

"Lillian where are you?" Ryla called out to her little sister.
"DOWNSTAIRS!!!!" She yelled back. Ryla walked slowly down the steps, each step making a creaking noise on the wooden floor. Pepper, the family puppy, trailed behind. It was just the three of them in the house since their parents had just left for Chicago on a business trip.

"What-cha doing?" Ryla asked.

"Watching TV." Lillian replied.

"You NEED to start your homework." Ryla demanded.

She sat on the front of the couch and Pepper stood in front of her with a toy in his mouth. Ryla nudged the toy out of his mouth and threw it far across the room.

"Go fetch boy."

Without hesitation Pepper chased after the toy.

"I wasn't asking you to do your homework, I was telling you. Now go get it now," Ryla scolded.

Reluctantly, Lillian got up and dragged her feet toward her bag. Pepper was nearing himself back to Ryla when the ground shook.

All of them froze.

Both Lillian and Pepper shot a look at Ryla.

"Um... Ry." Lillian began.

More shaking was the response. Worry filled their faces. Ryla grabbed the remote to turn on ABC's news.

"BREAKING NEWS!!!!!" "A Large 4.0 earthquake is sweeping the following areas in California: Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Fresno, Bakersfield down to Palm Springs...."

Instantly, the TV shut off.

"Pa...lm Spr...ings?" Lillian shuddered.

More shaking.

Ryla rose to her feet. Quickly she scooped up Pepper into her arms. More creaking.

"Quick Lillian get in the door frame."

"The what?"

"NOW!!!!!!!"

They both raced up the stairs to the front door that has the strongest support in the house. Pepper looked up at Ryla with his big, brown, scared eyes and started to whimper.

"It's going to be alright. I won't let anything happen to you." Ryla whispered.

When they reached the door frame, they felt the wind starting to pick up. Ryla put Pepper up toward her chest.

The three of them huddled in a group pressed up against each other. All around the houses and roads were starting to crack and walls started to tumble. The wind picked up debris and swirled it around them.

Ryla put small, 12 pound Pepper underneath her shirt hoping to prevent him from getting hit from anything. Parts of their house started to crack and fall to the ground. Lillian closed her eyes. They stood in the door frame... waiting and hoping.

A tear drop rolled onto Ryla's arm. She peered up at Lillian. I will not let you guys down she thought. Suddenly the wind picked up and debris smacked all around them.

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The earthquake started to dial down after a few hours.

"I think it's over." Ryla spoke first.

They all opened their eyes.

Their house was gone. Just like that.

Multiple houses were gone. But they were still here. They stood in awe.

Ryla took Pepper from under her shirt, and looked into his eyes.

"I told you I wasn't going to let anything happen to you." she murmured.

They got out of the door frame and stepped onto the piles of wood and bricks. Ryla searched around. The town seemed to have been deserted.

"At least we're not too hurt." Ryla said looking at the bruised marks over her skin.

But then, Pepper started to whimper again.

"What's wrong Pep?. The storm is over." Lillian asked.

Ryla checked Pepper all over making sure that he wasn't hurt. And he wasn't.

"Oh, maybe he's hungry and thirsty." Ryla thought aloud.

"Well I am too, but do you see any fresh water or food around here?" Lillian yelled frustrated.

"The closest pond with fish and water is about a mile from here." Ryla suggested.

"And how do you suppose we get there?" Lillian barked.

Ryla rolled her eyes, shook her head and started to walk.

"I hope you know where you're going." Lillian said as she followed.

"Look, just be thankful that we are still alive."

Pepper whimpered for the entire walk to the pond. None of them saw a house that was fully intact throughout their journey. When they finally arrived with hope built up inside, it quickly diminished at the sight of the pond. The water was brown. It was filled with debris. Lillian sat in silence...defeated. However, Ryla was not giving up. She searched and searched for any sign of food and water. Finally, she came across a bush with leaves and berries.

"Lillian, come here!" she shouted.

Lillian ran over to her sister. At the sight of the berries, she rapped her arms around her for a hug.

"I thank you and I'm sorry." she began, "I'm starving!"

She grabbed a handful of berries and stuffed them down her throat. Ryla ate some of the berries as well. She fed Pepper the leaves and he stopped whimpering. She smiled, proud for accomplishing her goal of not letting them down. Then suddenly, a new fear wiped over her. What happens next? We can't live off berries and leaves forever. Faintly, she heard a sound.

"Do you hear that Lill."

They listened.

"Come on we've got to see what it is."

They ran toward the sound. Then she saw something in the distance flying in the sky. She couldn't believe her eyes. There was a rescue team over head. Ryla and Lillian waved their hands up and screamed. Ryla looked at Pepper.

"I told you everything was going to be alright."

Ayana

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English 8 Block 5