

Missing.

Evelyn and her family were missionaries from Canada. She lived with her parents, John and Kathrine, and four-year-old brother, Bennett. She was, well, Evelyn. Thirteen-year-old Evelyn.

Evelyn was so excited for her best friend, Quinn, to come back from America. They had known each other since they were seven months old. They were like sisters! She had set up two beds in the cellar for Quinn and herself. As she strutted up the stairs that led down to the cellar, she called out to her mom,

“What else would you like me to do?”

“Well, you can greet our guest at the door!”, her mother replied.

“OMG! She’s here?!” Evelyn exclaimed.

“Don’t waste your time shouting! Now go greet our guest!” Her mother chided.

“I can’t believe you’re here!” Evelyn hugged Quinn. “Well, I guess you can now that I’m right in front of you!” Quinn laughed. Evelyn grabbed Quinn’s arm and pulled her into the cellar to show her the beds. Bennett strolled into the cellar nearly tripping before Quinn caught him. “Thanks, Quinn! Evelyn, Mommy wants you to set the table!”

“Fine.” Evelyn replied reluctantly.

She was ecstatic to see Quinn again!

Evelyn woke up to the sound of, “Sissy! The Ground Is Shaking!”. It was her little brother. She ran over to Bennett and carried him into the cramped, compact room under the cellar. She woke up Quinn and led her over to the little room. After debating whether or not she should get her parents, she crawled into the little room feeling the slightest bit guilty.

“We will stay in here until our parents come down,” Evelyn told Bennett and Quinn. “At least I hope they will,” she wondered aloud.

“I’m sure they will,” Quinn assured. Evelyn found a blanket and wrapped her brother in it hoping he would fall asleep; and he did.

“Our parents never came...” Evelyn said, looking down at her watch.

“I don’t feel the rumbling anymore.” Quinn replied. Bennett yawned.

“I think we should go out.” Evelyn and Quinn agreed in tandem. Evelyn slowly opened up the door and crawled out. Quinn and Bennett followed. They climbed up the steps to find the house empty and unbearably quiet.

Quinn found a piece of paper stuck to a house’s window. It read:

“Everyone must evacuate. Volcano eruption warning. There shall be no exceptions!

The Town Mayor,

Caesar Antojo”

Evelyn was filled with dread.

ARE WE ALONE?” Quinn cried.

“It’ll be okay...” Evelyn calmly exclaimed. *Hopefully someone will come back* Evelyn thought to herself. In the meantime, she knew she had to stay strong and decided that she would take care of Bennett and Quinn, or at least do the best she could. Evelyn had known about the pending eruption of Mt. Mayon. But all the volcanologists report said that it would be a mild one. What happened?

The next day, Evelyn, Quinn, and Bennett hiked up one of the biggest hills behind their home so they could see the rest of their town. It didn't look too bad, at least for now. They hiked back to their home when suddenly, there was a rumbling...

“WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!!!” screamed Evelyn.

“I will grab our stuff!” Quinn shouted back. Evelyn took one of her bags and filled it with some of Bennett’s clothes and then ran to her room to get her emergency bag. She handed her bags to Quinn and picked up Bennett.

She looked at her home one last time before leaving, whispered a prayer that it would not be destroyed.

After running several miles, they found another hill. Then they saw what had happened. The town was engulfed in a blanket of ash.

“What should we do?” asked Quinn.

“First of all, we shouldn't worry.” Evelyn stated.

“When will mommy and daddy come home?” Bennett asked.

“I am not sure.” Evelyn replied.

“Who will tuck me in tonight?”.

Evelyn felt even more alone than ever; but she new she had to stay strong, for Bennett, Quinn, and her parents. Oh how she wished she had her parents! Quinn felt the same way.

The sun was beginning to set. They were able to climb up some of the fruit trees where they set up camp. The perfectly-ripened *guyabano* fruit were sweet, tangy and juicy. The mangoes they harvested were just what they needed. Bennett was always happy when there were mangoes...his favorite! The stream nearby provided refreshing water. How soothing it was to dip their tired feet in it!

“Time to hit the hay!”

“More like ‘hit the ground!’” Quinn chortled. Evelyn thought to herself that it was nice to have someone around to brighten her up. She was glad to have Quinn with her, even in this crazy adventure.

At dawn, Evelyn snuck out of their tent which they built using fallen branches and dry coconut fronds they found on the ground. She wanted to have a better view of the volcano. She remembered seeing a *langka* tree two hundred yards to the north of the stream. It looked like the tallest tree there. There were coconut trees that were taller but those would be

impossible for her to climb. She knew it would be risky to climb the tree because it was closer to the volcano than their camp area. Evelyn was determined. She wanted to see if the volcano was still spewing ash and molten lava. Maybe she could even see a glimpse of her beloved town? Evelyn was burning with curiosity. It felt as if the volcano was a magnet pulling her towards it. She quietly kissed her brother's head and walked away. She was not going to change her mind. She continued on the trail as fast as she could. All she could think about was reaching the top of the tree.

The ground began to shake again. She couldn't believe the volcano was so close! She could see the volcano...it was flowing with lava. Twenty feet away were small spurts of lava shooting out of the crater and tiny flaming balls shooting from a slingshot. She knew she had to start climbing down and running back to the hill as fast as possible. She was scared. Evelyn ran to the right then to the left nearly missing lava beads that were being hurled from the crater. The smell of sulfur was making her eyes tear up now. *Just keep running, Evelyn. You can do it.* She could hear her mom whispering in her mind. She cried out in desperation and fear.

Evelyn heard the loudest scream she'd ever heard before, "EVELYN!!!". It sounded like the TV when Bennett accidentally turned the volume all the way. She recognized the voice. It was Quinn. Where was she?

Evelyn came across a small clear pond. It was almost like a big puddle really. It reminded her of the puddles formed after torrential monsoon rains. She saw the reflection of the volcano on the still water. She felt pulled by it again. It was as if the volcano was the puddle and she was Narcissus. She heard Quinn's voice boom out again. Her mind told her to go back to her brother and friend.

Evelyn looked at the position of the sun and realized that she had been gone for a while. She remembered what she learned about navigating outdoors with the help of the sun and her watch. Still, she was scared and out of breath. “QUINN?! BENNETT?!”, she called out. Nothing. She cried out again as she continued to run toward their tent.

It had been almost two weeks since that day when she sneaked out to climb the *langka* tree. Evelyn, Quinn and Bennett continued to live in their makeshift tent. They harvested guyabanos and mangoes, and even caught fish and freshwater shrimp! Each night Quinn built a fire out of tinder, twigs and stones. Bennett was happy as long as he had his mangoes. They ached to see their parents. The last two weeks had been surreal. They knew they had to keep hoping someone would find them. Quinn missed her parents in California. *They must be so worried!*

Evelyn woke up with the burning curiosity inside her. She woke up Quinn and Bennett and told them that today would be a good day to return to their town. Evelyn decided she would go by herself and return in the late afternoon.

“You’re not going without me,” Quinn said.

“Or me!” added Bennett.

As they began to walk, she did not think of themselves as the people who had not been evacuated, but the two 13-year-olds and four-year-old who had figured out how to survive during this calamity and crisis. She told Bennett and Quinn how much she loved them. They had hope in their hearts that they would be rescued. Bennett picked up a stick to hit a rock on the ground and they all heard a whirring sound. A sudden gust of wind blew dust all around them. *It was a rescue helicopter!*

