

The Future is Now

Life SUCKS and it's everybody's fault. Two years ago, a study came out that in 2020 (now), the earth would pretty much be dead. No one took it seriously, so now, the sky is brown with smog, all the trees are dying, or being cut down. Even now, with all this happening, people are still digging for oil and poisoning our atmosphere. The world is highly overpopulated and full of people who don't care about the state of the earth as long as they get their money.

I live with my adopted parents, Kara and Jacob Jaxson. I'm adopted because my birth parents gave me away to a science lab when I was first born. I grew up like a lab rat. Ever since I can remember, I've been part cat and part bird. The scientists experimented with human DNA and animal DNA, seeing if it could mix. I'm living proof that it can. I have bird wings and bird eyesight, with cat night vision, cat ears, and a cat tail. I'm lucky, I have the best of both animals, but there are drawbacks. It's not ALL awesome.

First, I used to have a brown skin tone and now, I'm albino. I also have a LOT of tattoos and a LOT of piercings to cover up my once brown skin and because I like tattoos and piercings:) By losing my brown skin, I lost my heritage, who I was.

Second, I'm one out of three people like me. There's me (Rose), Laura, and Dean. Dean and Laura both have the same animal combination as me, but it's hard. No one gets what it's like to be one of us.

Third, we're three science experiments scientists threw to the curb. We were put into the world with \$100, a phone and free WiFi for 3 years, which we've used up. They come, ruin our lives, then bring us out into the world with a "good luck" and leave.

Finally, there are these things we call "glitches." Glitches are where you get a piercing migraine, and see some sort of vision, while having a seizure and screaming your head off. You don't feel PAIN exactly, but it's definitely not fun.

Dean, Laura, and I live in the same sketchy neighborhood. All the houses are covered with graffiti and are crumbling, slowly deteriorating into dust. Not all the neighborhoods are like this, but we live on the outskirts of town by the junkyard. The city doesn't bother with us or our houses.

My friends and I go to school almost everyday. Yes, we have school. even during this environmental crisis, we still have to have an education. There are two schools in our town, one for the rich and one for the middle class and poor. Life's not a TOTAL bust, but this is about as close as you can get.

Now, I know what you're thinking, isn't the future full of electronics and fancy gadgets? Yes, but only for the richest. Middle class and poor people have what they have and nothing more. We're not poor, but we don't really make the cut to be middle class and we're definitely not rich. How you are treated, what you get, and sometimes how long you live, all depends on how much money you have.

It's evening time, and as I am about to fall asleep, I hear a knock on my window. It's Dean. By the look on his face I can tell that something is wrong. I climb out of my window and before I can ask, he says,
"It's Laura."

Together we fly from my window and across the street to Laura's house. I can hear the screaming coming from her bedroom as I climbed up her steps to her front door.

As we run into Laura's house, the screaming becomes increasingly louder. I see Laura's mother, Heather, sitting on a barstool at their kitchen counter. Laura's house is the same size as mine, but is a little fancier. They have cheap faux fur rugs instead of our cheap threadbare rugs. They have a bar counter instead of an island and it is overall cleaner, but that's our fault. Kara, John, and I aren't as clean as Laura and Heather.

Heather is nervously twiddling her thumbs. She can see that something is wrong but knows not to interfere. I give her a reassuring nod as we race past, up the stairs and into Laura's room. The first thing I see when I walk in is Laura. Her eyes are clouded over but her face is calm...well, as calm as you can be when your screaming at the top of your lungs. She isn't just rolling around on the floor shaking like we usually do when we are glitching. She is banging her head against her bedpost, causing blood to spill from a cut near the top of her forehead onto her bedside rug. Her usually tidy room is a mess, with things strewn all across the floor and her rug is stained with blood. Once Dean and I are over the shock of seeing our friend like this, work to subdue her. Dean grabs her arms, while I get her legs and feet. Together we haul her on her bed and after fifteen minutes of struggling, her eyes get their normal yellow color back and she stops screaming. Her pillow is soaked with blood but she lies there breathing heavily and falls asleep.

As Dean and I sit there, a thought occurs to me.

"What if that happens to one of us?", I ask.

"I don't know.", Dean answers, monotone.

I sigh and sit in there in silence. Heather comes in to make sure Laura is OK. She she gives us a hug each, then leaves. At about one in the morning, Dean and I get up and go home.

Back in my room, I remember I left my phone at Laura's house. I had taken it out of my pocket so it wouldn't break when we were restraining Laura. I decide to go get it.

I walk across the street and fly up to Laura's window. It's unlocked. I open it up and find my phone on her bedside table. I look over at Laura to check the cut on her head and what I see makes my blood turn to water. Laura is laying on top of her bed, above the sheets. Her eyes are glazed over again, her mouth frozen in a silent scream.

I'm not the one to be startled by anything, considering how I grew up, but her expression scares the skin right off my bones. I let out a terrified scream my friend. Heather runs in. She studies my alarmed expression and steps towards Laura.

She asks me with concern in her voice, "What is happening to Laura?"

"I don't know", is all I can squeak out.

As Heather walks out of the room, Dean flies in through the open window. One look at Laura and he pulls me into a hug. Once we break apart, we consider what to do. Finally, we decide to sleep in her room, in case anything else happens.

Once we are settled, Dean quickly falls into a light sleep but I can't. Everytime I close my eyes, I see Laura's frozen face. When I finally fall asleep, I start having the most bizarre dream.

I'm in a room, with four walls and a ceiling but no doors or windows. The walls have a city scene painted on them and the ceiling has eyes painted on it, of all shapes and sizes. They seem to follow me as I walk around the room. On the wall, there's a little girl who just lost her balloon. She's jumping up to try and reach it. There is a man walking to work dressed in a suit and tie. There is an elderly lady waiting to cross the street as cars zoom past. I suddenly realize something, all the people in the painting all have one thing in common: they have no eyes. I look up at the ceiling again. Maybe the eyes up there belong to the people down here. As I am about to start yelling for help to get out of this peculiar room, I hear noises. I hear the cars rushing past the old lady, the little girl crying for her balloon, the man whistling as he walks to work, and everyone else in the painting. Then, I SEE it happen. The figures on the walls start moving, going about what I imagined them to be doing. I walk towards one of the walls silently, as to not disturb the people in the painting. Carefully, I put my hand on the wall, with the tiniest bit of pressure and fall through.

Suddenly I'm IN the scene, watching the people go about their business. It's not real, it's some sort of trick, I think to myself but in my gut, I know it's truly and utterly real. I walk up to the old lady and ask the first question I think of, just to see if she'll respond,

"How long have you waited to cross?"

"Cross what?", she responds.

Suddenly she grabs me.

"Give me your eyes! Or kill me!", she screeches.

I pull myself from her grasp and quickly walk away. I approach the little girl with the lost balloon.

"Who's the old lady at the crosswalk?", I ask.

"What old lady?", she replies.

I look over my shoulder and see that she's gone. I walk away from the little girl and walk right into the guy walking to work.

"Excuse me," he says, "my apologies."

Then he walks off. This place is weird, I think to myself as I go over to the spot I entered and fall right back into the room.

When I get up, the walls are all blank. I look up at the ceiling. The eyes are still there. They look more real now. I fly up and take a closer look. As I thought, the eyes are real, glued onto the ceiling. Curiously, I poke one and hear someone on the other side of the wall yell,

“Ouch!”

“Hello!”, I yell, “Hello!”

I hear some commotion on the other side of the wall. Then, after a couple minutes of listening to someone banging around, a boy around my age falls through. I look him over: his hair is orange and he has a splatter of freckles on his nose. His clothing is ratty and he’s barefoot. I look down his arms to his hands. His fingernails are caked with dirt and grime. In his left hand he holds a pen, in his right hand he holds a sword. He says, “They say the pens mightier than the sword. Let’s find out.”

He hands me the pen and keeps the sword for himself. Then we start. He is a good fighter but clumsy. I hold my ground well. I use my wings, flitting, flying around, dodging his swipes. It seems I have the upper hand, until he gets behind me, and slices off a part of my wing. I fall to the ground, crippled. He stands over me and says, “It turns out that the pen is not mightier than the sword.”, He smiles. “I was right.” Then he turns, and walks back through the wall, leaving me in darkness.

I sit up, soaked in a cold sweat. I look at the clock. It reads 6 a.m. Ok. I think to myself, it was just a dream, it’s over now. I am about to lay back down, when I feel a pain in my right wing. I look behind me and see that part of my wing has been sliced off, the cut still fresh, the blood still wet.