

Star Death

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Rated PG

Submitted May 2013

Summary: Four billion years into the future comes a shocking revelation, one that changes the future course of history.

It started with the little things. Objects got a little bit heavier, gravity got a little bit stronger. It wasn't that big of a deal. Surely it was just a bit of Kryptonite we'd run across. Or perhaps the gene pool was finally getting a little diluted. After all, there weren't all that many people in the world who didn't have a trace amount of Kryptonian DNA inside them. We all did. Even in some of the remotest places in the world, studies showed that there were few pure humans left. Perhaps the human inside of us all was just catching up with us.

Then other things started happening. There had always been slight variations in powers, simply based on the person. My mother, for example always had a little less strength than my father, but was definitely lighter on her feet. But this was different. People who had once had more ability found themselves capable of less, on more of an equal footing with those who have what one might consider to be shallower powers. And they fluctuated constantly. It was quite a burden.

Then came the minds of the people. Over the millennia, society had its ups and downs, sometimes bordering on Utopic and other times reaching a downright apocalyptic low. We had been stable for some time now, but when the power changes came, so did the power struggles. Crime was on the rise, as the people who previously didn't have the strength or agility to pull off a heist now found themselves possessing that power, and those who thought they could play the hero before were sidelined by their sudden lack of ability.

Days grew longer, yet more sleep was needed. Sunlight was dimmed, if not hidden under the layers of smog and pollution.

The world got colder.

I don't think anybody quite knew what was happening until it was too late. I certainly didn't. And with the realization of what was happening, came a whole different level of panic.

Our star was changing.

Even having the history we have as a people, even coming from the stars ourselves, we didn't notice. You'd think that a race of people that were established off of another race of people who were wiped out by a sun would be very cautious, very sensitive about the heavens above us. And to a certain extent, we were. We had gone out into the final frontier, developed technologies, even established some colonies on other planets, though mostly in our own system. We knew we were not alone out there; we had met others who had time and again lent a hand to saving Earth. Thanagarians, New Kryptonians, Martians, Tamaraneans and more.

But it wasn't enough.

Scientists have been paranoid about predicting our star's death since we identified that stars could in fact die. I'm sure there were people in labs somewhere who knew what was happening, knew exactly what the impacts would be. But for whatever reason, the people weren't made aware of this until it had already happened. And when we started complaining about the haywire powers or the tiredness and fatigue or the weather, it was always brushed off.

Not anymore.

Now we know. Why we can't fly anymore, jump as high, lift as much. Why we need at least seven hours of sleep and have to watch what we eat. Why our days are cold and our nights are frozen, and why our children are getting sick and not everyone has good immune systems. And we wish we could go back to the days before, when we had these things and took them all for granted.

The possibility of doing just that was tantalizing. But even with all of our advanced technology, we knew it wasn't a solid plan. There was only so far back we could go, and to do so could cause a huge rift in the space-time... well, whatever they were calling it nowadays.

The bigger problem was that not everybody could go. And the government refused to show special treatment— despite the fact that, invariably, there would be those who left for the past against their better judgment. All in longing for the chance to get their feet off the ground, just once more.

Scientists have told us not to worry, that this was a predicted change and that even though it began happening a bit ahead of schedule, at a whopping four billion instead of five billion years, there was no chance of it actually dying in any of our lifetimes. We would be powerless, but safe.

I do not believe them.

That is why, dear little one, I have sent you away. The government has strict guidelines now on leaving the planet, and unless you're some kind of ambassador or you aren't of this earth, the people are urged— commanded, really— to stay where they are and undergo this frightening change. I cannot leave, your father cannot leave, and you cannot leave. Not legally anyway. The zeta-beams are all being watched like, well, like a hawk, and any other form of space travel is closely monitored as well, on both ends.

You had a brother, you know. Called him Jory. But he died before you were ever born— just from a simple cold. When I discovered that I was pregnant with you, I knew that no matter what it took, I could not let that happen.

I love you. But I cannot keep you here. Unlike the masses who just accept everything that is being said, I do not trust our system to be stable for much longer. Not our planetary system, nor our governmental one. We are on the cusp of a tyranny, I just know it. This is how it begins. Lock downs, fear tactics to keep everyone "safe." Whether or not our sun dies tomorrow or thousands of years down the line, I do not want you, my darling child, to be subjected to such torture. And I get the sense that these crackdowns have more to do with our star's death than they want us to know. It is going to happen. And I won't let it happen to you, my sunshine.

Your father and I have debated for a long time about where to send you. As it is so dangerous, we can't make any mistakes. For a while, we debated sending you to Rann, in the Alpha Centauri system. There are a good many people there, humans as well as other races. But it is heavily trafficked, and therefore heavily monitored. Not to mention the amount of wars and chaos that breakout consistently. Try as they may, it's still not a stable place. We've run through the list of known planets and star systems, not wanting to send you to an uninhabited system but unable to send you somewhere densely populated. And we've come up empty, time and time again.

Then, we found something.

Yellow stars. Roughly the same size and class as our own once was, on the same section of the main sequence, if not a bit larger and many years younger. Capella, they were called. And what's more, there was life on a few of the planets in the system there— humanoid life! — but they were for the most part unaware of the living universe around them. No one that we are aware of has gone from our planet or any others, as it is the custom that we do not interfere with those who are unaware of

our existence.

It will be a welcome home for you, my dear.

You will be different. You will be as we were, before our sun started expanding and cooling and vaporized Mercury. You will know what it is to grow up on a foreign planet, hopefully with the aid of kind parental figures and you will grow up into a powerful, beautiful young woman. You will be strong, fast, unbound by their planet's gravitational pull. You will be absolutely *super*, your father and I just know it.

And no matter what, know that we will always love you, my sweet Kallie. We wish things could have been different, that we never had to part with you and you could grow up in our arms, that we could see you with your own family one day. But we wish you the best, and know that we are so proud of you, no matter what happens or who you become. You are our daughter. You will be perfect in our eyes forever.

Oh. Oh, this is the hardest part. There's this intense pain in my chest that won't go away, my heart beating faster than a speeding bullet. And oh! I hate that I have to do this, have to let go now. I can't let you go. I can't ever let you go. I won't.

But I know I have to.

I won't regret sacrificing everything for you, Kallie. I might wish we could have had more time together, more time than just a few scarce weeks, clutching you to me as much as I possibly could before this day came. But you are my sunshine. You are my perfect, beautiful, only little sunshine— quite literally, nowadays. You deserve the world.

Someday, I hope you'll see this and understand what we went through, what we did for you. I imagine you might grow up fearful, angry that we left you, but fret not. We're doing this all for you. You're our only star. And you will escape star death, I can promise you that.

I hope I can promise you that.

Your father is looking at me with those eyes, those same chocolate brown eyes that you have. And I know. The time has come. I'm going to put you down now, into your tiny little spaceship. I'm going to pray that you make it safely to where you're going, that you don't get caught or turned away. I'm going to cry, because your big brown eyes are looking up at me with such curiosity, completely unaware of the things to come.

I'm crying, because I can't find it in my heart to take your strong little grip off my finger.

Your father puts his arm over my shoulder and his other hand comes to cover ours, slowly and carefully disentangling them. He has tears rolling down his face as well, and when the cover seals in over your little body and I can no longer see your face, I turn and bawl into his chest. He soothes me, knowing all isn't going to be okay but that at least for you it might be, and that's what makes this worth it, makes it the right thing to do.

He's going now to calibrate the settings, do a final check before we send you on your way. I have to pull myself together, for him, for you. I can't focus any more on what's to come. And so, I've decided to tell you a little story, about how all this came to be.

It all started with a little boy who crash landed in a place called Smallville...

THE END