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Apocalypta.

...It's just fifteen minutes past three o'clock and the gatherers haven't returned. They should have been here about an hour ago. Time has slowed down to a halt in the past year. We have all sort of drifted into thoughts of paradise, of friends lost and of adventures we'll probably never get to see.

At first, years ago, life seemed to have a north, a heading: Survival and rebirth. Now, though, the heading has turned to a routine. Yes, we have thinkers, as well as gatherers and adventurers but it's as though the smartest men and women here have also lost their will. Their names are simple but that's the way we have to keep it here.

The crimson spots of sunlight over the dark clouds remind us how fortunate we were of ever getting out of this alive, fire which burns for all of eternity feeding that red color and staining the heavens.

But fortune is a tough word to define. Are we really that lucky to have escaped the worst hell any human could've gone through just to end up in a prison? A place where the mind ceases to work, ceases to exist, it has no will.

I have to admit, at first it was beautiful but then it just turned into a depressing site.

Once, a young boy, probably 5 years old, asked me what the color was and why did I stare at it for so long. I told him it was

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beautiful and that I liked seeing how it shifted from a light orange to a full red.

What I didn't tell him was the reason for the changing in colors.

It still hurts to think of it.

I'm the veteran here, I'm 67 and I'm soon to give up on this life. I was one of the first five thinkers, men and women who had faced the ways of science and graduated as engineers, doctors, scientists, philosophers and such.

Then we have the gatherers and adventurers; these are the toughest physically, and mentally, being able to withstand great heat, carry huge loads and walk for miles without a break. Their task is simple, but not easy.

Usually their trips are long and unsuccessful, but every now and again, they come upon surprises such as new members of the community (if they pass the test) and products which can be used to our advantage.

After these two rankings, we have the Servicers. Their name might sound simple, as the others, but it's not an easy job. They keep this place in order.

Providing food for our community is never easy and maintaining our community is not easy as well.

I had never done this before, writing down my memories. Many of these men and women around me know them. But still, my father once told me that I was bound to become a great man and that my thoughts should always be engraved.

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I shall follow his advice then.

I write these words as a token of appreciation for their great effort but also as a way to vent the fears which kept me up at night, the tears I cried for endless hours, wondering if this was what life would turn out to be. It was.

The blood, sweat and pain we all endured to create this do not go unnoticed but that's little comfort. The memorials on the walls mean little to those that perished before our entire city was finished. After all the hard work, none of our goals has come to fruition.

We are still unable to venture outside without protective gear. The radio crews are still hard at work finding more survivors and we still haven't seen the light of day in a long time. The stains the boy asked me about were merely a reflection. We have learned to see the outside with a series of protective mirrors, diminishing the powerful blasts of energy coming from the Earth's surface.

Our society has to be kept at a certain number, so families are sent to tunnels around our city to further expand this place. Those who seem troublesome are easily eliminated with a Pravda Council. It sounds harsh, but look at where we are. We are the world's most powerful race and we fighting to get just a bit of food, about half a mile underground. We need to be simple and efficient.

Once those families succeed (if they do), their eldest rejoin the center citadel to proceed with controlled mating. We have

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managed to get some control and keep great track of the offspring, again providing that they will help in the survival of our tribe.

I grew tired of saying that after five years of promising people that we were to make it. The next years, I only hoped that someone grew tired as well and took actions into his own hands. It still hasn't happen.

I can see the frustration in their eyes, the anger of not being able to leave the tunnels. This only happens though on the older members, those who got to know the outside, when the heavens were blue and air was breathable. The younger ones only fantasize with one getting to know what the outside looks like.

We have had many discussions regarding what to teach them and we still do not have a clear idea. For now, in our new language, we teach them about the price of war, of not understanding the difference of opinions and being able to resolve conflict with speech instead of action.

It has worked so far. Thinkers specialized in behavior tell us which kids could be troublesome and present a threat in the future. These are dealt with in very simple ways as usually they like involving in physical activities. These either become adventurers or gatherers. If they are too troublesome, they are forced to outside citadels or killed, whichever works best.

Those forced outside usually attack in revenge. Therefore, adventurers become soldiers and are deployed to eliminate them.

Again, the safety of many involves the sacrifice of a few.

That has become our motto:

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*La seguride of las citadels ist essential. Citadels aboves
toull.*

Our primary language is a complex mix of those base languages from the original survivors. Though it has been taught to all, several thinkers still speak their native tongues, just like me. The tongue is predominantly Spanish and English, as I believe we're just about 11 miles inland from the eastern shore of Costa Rica but it has been influenced by Russian, French and Chinese. This is where we have managed to find softer soil to dig the tunnels.

This is Apocalypta, our last home.

The name is a bit tragic, albeit true. This place no longer holds hope but only desire to live another day. The point of that still confuses me, as there is nothing to see tomorrow but the masses have decided such is the right way.

We had to take to the tunnels after a series of events turned mankind into what it should've been from the start, a mere plague which needed to be eliminated. Ironically, we did this to ourselves. Some had predicted that the year 2012 would be the end of the world but this happened before. The precise day I cannot remember, but I do tell of what we did to forget such tragic moments.

We no longer follow this calendar that which society had leaned on for years. Today, it is the 25 day of the 1st month of the 45th year.

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That's right. We've been locked in here for such a long time, and we will not get out anytime soon.

Not that we should, though.

What began as a simple war escalated to a conflict of massive proportions, leaving countries with no ability to defend themselves against rebels within their own core. Every nation faced terrorist factions with desire to only diminish the present government but do nothing to replace. They felt the anger rushing through their veins as a drug, telling them that violence was the solution.

After eradicating many of the smaller nations, such as Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, factions began their attempt to gain control of larger countries.

Then came the Pandora attack.

Factions from around the globe joined in an elaborate plan to attack multiple targets at once.

They did not know of the terror which lay ahead.

With ease of access, in a matter of months, several nuclear weapons had been obtained and placed in their respective targets; the cities of millions did fear an attack but no mind could have foreseen the damage.

All it took was one command and 26 nuclear bombs exploded. India was the first to go, then Moscow, Paris, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and finally we lost communication after we had heard that San Francisco also fell victim to the attacks.

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Desperate to survive, just a few hundred managed to shelter themselves in deep tunnels, usually used to harness energy as hydroelectric plants. This became Apocalypta, the first citadel of which we had heard of.

Many of the thinkers took matters into their own hands and we managed to create a radio system. It took us about five months to build it and two years to get the first response. It was called Esperanza, a small citadel in Spain, comprised of 200 people. Within six months, we had found two others: Lakus, in the northern regions of the former United States, comprised of a nuclear shelter close to the Great Lakes and Sakura in Japan. These two are the largest, made up of 100000 people each. Their system is far more complex than ours.

We are only 300 within Apocalypta and rest of the subcitadels.

It's been thirty years since we have heard any news of other places.

I don't think we will anytime soon.

My family says that I have to keep hope up, but that's make no sense right now. There's no reason in fighting to see the light of day, to feel green grass on my feet and inhale the purest of airs. We won't ever see that again.

No one will.

I guess I am fortunate enough to know what I'm talking about. My kids, they never knew sunlight, only light coming from bulbs, fireplaces and reflection systems. They never understood how

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animals the size of elephants could roam freely in the plains of Africa as the only animals they knew are our farmed rats.

They believe cockroaches are good and provide nutrition but they don't think of them as a plague, which we used to see them as. They have never seen a lake, a pond or the sea. The water they drink comes from one of our greatest inventions, a purifier for underground water.

They do not know what it was to live on Earth but they know what it's like to live in Apocalypta.

It breaks my heart to see them smile, knowing they deserved better.

The gatherers have arrived and word is that they have good news. I will come back finish this message in order to engrave our city in history. One can only hope that someone will find it.