

No One Left to Find

The year 3039

This was the last time. The last time I will ever see my home, my eyes tear up once again. My suitcase seems even heavier, the world seems even grayer, and the light inside me flickers just a little bit more. The world has been engulfed in nuclear war for just a couple of months now, but the damage is already devastating. "No! Stop thinking about this stuff!" I tell myself, "Just repeat your life to yourself!" This was a game I had been playing recently, I try to think of all the good things that used to be in my life. I am Jolie Chatman, and I was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. I am twenty-two years old, and my adopted brother who is two years older than me is off fighting in this terrible war. The government is relocating me to go live in Antarctica, away from the bombs. I am Jolie Chatman, and this is nuclear war.

Before I leave I glance around my hometown, there's the curb underneath the willow tree where I fell and sprained my ankle. I can almost see my ten year old self sitting on the pavement crying and clutching my ankle, and at that time I thought that the pain from my ankle was the worst pain imaginable. Now I know that there are much worse pains than that, like what happened to mom.... "No! Don't think about that!" I try to tell myself, but who am I kidding. You can't hide from reality! Mom died in a nuclear attack on the way to Antarctica. I heard that people used to think that the world would end from a nuclear war, and I think that it might.

NLH 5TH RESA 3

I think about one thing on the hydro train, this war has turned us into monsters. In every possible way we are monsters. The government are monsters for firing bomb after bomb, caring for no one but themselves. Their offices are protected by the newest technology, force fields. I think about how they don't try to use the technology to protect their people, but instead they protect themselves. We are monsters too. I have seen mothers so afraid for their child's safety that they shoot them out in the streets, and all the while tears roll down their face like rain on a window pane. Then the mothers shoot themselves, because they are heartbroken for the loss of their most valuable possession. We even look like monsters, with the gas masks we have to wear. The black masks cover our whole face, and they have a long black tube sticking out from them. The sun never shines any more, and all you can see is nuclear gas. It's as if God himself can't look at the monsters we've become. I'm a monster, a monster riding a hydro train 32 miles under ground.

It's always cold here. Nothing is ever warm underneath the ice and the snow. We arrived two days ago, and I already hate it here. Everything seems to be surrounded by death, it's like a black veil has covered the earth and all of its inhabitants. You can see death in the eyes of everyone, from the very few children here to the adults. We've all suffered losses, every single one of us. For most of us, all we have is ourselves and the never ending cold.

You can't make friends here, it's almost impossible. Everyone is either closed off, (like me) or sick from cold or hunger. Then there are the mentally insane, either from loss or from gases, they are have to be locked in a room to keep from killing themselves. Some guards, the nice ones, will sometimes be able to slip them a gun or a piece of rope, anything that can be used to kill

NLH 5TH RESA 3

themselves. Honestly, I don't know what has ended more lives in this war, suicide or bombs. I wonder which way I will meet my end as I collapse on the barely padded piece of wood that is to now be my bed.

I got the letter today, the letter that completely extinguished the already flickering light inside of me. I had got a very similar thing only once before, and I never wanted to relive that moment ever again. My brother died, once I saw the envelope I knew. I knew that there was no trace left of my loving family except for me. No one gets letters anymore unless someone dies, and that's what the letter had said. Someone had died, but it wasn't just anyone that had died. It was my big brother, he was the man who had stood up for me in seventh grade when someone made fun of me. He was the man who would always be there for me, but he wasn't anymore. When I read the letter the whole world slowed down and sped up all at the same time, white noise filled my brain. A whole and complete emptiness fills me and my something inside me breaks into a million pieces. I still read on, and I learn that he had died trying to evacuate a city. The civilians had made it out, but he hadn't. I search for tears in my husk of a body, but all I find is that horrible, dark, emptiness.

After Kaden died, I've started having thoughts. These are the kind of thoughts that make me afraid of myself. Thoughts that make me scared that the guards will pass me their gun next. I never thought that I would ever consider killing myself, but here I am. Without my brother I have nothing to live for, so why live at all.

Today was the day. Today was the day that I would say good bye to this world and say hello to another. A desperate voice inside of me pleaded against this end, but the smoldering

NLH 5TH RESA 3

blackness inside of me dragged that voice of into a submissive silence. I somehow felt peace and clarity in knowing that I would die today. I start to walk to my bedchamber, the last place where I would experience life. That's when the alarm sounds.

The voice over the PA system screeches, "There is a drone with a nuclear missile burrowing under ground. Please take cover." "What?" My brain tries to make sense of all of this. Then, it does. I was going to die. I didn't panic like everybody else, I was going to die today anyway. So instead of taking cover, I stand chalk still and wait for death. In those moments waiting for death I see my life, I see the laughing and the fun. I see the happiness that had filled it before, and finally I see my end. Then, I hear the boom. Even though that boom means my death, death seems like more of a gift than a curse right now. A ginormous smile spreads across my face, and I already start to be incinerated inside and out. My last thought before death is, "At least no one will receive a letter for me."