

NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Winner (aged 8-11): Lucy, age 10

The Tube System

I first met Lila in a dream, it goes like this.

The gas attack sirens wailed as I went to grab my mask, but it had gone. It was bad gas. Very bad gas. I rasped for air, but I knew it was useless. A pen was beside me, so I wrote with a wobbly hand:

My name is Lila. My future was before me and my past is behind me, I'm dead now. I write this with love to all those who care.

Then my eyes drooped, and I thudded to the floor. For weeks all was silent until a bright light echoed on the back of my eyes and I saw an airport. I must be crazy, I thought, I am dead. But that was until I read the sign. It said *Reincarnation, platform 3 section 2*. Suddenly, a man appeared behind me and said "Okay, you have no religion, you died in a gas attack. You need platform 23 section 1." Then, before I had time to wonder, I was sucked up a tube in an undignified manner and ended up on the platform the man said I needed. There was a glowing tube in front of me and I stepped into it. A woman inside said "Right you've died in a gas attack, and now you are going to start life again, until, you learn the true meaning of life so, until you can tell me, I'll send you back as an animal."

"But I don't want to go back, I'll just get killed again and if you hadn't noticed there's a world war going on," I impatiently said, but all she did was shove me into a tube and type something on her floating keyboard, then I felt my ears stretch as I was whisked down to a trench in Germany.

I was a rat.

Out of all the things I could have been I had to be a rat. Suddenly the ground trembled as a soldier's big clumsy boot squished me, then in no time at all, I was back at the platform with the stupid lady.

"Back so soon?"

I did not like her. I thought of all the meanest words I could and imagined a whole crowd was shouting them at her. Some of them included ugly old pile of dung, waste of space, horrid, stupid, wish I had never met her and blathering ball of disgrace. She was a vile old lady and I decided to run for it. Knocking over files and bookshelves, smashing security cameras and destroying the dead'uns portal. Many people did not get a second life that day, but I had no guilt. They are destroying the world, the only planet that is perfect for us. And the more we destroy it the less chance we have for a future.

Then I awoke from my dream. That girl was correct. We're killing ourselves. We must stop. We must make this world a better place.