

EARTHQUAKE IN ECUADOR

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ADMITTED!

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“Evelyn Ashford... PASS!”

The results for the school’s girls running team to travel to Ecuador for a track meet was just called on the loudspeaker this morning, and I was so excited to FINALLY be admitted.

My best friend Alice Webber, who was right next door from my house on Rosebush Lane, turned around in her seat.

“Can’t you believe it? Next month, we’ll both be in Ecuador!” Alice whispered, a hint of excitement in her voice.

I gave her a fist bump, and then Alice turned back around in her seat.

After the next fifteen minutes, school was dismissed, and we all went home. My mom was waiting for me in the kitchen after I practically knocked down the door. I almost burst, I was so excited to tell Mom the news.

“Mom, you’d never believe it!!!”

Mom looked up from her bread making.

“What?”

I jumped up and down with ecstasy.

“I’m admitted into the running team to travel to Ecuador!”

Mom beamed, her smile lighting up the room like a hundred-watt light bulb.

“I always knew you could. What about Alice, is she coming as well?”

“Yep.”

“Good for her.” Mom said silently. She turned away from me.

I knew exactly what she thinking. My dad died in a helicopter crash nine years ago, and she probably

missed Dad a lot, though I was too young at age two to remember him.

Mom stuck her bread in the oven, cleared her throat, and turned to me.

“So, tell me all about the Ecuadorian track meet next month,” she said.

So, over cod soup with freshly baked bread, I explained to Mom all the details of the track meet.

We were going to be running in a 1400 -meter field, along with of my friends. Even the spoiled Kathy Brooks was going to participate, but it’s still bound to be oodles of fun!

After Mom was done reading the slip, I kicked off my shoes, went upstairs, took a nice loooong hot shower, and nodded off, my heart leaping with jubilation.

ECUADOR!

A FEW WEEKS LATER

APRIL 21, 2021

The weeks swiftly passed by, as well as school did. We were let out a week before the East Timor trip was due, and that, next to no school, was the highlight of all conversations for us 6th grade girls. Me and Alice went over to my farm every day to train, and we were often interviewed by the other kids in our grade.

Though popularity got people into trouble sometimes, I couldn't help but think that being famous was one of the best things that could have happened to me.

. . .

It was the day were we leaving to Ecuador, Africa, and I was all jitters. In my anxiety I barely ate two bites of dinner, and it was my favorite, mac n' cheese with fresh lobster meat. So on the plane, my stomach was as empty as my Mom's gumbo pot after a family feast.

My team was clearly excited. They kept on squealing on how they were going to have so much fun on the trip and how beautiful East Timor was going to be and this and that.

When we finally landed in East Timor, I was completely surrounded by people of many colors. And

some women were even carrying baskets on their heads! They must have amazing posture.

We all settled into our hotel and went out to dinner a few minutes afterward. Me and my friends even shared a tasty dessert called malva pudding, while Kathy chose to eat an ice cream sandwich, since she said her tongue was too sophisticated to eat anything else.

After a delicious dinner, we went back to our hotel then went to bed early, drifting off into a heavenly sleep.

A QUAKY RACE

THE NEXT DAY (eek!)

APRIL 22, 2021

My heart was beating wildly inside of my chest. Me and my fellow track acquaintances were lined up on the track, about to take off. I looked around me nervously, scanning my friends at home, but on the track my rivals. Alice was fast but was just as fast as me, and so did Allie Pitcher. I gulped, sweat dripping off the tip of my nose.

The race starter picked up a pistol from his pocket and shot it into the air. I lunged forward and sped away from the starting line. My mom was waving at me wildly, and I turned away, embarrassed. But that was the least of my problems. The other runners, including Alice, were leaving me in the dust. I ran swiftly, passing Tracy Williams and Bethany Morris. My legs were burning, but I couldn't stop for a break now. I sped up to Kathy, our arms almost touching.

“Get out of my way!” Kathy shouted, shoving me over to the side. I just quickly caught up to her again. “Can't stop me that easily,” I taunted. The finish line was dead ahead. I was so close. So close! I put another foot in front of me towards the finish line, until a crack appeared underneath the familiar black and white checkered pattern. I stopped, then examined the crack. That's when the ground beneath me started to rumble, and branches of cracks spread from that one. The rest of the girls, including Kathy, froze.

“Earthquake!” one of the parents shouted. The ground beneath me shifted, causing me and some of the other runners to fall to the ground.

A mass of parents ran to the track, stumbling then righting themselves, and grabbing their kids. I couldn't find Mom, but we all ran to the nearest building. The rumbling increased, and I looked out the window to see a building next to us collapse. Were we next? I didn't have to wait to find out.

At once, the building tilted to one side, sliding us across the floor and onto a large window. All of us girls including Kathy, ran to another room of the building. Above all the screaming and crying going on, the creak of the building was the loudest of all. It tilted so far, that the half of the building we were in collapsed to the ground. All I remember next was a tennis shoe being wedged into my face, and then blackness.

OUR ESCAPE

A FEW HOURS LATER

“Evelyn? Evelyn! Wake up!”

I felt somebody shaking me vigorously, then woke up to find Alice leaning over me. I stood up, but then a pain in my arm shot through my body, causing me to sit back down. I clutched my arm, tears springing to my eyes. I

could also tell by rubbing my head and pulling it back to see blood on my fingers, that my head was also bleeding, but not too much.

“What happened?” I asked.

Alice rubbed her head.

“Well, it’s kind of a long story. But I think the building collapsed, and we got trapped down here. Some of the rubble created a wall around us.”

I looked around. Every runner that was trapped was either bleeding, bruised, or still unconscious. Even Alice’s leg was bleeding. But otherwise, we were still alive.

Suddenly, the ceiling, which was cracked, started to crumble, causing massive chunks of rubble to fall on us. Everyone screamed and jumped back.

“Okay, everyone. I know that this is hard, but we can make it. I want everyone to find the unconscious people and wake them up. Then, try to dig your way out of the rubble,” I announced.

Everyone sprang into action, waking up everyone, and hoisting them up on their feet, (if they weren’t injured.)

I even started to lift a heavy beam off of a girl with round glasses, until an alarmed cry came from the other end of the room.

“I can’t wake this girl up!”

Alice and I ran to the girl who was obviously distressed. She was bending over a girl with wavy brown hair, like mine. At first, I couldn’t recognize her because of the dirt and grime on her face, but as I took a closer look at who she was, realization hit me.

“Kathy!”

I tried to wake her up by shaking her, but she wouldn’t wake up. Then one of the girls said that she knew how to feel pulses, because apparently none of the girls in the room knew where a pulse was. She approached Kathy and pressed two fingers to her neck. She turned to us with tears in her eyes.

“She’s dead.”

Silence hushed the room. Then Alice started to cry. I never liked Kathy, but I joined in too. Soon, everyone in the room was crying softly. Then another chunk of debris fell in front of us, snapping us back to our situation.

Pulse girl, whose name was Amethyst, rubbed her eyes, and stood up, along with Alice, who was hunched over Kathy's body.

“We have to move on, and we obviously can't stay here. Now that I know that everyone else is okay, we can keep on trying to find a way out of here,” Alice said, a hint of indignation in her voice.

Everyone, including me, nodded in agreement, then we started to lift beams, push away doors, and kick away slabs of metal and desks, until a beam of light shone from where a window used to be. “I see sunlight! It's an exit!” I cried loudly, grasping the girls' attention. All of us wormed our way out of the rubble prison to see a rather depressing sight: there was just a broken light in the middle of an almost collapsed room, it's bulb hanging from it's casing.

“It's hopeless! We'll never get out! It's just another room,” a girl named Becky from the back of the group yelled.

“It's not hopeless,” I cried. I wiped some dust mixed in with tiny bits of glass off of my hair.

“Like my friend Alice said, we have to keep on trying to find a way out of this! We have to survive. So let’s get to work.”

The girls cheered confidently. Then we looked around the room, using the light as our beacon.

“Wait!” I yelled suddenly, silencing the runners.

“Do you hear that?”

The rest of the girls strained their ears, trying to identify the sound.

“I hear it,” Amethyst said. “It’s like a whirring sound.”

“I think it’s a drone,” Alice said, stepping on a giant hunk of concrete. “And it’s coming from over here.”

The girls and I huddled around the slab of concrete and started to kick the wall with our feet. Fortunately, the wall wasn’t very sturdy, and it fell apart easily. This time, a stronger beam of sunlight crashed into my eyes, and people were on the other side of the wall. The drone was in a man’s hands, and he was gaping at us.

“Look, I found some girls,” he shouted to a paramedic.

A few people bent down towards the hole and scooped us out, wrapping blankets over us. But exhaustion got the better of me, and my eyes started to droop. Soon enough, I fell asleep to the beeping of the ambulance and police sirens.

EPILOGUE

TWO MONTHS LATER

JUNE 22, 2021

By this point, you're probably itching for me to get into the juicy details, right? But I have to keep it brief.

After we escaped the fallen building, us runners were sent straight to the hospital. But, I had suffered a few scratches, and a concussion. It turned out that we did have an earthquake, rate 6.5 on the Richter Scale. There were 104 fatalities in the earthquake, one of them Kathy. Mom was safe and sound, and even managed to escape the building unscathed, but unfortunately, the track meet was canceled, and nobody brought home the prize. But I learned one lesson that day: Some challenges, you just can't face alone.

THE END

