Pilot Pen Writing Competition

THE BEARER OF SOULS

BY CHESTER WHITING

I used to believe that we were alone. That we were the dominating species on this earth. I was wrong. Beneath our feet a whole other world exists, a world with far more complexity and crisis than our own. Evil lurks beneath our shadow. I am a wanderer; I have no importance up here on the surface but the world beneath needs me — for I am the bearer of souls.

As I make my descent to the world beneath, the souls of men and women long past speak to me, giving me strength. They tell me that they will give me their power to cripple the evil below. The Gates of Marrow stand before me, a cold mist falls around me when they open. I feel the souls of those who have fallen in this realm. Dreaded beasts, Monsters of fire but there was another.

Its mind was clouded; the soul corrupted, it was as if it never formally existed. Then it appeared; a shrouded skeleton with robes of shadow draped over its mangled remains. “Find Me,” it declared in a deep solemn voice. The figure immersed itself in the chilling mist, then nothing. I know I must pass through the gates, I can sense it.

I enter. Shadows race around me stripping my body clean of flesh. My robe lays tattered, torn and stained black by the shadows of evil. I am only left with my mangled skeleton. I am confronted by a bare landscape; the trees stripped of their leaves and their trunks darkened. The skeleton appears again only this time he has an evil grin on his bare face.

“You have not found me – only yourself, and you have not found yourself – only me.” The riddle swirls around endlessly in my empty head. I soon realise the ugly truth. I am thinking of another possibility but there is no other. I know I am right but I want to be wrong. I am he – the shrouded ghoul.