



Entry Level 3 Literacy

Every Thursday the Rain Comes

'It's going to be heavy today,' said Uncle Alfred, checking the radar screen, 'A Class Seven rain storm, to be sure: a real whopper, I bet!'

He stood up, shook his head and chuckled to himself. In an orange puff of sulphur, he lit up his black wooden pipe and slowly headed through the airlock to K Block. The pipe smoke hung in the air and, for a second, seemed to follow him out before being sucked into the air-con unit overhead.

Freya looked out of the only window in the room, through the grimy glass, into the grey, early morning murk. Nothing moved.

She listened for a moment. There were no birds chattering, no car engines rumbling, no train horns sounding or jet engines roaring. There were no children playing, no radios blaring or people laughing. In fact, there was nothing. All she could hear was the rhythmic clanking of the rusty old LSM, which had kept the whole colony alive for the past five years. Uncle Alfred said that the LSM (short for Life Support Matrix) must have come from the heavens — funny, she thought, because everything else on this planet had gone to hell.

After the rain had come, everything died. All the plants, all the animals; except for the few cats, dogs and chickens that

managed to scurry through the gates of the compound (and, no doubt, a few rats in the sewage system) and, of course, all the people: except the 54 survivors.

'We are the last people on Earth, and the luckiest!' said Uncle Alfred. Freya sighed. Sometimes she wished she had died with the others.

She looked at the droplet scars on her arms. She remembered waking up in the compound in terrible pain. The rain had come and burnt everything. It even turned the atmosphere into poison. No one was ready for it or had expected it. No weather forecasters saw it coming, not even the government scientists; but, still, it had come.

The compound had an experimental artificial atmosphere. It was built to simulate a space station on the moon. When it was locked down, nothing from the outside could get in. Some people arrived too late at the gates. They had banged on the windows and doors and screamed. Freya remembered putting a pillow over her head to block out the voices, but still she hears them in her nightmares.

One day, not long after she had arrived, Uncle Alfred (he wasn't Freya's real Uncle) explained to her what had happened as he gently applied soothing ointment to her burns.

'The rain comes every Thursday,' he said, 'It comes in torrents and burns everything in its path. It's like acid or something. Nothing can survive it.'

'What causes it?' asked Freya.

'Who knows?' said Uncle Alfred, 'Maybe we'd made such a mess of this planet that she decided to fight back. All I know is that we must be special 'cos God spared us and now we're all that's left of the human race.' He smiled warmly.

'I don't feel special.' said Freya.

Thursdays were the worst days now. Freya even hated the sound of the word, 'Thursday'. Someone told her the word came from the Viking God of Thunder, 'Thor' and his mighty hammer. It seems that God must have a sense of humour, she thought.

As Freya looked out of the small dirty window, she froze as if she had seen a ghost. She peered into the distance, blinking in disbelief, and saw something she hadn't seen for five years: a ray of sunlight.

Suddenly, she burst into life, 'Uncle Alfred! Uncle Alfred!' she yelled at the top of her voice, 'I can see daylight!'

In her excitement she didn't notice that one ray of sunlight had transformed into three, then ten and then more, many more, until she was staring at the most wonderful sight she could ever imagine: a beautiful, sunny day. She rubbed her eyes. The sky was blue and there were no rain clouds in sight. It was a miracle! Perhaps she was the luckiest girl in the world, after all.

Name_____ Date_____

QUESTIONS

Answer these questions in sentences.

1. What did Uncle Alfred say was coming?
2. What is the girl's name?
3. What could she see when she looked out of the window?
4. What could she hear?
5. What happened when the rain started five years ago?
6. How many people had survived?
7. How did Freya get the scars on her arms?
8. How did the people in the compound survive?
9. Where does the word 'Thursday' come from?
10. What did Freya suddenly see from the window?
11. Why was it so important?
12. How do you think Freya felt at the end of the story?
13. Can you think of another suitable title for this story?