

Cassidy Reymes

The Final Star

We used to live in a vast world, alongside giants. They made up a working society. But it all went down the gutter when the tragedy struck. The great, big, green trees they had planted turned into short, charred stumps. The boxes made of wood, brick, and metal they had built, turned to ash. And the animals they had domesticated, turned to a pile of cremated dust, taken by the wind. Humans used to run this world, but after the Final Star struck, we took their place.

In this world that we have worked to create over the past six generations, only we live in it. We, who evolved from Tardigrades, rule the new world. The fate of the earth rests in our hands, and I intend to be the one who puts the puzzle pieces back into place. I will push the Final Star back into its proper spot, inside the solar system—the planet we used to orbit around. The sun, referred to by the Tardigrades as the “Final Star”, it is known as the ultimate end of mankind.

The Final Star was pushed too close to the earth by a massive space rock, now it sits about two million miles away, which causes the surface temperature to rise to nearly 400 degrees, not to mention the great amounts of radiation. It’s boring here on earth, always the same process, and the same routine. It’s never night, either.

We, the evolved form of the Tardigrades, are called Digrades. Instead of names, we have numbers, for example, my number is #9378. We use numbers because we don’t want attachments. Humans always said that when you named something, you’d get attached, and Digrades are a species of work and commitment. Digrades work to make a society like the humans once had. We are preparing the earth for mankind’s return. However, I’m starting to wonder if humans will ever come back to earth.

Digrades hope that humans will come back because they gave us a home. They maintained the places where we lived during our Tardigrade form. They cleaned the mountains, cleaned the trash in the seas, and shortened the plants we lived on. But now that we have evolved, what is the point in having them come back? Our max growing height is 5ft 2in—about the size of a pre-teen human. We no longer have a need for humans. We can manage a working community. So why do we need them back? A whole planet all to ourselves, and we want another organism to coexist beside us once again.

Non-stop work without the need of sleep. Digrades have an infinite amount of energy and stamina. We, unlike humans, don’t crave for breaks. We don’t want to take time off, or to see our families. We work, reproduce, and eat. One thing that hasn’t changed in our evolution is our diets. We eat algae from water, wet rocks, and other varieties of wet surfaces. Though, when we were Tardigrades, there was always too much to eat, and never enough of us to eat it. Humans would send out these big machines and they would collect most of our food and put it to waste. But now that we are bigger, we have bigger appetites. A single Digrade can eat sixty-nine thousand pounds of algae in its lifetime.

After most of the humans left, and the Final Star hit, we didn't know exactly what to do. The extreme heat from the Star caused the water to boil and disappear, so a lot of the Tardigrades died, except the ones who lived in and under ground. The massive amounts of moisture underground saved our kind. They reproduced and made farms with the perfect amount of moisture to produce more food. Through the past generations, we have adapted to the new way of life, and understand the roles we play. In addition to our evolution, our bodies have become accustomed to the Final Star's effects.

The Final Star has helped us greatly in the long run. Due to its radiation, it affected the growth and speed of our evolution. It caused us to go from our small, Tardigrade form, to our large, new, Digrade form in six generations, rather than the thousands it could have taken.

To this day, we still use those food farms, and it is a fascinating process. The Digrades we call workers of water, use a tube to suck up oxygen and drain it of its water droplets. Then, the leftover air is pumped back up to the surface and the water is drained into the ice caves about 29 miles below the deepest trench on earth. The ice cave holds the water we collect, and 104.7 quadrillion tons of ice. We can bring that ice up, closer to the surface, which causes it to melt. We can then throw it into a farm, also known as a pool, to be left to grow food. Below the surface, there is also a lab plant. Where we continue research to create more living organisms. The most complicated creature we have made, successfully, is a thing humans called, Comb Jellies; undoubtedly the furthest relative to a human, but they do have nervous systems, which is a step up from the previous experiments.

The date is Gumfrin 78th, 4512. I learned the human calendar a while ago, and it would translate to July 2nd, 5414400. Today, I was working in the water fields, when I noticed something. As of late, the sky has been getting darker and darker. Like it's turning from its usual vibrant red to a dull burgundy. And the Final Star is starting to dim a bit.

Anyway, off of that, I am sitting in my designated eating area. It is a box made of a very tough material, and engraved in it is my number. My food looks appetizing. Beside me is a square hole, referred to as a window by the late humans. I spend my time in my eating area staring out of the hole, and munching on my algae. But today, it's different. I watch as everyone continues their work, but off in the distance, I see a very big ring of something. I focus on it. Little pieces of the clear floor are being torn up and flown into the mysterious ring.

My voice is barely processed into existence. But yet, she responds. Yes, I think about it for a second. Is that, off in the distance, what humans used to call a- Storm Silence.

Disaster.

My eating areas top half is ripped off as #9377 is whipped around into the air. I take cover, burrowing into the mix of clear and tan ground. I'm too slow.

Before I've processed what's happening, my body mass seems to disappear, and I float, taking the same route as #9377.

Humans used to say that before you die, your life flashes before your eyes. And they seem to have been right.

Rolls of film slide across my vision like freshly farmed algae down one's throat. On them, my entire existence. From my entering earth, and now, to my leaving. But one of the images catches my eye. An image of the Final Star. And slowly, I begin to realize something.

We can work our mass off, losing pound by pound, sweating, refurbishing, repeating, but humans will never be able to exist again, unless the Final Star is pushed back into its place.

Blackness and silence

The buzzing of the Final Star awakens me from my deep stage of slumber.

I've seen this scene before a Digrade spoke.

I've been reincarnated. I have to start all over. ***But I'll make this one count.***

THE END