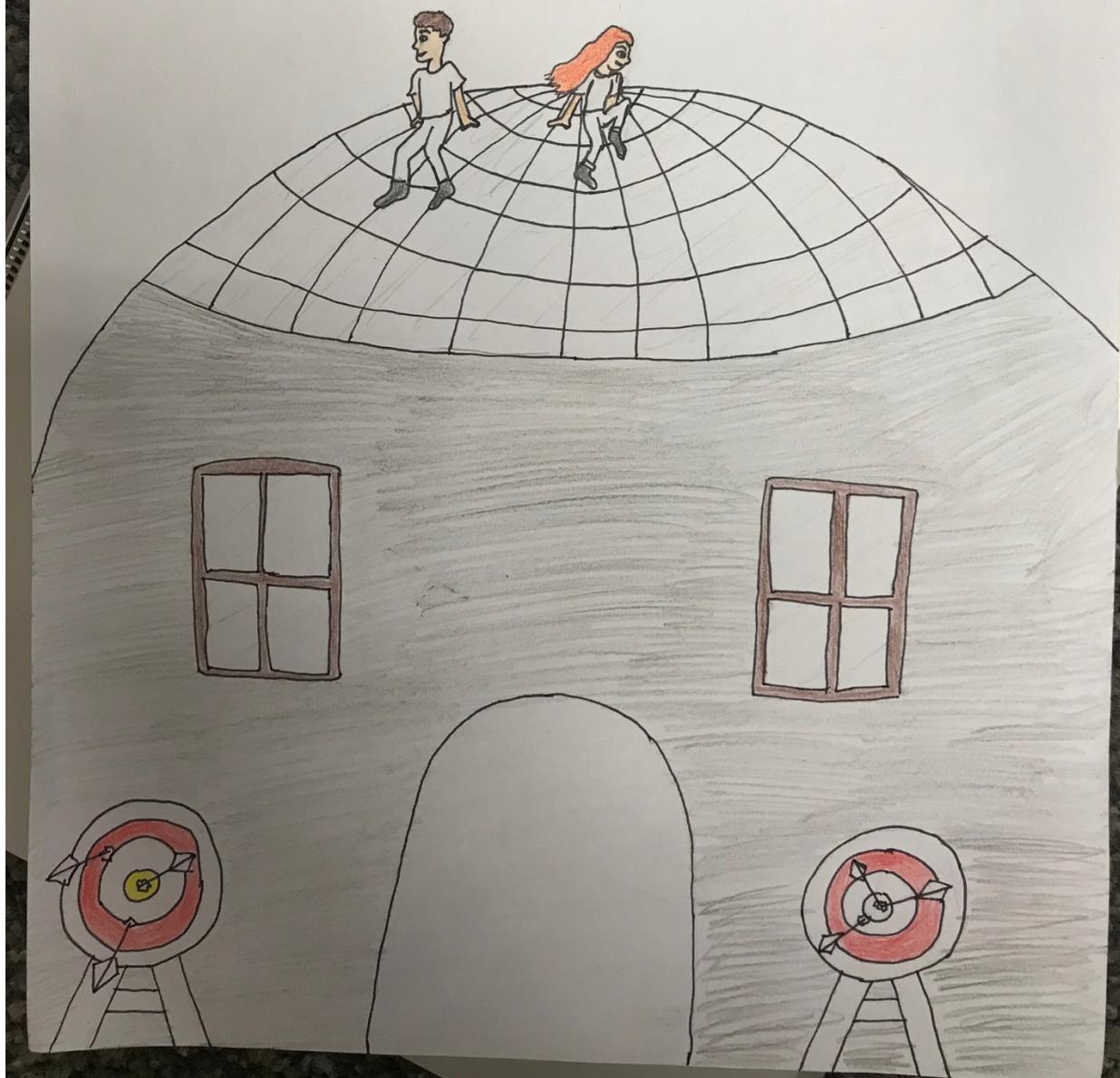


The Test

by Bianca, Rylee and Imani



There were 51 kids picked to train to survive 51 of us stuck in a dome, and only 5 would survive, we knew this was going to lead to problems, everyone would do whatever it takes to be the top 5. One is the confident girl that no one likes because she is always top of the board and there is nothing she can't do. On the other hand, there was Three the hottest boy who isn't very good at anything but is determined to make it... They begin to talk... who will survive, who will get to live an eternal life and what is the future really like?

Chapter one- The beginning of the end

As one opened her eyes, she knew it was the end, the end of ever being happy. Little did one know she was picked, picked in the 51 to go to the future and live forever. She never really saw the point in living. One had no parents, no friends, no one to love her, she hoped the future would be different and she had to keep the hope things would change. She loathed the academy, one hated the feeling of never leaving the dome, she had never seen the outside, but she knew it would be beautiful. She felt her breath quicken and her throat become dry, her airways shrinking. Her alarm sounded in her ear, beep, beep, beep it went through her whole body, her toes unrelaxed and her body moving on its own to get up and start her usual five am training. Her whole body was shaking as one hadn't had any food for the past five days, but she had to persist. Her feet taking one slow stomp to the ground as she made her way into the ration room. She took one small protein muesli bar which left sour, unflavoured tastes in her mouth, like her day unflavoured, the same thing over and over and over again.

One had no one to turn to, no one liked her, they had all hated her, they were all jealous, jealous of how she was always top of the board, never failing a test, outshining everyone and anything, there was nothing she couldn't do. The dome was massive, filled with all different rooms, rooms full of weapons, challenges and recourse to survive, survive in the future. The future was the only thing keeping one fighting, fighting to live. She didn't know if the future was going to be a living dream or an utter disaster, this was what she was soon to find out, 34 more days to prepare, 34 more days to survive, 34 more days could be the only 34 days she has left if she doesn't pass. There were 51 of them, but only the top five in the academy would make it.

The pressure was an overload and she knew the day was soon, through her restless nights, her heart pounding out of her chest and still no one to turn to. She was continuously staying up all night at the test chambers practicing, nothing was standing in her way to be one of the five to have a chance of living forever, having eternal life, maybe this is what she needed. She had no distractions anything could throw her off her game. She had this, she had this for sure. One stopped for the slightest moment and looked at herself in the mirror. She finally saw potential in herself as she could finally be something, do something bigger than pass a test. One has always had dreams, dreams that were trapped in the dome, if she passed the test, she knew she could make them come true.

Chapter 2- The distraction

In was now 12 days until the test to determine if one would live or die. The training became more intense as one was shoving past the crowd of people not knowing what was going to happen. All you could hear was screaming and crying the crying of the kids who were on the bottom they knew it was the end for them. One felt awful for them, but she knew she couldn't get distracted by it. One was ferociously running to the archery room where she felt safe, no one ever went there, it was her space... or so she thought. She opened the door but then suddenly stopped she saw something, someone. It was a boy, a boy in her archery room her eyes squinted to get a closer look, she vividly saw his brown hair and freckly face, she turned around, one quickly swung her whole body around the door hoping he didn't see her staring. She hears him giggle.

"hello is someone there"

No response

"come on I saw your strawberry red hair, don't be scared," he said

"what are you doing in here," one said

"practicing my shots for the test I need to pass" he firmly said

"well you're doing it all wrong" she chuckled

"I would like to see you try"

One picks up the bow, brushes her strawberry red hair across her delicate face, she pulls back the bow along her lips, she let go perfectly hitting the center of the target.

"hey, I never caught your name," he said with his blushing cheeks, he was impressed, very impressed

"my name is one, what's yours," she said while ripping out the bow from the target so confidently

"my name is three how come I have never seen you around before"

"because I'm always practicing's I need to get out of here, don't you, clearly not you can't even hit the target" she claimed

"well I guess you can teach me," he said with a smirk from ear to ear

"I don't have time for that, I need to focus on myself" once again one was pushing everyone one away. She knew she needed to get over these distractions she had to be alone, but there was some part of her wanting to help, she was torn she didn't know what to do. She left, she went to bed that night wondering what if, what if I stayed around to help, her head swirling around with regrets. She woke up to the same alarm beep, beep, beep. She got up she rushed to get ready, from this moment on her search began, she was searching through every room in the dome trying to find three, she really wanted to help she had felt horrible for leaving suddenly with no explanation. Her feet stomping along the floor, rushing past everyone, she crashes into someone.

"ow watch where you're going you idiot" she shouted... it was three, she was so embarrassed she didn't know what to say.

"hey three, I was just, just just uh looking for you." She said blushing

“I was doing the same, look I really want to pass this test it would mean the world to me if you could train me, you help me, and I’ll help you”

“I’m willing to help you, I want you to pass”

“When do we start” three said

“right now, get your things”

Chapter 3- training begins

One and three made their way pushing and nudging through the crowd of eager trainers who were cursing and yelling as they nudged without apologizing. They made their way to the archery room eagerly to begin their lessons. One started off with the basics she stopped behind one guided him with h/er arms wrapped around him guiding him to the perfect shot, three felt embarrassed as he wanted to be holding one, he felt the thump of her heart against his back, he got butterflies witch began to creep up to his mouth as an awkward giggle sprayed out of his mouth, his cheeks as red as a rose he was falling for her... massively. He pulled the bow behind his ear, he let go hitting the target perfectly, he swung around and picked up one not letting go hugging her as he has never hugged anyone before this is the happiest he has ever been.

"I DID IT" he shouted

"I'm so proud of you, now time for the hard stuff" she giggled

They were both blushing. One needed no distractions not even three. Even though three was so perfect, his brown curtains flowing down, his ocean blue eyes and his cute little freckles on his nose. She began training him more until the bird left the nest and was ready to start shouting without his guidance. Three tried once, twice then three times and each time nearly a perfect shot. He ran to one and hugged her again as he pulled away, they both shared stare at each other and felt their connection growing. To complete their training for the day one and three ran around the dome as quick as they could stopping, breaking and chatting. One had never been so excited about anything in her life she had her first friend, who made her feel special for once in her life she felt ever so special.

The next morning, she was up eagerly at the crack of dawn observing the streaks of stars across the sky which shone right into her room as a reminder that the future was unclear, and nothing was set in concrete at, she didn't care as long as three would be with her. She had never felt this way about anyone, she had never had a family and finally, three, three was her family she felt so full when she was around him, if he didn't make it, then one wouldn't go, she would give up everything because she knew a life without him wasn't worth it. The day of the test was creeping up behind them and they couldn't stop it coming, the nerves took over their whole body with only 4 days until the test. They both had to fit in their last training as One thought that Three wouldn't make the five.

Chapter 4 The big day

The students marched in a never-ending crowd into the large cement dome known as the 'test'. Their feet scuffed the smooth, cold floor as they twisted to face the stage. A large projector rolled down and a blank screen faced them. A robotic voice followed, echoing around the dome as the students were silenced. The screen beckoned them forward, its voice screeched in their ears like a crawling, metal spider digging further and further into their consciences. One by one, each member walked forwards seven steps exactly, a long winding line around the dome's base. One was the first to walk out, as her name suggested. She stared through the crowd of students trying her best not to gaze over at Three, she knew he was thinking the same. Friendships were safe in the academy but frowned upon for success in the test, and One didn't want theirs to be apparent. Finally, all students were lined along the wall, 51 familiar faces, most of which will soon be forgotten. It was finally silent in the dome, One glanced around uncertainly, sure that it was part of the test. Her eyes rested on a small tunnel, only centimeters wide, trailing along the very wall each student was resting upon.

One stepped forwards slightly, sure that the tunnel was a part of the test. Face forwards, a cold, bleak look on her face, the last thing she needed was attention. Still staring straightforward, she glanced over at Three, reassured to see he had already stepped forward. As she turned back to gazing at the center, 36 bodies lay face down on the stone, an apricot tassel balancing upon a wooden dart seethed deep into each students' neck and back. Before she could recognize any of the students the floor gave way beneath her. The light faded from her eyes, her tangerine hair trailed behind her and she scuffled to grip the walls. Staring down was a bottomless pit, a black hole luring her forwards, but she wouldn't break. Legs outstretched, arms aching pulsing with hatred endured dedication.

One slid down, carefully and purposely springing to the small opening on the side of the metal wall. She peered down at the hole, a warm, bitter fire, lighting her eyes with acidic smoke and reminding her why she was here. Sprinting to the end of the tunnel, dodging darts, arrows, lasers, plugging her nose through venomous fumes as she pushed forwards for 45 minutes, feeling like a lifetime. One reached the end of the tunnel. A creaking, wooden door greeted her, just to the left, a golden sign read 'welcome to the academy, your training will begin Tuesday morning, congratulations'. No-one had ever said congratulations to One, she had never been celebrated, cared for, made someone proud. A shining, silver tear slithered across her eyelid and down a cold, silky cheek as she stared at the sign. One had never cried before and was certain no other students had. She ran her pale fingers across the old, golden handle to the door and jerked it open.

Chapter 5 -Test two

Three stepped inside the small room that he was led to believe was his quarters. He put a hand against the brick wall, wondering if One made it. Three had never felt that warm, tender feeling with One, then he had with someone else, not even with his mother and father, who were far from the academy by now. Three turned away from the wall, his focussed, heartfelt look breaking into a shocked and grateful gaze as he admired his new quarters. A neatly tucked, deep blue bed lay crammed against the pearly grey accent wall covered with perfectly painted cinder clouds and large oak trees flourishing within the corners of the wall. Across from the bed lay a deep timber set of drawers, a golden sign stating, 'welcome to your quarters One', similar to the sign outside the door to his quarters. Couches, a dining table, and a bookshelf decorated the remainder of the room, and a winding staircase spiraled to an unknown room above. Three jumped up from his spotless bed and made his way over to the staircase. Carefully, one step after the other, still breathing heavily from the test, he reached the top, a lookout over the course, 7 similar towers stood at the same height inside a new, larger dome.

"I knew it" a voice sang from behind him.

It was one, of course, she had made it too. Three was relieved, but not surprised, as she was the one who trained him in the first place. They dangled their feet off each of their balconies, talking until the room turned a deep violet, stars shining above the glass over their glistening, daydreaming heads. After hours of discussing nonsense, they scrambled downstairs and awaited the dreadful sleep that awaited them. A never-ending delay, longing for the reassuring darkness to engulf them and dispatch them into the following day. Three woke with a start to hear a deafening siren informing him of a new day's arrival. He peered down beside his bed, an endless hole, similar to the one in the maze, a vicious fire ablaze within the depths of the darkness greeted him.

Small fractions of the once elegant floorboards floated above the gaping hole. Three tore back his sheets and placed one chilled foot on a floorboard, after exactly 8 seconds it faded away into fragments of dust, falling to the fire. Three took a deep breath through his nose, the oxygen-filled his lungs, an unusual smell carried between his gasps of air. Nevertheless, he hopped forward in energetic bounds, blood pumping, eyes concentrating on each step, brain working to calculate his next leap until he made it to the end, another hole in the brick wall. As Three hurdled towards his target he slipped. He plumaged into the depth, sure that it was over, but there had been something in front of the hole when he tried to jump in. As he slipped into the fluorescent fire he dreamt of One, for a life with her and what the future would have looked like.

Chapter 6: The future awaits

One woke up, she had missed the jump into her one opening, her chance to the future, but she was in a familiar room, the training academy. Across the room was Three, she was sure it was a dream, that she was in heaven, she was sure she burnt to a crisp as she slipped through the bright flames within the hole, this couldn't be real. Until she took a deep breath of that strange, unfamiliar air and was snapped back to reality. Before One could stop herself, she ran towards Three, leaping into his arms, and laughing as they spun in circles. Three lifted her down into a warm, welcoming embrace and snickered; "WWE did it".

They had, but it wasn't over yet. They still had to train, to fight until they reach the end, the future. One glanced across the room, she observed a brother and a sister, the girl holding another boy's hands and the brother standing alone, quietly congratulating himself. Only five had made it to here, but to One, Three was the only person who mattered. As One glanced around the room, Three handed her a bow and a set of arrows. She felt that familiar lust and rush of exhilaration and was transported to the first time they met, the first set of arrows they fired at targets, side by side. After hours of target practice, sequences of rolls, shots, and combinations of karate, taekwondo, and other fighting combinations, they moved to other areas of training.

They practice boxing, building small houses and setting up tents, finding food through critical conditions and warding off possible attackers all to prepare for the future. Just as One was finishing pegging her tent into the stiff, artificial grass, the same crackling voice crept into the academy as the first day of the test.

"Students, you have achieved satisfying results throughout the test and will soon board the 17-hour flight to the future. During this time, it is advised to practice each training session and build on your aforementioned skills, to survive the journey to and from. If you survive, you will choose to board the shuttle back to the present or to stay in the future and continue to keep the earth flourishing. As you may have smelt, the air in here is quite different compared to the oxygen you are used to. This air ensures that you will stay young and live forever. Enjoy your stay, as when you arrive there may be no end" the metallic voice announced.

One turned to Three.

"Will you stay when we get there?" she whispered.

"Only if you do" he replied, teasing.

The five students turned towards a corner of the academy, a flight of stairs forming, and an extravagant space shuttle revealing itself. Beside the stairs, a cupboard filled with five helmets and spacesuits.

"Ready?" Three peered at One.

"With you, always" she replied.

Chapter 7: The untold future

Chapter 7: BEEP, BEEP, BEEP! the ship was shaking and rocking, one felt her breakfast creep up her throat like a spider, deep breaths in and out, three whispered softly into her deaf ear from the sirens. His voice crept up her spine sending tingles throughout her whole body. The tingles where a shock wave that released all of one's tensions her knuckles unclenched and she grasped three's hand awkwardly. Threes grin grew his smile as wide as the future, as he hoped that this trip would grow their relationship. The ship was large but made everyone feel boxed in as they could be plummeting to their death, the air filled with untold secrets the aroma of disgust, regret and pain bounced through the plastic oxygen, as this could be the last time tales could be told. The ship then glided to the ground of the future sitting on a timeline of the past and the present. Wobbling and sea legs were spread around the room, the smell of sickness sour, protein muesli bars glided across the room like a sludgy sweaty, oozy slug. The door shifting the future awaited. The suspense was unbearable what was on the outside, freshly mown grass? Rockets zooming across the sky in constant motion, laughter and utter happiness and people walking their children in their air strollers they were soon to find out what destiny they were to fulfill.

The door slid open, rocking shaking their eyes grew wide and were filled by the sight before them it left them with a ...emptiness. Trees beamed down on them touching their noses they whispered pain, judgment regret, and sadness into their ears the branches naked with no vibrant green leaves. The grass was brown dusty dirt, the sky was murky filled with second-hand sour smoke which stabbed the sky. Bodies decorated the ground in a neat unpleasant triangle pointing up to the upside-down hell sky while the devil waited on his thrown made by clouds. Screaming, crying, shouting bounced across the horizon. It was the complete opposite of what they thought.

Their smiles sucked into the atmosphere their eyes filled with tears if this was the future they would rather live in the past. The trudged on regrettingly through the dirt and long brown grass, they tried not to look and see the houses on fire and the children who the fire had consumed. The journey was not to enjoy the future it was to see if it was survivable able to become the home on many. One was distanced she couldn't take her eyes of three, his floppy, golden-brown hair which flopped across his face, his eyes which you could sink in forever and ever. A butterfly was flapping inside her stomach making it turn and twist as flapped stronger and stronger. Three couldn't take his eyes off of one. She was the most magnificent girl he had ever seen. Her long fiery raspberry red hair, her wide green eyes, her smile which made him ever so nervous. They both had unfamiliar feelings for each other which only got stronger and stronger as they trudged on holding hands.

Chapter 8: The argument

The sun disappeared into the clouds the clouds swelling it whole. Everyone's head was bloated with questions. Why was the future a living hell? How could society live forever in a place with no essence, no happiness? The day flew by and made them hungry so they ate their dehydrated rations which did not suit their pallet as they lost all their lunch and the slug hadn't yet left their tongues. They were all tired but fearful of sleep knowing that they were in unclear evil surroundings. One and three set up their tents quickly as they were eager to sleep after a long stretch of a day. During the night One heard screams ringing in her ears she couldn't shut them up. She made her way to threes tent and said shaking of fear;

"Can I stay in your tent tonight"?she whispered embarrassed. She needed someone to comfort her

"Of course",he said, trying not to show his pride.

During the middle of the night, One felt her hairs on her pale arms stand up so she wrapped her arms around three trying not to make the situation awkward as they had only been friends for just over a month. Three turned to his side trying to swallow his verbal diarrhea, but he couldn't, and exclaimed;

"So how did your parents pass away?". Regretting what he said, one nudged and grabbed his arm and placed it over his mouth to stop himself from saying something else he would regret "What a wonderful question three, quite a charmer aren't you?"

"Sorry I've just heard that you don't like to open up to people and that you are very hard to crack". Now three was truly ashamed of his word vomit but he liked one greatly and it made him nervous to be around her.

"well clearly you don't know me at all, and how my parent passed away is none of your business nor anyone's for that matter". One left the tent angry with tears flooding through her heart to her eyes.

"One wait"! Gaspd three clutching onto her silky, soft hand.

One ran fast through the gluggy mud clutching to her ankles.

She stopped and took three deep breaths as her face went pale and her eyes went square from tiredness, tiredness of running, lack of sleep and her whole life story being asked each day. She fell to the ground and had a deep long cry. A river of tears flooded to her face making it sting, the water in the river had been building up since she saw the future for the first time. Not what she pictured. As she got up with the calls of the night howling and dancing on the wind, she heard a crackle and crunch in a brown bush she turned to see a dark figure. Feeling queasy frightened, her breath stopped, her whole body flooded by fear building up, stopping her from screaming as she remained frozen, paralyzed at what she saw. The dark figure leaped at her and grabbed her by the arms dragging her into the unknown, being dragged away from all she had left, three, but what she saw next was sure to test her faith and what she saw made her heart thump out of her chest and made her blood become cold and lose its flow.

Chapter 9: Where's one!

Three was up and out of the tent, he couldn't sleep as his mind was filled with only regret floating around towards his heart, if he was going to live for eternity he would need to cure his awkward ways. When three was around one he felt his best self, he felt free for the first time in forever he didn't feel like a loser, he wasn't ashamed of his hobbies his mixed feelings made him only think of one and of how much he wanted to be with her. Did he love her? Yes, everything else was a blur, but his feelings for one whereas clear as day and one was the beaming, bright sun in his dark clouds, shining so bright it blinded him. He picked himself up and became determined to win one back, he skipped to her tent quickly to find the scrunched-up sheets to the corner but no sign of one who three could imagine sleeping gracefully waking up with her strawberry hair still neat and no whips insight. He checked frantically at every tent no sign of one. His breathe quickened and he felt protective over one and wanted to find her and for her to be safe again in his sights. One was speechless the familiar dark figure looked exactly like her mother. The figure was a living image of her mother taking from a photo album pasted back to life. She had the same wavy blonde hair like her mother and fishbowl blue eyes like her father. She worked up every last ounce of courage in her body and spoke

"D-do I know you?" she stuttered as she spoke like a mouse
"do you not recognize me, oh my naive sister how I've longed for this moment".

She was green her face hot her stomach-turning and the familiar spider biting at her throat. She had another family why did she never meet her sister?

"Why have I never meet you?"

"why do you think? I was crazy to them just because I tried to kill you but that's because I was jealous, jealous that you were the favorite, but what I did to them made them surely regret their decisions".

One held her breathe. She put the puzzle pieces together and found out that her sister was banished to the future because she murdered her parents. She tried to squirm and escape but her sister had her in a tight grasp with a shiny, sharp blade to her neck.

Three ran and ran the surroundings brushing past his eyes as he saw footprints. He finally came to a dark bush where he layed his eyes on one who had a blade to her neck by a girl who appeared to be her twin.

"mother and father would be so proud of me, finding my baby sister who I loathe, enjoy hell he whispered".

Before she could even blink three came at her with an arrow and shot her right in the head.

Chapter 10: New beginnings

"Good aim". said one, Still shaking

"I have a very good teacher," he said winking

three swung one into his arms as they locked lips

"I think I'm going to call you rose". her snickered.

"I'm most defiantly going to call you archer". she said with a wide smile.

They looked out upon the horizon of a terrible unpleasant future. They held hands as they walked along the dusty ground where they found a hill. They planted a seed for a new tree. And breathed in the long-living oxygen and cheered and shouted. The others trotted up the mountain and they all shared the disease of laughter and smiles.

"To new begins and to a long forever!" They all shouted taking more and more sips of oxygen feeling younger and free.