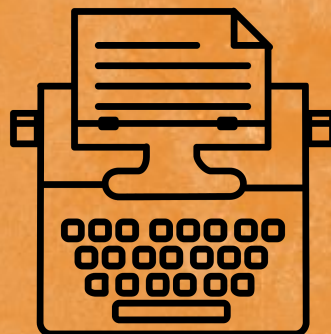


Title:

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Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

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FORMAS



The Meeting

By Jackie Chikambure

This is story has hypertext, any link you see in this piece of fiction can be clicked on.

“Okay, you’ve gathered us here, say what you need to say Nostalgia,” the President was impatient.

“You know we don’t like being called that,” Kee whispered. The words barely made it out of her mouth, she was talking to President Grae! Kee lowered her head respectfully. Her brown hair would have fallen to the side, but it hadn’t been washed in a week and stiffly stood like an afro. She had had no time to fix it, there was no time, but as she felt Grae’s commanding presence and caught a glimpse of his taut, shirtless torso, she blushed and wished she had spent just a moment fixing herself up before this meeting.

“Never mind him, Preserver, say what you need to say,” Thato gently urged. Despite the heat, Thato was always dressed in a black suit, and a heavy-looking golden cross sat on her chest. It represented continuous prayer for the days of the past and hope for a better future to come. Thato was a skinny, blonde, green-eyed girl who always wore a toothy smile. Kee shifted her glasses higher up her nose. She knew she ought to get her eyes laser corrected, but these glasses were the last thing her family had passed down from before the Elimination. Grae grumbled.

“A man turned 31 at The Preserver Colony last week,” Kee blurted.

This silenced the room.

“Kee, you are the brightest sixteen-year-old I have ever met. I’m sorry to hear about the loss of your Leader and have no doubt you will lead your Colony well but making things up to push the Nostal...” he paused, “the Preserver agenda is frankly a waste of the Committee’s time.” When Grae spoke, it was always as though he was addressing a large audience, his voice vibrated throughout the walls. Kee thought the windows would shutter.

They were seated in the Grand Committee Room at UCT, University of Climate Tech. The President was at the head of the table, Thato, was at his right, there was an empty space to Grae’s left and Kee stood at the bottom of the long table, representing The Preservers. From the Grand Committee Room, located on Table Mountain, Kee had a view of the entire city. She marvelled as the blue waves lapped against the sides of Signal Hill; she was not used to seeing so much water.

“Can I take off my mask here?”

Grae waved his hand gesturing that none of them had breathing masks on, so Kee gingerly took it off. The manufactured here air always felt too crisp. She choked and poorly tried to hide it.

“I am not lying President Grae. We have an adult who turned 31.”

In one swift movement, Kee retrieved a tablet from her satchel and placed it on the table. The table lit up and a holographic screen rose in front of them. The title on the screen read:

[The World Times.](#)

“I have proof. Click on that. Read it. Just click on it.”

“Not this Nostalgia shit again, nobody reads! Grae dismissed the hologram without opening it. He drummed his fingers on the table, he had black rings tattooed across his fingers, five on each finger and four on this thumb, signalling how many years he had been alive.

“Let’s hear her out Grae. She is nervous being here.”

“My ancestors came to Africa, *the Motherland*,” Grae sarcastically spat out ‘motherland’.
“On a ship. Do you know they say back in the day people like her were inferior to people like us, so believe me I know what it feels like to not belong but look where I am? She must speak if she wants to be heard.”

Kee’s hands trembled. “Chemical toxicity and death associated with it is age and compound dependent, hence the adults can’t live past 30 with this air. Many are dead by 25, but we have a special section at the Colony where we infused the atmosphere with an organic compound made with Golden Pathos, Peace Lilies, Snake Plant, and Dracaena. This compound, GPSD, purified the air to how it used to be three centuries ago. A select group live there now and grow actual fruits and have gardens, real gardens with non-GMO food, and last week one of the adults turned 31.”

“It’s a fluke.”

“No President Grae, it is not.”

“What are you suggesting?” Thato asked, visibly intrigued. Thato belonged to the Denialist Colony who lived in the South. They didn’t call themselves the ‘Denialists’ though, they were the Yin Yang. Their motto was “Life is in Perfect Order” and their Colony prayed ceaselessly that God would deliver them safely to the promised land, after death. For Thato to show interest, Kee knew that she might have a chance at convincing The Committee to help her reverse global warming and climate change. To return the world to what it was, and humanity would have a chance to do it all over again. She turned her attention to Thato.

“I am suggesting that we mass create GPSD and chemically change the atmosphere to what it used to be, before our time.”

“Using what was it again, flowers?” The President laughed. “No.” President Grae calmly responded. “For one, the *old* days with their carbon emissions and messing around with the atmosphere is what got the world here in the first place and two, we have more important things to worry about. The imminent attack of The Sabos. While you and your Colony work on pipe dreams of the past and The Denialists do nothing but pray, the Sabos are doing everything they can to *cleanse* humanity of itself by killing us all. Only my people are actively working on saving any semblance of the world we have left. So, thanks for your time but no.”

“President Grae, with all due respect,” Kee’s glasses dropped down her nose, she hastily fixed them. “What if your strategy to fight with the Sabos is wrong, what if the right strategy is to bring them onto our side? If we give them hope that humanity could be saved and *is* worth saving, they won’t keep trying to eliminate us all, what if -”

The grand doors slowly creaked open and four giant men with wide shoulders and red painted faces marched in. Thato clutched her cross and Grae reached behind the belt of his shorts for his weapon.

“Another committee meeting without us? Now I am starting to feel you are avoiding us,” the tallest of the Sabo men laughed, a very gruff laugh that filled Kee with dread. Kee had never seen a Sabo in person. They were more terrifying than the stories.

Thato moved closer to cower behind Grae and faintly mumbled a prayer. The President tightened his grip around the gun behind his back, his mind churning. He wondered how the Sabos had gotten into the building, his guards outside were most likely dead. Kee shuffled forward toward the leader of the Sabos. She could not believe what she was doing.

“And what tiny thing do we have here?” The leader of the Sabos bent down 90 degrees over the shuddering Kee.

“I am Kee. I am the new leader of the Preserver Colony.”

“Hello, little Kee. We will kill you swiftly.”

“No, please. We can stop fighting. You saw how that led to the Elimination, everyone killing each other, over what, the need for clean air only found in Africa? It does not need to happen again.” Kee held the tablet out in the palm of her hand. “I have another solution.”

The Sabo Leader towered over her again, peering at her tablet. Grae desperately wanted Kee to stop antagonising him. He motioned her to take cover but as she turned back to look at him, the President saw determination, not fear. It was hope that made her delusional. Was there actually hope for the world? Grae was certain all three of them were about to die but Kee kept her eyes locked on him and she mouthed the words then she invited him to join her.

Grae did not move.