

2080

By Emma Lengkeek

In the year of 2080 a virus broke out and spread across the entire world. “The government requests that everyone please wear safety glasses, do not leave your home, and stay safe,” the wall TV blared out the latest updates on the virus at the Stanley’s home. “We ask everyone to stay indoors as much as possible, all businesses, schools and churches are closed until further notice, and only grocery stores will be opened. Remember to wear safety glasses to protect your eyes and everyone else from the virus.”

“What,” I complained. “No school?”

“Not for a while at least,” answered my Dad.

“Hurrah,” yelled Bryan, my younger 13-year-old brother. I quietly left the room and went upstairs to my room.

“Please call Olivia,” I said to my small portable robot in the corner of my room.

“Hi, Olivia. Isn’t it awful?”

“Yes it is,” said Olivia.

“Imagine, no school for the rest of the year,” I said. “I wonder why we have to wear safety glasses,” said Olivia. I talked a little longer with Olivia and then hung up.

I would be graduating from high school in a year. I was good at school. I had a nice new home. Why should this happen? And of all the stupid things, why should we have to wear safety glasses when we left the house.

I then called Lydia. “Hi Lydia, isn’t this awful?”

“Yes it is,” replied Lydia. I talked to Lydia for a little longer; she did not seem that concerned about the future. “God has a plan for everything,” was all she would say. She always seemed to put too much trust in this god of hers.

I talked a little longer, and then hung up. “Why?” I explained allowed. Then I burst in to tears. My whole world had stopped in a matter of minutes.

Days went by. My brother and I watched TV all day. Once a week my Dad or Mom would put on safety glasses and go and buy our food. Each time they came back, I noticed they brought back little less food. I talked to Lydia and Olivia once in a while, but we did not have much to talk about. Once Lydia mentioned that she was going to church. I was very surprised because I thought churches were not supposed to be opened, but I did not say anything. Once I went on a walk, and someone yelled at me for not wearing my safety glasses. Our streets were desolate and bare.

Sometimes I would ask my parents why they put up with all these new rules. They would only say, “We must obey the government; it will only be for a little

while.” But I knew in my heart that it was forever. The latest thing that we had to put up with was The Safety Regulators. Also known as T.S.R., T.S.R.’s job was to enforce all the rules that we had to follow regarding the virus. Everyday my Dad would watch, as our wall TV showed all the names of the people who had died of the virus.

Almost a year had gone by since the government had closed the entire world down. My parents looked twenty years older. My brother hardly ever talked to me now. One day while sitting in our living room our wall TV blared out that they asked anybody who knew of people keeping their businesses open, going to church, or meeting anyone, should report them to the T.S.R. I gave a little gasp, “I hope Lydia does not get in trouble.”

“Lydia is going to church?” asked my brother.”

I quickly left and rushed up to my room. “Call Lydia,” I said. “I am sorry she has not been around,” responded my robot. I realized it was Sunday. She must be at church. I must act quickly. I heard our security system beep softly, I knew my brother had left the house. It would take him at least 15 to minutes to find a T.S.R. and then another 15 minutes to get there. If I ran to church and told them it may not be too late. I put on my safety glasses so I would not be stopped.

I slipped out of the house and started running to Lydia’s church. I had been there once before for an activity. I ran for a while. Suddenly I realized that I must have taken a wrong turn. I clicked my Z-watch. I got some directions and soon arrived outside the church building. Inside I heard voices joined together singing. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. I stopped and listened until they were done. I was about to go in, but to my horror I saw about 50 T.S.R. people walk in. I did not hear any struggling. I only heard a sharp scream by someone inside, but it was silenced quickly.

They soon led the silent congregation out of the church toward a waiting van. I saw Lydia, and she looked at me sadly. “I tried to stop them,” was all I could say through my tears. “Here, I will not need this anymore,” Lydia said, and handed me a small rectangular object, I quickly slipped it into my pocket, “Run,” said Lydia. I ran, and did not stop until I got to my house.

The next day my father was watching the names run across the screen. “Did you have a friend named Lydia Colindale,” my Dad asked? I burst into tears. “I am so sorry,” my Mom said, “So many people have died of this virus.” “She did not die from the virus,” I screamed. I realized as the names went across the screen: they were all people who went to Lydia’s church.

Weeks went by. I stayed in my room most of the time. One day my brother came home, and announced that he had joined the T.S.R., and that he would be

moving out of our house. My parents did not try to stop him, as they were too weak.

I think they were also slightly relieved that there would be one less person to feed. We had hardly enough food to feed us.

One day Olivia called me. She seemed very upset. "What is the point of living," she asked me? I could only say, "It will be over soon," but in my heart I knew it would never be over. The next day I saw her name run across the screen.

Spring had come. I decided to take a long walk, but I did not put on my safety glasses. I felt full of hope. The air was fresh and clean. I walked along, but to my horror I saw many very hungry looking people. Their clothes hung very loosely from their bodies and their faces were thin and hollow. One small boy begged me for a little food, but I had none to give him. When I returned home, a large truck was parked in front of our house. My mother came out carrying our bedding.

"What are you doing," I asked? "We have to move out of our house they need to use it for a hospital." I knew now that my parents were under their power.

While I was packing, I found the small rectangular object that Lydia had handed me before her death. It had a thick cover, inside were thin pieces of paper, and on the paper was words. I realized that it must be a book. My mom had told me about them. On the front of the book it said *The Holy Bible*. I had sometime heard Lydia mention her Bible, but I had not known what it was. I began to scan through it. Several sentences caught my attention. "The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him." Nahum 1:7 "It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid or dismayed." Deuteronomy 31:8. This sentence would have been a comfort to Olivia. "God is our refuge in strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1.

The next couple months I spent reading my Bible. I realized why Lydia was never discouraged, but that she always found comfort in reading the Bible. And how she was not afraid even when she knew by that attending church she could be killed. Every night before I went to bed I prayed, and I found meaning to my days now.

I decided to share the Bible with my parents. When they saw it my parents turned pale, and begged me to get rid of it. I tried to tell them about how much hope I had found out of reading it. They only begged harder for me to get rid of my Bible. Finally I promised I would get rid of it.

My brother came to see us that evening. He seemed to look down on us. He liked to boast that he has kept us alive by being a T.S.R. because he got extra food

stamps to give us. After dinner, I went upstairs to read my Bible. I was so absorbed in reading my Bible I did not hear my brother come in.

“What are you reading?” he questioned.

“My Bible,” I said.

“Get rid of it, or I will report you,” was all he said.

Several weeks later I discovered an underground Church. Every week I went to it. The people at the church told me there were thousands of churches like theirs, I found so much comfort in that.

One day while I was reading my Bible. There was a knock at my door. A T.S.R. man entered and told me to follow him. I knew I could not get away. As I stepped outside I noticed the beautiful fall day. I saw some birds fly overhead. I saw the van parked out in front of the house. I was shoved in the van, as the doors closed, I knew I would never see sunlight again. But I also knew that I would be with my LORD soon. My father would see my name on the list tomorrow. The van stopped the doors open a T.S.R. man aimed a gun at me. I thought of one of my favorite verses in the Bible. John 5:24. “Truly, truly I say unto you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into Judgment, but has passed from death to life.”