

A New Beginning

“Don’t worry about a thing, cuz every little thing is gonna be alright.” Aurora hummed this uplifting beat everyday while getting ready. It brought her some semblance of bittersweet happiness; it reminded her of great times as a child. The date on the calendar was circled in green, “Happy 12th Birthday!” scrawled over the small square box in her father’s handwriting. As her eyes moved from the calendar to her bedroom window she saw nothing. She wore glasses, but it wasn’t like she couldn’t see anything, there was just nothing to be seen. No flowers, no birds chirping, no happiness.

For centuries, humans had not taken into consideration their dying home until its last moments. Twelve years before Aurora was born there was complete chaos. No one planted a tree, recycled their trash, or even stopped released dangerous gases into the atmosphere for everyone to breathe in. No one noticed that the elephants, giraffes, and many other majestic creatures were dying. There were some who tried saving the disappearing species, some who knew that with a little dedication there could still be hope. Movies, songs, speeches given by children who wanted to finish their childhood years were shown to people of Earth, but no one truly saw. The buzz of a text message, or the ring of a phone call, kept people distracted from how badly they were affecting the world.

Aurora took out the few family photos that she had kept over her years. She felt as though if she kept these pieces of her happiness, she would remain sane. As she looked at a picture of her dad and older brother she remembered stories and the harsh reality of what happened to her world. There were three stages to the inevitable destruction of Earth, two of which Aurora was too young to remember. The first stage was massive climate change disrupting their everyday lives, causing tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes all around the world. Houses, skyscrapers, and many memorable buildings turned into rubble, leaving what seemed to be a deserted world. It became a new reality for the generations that were being born into this mayhem.

The second stage was war and a reversal of history. Nation leaders declared war for more land, more resources, more everything. Instead of finding ways of slowing down Earth’s ticking-time bomb, humans decided to fight for what they believed that they needed. Untold amounts of people died in these years, whether being killed for things that they owned or killing for what they didn’t own. One day, Aurora’s family had been running low on food, and it was her father’s duty to collect some for his children. He never returned that night. The only thing Aurora remembered from that day was saying, “I love you,” to her father for what was the last time. These years seemed to be the worst, but then it seemed to all stop. There was no more fresh air, no more fresh soil, no more endless electricity, no more life.

The third stage was the worst. Depression, starvation, and disease. Most times it would be hard to breathe, and Aurora's brother went to bed, but never woke up. This stage was peaceful, but none quite knew who would be next. Before her father died, Aurora's favorite things to do was take care of the garden and look at family pictures, learning about her family history. It was her way of surviving and these two factors made the pain and heartache ease with time. The garden consisted of many plants, and because many of them selected as a result of her brother's research, they were able to sustain in harsh environments and provide with enough nutrients to keep someone alive. These plants were always in her family garden but seemed to be a waste of space as more beautiful and fruitful plants could be planted. It was enough for Aurora, and she made sure to make the best of these four-leafed plants as much as possible.

As she finished getting ready to head outside into her garden, she noticed a picture that she never noticed existed. It was of her entire family, happy in the garden. This picture brightened Aurora's face as she could remember that day. Aurora could remember her father's deep voice singing along to the song, "Every little thing is gonna be alright!" Aurora could remember the freshness in the air, the beautiful chirps of the birds, and the scurrying of a squirrel nearby. She remembered her brother and father playing football, and taking pictures of a happy moment of her life. Tears started to fall down her face, but looking closer she saw a capsule, with her name written on it. She never remembered the capsule at all, but as she looked more closely, realized that the capsule was located in the picture where the four-leafed plants now resided. She would have to destroy her one source of food to discover what was in this capsule that was obviously destined for her. Aurora, looking for answers, dug up her plants. Destroying the roots, to understand her roots, she reached the capsule. Gingerly, she opened it, and heard, "Aurora, we love you, and we are counting on you." Inside the capsule was the last remaining pot of fresh soil, with a few seeds. "Aurora means new beginning sweetheart, although we may not be there you are destined for much more than we could ever give you." Lastly, there was a note saying, "Don't worry about a thing, and bringing the note close to her heart, she knew just what to do.

The world can't survive with everyone against each other--it takes all of us to save what we all call home.