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The End

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The End

Lauren Mock (*English 2025*)

When they told us the news—through CNN, phone alerts, front pages of magazines, and televised messages from celebrities like Chris Evans and Emma Watson—we didn't believe a word they said. We drove home from our 9–5s as usual, ignoring the obnoxious beeps from the stopped traffic around us and taking a moment to notice the brilliant blue of the day's sky. We walked through our front doors and kissed our spouses, or our kids, or our dog, or our aging grandmother. We made dinner and sat around the table and talked about our days—the people that irritated us and the tasty coffee we had that morning—until somebody inevitably asked, “Did you see what they were saying on the news?” with a slight chuckle, though there was the faintest glimmer of doubt in their eyes.

“Nothing to worry about,” we said.

“Just fear-mongering,” our ultra-conservative father-in-laws said.

“It's about time, this earth sucks,” our cynical little brothers in their emo phase said.

“Christ hasn't even returned yet!” our devoutly Catholic mothers said.

The full-fledged denial that anything could possibly bring our existence to a full stop continued for the several days that followed.

We woke up, went to work, came home, ate dinner, argued about something stupid, made up, went to bed, and did it all over again.

The sky continued to blanket us in pristine blue, in fluffy clouds, and sunsets of pink and gold. Safe and all-encompassing, like a warm embrace from the universe beyond.

Nothing in it made us think of danger. Of an impending apocalypse.

We first heard about it on that Tuesday. Panic started to creep in on Friday, when half the news anchors were missing because they took the day off to spend it with their families. Some of us left work early to do the same. At that point, our bosses couldn't be upset with us. A bunch of us canceled doctor's appointments, ordered fast food for dinner, sat out on our porches listening to the crickets and watching the stars.

We reminisced about our favorite memories and our happiest days and our darkest hours and what we would change if we could do it all over again.

The lucky ones answered: *Nothing at all.*

We sent lengthy texts to old friends and old lovers. We played our favorite board games. We prayed. We played fetch with our dogs, whose blind joy and lolling tongues made us even sadder. We prayed some more.

The End (cont.)

When Sunday hit, the scientists were utterly despondent. NASA issued a statement: “Be with your loved ones at 10:03 p.m.”

Some of us had different ideas. Some wanted to climb mountains, see the ocean, and drive as far as possible. Some jumped off of tall buildings. Some wanted to squeeze as much in and be as far from familiarity as possible.

But most of us stayed home, snuggled together on the sofa, terrified but also at peace, while watching our favorite early 2000s rom-coms.

Most of us were indulging in the last moments of what it felt like to be alive when the asteroid came streaking through our atmosphere at 10:03 p.m.



untitled

Alyssa Mazak (Biomedical Engineering 2027)

