

Lena Lin

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Bloomington High School South

Day 24 Greener

Fictional Short Story

When I was a little girl growing up in the '30s I remember being so grateful that I was born into a world with evolving technology, medicine, and everything that allowed people to grow up healthily and happily. I also remember a decades later when that illusion was shattered for me with the death of a dear friend. And again,
and again,
and again.

Troy,

Thank you for introducing me to everything I'm passionate about today. As a child, I remember telling you that I would never forgive you for educating me on the horrors of our modern world—the smoke you breathed, the garbage in your yard, the color of your water. And how all of that was because of the color of your skin. Now, I wish I could tell you that I will never stop being grateful for the enlightenment you brought into my life. Thank you for housing me when the drought hit Cali. Thank you for the water, even though we both knew your family didn't have enough already. Thank you for the masks, and for letting me borrow your inhaler, and for

protecting me always. Your lungs may have gave out, but your heart never did. I will take good care of your family.

Sesi,

I am beyond pissed that you had the audacity to die in your own backyard. But I am beyond grateful that you died for something you cared about, you stubborn little gal. At least you proved your point. You don't know this, but when I got to your house, and after I cried with your parents, I had a good yelling session with those researchers. "The ice is not melting" my ass.

And even though you were ridiculous even in your own death, I have to be grateful for the positivity and humor you brought into my life. You will never know how powerfully you impacted me. Thank you for teaching me about Inuit culture, and making the best fish in all of Greenland. Thank you for believing in the good of humanity to make change. You would be proud of what we are doing today. This is all for you, my dear.

Maya,

You are the coolest person I have ever met, and probably the only politician I will ever tolerate. If you had lived longer, you probably could have been the first leader of the entire planet. Thank you for teaching me what it means to be a woman, and thank you for teaching the world what it means to be human. Large corporations didn't stand a chance against you—you were a powerhouse! No wonder it took a whole hurricane to take you out. You will always inspire me to enact change. I will never, ever forget you, and neither will the rest of the world.

Mom,

I know that you were away a lot to conduct research, and I just want you to know that I understand now. I see what's happening around me. Everything you warned me about happened—the rise of the oceans, the downfall of entire ecosystems, the mass extinction of species... I wish you were around more. Maybe it would have ignited my passion earlier in life. But I know that everything you were doing was important, and I forgive you. You would be ecstatic to know that we've accomplished what you had been advocating for your entire life. The planet is healing again, mom. I just wish it had happened earlier.

Love,

Anastasia



Instagram



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pollutionsux Climate justice is an integral part of the solution for our environmental crisis; without it, those who are unfortunate enough to suffer the consequences of others' environmental ignorance will continue to pay the price until they are overwhelmed. And then, it will be us who pay the price.

About my story (please read AFTER you read the story): This is a short story that is meant to convey the losses and grief of the main character, Anastasia (whose name means rebirth/renewal/resurrection). It takes place in the future, when humanity has already suffered a great global loss but eventually came together to heal the planet. Each of her friends whose lives were lost because of climate change represents a different climate issue: environmental racism, environmental indigenous injustice, and environmental sexism. Her mom was meant to be a representation of someone from our generation (Gen Z).

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