought made Owen nauseous. He walked along what had been a footpath but was now covered by wreckage. He tip-toed across the battered road. Nobody was there to hear him anyway.

In the lone city, stood one building which looked almost ancient. All, except this building, had been destroyed. Owen strolled towards the building, looking cautiously around him for any such sign of movement. It was because of them, the raging thought filled Owen every day when he reached the front of the building. Owen drew a key from his pocket. The door's window was covered with newspaper. One of the even rarer sights was seeing paper. It was at least fifty years old. Owen unlocked the door slowly and it shrieked open. He stepped in with deep awareness. He was scared. Waiting for the day when they would finally come to make him one of them. He couldn't bear this thought. Slowly, he turned around.

Joy finally entered Owen. The sight of hundreds of books lay before his eyes. Yes, this one standing building left in the entire city was a library. Robots would never permit this building. It was a terrible thought that one day, it would no longer exist. Owen walked up to the battered counter where there had been employees scattered around talking and enjoying the humour of each other and books. They were probably now at home. The television clutching them to the seats in front of it. There was a drawer embedded into the counter. Owen pulled the drawer open and one small object remained at the centre of it. A pen. Glamorous to Owen. It created his world. He ran across the hall to the rows of books which remained in front of him.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Owen's heart sank. He didn't expect this to be the day. Fourteen years had Owen been absorbed into this library. The knock echoed throughout the library.

A voice blurted, "One more time and we will have to open the door ourselves."

There was something awkward about this voice though. It sounded almost unreal and robotic like. Suddenly the door whizzed opened and it fell off its hinges making a deafening thud.

"You're under arrest for violation of article 527 of the Times Constitution!" exclaimed the voice.

Owen stared at it. Made of steel components and a face, but it was no ordinary face. The face was a screen, large and rectangular. *Is this what humans have come to?* pondered Owen. Many more came pouring in through the battered door and seized

Owen. The library was left empty from that very day. No movement throughout the whole city, except for one sound of a burnt piece of paper flapping through the air.