

Essay on Describe the Scene of A Fire You Witnessed In A Thickly Populated Area at Night

I was on my way home on my motorcycle after exercising in the Lake Gardens when saw thick black smoke billowing upwards some distance from me. It was twilight time and the dirty black smoke rising against a brilliant red western sky presented quite a spectacle. Knew that a fire was raging and judging by the color and fury of the smoke I reasoned that it was probably caused by the burning of rubber and diesel oil.

I continued home and I noticed that the smoke was getting closer. The column of black smoke was both magnificent and ominous. Then as I rounded a bend along the road I saw the fire. The glow of fifty-foot flames shooting upwards was blinding. I blinked my eyes to let it adjust to the sudden brightness. After a while, I could see that a row of shops was on fire. A tire shop, welding, and paint shop and two car-repair shops were right in the middle of the blaze. I knew these shops well because they were only a few hundred yards away from my house, fortunately on the other side of the road.

All traffic along the road beside the fire was halted. A policeman directed me to a side-road that led to a housing estate opposite the burning shops. I rode into the side-road and stopped to watch the fire.

The heat was so intense that the fireman could not even approach the fire much less try to extinguish it. I could see two firemen crouched behind their fire-engine about fifty yards from the burning shops. They were desperately directing their jet of water toward a row of shop-houses just next to the fire. Could see that they were trying to keep the fire from spreading by keeping the neighboring houses wet.

Presently more fire-engines came and the firemen set about containing the fire. They sprayed a protective ring of water around the fire. If the fire were to spread to the other shop houses, the loss would be unimaginable. From these other shop-houses, I could see figures working feverishly trying to remove their belongings to a safe area. I could also see policemen trying to prevent the occupants from entering the shop-houses. The dangers were obvious.

Then came a series of explosions that rocked the neighborhood, the oxygen and acetylene cylinders used for welding burst open spectacularly sending trails of sparks that pierced the now dark sky. The shower of sparks that followed every deafening explosion was greeted by hand-clapping and shouting from a group young boys near me. I could understand how they felt. This display of glowering red sparks would put the best New Year fireworks to shame.

Looking at these boys I suddenly realized that there were so many people besides me. All of them were gaping at the fire. Their faces, lit by the glow of the fire, revealed a variety of emotions. Some were crying, some looked frightened, some indifferent and a few were actually enjoying the scene.

The fire raged unabated for almost an hour. The Whole shop full of tires was the perfect fuel. Coupled with grease and diesel from the other shops, no fire-department on Earth could have stopped the blaze. So all of us, the firemen, the policemen, and the onlookers just stood there and watched, waiting for the fire to burn itself out.

As the fire progressed; whole walls came tumbling down revealing three or four cars in one of the shops. They were abused like the paper cars that the Chinese burn for their dead ancestors. I wondered what the superstitious Chinese are going to say about this burning of

real cars.

Gradually the fire became less intense as the fuel was burned away. The fireman turned their attention to the burning shops. Could see five or six streams of silvery water arching pathetically into the fire. However, after fifteen minutes or so, the fire was visibly reduced in intensity. Flames still licked hungrily at various places in the burnt-out hulk of once well-stocked shops.

Without the glow of the fire, darkness reigned. Silently the onlookers disappeared from the scene. I could just make out the silhouettes of the fireman busy at their tasks. Elsewhere I could see groups of people hurrying back to their shop-houses. How fortunate they had been. They certainly had had a close call. As there was nothing left to see or do started my motorcycle and weaved my way through the thinning traffic towards home.