

Forgotten Futures: Fractured & Forlorn

She trekked through the desiccated landscape, her tongue parched and her lips cracked. With no destination in mind, she surged forward. The heat of the sun burned away her energy and her hope. She scanned her surroundings for any signs of life but all she saw was the rundown cityscape.

She came from a country that was once called Singapore, but it did not matter, for “countries” no longer existed. Five years ago, due to the impending climate change, not only had disastrous tsunamis and earthquakes struck, but the continents themselves had changed their alignment, moving together to form one big continent all together. It was the end of the world as they’d called it.

She recalled the last time she’d seen her family; they had been caught under the debris of the earthquake. She’d traveled far and fast, seeking for an area where she could sustain herself till her family would join her, as she had been out at school when her entire world had started heaving and shaking, but any hopes of finding them had been washed away by the tsunami that struck right after.

Each countries’ rescue efforts went towards helping themselves but disaster after disaster struck, and it was not long after, when the ‘Great Famine’ struck. Resources were running out and there was no hope. Citizens started rioting against the government, blaming them for the distraught situation they were stuck in, when in reality everyone had a part to play.

She didn’t need to live for anybody but herself; she could move wherever, whenever she wanted. No one paid to live anymore; it was mayhem. Everyone looted whatever they could lay their eyes on and basic necessities like food and water were what was most sought after. It was ironic to walk through the dilapidated streets and find wads of cash laying around, for cash no longer was the currency used to attain things of one’s desire.

She’d done her fair share of looting as well, and she’d been lucky enough to get her hands on a smartphone. The phone had everything, from an international credit card, to an app that could tie shoelaces. However, she had no use for it, so its sole purpose was for her to track time as days passed by, and to use the phone to detect disaster prone areas so that she wouldn’t wander into them by accident. Landlines and mobile networks no longer existed, for technological devices now thrived off solar energy.

She walked as far as her feet would carry her, bitter as a gourd as she occasionally stumbled upon safehouses; for only the rich and powerful could afford them. She stood and looked with envy as a couple sat lavishly on the couch, watching the holographic people that spoke to them from the walls. She watched with a mixture of awe, jealousy and horror as the man pressed a button at the end of his armrest and a pint of something that looked suspiciously like beer, popped up.

Her legs finally gave way to exhaustion and she collapsed behind a shelter, gasping and out of breath and energy. She looked down at the crevice right beside her, wishing she could have been engulfed by it.

She had ridden the waves of grief before, she'd persevered and overcame so many obstacles. But this time, she felt as though she were drowning in her grief; and this time, she wasn't so sure she'd be able to stay afloat. After all, grief had a way of removing one from the world, and it takes a lot of strength to reconnect and weave yourself anew into the fabric of living, to give yourself a chance of happiness in the future. . .but after all that she had seen, she wasn't so sure that she had what it took. She closed her eyes, unsure whether she'd face another torturous day of living or if she'd finally be able to rest.

This was the world now, with its two extremes of the extremely lavish and those who barely scraped by. Ironically, neither group had a care in the world; the former too caught up in their lavishes and oblivious to what was going on around them. Some would even convince themselves that nothing was askew by having their screen-walls to project a simulated background of a calming ocean or a beautiful sunset, instead of facing the bleak cityscape.

The latter lived without any care in the world, for they had nothing to lose; their lives tethered on the very fine edge of life and death and there was nothing anyone could do to change the situation of either. . .