

# 3014

By Lily Andrews, grade 7

*March 19, 3014*

*So, Finn gave me this book to write in. I'm just hoping I can leave the centre soon because I've had a headache for like a week now.*

I put down the metal book Finn made me, grabbed a pill from my cubicle cabinet to soothe my headache, and take three puffs from my CO<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> inhaler. Noor says that 1000 years ago we wouldn't have to take all this stuff, but who knows, she complains about everything. Sometimes I wonder if the things she says are true, especially when I'm lying in my cubicle. Did the oceans contain water and not ice? Were there other creatures that lived as she said? I can't tell for sure because Finn didn't let me take history class. He says it gives people "false hope". "That book is a false hope," I thought, finally finishing my puffs. I've never really been a great writer and that entry is proof. They only teach us science at school because they are "preparing us for the future" or something. I glance through my window at the terrible repair job I did yesterday on the insulated, technological glass that surrounds the children's centre. There's no way I'm protecting the future with my repair skills. After sitting and massaging my head for a while I force my body out of my cubicle into the main hall of the children's centre. The walls are all white with photos of the kids living at the centre. Each kid wears a white jumpsuit with a number on it. Noor told me that everyone looked different on old Earth, and we only look the same because of "jintitic modifikason". She's always using big words like that. I scan the hall and find Noor's jumpsuit with the number 02563. I run towards her, excited to talk before I have to leave for school.

*March 20, 3014*

*School yesterday sucked. Finn insisted that we were early even though the school is directly across from the main hall. Everything is close together in the children's centre. you can only leave the glass that surrounds the centre to fulfill your "frozen earth duties" after your 10th year.*

*I didn't pay attention at all in Science1 but I did hear something about career choice that will happen today so I'm pretty excited. I don't know much about what happens after year 10 when you get to leave the centre and explore the earth other than you have jobs to fulfill and it's all towards a big goal. Occasionally I'll see an age 20 or age 30 outside the glass in the snow and I'll wave to them. They always seem so content. I'm going to the career thing with Noor in about 10 minutes but I will write tomorrow. Maybe one day a year 8 or 9 will find this book and be inspired.*

I place my book gently in my cupboard this time. I'm starting to like it and I don't want some year 5 stealing it. I take my pill and puffs and climb out of my cubicle. As an afterthought, I scramble back in and write my number on the cover of the book: 03156 This way, if it gets lost someone knows who to give it to. I ran towards Noor who was talking to our group supervisor, Finn. I try to creep past him to grab Noor but he turns and spots me. "What do you think you're doing Kairo?" Finn asks. Ugh, his voice is so grating. "I'm just grabbing Noor so we can go to our career choice" I respond, grabbing Noor's arm and leading both of us toward the hall exit but he stops me again.

"I was just talking to Noor about that." Noor shifts uncomfortably and Finn speaks again. "And we *both* agree that you shouldn't pick your careers until next year." Now I'm mad. Finn is always cancelling things last minute or controlling what I do with my life! "C'mon, Finn!" I exclaimed. "Noor and I are ready. I mean, we are at least... age..." I paused for a moment, struggling to recall my age. It was hard to tell anyone's age around here, even some of the year tens in my class looked older than the age 20s I saw outside. The only ages I could recognize were of the workers outside and the group supervisors. My head was spinning, but before I could finish figuring it all out, Finn interrupted my thoughts with a fake, dramatic laugh at something Noor said. "Whatever Finn. Noor and I have better things to do today anyway." I beckoned for Noor to follow me and we crossed the children's centre from the main hall to the break room.

I collapse into a beanbag and fold my arms. Looking up at Noor, she looks Embarrassed and she is facing her legs. "Did you actually agree with what Finn said?" I ask, my tone slightly harsh. She shakes her head and I grab her hands "You have to learn to stand up for yourself Noor." my voice softer this time. Noor has always been quiet but once you get to know her, she's pretty adventurous. I want to at least do something with my day so I get up, hug Noor and go to snoop on the career choice. I walk from the break room to the school hall and creep in

along the walls. When I get to the door to the career room I pause and scan my surroundings. Just left to the door is the sign-in table; it's small, but a good place to hide and eavesdrop. As I crawled under the table, my arm scraped against the wall. There's blood. In the children's center, anything that is different from our approved items, including blood is considered contraband. If you're caught with contraband, you'll be sent to the white room. No child ever wants to go to the white room; they just make you sit in a soundproof white room until you're let out. I'm going to have to cover this up but for now, I want to eavesdrop. I press my ear against the wall and hear an automated voice discussing career options. "There are many options that contribute to living on our earth!" says the soothing voice. As I listen to her talk about our roles, I start to drift off.

Suddenly, I woke to the sound of metal shoes walking out of the classroom. It's a teacher. I quickly scramble back under the table and hold my breath. If I get caught, I will definitely end up in the white room. I hold my breath and to my surprise watch Finn and my Science 1 teacher walk out. My teacher seemed angry; "Why weren't Kiaro and Noor at my career choice class today?" I'd never seen my teacher so angry and Finn so nervous before.

"Well, Katerina... I...I just think they don't need to be released" I didn't know that was her name.

"And why is that Finnegan?" she raises an eyebrow and Finn speaks again.

"Well...well Noor is very smart and Kiaro...um...has other...talents. But they would both make great counsellors and attributes to our team!" Finn appears to be sweating and I'm very disappointed that he doesn't think I'm smart.

"You can't hold on to these children forever, they need to be released!" her voice softens "This may not be my place Finn, but the board was actually thinking of releasing you" Finn's face grows very pale. I don't know why Finn doesn't want to be released. Getting out of this centre will be the best day of my life. Katerina notices his fear and tries to reassure him "I wouldn't worry about it though, you're a great scientist and you're really helping us get off the planet." "As for Kiaro and Noor, I'm sorry to disappoint you but they need to be released. We already have our choice for our additions to the team." Finn looks crestfallen as Katerina leads them both towards the main hall.

I run back to the break room and tell Noor everything. Noor seemed slightly interested but I was annoyed that she wasn't as into it as I was "Don't you think it's weird that they were talking about a team, and getting off the planet?" I asked.

Noor shrugged "Maybe they just want to go to the moon again."

"Why won't Finn release us though?" I ask. I wish Noor was paying more attention "And what about the age thing earlier today? Don't you think it's weird that I don't know my own age but I know the ages of people outside?" "I'm not too worried about it. Time passes quickly in here." Noor responds. I was starting to feel very frustrated. I look at Noor's green eyes; her eyes have always had a spec of blue in them. Not enough to notice, but enough to see if you focus. I've never seen someone with blue. An idea appears within my thoughts. A fragment of a plan.

"Noor, we need to run away."

*March 21, 3014*

*I don't have much to write today because I'm going to be very busy. Noor took a lot of work to convince but eventually, she came around. Noor is stubborn that way but I just told her if we get caught, she can blame it on me. My plan is to pack a bag with my inhalers, pills, a blanket and a canteen. When we have our 10-minute break I will try to find a break or weak spot in the glass and break through it. When we get out, I probably won't need to "survive" because there will be workers everywhere and they will take care of us. Noor was nervous but I told her I would protect her. As for my arm, I put on the uniform cardigan with my number to cover it up. I just hope it doesn't get infected when we go outside.*

I put my pen and book into my bag and take my pill along with my two inhalers before packing them into my bag. As I'm stuffing my blanket something outside the window catches my eye; there's a small crack in the glass. "Yes!" I whisper to myself. This is perfect conditions for my plan. I climb out of my cubicle and run to school. It starts early today so I told Noor I'd meet her there. When I arrive my science teacher looks at me skeptically "Why the bag Kiaro? You never bring a bag to school."

"I guess I'm finally taking after Noor" I respond, not paying attention and digging through my bag to make sure I have everything. She shrugs and begins the lesson "Today we are going to learn about what makes a strong foundation for buildings." Science 2 is so boring; It's just all architecture and building. I take out a textbook from the shelf on the side of the classroom and rip out a corner to write a note to Noor: *I found a crack in the glass*. I crumpled it up and slid it across the floor to her. She packs it up and writes back: *Are you sure about this?* I sigh and roll my eyes before responding: *of course I'm sure, let's do this!* Noor pauses but then looks at me and nods confidently. After an hour and a half of incessant droning, I was ready for the ten-minute break. I grab Noor's hand and hug her. "Are you ready?" I ask, wanting to make sure she is prepared. "Yes" she responds and we head toward the weak glass. Once we arrived, I noticed it was not as much of a small fracture, but a huge crack. I'm guessing the only reason no one has noticed it is because it's behind the cubicles, but I would've thought a worker had noticed it already. Noor and I sat down while I went over the plan one final time. As we frantically searched for a way to break the glass, I caught sight of a counsellor staring straight at me. Panic set in as more counsellors and Finn appeared, all shouting and closing in on us. Desperate for a way out, I grabbed Noor's hand and charged through the glass, feeling the sharp shards slicing into my skin. We ran as fast as we could until the sound of the footsteps and shouting grew distant, and I finally stopped to catch my breath. Looking up, I realized 2 things: 1-There are no workers out here. 2-I am not on earth.