

James Brown had enough. He had recently learned of his mother's passing at his holiday camp, but since there were still 2 more weeks to go, he couldn't attend the funeral. He first thought that this was all just a joke, when his father called from Queensland with the information that Lucy Brown had died and left her son one million dollars and her blessings for a bright and prosperous future. On the day of the funeral, in tribute to his deceased mother, he donned a plain stygian t-shirt and a pair of ink black denim shorts. A black satchel hung from his belt, containing all of the precious items that he and his mother had collected on the first day of camp. Among them were a conch shell, a shiny peridot green pebble, a gorgeous bottlebrush cone, and a couple of lilly pilly blossoms that smelled like cloves and the summer breeze. The following day, she left for Brisbane where she soon suffered a fatal heart attack.

He grudgingly completed the day's activities without complaint, but the dinnertime challenge was the last straw. The challenge was to tell everyone in your cabin what you liked the most about your parents, and it seemed incredibly inappropriate considering the circumstances. He quickly made an excuse to avoid the conversation and dashed into the bathrooms. He looked at himself in the mirror, and he saw that beneath his assured façade, there was an ocean of dejection that flickered with self-doubt and anxiety. Nothing he did could hold it back, so he let it flow out of him. When he heard his campmates whooping and cheering, he knew it was time to go out for the nightly campfire. Reluctantly, he trudged out.

His eyes were bloodshot and red, and they darted around at lightning speed, hoping that nobody in the circle would find out about his loss. He sluggishly stabbed a marshmallow and held it up to the crackling flames of the campfire. The sun was just beginning to dive below the horizon, casting its warm, amiable glow across the field of tents. Losing track of time, his marshmallow ended up charred and smoky, a symbol for the pain and suffering he had to endure, surrounded by a resilient, empty fortress. When the fire burnt out, it was a signal for all of them to return to their sleeping bags. Each movement James made was painful, a reminder that what he lost would never come back again. He ached all over, wanting to disappear into the darkness. Instead, it started to rain and the water shrouded him in a blanket of tears.

As he walked back to his tent, he was suddenly engulfed in a wave of sorrow. His shoulders slumped and he collapsed on the ground, weeping and sobbing. His eyes watered the stones, and luminous, lacey ferns sprouted wherever the drops hit the ground. Friends heard his cries and came running to comfort

him, jaws dropping in amazement as they stared at the glowing tapestry that had been woven from the plants. James told them about his mother, and how it was her funeral today. His friends nodded and were exceptionally understanding of his behaviour. As soon as he finished telling them, he felt as if the pressure of the sky had been lifted off his shoulders. He thanked them for listening and helping him cope and walked off to his tent with a smile on his face.