The rest

“Bye guys, I will be back soon” Mia yelled from the doorway. Closing the door behind her. Mia didn’t feel right. She wasn’t in the right mindset today. The entire week had been building up to this day. If the authorities denied it again, C475 would not have enough oxygen to survive until the next “Market Day”. But Mia couldn’t think like that. She needed to be positive. Especially for the children. She couldn't let them down. She had the responsibilities as the oldest and only 17-year-old. She couldn’t be the one, telling 20 people that 3 months ago was the last time they got oxygen. Mia blinked a scared tear away.

“You can do it, dummy,” she said to herself while looking at her tank. It had 0.1 standing in bright maroon. Only enough oxygen to last her 2 more hours.

Walking down the long dead silent road, the only other thing on her mind than her responsibility, was her hatred of the life, the authorities and the past generations had given her.

And the worst part about it was, that if only Mia’s generation had been the ones that had lived before the world wars, they wouldn’t be in this situation right now. After the fourth world war in 2043, the world was joined into one country: The UNN. The counties needed to unite and make a system that would ensure all people could get oxygen. The reason for the oxygen loss one could ask. The past generations' egoism and the big bomb in Asia.

For Mia, the journey to “Marked Day” felt longer on this day. The grey city was the only thing she saw. Not a single human in sight. The black road she walked on was not saying a word and the wind was as still as ever. Not that it meant something to Mia. She enjoyed the silence. A rare experience in a small building filled to the brim with children and teenagers. So, when it finally happened Mia was thankful.

…

It took Mia 30 minutes to arrive. One hour and thirty minutes left.

On Mia’s way inside the big black box, with the almost creepy-looking bright maroon sign “The filling”, she got a feeling something was wrong. Normally on these days, Mia saw many robots and other types of droids flying or driving past the black box, but not today. Mia felt like she was in the wrong place, but the signs were still pointing toward the entryway.

Mia walked up to the closed doors and opened them. She went through and walked directly toward the robot sitting in the middle of the hallway.

With no human expressions, it said “Name, age, and house” with a very human accent.

“Mia 17 C475” Mia responded. It wasn’t the first time Mia had had the responsibility to pick up the oxygen tank. Last time she got a no. The robot looked down at the device in front of it. The robot was unusually slow today. Mia started scratching her arm. With a big surprise to Mia, the robot looked back up at her again. The only sound it made was “No filling”

And then the world came crashing down. Mia couldn't believe her ears. She started tearing up.

“WHAT no, it can't be” Mia screamed. She didn’t know what to do with herself. How could it be possible? She thought of the small children back at the community building. She couldn't let dem down. It couldn’t be true.

“Tjek again” Mia demanded. The robot didn’t answer.

“Tjek again I said” Mia pleaded. The robot didn't answer again.

With no heads-up, Mia was placed in the hands of a robot that escorted her out. When Mia was back outside, she fumbled her way out of the robot's tight grip and ran. She didn’t stop to take a breath. She ran as fast as she could. No looking back. Only looking at the ground and the way forward.

…

One hour left.

When Mia finally was home her head started spinning. Maybe because of the adrenalin from the run or the fact that she only had an hour left to live. The house was full of noise. Happy noises from all directions. The first thing she did after coming home was to go straight up to her best friend's room.

Elisabeth was always Mia’s rock. The entire time Mia had a problem Elisabeth was the one solving it for her. Other than that Elisabeth is a genius inventor.

As expected, Elisabeth sat at her desk working on her latest invention: a new way to get oxygen. She had worked on it for years but could never get it to work. She always said it would be done the next week but not in a million years could Mia believe that. But Mia was of course supportive.

Now she would never finish it. Elisabeth would never get a proper chance to get all the material she needed. Mia could now only look at her with a miserable face.

“Hey, girl how was “Market Day?” Elisabeth turned her head from her invention and asked.

Mia didn’t want to answer, so she smiled with a fake smile and said “How are the miracle doing” referring to the invention on her desk.

Elisabeth didn’t suspect anything and answered “It needs time dummy. It will work. You can count on it”. Happiness filled Mia. But only for a second. She looked down at her feet. Elisabeth that knew her very well could sense the sadness.

“What is going on Mia”

“ I … I didn’t get a filling”

Mia looked back at her best friend for all her life. Elisabeth looked like a statue. Mia could feel the confusion from her.

“No you are joking,” Elisabeth said while looking at her tank. With that reaction, Mia’s heart busted into a million pieces. Mia felt like she had let the most important person in her life down. She fell down on her knees.

“I'm so sorry… I'm so so sorry”

Elisabeth walked over to her and sat down with her.

“Don’t be. You can't take responsibility. They are the evil not you”

Mia didn’t answer, so they just sat in total silence. The second time that day.

…

Forty minutes left.

After sitting in the same position for some time, Elisabeth stood up.

“We need to say something”

It only took Elisabeth a few minutes to get all 20 people into her bedroom. The entire time, it took Mia had just sat in the same position. Head down and on her knees.

The silence came back when Mia started talking.

“Guys we didn’t get a filling,” Mia said with a neutral tone. No feelings. Just like a fact they needed to be heard.

After some time, Mia had the strength to look at the others. The first eyes she found were Elisabeth’s. They showed peace and anger at the same time, with no to little sadness. Mia knew whom the anger was pointed at: the authorities and the past generation who put them in this situation. Looking around at the others, their eyes showed the same.

One after another each one of the 19 sat down. Holding hands with one another. Elisabeth on Mia’s left side and Sam, a 6-year-old boy, on her right.

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Twenty minutes left.

People went out of the room after some time. No one saying a word. Mia also left. Her speed was as slow as ever. She felt like she was walking in slow motion. Mia decided to go outside to get some fresh air. She had always been an outside person. Always enjoying the sun on a hot summer day. But now the sky was grey. The same grey as the city in front of her. The only other color than grey was the yellow community building behind her.

Mia walked around the building and sat on a chair. She looked up at the sky. Not feeling anything just looking. Looking down at the grass Mia finally felt something different. Anger.

“How could they put us in this situation? Why didn’t they save us?” Mia screamed out. No response. Mia shocked her head. Of course, no one responded.

“I should have done something sooner… I should have demanded a filling” Mia whispered. Guild filled Mia. Even though she knew it wouldn’t have helped. But what would? Mia thought. In a split second, Mia knew what to do. She ran back to the house. No time to waste.

…

Ten minutes left.

Mia sprinted up to Elisabeth’s room for the second time that day. She found Elisabeth lying on her bed staring at the ceiling. She couldn’t let her be sad. Elisabeth was important. She needs to be positive and stay strong. Mia tugged Elisabeth up from the bed

“What” Elisabeth asked pissed

“We need to fight. We need to do something. We can’t just give up”

“But what can we do?” Elisabeth said with carelessness.

“Get your miracle to work”

“But I can’t”

“Yes, you can. Now is the time to get it to work” Mia said with willpower.

Elisabeth looked at Mia. “Okay let's do it”

In seconds everyone was assembled. Ready to work their asses off. Ready to help with what they can.

…

Five minutes left.

Every one of the 20 people in house C475 fought. Not a single person was despondent. Not a single person had the feeling that it was going to end anyways, so I could just give up. No. The small kids were putting cables together. The teenagers were gathering bigger pieces around the house. Elisabeth stood over her work with slippery fingers and greasy hair. Mia stood by her side assisting her. In the few seconds, Mia had with her own thoughts, she thought about all the people in the house. All her memories from her childhood. But as soon as she began feeling sad, she concentrated on the goal.

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Two minutes left.

“We need to try now,” Elisabeth said looking down at her tank and reading 0.001.

“Okay then do it” Everyone shouted in unison.

Elisabeth pushed a button.

Nothing happened.

It doesn't work.

She pushes again. Nothing.

Elisabeth looks at Mia.

…

One minute

Mia smiles back at Elisabeth. Mia turns her head and looks at everyone. She smiles at them. They smile back. Each and everyone knows they have done everything they could. No regrets.

Mia looks up at the ceiling and starts screaming.

The other joins her.

Mia closes her eyes.

Breathing in and out

In and out.

In.

Out.

Nothing.