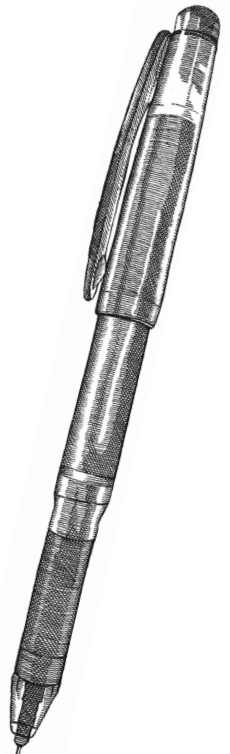
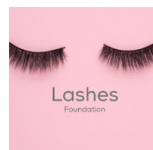




# Writing Competition 2024



*Sponsored by* \_\_\_\_\_



**MANSFIELD**  
BUILDING SOCIETY

**LINNEY**





### **Note from the Meden School**

We are so incredibly proud of our students at Meden. As a school, we are keen and passionate to share the students creative flare and talents. It has been an honour to watch students be enthusiastic towards writing. There have been so many entries submitted and it was hard to narrow it down. Well done to everyone involved and thank you to BJ Jephson, Mansfield Building Society, Linneys and The Lashes Foundation for supporting.

On a dim, lonely night, a young boy, younger than 18 stood perched at an old fashioned bannister. He seemed possibly awe-stricken at the sight of a brand-new place to explore. The room looked like it has been furnished millennia ago. It was drenched in dust and grime the colour of charcoal – but it was inviting none the less. On the floor sat, invisible to time, a still burning fireplace. It did not look like it was going out any time soon. The more the boy peered around, the more breath taken he became, the more things he uncovered – like old portraits and piles upon piles of leaves.

The boy, who looked like he had just won the lottery, clattered down the mahogany stairs admiring the detail. But something rose the bubbling pot of paranoia deep inside of him. Hundreds of skulls, crosses and bones were littered by the fireplace.

“That was fake, right?” he thought to himself. The looming aura of dread and paranoia somehow shifted the atmosphere to a dark and isolated one – but the fire was still burning.

Hurridly, the boy kicked all of the bones and crosses away, out of sight. But the fire was still burning.

Now, the boy had come to realise how nice these portraits really were. But the fire was still burning. There was one of a British woman having a cup of supposedly tea with her husband. But the fire was still burning. One with a man lighting weights. But the fire was still burning. The boy couldn't take it anything. He looked towards the fire and...

It went out.

Panicking, worrying, stumbling, the boy went to look at the fire closer up. The more he approached, the more he wanted to go, the more he continued anyway. The boy tripped and fell at the foot of the fire, which was burning no longer. He silently asked if anyone was there who could re-light this fire... but no answer prevailed.

On a dim, lonely night, a young boy now not so long stood at the fire, which no longer burned. He glared angrily at the fire. Glared furiously at the room. The piles upon piles of leaves, which had only seemed to double, the dozens of portraits now wilted, the mahogany stairs now charcoal black with dust and grime. He looked himself, the wrinkled hands which were now his own, the tingling in his entire back, the plain and stink of his terrible hygiene. He was 40 years old now.

He should never have looked at the fire.



## Judges Comments: .....

### **Mansfield Building Society**

Loved this story especially the twist at the end which I was not expecting, it was also left open, so the intrigue of the magical fireplace continues on. I really enjoyed the full descriptions of the portraits this made the story more viable in the mind's eye bringing the scene to life. It was a great story and I really enjoyed reading it thank you.

### **Lashes Foundation**

Paige's story was so engaging. She had me captivated and intrigued from the beginning! The use of the magical fireplace kept me on edge and I was not expecting the plot twist at the end. Thank you so much for sharing, I hope one day you publish your own books so I can purchase them all!

## Second Place - Year 8

It was a cold winters day. The fire was as hot as the sun with sparks igniting the tortilla shaded deadwood. The paintings and walls were as dark as a blackhole. In the entire mansion there was a mysterious and eerie feeling lurking within the walls.

30 years ago, gorgeous, breath taking and shimmering the mansion was in pristine condition. The walls were a beautiful shade of cream the furniture was a peanut brown colour, and the fire was as bright as everybody's mood. There wasn't a frown in sight, everybody's smile was pearly white.

Now, the more the fire crackled, the more the smell of deadwood aroused the more the room was polluted with smoke. The fire had gone from a beautiful marigold colour to a dull squash colour with ash like smoke. floating, moving and polluting the smell of deadwood filled the room.

It was back to that cold winters day; the fire was as hot as the sun with sparks igniting the tortilla shaded deadwood. The paintings and walls were as dark as a blackhole. The stairs were creaking, the fire was crackling, the painting was crooked, and the walls were rotting away. Even though the painting was as old as time it still had an eerie and mysterious feeling that would not leave the mind of the residents.

**Jake S**



**Judges Comments:**.....

### Mansfield Building Society

It's a great story especially because of the use of colour throughout the story, by using a lot of colour in the descriptions it enables the reader to visualise the scene and brings the reader in to the story. Also, there was a good use of descriptive words that made the story stand out from others. Really enjoyed it.

**Judges Comments:**



### Lashes Foundation

Chantelle's story is filled with beautiful description, alongside suspense and mystery. I would love to find out what happens next in this story! I have so many questions such as "Will she ever be found?" "Why did her father hide her?"! Well done Chantelle!

## The Figure

I was walking in the motionless night sky, along the neglected path. I walked by uncertain landscapes. The more reticent it went, the more it felt lost. I got to the end of the hushful street. I crossed the road and I heard footsteps behind me. I looked behind and there was no one there then a gush of wind like clouds going across a misty midnight sky came across my intense face.

While I was walking I came along an isolated house. Decayed, demolished and useless was the way to describe the gate I walked through. As I got closer to the door my feet were shaking. My hand touched the door handle but it opened by itself. It's hard to say what the sound was-like chalk screeching along a chalkboard.

My foot touched the dusty floor. I looked around and saw a picture frame with a picture in it. I picked it up and blew on it and an endless amount of dust flew into the dark room.

The more I walked, the more I felt lost, the more desperate I was to leave. I looked around for a second. There it was, at the end of the corridor. An isolated door with nowhere else to go. I got closer, closer and closer to the door until I was there, in front of it.

I put my hand around the door handle but I didn't have the courage to open it. My heart was beating like a drum pounding on my chest. I opened it and a black mysterious figure started to approach me. Desperately, I closed it quickly in fear. I looked at the door again and it was open. Spine-chilling, petrified, uneasy was the way I felt as I stepped into the room. I looked around and saw a light switch on the wall.

I turned the light on and in front of me was a black figure. It grabbed me by the neck and started to lift me off the ground. I tried, tried and tried to scream but nothing would come out. My breath was being lost, until it disappeared. The figure dropped me. I looked up at the figure and I realised it was my father. I stared at him hurt.

I said, "I love you dad". A tear ran down my face and then that was it I never saw daylight again. My father knelt down and held me in his arms crying. He shouted, "I'm sorry this never was meant to happen." He grabbed a blanket and placed it under my head. He kissed my forehead and said "Farewell my daughter." That was it he left.

A few months later my mum put a missing person poster for me. My dad knew exactly where I was and knew no one would be able to find me and he was the last person I saw.

Light beamed through the window. It illuminated the entire room filling it with a shadowy tone of sunshine. Paintings hung from the walls: some big, some small. All the portraits were of someone important and a large extravagant mirror hung next to them. It had a frame that was ebony black. The mirror resembled a painting of its own.

Directly below all the decorations was a twisted staircase with what seemed like a balcony in the centre. The bannister was ebony and arched below the railings but on the corners were big pieces of wood that had been carved and engraved to resemble a post.

A well-dressed man stood staring at me whilst holding the sides of his blazer. He was a tall man with black hair and clothes but it seemed that on his chest there was a golden chain – it looked to be a pocket watch. The more I stared back, the more I was intimidated, the more I felt uncomfortable.

Behind the man was a shadowy, lonely, distressing door. It seemed like any light that reached it got swallowed into a pit of darkness, like an endless void. I couldn't make out any features except one spiralling pole close to the window.

I suddenly heard footsteps. The man had vanished, leaving me alone with whatever was lying in wait behind the door.

I looked up at the window. There was no more light except from the eerie glow of the moon and a fireplace that was soon to go out.

**Rose A**

I felt petrified. The stairwell, which was never ending, stood mysteriously watching over me. The crooked chandelier dropped miserably from the ceiling. Like a figure, the vase sat covered in dust in the corner. Decrepit, ancient and solitary the chair was cloaked with blood like a virus spreading. My heart was racing.

All of a sudden, I awoke to different place of time, with a peaceful atmosphere and happy memories. Like a parade, like a celebration the racket of music filled my ears. I felt at peace. Why was I here? Is this a dream? The long grass swayed freely: shamrock and emerald in the fresh summers breeze. Enraptured, exhilarated and delighted I walked up the stairwell.

Then all of a sudden, I went back to reality...

Now, I stood silently trembling with anticipation. Creepy, clueless and oblivious the stairwell creaked beneath my feet. Having no choice about it, I decided to explore more. I was almost ready to leave this place, almost half asleep, when I heard the footsteps coming... The sound of someone breathing close by. The more I looked around, the more I questioned, the more I felt the urge to run. The portraits, which were alarming, gave me goose bumps and an extreme thudding in my chest. Ruthless, dangerous and threatening, the fire crackled.

My heart was racing. An unusual looking light caught my eye gleaming through the stain glass windows. I began to wonder what this could mean. It was as if the stairwell was trying to tell me something, signal me, trying to aware me of something back somewhere. Was this the end? Am I finally free?

Then I stepped forward...

**Farrah E**

Almost 3 years ago my mother, Shannon Smedley, was diagnosed with cancer.

Day by day, her disease worsened, to the point where she was repulsed by the idea of eating. But, she still continued to find the strength to get out of bed and complete her daily tasks; such as looking after her 3 children and making sure everything was okay so they did not get scared.

Nauseous, Shannon realised how much bigger, how much faster, how much more aggressive the cancer was spreading. It was at that moment she decided that her children should stay with their father for a while in his childhood village of Warsop. At first, Shannon thought that she was able to take care of herself and her medication, continuously thinking she would be ok...

But as she spent that night laying in bed, staring blankly at the ceiling, she thought she had hope to be able to win the battle that God had put upon her – instead she was rushed to hospital that very same night.

Hearing her children's joy and laughter is what brought out her smile. Even though it was hard for her to keep the evil truth from them, she never wanted to let sadness be thrown upon them. As Shannon held her children in her arms and gazed into their eyes she whispered in each of their ears, "I love you."

Those were her last words to them.

Two days later, Shannon had passed and her children were left feeling nothing but sadness. However, they still try to live their lives to the fullest as that was Shannon's wish for them, always...

**Maddie F** - In memory of her mother, Shannon.



### Judges Comments: .....

#### Lashes Foundation

Maddie, thank you so much for sharing such a heart-breaking story with us. Your strength and resilience is admirable. I love that you have found writing to be able to express yourself. Your story is written from the heart. Your mother will be very proud of you.

.....

I stood before the towering gate. Untamed plants spilled through the gate, as if it was reaching out to feel the touch of freedom beyond this place's dreadful compounds. The chill of the night air bit at my raw skin and dug its way through my bones. Dead trees swayed harshly in the distance, obscured enough by the dense fog to make their forms look like the bony hands of death, reaching into the underworld, grasping for my soul.

Of course, this place was not always like this, not so dreary and dark. Years ago, I and my friends, with names that have since evaded my memory, would venture here year after year on Halloween's night. The moon would shine brightly in the sky and not a cloud would be in sight. The ancient keeper of the gardens would always give us a kind wave as we passed through the stone arch and pushed through the creaky iron gate. We would hop, skip and tumble our way through, yelling out the classic, "Trick or treat!" that all the kids would do. He would give us a handful of sweets, not the kind that everyone despises on Halloween, the cheap, small pieces, but large chocolate bars we could barely fit into our bags. That is why we continued to go, even after we warned against it.

All the thrill of the place is now gone, replaced with a melancholy dread and the hint of the unnatural in the air. The air hung heavy and the wind rushed harder. The atmosphere here always felt uneasy, perhaps that is why we were always guided away with soft yet backhanded comments from the adults, pleas to not head to this eerie grave. I certainly understood now, stood against the air which held itself with a sharp, sinful structure that could tear at hearts and souls alike.

The old garden keeper passed many years ago, no-one could find the reasoning of his death. Yet yesterday, just as I had finished college, I got a letter addressed to here. A desolate grave of a man long dead, yet he sent me a letter. I stood before the towering gate. Maybe my time had come, and the distant hands of death would take my soul, but the only way I could truly find out was to step inside.

**Miley S**



**Judges Comments:** .....

**Lashes Foundation**

This story is powerful, engaging and kept me hooked throughout. The imagery that is built up throughout is truly wonderful. You are very talented.

The leaves were lifeless. The wind, which drifted the leaves, danced through the forest. It was as if the season had changed. Autumn had arrived. Ever so gently, the water trickled, manoeuvred, shifted down the stream. Like a silent graveyard, like a lonely old man, the birds fell silent. Proud, intimidating, ancient, the experienced trees stood.

Slowly creeping through the forest, the woman emerged. She was lost. Like a disturbed fox, she ran. She stopped for air, like she was suffering, as if it was unbearable. She felt alone, she felt insecure, she felt unsafe, surrounded by miles of forestry. Then, she remembered the reason she was here, to solve the issue, to save her family. Strutting into the distance, she was ready.

She realised, cold-hearted and surprised. All of them stood there, like lost pups, like a confused cat. She crawled, snuck, shifted towards them. They were freezing and wounded... They were told to run fourth. Proudly, successful, and brave, she led them home.

### Beau H



#### Judges Comments:

#### Lashes Foundation

The vocabulary choices and description in this story is almost magical. I have so many questions about the disappearance of her family. The story is intriguing and builds a real sense of tension throughout. Thank you for sharing!

It was damp. The thick smell of disintegration filled the air, slowly, quietly, calmly. On the ground, leaves which crunched annoyingly, sat with no life. Crimson-red flowers lined to rigid waters edge like a chewed stick, like a disturbed intestine. Birds, which flew through the trees leaves, quickly hunted the area; only the merciless of people entered.

This place penetrated me with suspicion, with suffocating nausea.

Violently, my mind raged, exploded, tormented back to how it had come to this. Run or die! Why did I not think? Mysteriously, the blood-red flowers caught my eye again; they twitched like cursed jewels. Bravely, slowly, carefully, I hate entered the forest, filled by natures glory.

The moment I passed the warnings, which now felt like a stupid mistake, my blood turned to ice. All of my confidence left my body by the foggy air that enveloped my senses. I was lost.

Sticky, tepid clothes clung onto my skin, like dense milk. Tormenting, raging, oozing around me. Slimy sweat ran, swayed down my neck. Nervously, I jolted through the flowers. Beyond the darkness a peak of light appeared bright.

A spirit? A ritual? A gateway?

Gentle, transparent flows of sound consumed the air once more. Wave after wave, creeping steadily in speed. Confidently, I viewed the scene. At every wave the soft, lipstick candy flowers fell to one side. More and more beams of like escaped through the gaps, like a fracture. The view before me began to face. An empty canvas appeared. Disspointment. An empty vault. Was this the end of me? Or was it the mysterious forest?

Either way, I was truly lost.

**Pauliasi D**

Dinner was ready. I smelt the hot steam which smelt like a juicy steak. These aromas almost made me forget about the horrifying war I was about to join. Almost anyway. Two days. Only 48 hours until I would have the worst experience of my life. I was petrified, horrified, worried that I would never see my family again.

The time has come...

Our bodies hurt, the savage gusts pierced through us. Endless sounds of painstakingly loud bullets made our frozen ears bleed. Restless days of taking other people's lives. People just like me – but when I shot them, I felt nothing other than the recoil. Rotten corpses laid everyone. The thick smell of blood made the air almost unbreathable. Chilly, icy, painful winds made it impossible to sleep.

The more time we spent on the battle ground, the less we wanted to live.

Painful, my eyes and feet felt. It has been 7 weeks since I arrived. Tired and exhausted from the never-ending massacre. Tears continued to rush down my face.

**Krystian S**



