The Great FIRE of London

1

London in the 17th century had a population of 350,000, making it one of the biggest cities in Europe. The Port of London did trade with places all over the world and some of London's greatest architecture was built then. With its royal court and its high society and fashion, London was the place to be!

2

Then, around the middle of the century, **disaster** struck! The Great Plague **broke out** in London in 1665 and soon **spread** over the country. It was a terrible disease and more than 60,000 people died as there was no cure. Then, as if that wasn't enough, the very next year in 1666, the Great Fire of London happened.

3

It all started with a **careless** mistake in a bakery. Thomas Farynor, a baker with a shop in Pudding Lane near London Bridge, had not **put out** the oven fire properly when he went to bed. His family woke up on Sunday, 2nd September to a house filled with smoke. There was no fire service in London back then. People just used buckets of water, so the fire soon spread.

4

Within minutes, the houses near the bakery were also on fire. It had been a long, hot, dry summer, which made them burn very easily. And when a strong east wind started blowing, that helped the fire even more! People decided to **knock down** some buildings to stop the fire from spreading. But, as they were made of wood, this just made it spread faster!

5

The guards of the Tower of London **blew up** some buildings with gunpowder. This helped to get the fire under control. On 5th September, it was finally over, but London was a horrible smoking ruin. Only six people were reported dead, but over 13,000 houses were destroyed, leaving 70,000 people without homes.

6

London took thirty years to rebuild. As well as homes, many important buildings were lost. The great English architect Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt much of the city after the disaster. His Monument to the Great Fire can still be seen in London today.

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