

Travel writing coursework

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BUSTER**

The Volvo estate came slowly to a halt outside a boarded up old farm house. A middle aged man and three adolescents clambered out the car to be met by the fresh rural air. The sun shone brightly onto them as they examined the landscape. They were surrounded by fields with a long gravel path lying behind them. They all took a corner and hoisted the khaki Canadian canoe from the top of the estate then carefully lay it on the grass beside them. One of the boys asked the man which way they were going and he replied by pointing down the gravelly path which slowly merged into woodland in the distance.

The man locked up the car checking it again by pulling the handle and gestured to his son to help lift the canoe. They lifted it up with a heave and began to carry down the path and into the woodland followed by the boys two friends. The cows grazing in the field opposite the farmhouse mooed as they continued down the path. The four of them took turns in helping carry the canoe. The woodland became more thick and the stinging nettles brushed at their bare ankles. The bushes and trees were littered with beer cans and plastic bags left by youths.

The man's son considered what this was doing to the animals habitat and felt a slight sense of guilt as he knew he had done exactly the same in the past. The sound of the river became clearer and the forest came to a 'T' junction. The man led the way with the canoe and took the right turning. After about a hundred yards they came to a stop carefully placing the boat on the ground again. Before them lay the river. Three or four anglers stood at the side of the bank, one of them acknowledging them by saying what a lovely summer's day it was.

The man was a keen fisherman himself and asked if the other man had caught anything. He replied by shaking his head he said 'The fish don't like warm weather'. The rivers are far too over fished he thought to himself, it's such a shame that some of the rarer fish were dying out. He then shook his head and told the boys to sit in the boat. They did so and he pushed the boat with his might into the murky green water. The boat wobbled about and then stabilized itself, the boys pulling it to the side. The boys laughed nervously.

The man then wobbled the boat vigorously to show that it would take a lot to tip it over, the boys shouting at him to stop. He laughed and stopped. Then he handed the boys their paddles and gave them a few last words of advice. The boys waved him goodbye and he shouted at them to ring him when they wanted picking up. They were on their own now, at one with nature. They directed the boat round the first corner past a few branches in the water. Reeds grew either side of the river and made their path very narrow.

The boys struggled to direct the boat around the winding corners trying not to crash into the reeds around them. Bracken and stinging netals were visibly close up ahead and the man's son told them to go straight through the middle as they lay either side sprouting through the reeds. The larger of his two of his friends began to paddle without informing the other one and the boat headed straight into the bracken and netals. They all panicked shouting not to tip the boat over. The boat went straight into the side and they were all stung and pricked by the thorns but the boat stayed stable and they sighed with relief.

The river opened up and the banks became wider and had no reeds or bracken at the side. They relaxed and let the river drift the boat down stream by itself. The boys basked in the sun and chatted about football and women. Floating on the waters surface lay more cans of beer bobbing up and down. The larger boy contemplated the reason why these people just through their litter into the river. He came to the conclusion that it was a mixture of laziness and thoughtlessness. He pondered what the effect the beer had on the water and what an animal would do if it became trapped in one of the cans.

He was snapped out of his thoughts by a hissing swan and the shouts of his friend as he politely told it to go away. His friend slapped his paddle at it as the other two rowed the canoe away from the animal. They all relaxed again as the swan disappeared back into the distance. Everything was calm again and the boy that had swung his paddle at the swan was now happy. A big white boat was now coming at them head on and the boys swerved the boat around it like an adder through water.

The boy thought what the fumes coming of the back of the white boat would be doing to the water. He thought of how the fish were being poisoned and the air around the river was being turned into the kind of warm hazy air you'd expect in a city centre. The boat drew closer to its destination and one of the boys asked a walker on the bank if they new how far it would be to the pub. 'Just around the corner' they answered and the boys thanked them and were happy they were nearly. They paddled the boat around the corner and the pub came into sight.

They approached it slowly scanning the bank for a place to park the boat. They spotted a gap in between a large patch of reeds and paddled into it. The boy at the front climbed out first followed by the man's son and the tall boy. They all grabbed a section of the boat and yanked it as hard as possible out the water and onto the bank. They lifted the boat off the ground and made the short walk with it to the pub. They sat down in a heap of exhaustion on one of the wooden tables outside the pub. They ordered a plate of chips and reviewed their hard days work.

The plate was empty and the boy's dad had arrived to take them home. They placed the canoe on top of the car again and strapped it in place. They all got inside the car and the boy's dad had asked if it had went well. They all agree it had been a good laugh and it was a lot of fun. In front of them a man opened his window and dropped out a hand full of rubbish. The boys all thought to themselves what were we doing to the environment and how we were ruining it for our next generations and animals. The car drove off and the boys sat there in silence just thinking.