

'Earthquake'

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Chaos.

The world shattered beneath her feet as she fell deep, deep down into the gaping chasm of the destroyed rubble. Blinding colours and piercing screams rattled her ears, and everything blurred together until she could no longer think straight. *Help*, she thought desperately. *Please help us*.

Suddenly, everything quietened and a dim light spread through her eyes. Grateful for the moment of solace, she let the darkness take control and closed her eyes.

"Avery? Wake up!" A frantic voice jolted her from her sleep; she woke up groggily, struggling to understand her surroundings. "She's awake!"

The relief in their voice was almost tangible, and once again Avery felt confusion take over her mind as she strived to recognise the voice.

"What's going on?" she murmured, barely able to hear herself over the hurried conversations and the ringing in her ears. "What's going on?" she repeated, louder this time. Silence followed her words. Every face in the room a gamut of emotions from relief at her consciousness to distress at her condition.

"What's the last thing you remember?"

She turned to look at the source of the voice. It was a woman in a tightly-wound bun wearing a white coat. She gave Avery a frustrated gaze, as though she'd rather be anywhere else.

The last thing she remembered? A burst of memories sprung into her mind as she remembered her vivid vision of the Earth's rupture and the chaos that ensued. She felt her heart pounding inside her chest, her ears ringing louder than ever as she recalled the piercing screams. She took great gulps of air, trying to calm down, and the voices around her filled with concern and fear.

"The earthquake...", she gasped, "The earthquake!"

"What are you talking about?" Her mother's voice gushed with sympathy. "You fainted at school, remember? You've been unconscious for hours. We were so, so worried."

She glanced at her husband, who nodded solemnly, unsure of how to react.

"There was an earthquake." Avery paused, try to control the ringing in her ears. "There was an earthquake, it was horrible. There were so many people there screaming, running, try to stay alive. I was there."

"Is she just confused due to the concussion?"

Raged rushed through Avery, worsening her headache. "You're not listening! Something serious has happened!"

"*Nothing* happened. You were at school all day."

Her headache suddenly sharpened, causing her to gasp out loud. Her mother's stern features softened rapidly, glancing urgently at the doctor.

"Are you in a lot of pain?" the doctor asked reluctantly, as though she hoped Avery would say no.

"I'm fine, but I don't understand... what about the earthquake?"

Could that really have all been a dream? Or was she really going insane?

Her thoughts spun round and round as she struggled to find an explanation for this eerie situation. A loud rumble from outside the window shook her out of her reverie. She stared outside, unable to comprehend what she was seeing. A real-life earthquake.