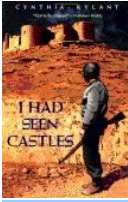


Passages

Reading Level 6



Title: I Had Seen Castles

Author: Cynthia Rylant

Sample From The Book

Pittsburgh was darkness. The taste of smoke in one's throat and heavy smog and black soot. That was Pittsburgh.

I grew up there. It was the only world I knew until I was eighteen, and I never questioned the filth. Perhaps no one did, believing filth to be the price one paid for the steel and railroads that fed us our meat at dinner. Industry gave the city shiny black Fords and millionaires and lights. The lights burned at high noon as well as midnight, so thick were the black clouds hanging above the town. They were beautiful lights, nonetheless.

The mills would ultimately poison or maim or kill most of the people who worked in them. Wives would collapse in grief. Children would cry softly in their narrow little beds.

The mills were fed coal and men so Pittsburgh might live. And it did. Very well.

We lived in one of the established, older, well-trimmed neighborhoods. Our house, like all of the houses there, was big. Big and comfortable, like a soft-smelling grandmother. Carpets had not become fashionable and so the floors were left bare, glorious oak floors graced here and there by floral rugs. Floors that announced the life of the house, that resonated each tapping heel, each clickety-clack of a dog running through, every boy's oxford shoes. Floors that sung.



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