

I stared down at the busy city of New York from my apartment. People were rushing about anxiously, with tiny, glowing electronic gadgets in their hands. Advertisements flashed on bright screens, and glass buildings crowded the horizon. I looked down at the book in my lap. On the cover the word Constellations was stamped into the leather binding.

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I tilted my face up to the sky, looking at the dark, vast sky. A sigh escaped my mouth, for the stars had disappeared years ago. I should have known better than to hope in something that was beyond my control.

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I balanced a thick stack of papers on one hand, sipping burning coffee in the other hand. The printer had broken after making only two hundred copies, but I was satisfied.. To see the stars was my dream. If my plan went successfully I could see it come true. I crossed my fingers for luck even though I was long past the fourth grade.

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The sun peeped through a rainbow colored sky as I pushed spoonfuls of cereal into my mouth. Chewing slowly, I looked out the window, watching a dirty pigeon hop off of the window ledge. A knock sounded through the door.

“Hello? I’m here to sign your petition?” A man pushed the door open gently. I raised my eyebrows.

“Sign right here please,” I told him warmly. This was a step forward in my plan. I was on my way.

The waiting was torturous, it brought back memories that I would rather forget. They flashed by in seconds, racing through my mind at the speed of light.

My mother getting married.

My father disappearing.

My sister’s lifeless body, lying in a coffin.

My phone buzzed, interrupting my thoughts. My eyes moved to the screen slowly. The message was sent from the governor’s secretary saying that I had been granted a half hour spot on live television. The memories began to fade as

excitement replaced them.

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My fingers fiddled with the hem of my shirt as I prepared to go on air. A makeup artist came at me with heavily powdered brushes after making a noise of disapproval as he looked over my face. Someone ushered me into a chair on the set. A reporter glanced at me with disdain. She didn't want to waste her precious time with a useless cause. My cheeks burned. The cameraman began his countdown.

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"The stars are a precious piece of history. We made them disappear, so it is our job to make them come back. If every person in New York City turns off their lights on March thirty first, the stars will reappear. Although it will only last one night, it will go down in history. I beg the people of New York, turn off you lights to be part of a magical night, and to save an important part of history." And with that, the red camera light clicked off and sound returned to the studio room.

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The ball dropped and the sea of people cheered wildly. I looked on silently, wondering why they thought it was fun to be pushed together, heads bobbing to pounding music, and kissing at midnight. The stars had been forgotten.

New Year's day was bright and sunny, the clouds had floated away for a single day of bliss.

I sipped a Coca Cola as I sat down to watch the news.

A soft thump vibrated through the apartment. I knew what it was, but I didn't want to see.

Forcing myself to look, I saw the small, lifeless body of a bird, sliding down the windowpane.

I looked on watching, waiting for something better to happen. The weatherman kept on talking, the people kept on walking, the world kept on turning.

The bird began to plummet to the sidewalk.

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The stars had disappeared long ago, fading into the atmosphere. In some remote places on earth, you could still see them, but not in New York. The more lights that were turned on, the more they faded. Eventually the sun would fade away too, I suppose. They taught a bit about the history of stars in school, but not enough to make the students care. I knew that the stars were important, and I was determined to make people see the importance. I felt like I was on a mission to save the world, but I knew my cause seemed silly to the rest of the city.

Confetti that was left behind after New Year's began to disintegrate. The city was a mess, but no one cared anymore. I started to wonder if we could, or would, ever fix it.

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On March 2nd I celebrated my birthday. A few cards were sent in the mail, and I treated myself to an ice cream cone. It dripped onto the shop floor, and I rushed out as the irritated clerk started grumbling.

My hair whipped around my face as I stepped over a grate in the sidewalk. A subway train was zooming by underneath. I doubted that anyone would turn out their lights. It was a lost cause.

I continued to fight for the stars, although nobody seemed to listen. I was the weird girl, who pinned up flyers everyday, even in freezing cold rain. I was the crazy person on the subway, who everybody avoided.

I no longer cared what people thought, but I at least wish that there could have been some good to this dark cloud that has now engulfed me.

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Two days before the end of March, I prepared for the big night. I frantically stapled up posters, I handed out packets of information to people in Times Square, and I went door to door, begging people to participate.

They looked at me with confused looks on their faces. Some irritated. They

had no idea what I was talking about. How could they? After all, they were busy too, ushering their children to school and back, shoving in enough hours at work to pay the rent, and avoiding the watchful eyes of the government.

I tried to seem like I could care less, but inside I was burning. I needed the people to do this. I need to see the stars. So I could have a little bit of hope left.

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I was staring out my window, waiting, hoping for something to happen. I bit my lip nervously. The sky remained lit by the lights of the city. Tears began to streak my face.

Bolting upright, I looked around wildly. Blankets were wrapped around me in a knot, my hands were clammy, and my face was wet with tears. It had been a dream, a nightmare. Glancing at the clock, I slipped out of bed. The sun was peeping over the horizon, and birds were chirping tunelessly. I started making a fresh pot of coffee, and pancakes at the same time. The sun had risen completely, once I was done eating. I left the dishes near the sink, too tired to wash them.

The day went by quickly, and I got more nervous every hour. Today was the day to see the stars, is what my posters said. But would anyone care? I sighed. My thoughts were rushing by at the speed of light, I couldn't concentrate, much less get any work done.

At noon I went door to door, once again begging people to turn their lights off. They looked at me wearily. They already knew my story. Darkness began to spread across the city, and soon lights would start flickering on. I walked back to my apartment, defeated.

I waited, staring out my window, counting down to nine o'clock, when all the business owners were flick a switch, turning the lights on. The air was clear that night. The clean, sharp smell of spring floated through the city. Five more minutes.

I didn't want to watch my dreams fall apart, so I went to take an aspirin, while the clock ticked to nine. I turned my head toward the sky. It was dark. One building's lights were shining, and people were yelling below. The lights turned

off. The city was dark, and peaceful. Now we just had to wait.

Two hours passed, and the sky was still black. Maybe I had been wrong, maybe the stars wouldn't appear. How stupid I would look, announcing it to the whole city, only to have my predictions be wrong.

Suddenly something in the sky appeared. At first I thought it was a plane, but the light didn't move, it stayed in place. Then another one appeared. The sky began to fill with lights, with stars! A smile spread across my face, and laughing I ran to get the book of constellations, I flipped through the pages quickly. Glancing back at the sky I saw it.

After all of it, I was looking at the Big Dipper.