

*There are two ways of spreading light:
to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.*

–Edith Wharton

Chapter One

I feel that doom is near. This feeling makes me angry and nervous. I keep looking for the cause and can't find it. It could be that aliens are finally going to attack and turn us into slaves. Or we're all going to catch the flu and puke to death. Or the holes in the ozone layer will grow so big we'll be fried by the sun. Or maybe the senior humans will do something really stupid, like start the third world war and kaboom. Game over.

How's a girl supposed to cope with this? I hate the big cloud of dread that hangs over me. I want to get rid of it, take control. So what do people do when they can't stand the way things are?

I've made lists:

- Become a politician (I doubt anyone would vote for me.)
- Join a secret underground group (How do you find secret underground groups?)
- Become a scientist and invent alien detectors. Or ozone menders. Or an auto-kill switch for nuclear weapons. (No way would I wear a white lab coat. I wear only black.)

I decided to wear only black when I was thirteen and my mother bought me a frilly lime green dress. Who wants to be caught wearing lime green on the day the world ends?

There's this girl in my art class who would die wearing hot pink if our doom arrived today.

She always wears pink. Of all the people on the planet, she annoys me more than anyone else. Her name is Lacey and she's quite the experiment in Artificial Stupidity. For example, I heard her telling one of the other girls about her boyfriend.

"Chad is so, like, perfect for me, right? Because he's just soooo cute! He has an amazing six-pack and white teeth and such good hair. And he knows how to dress! I mean, when I'm with him, it's like having the best purse or something, right? We just look so good together!"

She actually thinks her boyfriend is some sort of fashion accessory.

I've never talked to Lacey because, clearly, it would be a waste of breath. I don't even know why people like her were born. What is she good for? Proof that evolution can go backward? Sure, she's pretty, but that's about it. Dolls are pretty too, and I got bored with them years ago. Meh. I hardly ever played with

them even when I was little. Why would I bother with a brainless doll now?

Sadly these things can be forced on us.

Chapter Two

I don't especially like art, but I'm taking it anyway. My school says all grade nine students must take something artsy, and it was art, music or drama. Not exactly fair when I suck at all of them and would rather be in science. But here again, I have no power to change things. So I'm in art class and the teacher, Mr. Ripley, asks us to give him suggestions for our