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English III

1 June 2018

Earth: Far and Sick

### **Day 100**

I've waited a hundred days to start this journal. I kept thinking, hoping that one day, we would return. I felt that starting this journal would be like accepting this situation. But today, I start it because I feel that I'll go crazy without it. I need somewhere to keep my thoughts and some one to connect to the person I used to be.

There's no way my home could be gone, just like that. It's been a hundred days without my love. I don't know where he is or if he's okay. I try to not think about it. It never makes me feel any better. Today, I met Joan. Joan is one of the passengers on the USS Eagle. She, like many of the passagers was much more accepting of the position we now found ourselves in. We were in the gathering room when she started sharing her views.

"The way I see it, we deserve to up on this ship. After all that we've given to society, we deserve to reap the benefits. No one saw this coming but how does it help to stand here and wallow? We are alive, all is well," she said in a conversation with someone else. But there was too much in her words for me to ignore.

"How could you possibly think that way?" Before I knew it, my thoughts had become words flying towards Joan. I already started though so, I figured why stop? "We don't deserve to be up here anymore than those other people. We should consider ourselves lucky. And you say

that we didn't know what was going to happen. That's complete bull. They warned us years ago that this would happen," tears welled in my eyes unexpectedly. I turned around, suddenly embarrassed, "We were warned."

"Yes, Damien, and if I remember correctly, they were the ones warning us. They could have created their own escape plan instead of whining and insisting on us doing it. We deserve to be up here because we worked for it. We didn't sit on our asses ignoring all logic and reality," she walked around to face me. She was standing by her thoughts. There was no changing her mind. *But how, how could she not feel any remorse?*, I thought. I fell silent for a while. I honestly didn't know what to say to her. "If you really care that much, why don't you go back for them," she returned to her friends and they all laughed. The crackling sound of their voices left me stunned. She was right, though, I was going to do something about it. I was going back to Earth. On day 100 aboard the USS Eagle, Joan inspired me to start my master plan.

### **Day 101**

I started counting the days I've been up here because I figured I'd lose track of the days of the week. I'm sure everyone has but they don't care. No one up here cares, hell, they got up here because they never had to care. They had money, so they were allowed to ignore the slow deterioration of the Earth. They had money and so they were afforded an escape. And I am one of them, technically. My father, owns several nuclear plants. People always needed energy so we always had money. Growing up, I was very sheltered. I was only allowed to hang out with other white kids. All of their parents were colleagues of my fathers' so they were always over for dinner, well meetings... meetings at dinner.

My father has always been a little distant but the divide between us broadened as I grew. I began to really understand what his work was and how he intentionally ignored his direct connection to the pollution of the water of the community next to us. My father was a criminal in my eyes because he was putting those people at risk with no consideration. I brought it to him several times, being the sixteen year old activist I was, and he shoved it off or gave me an empty explanation. I figured I would go visit that community. If he wasn't doing to do something, I was. Leaving my home of Grand Blanc and going to the city of Flint was one of the best days of my life. It was, but is now the worst because the pain that I feel would likely not exist today. In May of 2016 after years of hearing about Flint's water crisis, I went to check it out myself. There, I met the love of my life, Dante. Dante was unlike anyone that I had ever met, or that I was ever allowed to hang out with. The day we met was one of the most awkward of my life.

"Who that?" I heard him ask his friend Marcus. "She ain't from here, look at em shoes," he scoffed. How could he be so disgusted with someone he didn't even know? I realized that I wasn't going to be very welcomed here. I had to choose my words carefully.

"Yo, I's just visiting. This is Flint, ain't it," I rolled my eyes at myself. They looked at each other and chuckled right in front of me taking pauses to look at each other before returning to laughing.

"Do we look illiterate to you?" Dante finally caught his breath enough to say. "'I's,' really? Where do you think you are? Flint is still in Michigan. This isn't Alabama." If he wasn't disgusted before, he was now. What a brilliant start to my journey to help them.

“No, not at all. Believe it or not, I’m here to help,” I said with a smile across my face and my hand extended, “My name is Damien, Damien Richardson.” Marcus began to reach for my hand but Dante smacked it away.

“Richardson, as in Thomas Richardson, the man that is ruining my community?”

“No, well yes. But I want to..”

“Oh shut it. You left your shining house filled of servants that likely fetch water from your personal fount. You walk in here with your expensive shoes and stand here and profess yourself as the savior who is here to save us, while actually being the devil that ignores our cries after hitting us down again and again. How dare you?”

“You claim that your cries are ignored, but here I am now and you are showing me out. What does that say about you?”

“Absolutely nothing. If you want to help us, tell the man with the money to have some consideration for our lives. That is what you can do and what you should’ve done two years ago.” The his words weighed me down. I could feel myself seeping into the ground. I had never before felt that bad. I really did want to help but how? I assume that they took my contemplation for surrender because they disappeared. I didn’t go home that day, I was discouraged but my car wouldn’t be ready until the next day.

“See, that’s what I mean. You came here to serve a purpose and after a little pushback, you’re ready to leave?” A familiar voice said from the driveway. I was staying at an inn and as soon as my car came, I prepared to leave. I was putting the rest of my things in the trunk when I heard him, Dante.

“I came to help, yes, but you made your feelings clear. Now I’m trying to leave, and you’re in my way. What do you want from me?”

“It must be amazing to be that quick to give up, to forget. You want to help us? The first step is getting a backbone, you’re not in Grand Blanc anymore. The second step is getting serious about it. When you care about a cause, you never give up because those people are more important than your ego. You do whatever you can. Even if you don’t succeed, you die trying” A cocky smirk ran across his face. He was right and he knew it. I figured that was as close to a smile as I’d get, so I settled for it.

After that day, we began working, hashing a plan to improve Flint’s living conditions. Turned out that they were already making efforts. Both Dante and Marcus were a part of an initiative to create water filtration systems and place them in every home. It wasn’t easy though. Flint was not a small city and filtration systems, plumbing and electrical work was expensive. Expensive for the residents of Flint but not for my father. After spending virtually the entire summer in Flint, I went back home because I was on a mission. I started slowly depleting the money from my father’s account. I figured he was the cause of the mess and so he should be the source of the solution. Besides, I didn’t think he’d miss it since he was making so much everyday. I was wrong. He eventually figured it out and I had to come clean. He forbade me from doing anything like that ever again.

“That money is for emergencies,” I figured that Flint’s water crisis was an emergency but that was because I couldn’t see the future. I never could’ve predicted the predicament I am in now. There’s an officer comin...

### **Day 103**

I had my journal privileges revoked on day 101. On USS Eagle, they run a tight ship. Everyone aboard the ship has certain rules to follow. Being asleep by midnight and awake at dawn are just two of the many rules

I wondered if they were afraid we'd turn out like the humans on Pixar's Wall-E. Breakfast is always a shake. There is limited food, even with the Harvest Room, and limited space even with the size of the ship easier being two American cities. We ate quickly and standing up because it was more efficient. One day I learned that we were being trained in the arts of the militia just in case we were threatened by aliens. I couldn't help but think that we are the actual aliens. We were far away from home. Everyday since day 100, I've gotten into the habit of writing just before I go to bed because I always have so many thoughts then.

Anyway, yesterday I broke curfew so I have to be on the low with my plan from now on. In a few days, when they stop eyeing me like a delinquent, I'll get into the control center and drive this thing back to Earth. First, I need to find the room.

### **Day 106**

I found the room. I got to sneak a look inside when an officer opened the door. It's huge but I'm not scared. I'm going to find a way in there.

### **Day 108**

I haven't been able to write in this journal because my worst nightmare has come true. I went looking around the ship, slipped my way into the control room when everyone was eating.

The control room looked like a hotel room on one end and a plane on the other, someone was driving this thing. I looked around, trying to see if I could find a way to drive the ship without drawing too much attention to myself. As, I looked closer, I noticed that the working of the controls was similar. It resembled one of my father's cars. Two years ago, before we stopped communicating, he was teaching me how to drive. Then it hit me: I hadn't seen my father in nearly a year. *How could I just be noticing*, I thought. What kind of person was I. I roamed around this place for nearly a third of a year alone wondering what I was going to do, crying about Dante and his family, and not once did I even question where my father was. I guess I just assumed that he was here someone but I didn't bother looking. Truth is I didn't care. I was deep in my own thoughts staring into the screen of the ship. Space was dark, nothing like the stories. The stars weren't nearly close enough to provide enough light. How could anyone drive this? I got into the seat, it was currently on autopilot. I placed the goggles that were on the dashboard over my eyes. Instantly, I figured out what they were for. They made the dark abyss that is space look like something manageable, navigable. I got up, locked, and blocked the door. I walked over to the seat, took a deep breath, and turned the autopilot off. The ship suddenly turned at least 30 degrees, throwing me out of my seat, and throwing the plan of being discrete out the door. I pressed the gas with a fury, the pedal nearly broke. In my head were thoughts of Dante and the people of Flint and everyone else who just couldn't afford to saved. Everyone who's worst sin was being born without money. How the people with the money initially ignored the environmental changes and danger but created a plan to save themselves. Thoughts ran through my head, and tears down my face. I heard knocking. I didn't know how long it was going on.

“Whoever you are, open up now,” a soldier shouted from the other side of the door. I stayed at my seat, kept my foot on the gas. I was not going to give up. Besides, I barcated the door pretty well so I didn’t feel like I needed to worry. I smiled, thinking that I had accomplished something. Then, the door came down. “Who are you?” I hesitated. “Identify yourself now!”

“Um, look it doesn’t matter who I am. The more important question is who do you think you are?” I don’t know where this arrogance was coming from but it made me feel more empowered. Then, I felt a gun at the back of my head. “Okay, I’ll get up.” I put autopilot back on and hopped out of the seat. I had to digress. What help would I be if I died?

“Slowly.”

“Calm down,” I turned and took a quick survey of the room. *Could I get out of this?* I saw that they blew an entire wall out, completely ignoring my barricade. There were ten officers, all dressed in the same thing and two men dressed in suits. The first man stepped into the light.

“You’ve made a grave mistake girl,” An unfamiliar man scoffed as he made his way over to me. “What were you thinking? You put so many people endanger.”

“You mean like you did when you left all those people on Earth? How could you? Aren’t they humans too? Aren’t they worthy of life? You stand here and condemn me, but you’re the one in the wrong,” I spit at him.

“Well you can join them. If you don’t want to be here, find a door. In fact, I think that’s a great idea. Boys,” he waved some of the officers closer to him.

“Stop!” The other man finally spoke up. I saw his face. It was my father. “Please, let me talk to her first, boss,” he begged. My father just begged for something. I never saw anything like



it before. Before I could object, I was being dragged into the hotel room section of the control room.

“Where have you been?” I demanded, “and what is this?”

“Listen, there are some things that you don’t understand.”

“What don’t I understand, dad. From where I’m standing, you contributed to the destruction of the earth and then left most of the humans on it to die. And now you’re here helping this guy. Why?”

“Look, this ship runs on petroleum and you know my business had the largest supply in the world. I helped to create this ship so that we can save as many humans as possible.”

“As many rich humans. That’s what you mean right? So your money is still the most important thing to you? I can not believe you,” I turned my back.

“No, Damien look around you. What could money do for us here or where we’re going?”

“Where we’re going? Where are we going? I assumed we were just flying around. God, you guess really thought this all the way through.”

“And obviously you didn’t. What did you think you were doing. You wanted to go back to Earth? How? We are light years away and you don’t have a map. You have nothing. This, Damien, was a suicide mission. You’re life is being threatened and you are still thinking only of berating me. Even if your existence here was miserable, at least you were alive!”

“Like you care. You were here this entire time but didn’t bother to reach out to me? Admit it, you only care about yourself. You stand here and tell me about myself but we are in this position because of people like you. You are negligent and cruel.”

“I distanced myself because you made yourself clear years ago. You despised me and I had to deal with it. Still even with the hatred in your heart, I made sure that you got on the ship because you are my daughter and I love you. Whether you believe it or not, I do.”

“If you loved me, you would’ve done something when I told you to.”

“You are my daughter. You are my number one priority, not those people. That is why you are here and not them!”

“You should have left me there,” I sobbed. “That was where I felt at home. That is where I became who I am. Those people matter to me. That earth was not just a planet, it was home. No, I didn’t have a plan. No I had no idea how to get there but I was going to try because I am not a coward. I am nothing like you,” I sobbed. There was a long pause as if he was checking if I was done. Had he heard anything I said?

“Okay Damien, look, unless you apologize for what you just attempted, you are going to die. I can plead your case but you must go out there and talk to the boss,” he shed a tear, “Please.”

“A wise man once said ‘When you care about a cause, you never give up because those people are more important than your ego. You do whatever you can. Even if you don’t succeed, you die trying,’ those are words I’ll never forget,” I left the room, and faced the boss.

“Young girl, you have done a bad thing. Do you understand that?” his smirky expression cut into my pride. He was laughing at me. He had all the power and he knew it. He was just like everyone I had been surrounded by my whole life. I spit at him once again and I bolted. I ran to my room and locked it. I hurriedly wrote this journal incase anyone ever finds it. Wherever we

land, make sure your care of it. Take note of what happened. Don't forget this. After all, how many times can we move? How many of us will get left behind next time...

That was the last journal that Damien wrote. For her act of insolence, she was thrown out of the ship into space where she suffocated and died. She never found out what happened to the Earth or to Dante but she died for a cause and so she was okay. The ship kept traveling. Thomas Richardson, then woke up from his terrible nightmare. He ran to his daughters room and hugged her intensely.

“Have you thought about what I said?” She raised an eyebrow.

“Thought about what sweetie?”

“The water crisis in Flint. Your company is directly linked to it. We have to do something.” Tom was relieved. Yes, honey of course. We'll start on that right away. Tom was relieved to have been given a second chance. This one, he wouldn't waste.

