

# The Diary of Jane

## By Julie Cain-Mailly

February 2

I have a test in social studies, a quiz in science, and science fair. They claim school is for learning; all I ever do is get tested. Well, unfair, I was talking to my homeroom teacher, and he told me our school had been built in the oil crises of the 70's. I didn't really know what that was; I figured since the original people painted the school in ugly tans and browns, they obviously didn't know what they were doing. I mean, if you don't even know how to do color schemes, how can you expect to build a good school? I remarked to Ms Goldberg of this, and she laughed. Her response was "the oil crisis was when OPEC burned the oil instead of letting the U.S. buy it. Tons of people decided to question our need for oil and how bad it is for the environment."

This, I found out later, was also around the same time as the Watergate scandal. Sadly, I got this from Mr. Watson, which means I sat through 45 minutes on what exactly happened. What do I care what people in the past did? Got to run, Chris is here in his Hummer, we are going to see a movie. I'll leave the light on so my Mom thinks I'm studying; never mind the oil guy, mom says oil's getting expensive. She turned the heat down to like 70, it was freezing! He's now throwing rocks at my window, talk about romantic!

February 25

Could you believe it? They voted to put those ugly wind farms down at the Cape. I feel sooooo bad for Jess, having her breathtaking sky-line view ruined by those giant steel fans. Prices for gas continue to rise, and my parents got it in their heads to teach me responsibility by making me pay for the gas in my car! Talk about lame. Like most of my spending money is wasted just to go to school and back. I think this is a plot to make me get a job. Which will happen, like, never?

March 12

OPEC is refusing to sell oil to the U.S., same as most of the South American countries. What's the big deal? I say leave them; we can dig in Alaska. There's nothing up there but ice anyway. Mom's all freaked out, and she claims we should do our patriotic duty and cut back on using oil, like that will ever happen.

March 31

People are beginning to lose their houses or abandon them. They don't have the money to pay for heat, so they think it's best to go live in a shelter. Everyone that's smart is buying wood to heat their homes; the only thing is, almost all the wood has been used up. There's not a tree for miles—those weirdoes even cut down the apple trees! There's this rumor, that OPEC will not sell us oil because

some weird environmental freak used his super wind powers to carry a spark and ignite all the oil. Huge point—people as filthy rich as OPEC couldn't afford surveillance systems?

April 1

Okay, I'm scared. The numbers are out; three-fourth's of all the oil in the entire world is gone. Somehow it even ignited underground. There's no more oil for cars, or houses or anything. Nothing can run—nothing. This is all anyone talks about, every TV station, every radio station, every website. The president, very uncool, states we would declare war, but no airplanes or tanks can run. There is no oil.

April 2

We are all barricaded in the high school. We always joked about it having been built by a guy who built prisons, but now we are truly trapped inside. There is a giant black cloud, darker than, I don't know, dark. There's nothing to do, I mean really nothing. No electricity, no cell phones, no nothing. I am so bored.

April 30

Chris is stuck in another high school, so I can't even talk to him. I've spent all my time with this geek named Dan. It's still dark, still nothing to do, so I've wound up actually holding conversations with him. He's wicked into words and reads books a lot. Other than the smart geeks who hang in the library, everyone else is going stir crazy. Some people pick fights with each other, just for something to do. Everyone smells because the water is only to be drunk, and everything is rationed. It's like going to war, my mom said. But what are we fighting, and can we win?

June 14

One of the old, washed-up football players who was extremely bored, had asked Miss Jasmines why this all happened. She claimed, "Cars had given off carbon dioxide, unburned hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide. People hypothesized that these gases, unless controlled, would cause another ozone layer-type thing that let in heat, but did not let it out. This would cause the planet to heat up, global temperatures to change dramatically, and oceans to rise. But now, with everything released into the atmosphere, where has the oxygen gone? All of the other gases are less dense, so the air outside no longer contains that vital element down near us. The air outside is toxic. Let's pray the air purifiers here still work." At that she looked up and realized the mistake she had made. Everyone who had been bored now put all their energy into fear. Everyone had already been slightly insane, having to stay in the cold, having none of our stuff, being bored for days and days.

I still do not feel these are valid excuses for what they did. It was horrible; I can not write what they did. I can not. I am scared for my life.

June 15

Me and Dan (did I really call him a geek?) escaped. There was a break in the cloud, and we ran. Everything is dead. There are no flowers, or hedges or even grass. We don't know if we can drink the water. We walked everywhere, and we have not found another living soul. There are bodies grouped together in the houses that we entered, and it appears they died from the lack of oxygen. We felt bad, but we took their canned food. If we left it, it just would have gone to waste. As we walk, we have been talking. Dan feels I should write about what happened, just to have a record, and it might make me feel less scared. We have no destination, just following the sun and the break in the clouds. He thinks there might be a larger break that is permanent in the clouds, were we could settle. I think this is just wishful thinking, but I let him hope.

June 16

Me and Dan got into an argument, him claiming I will be very messed up if I don't come to terms with the past, and he refuses to live with anyone who might be insane. So here is what happened though it pains me to remember, and I hate that I am writing it down.

*June 14<sup>th</sup>: This is the day the conversation had happened, the one that upset everyone. At this, the football coach yelled out that we should get rid of anyone who is not fully formed; they were only taking up oxygen that the healthy people should get.*

*The mother of an autistic child yelled back that any person on the earth deserves to live, especially in the U.S. If anyone harmed her baby boy, they were breaking a federal law, never mind the will of God. Someone yelled that if God or the government cared, we would have been rescued by now. At this point people got up and started attacking each other. Anyone with any sense at all ran for their lives and hid. That was the longest night of my life.*

*Once the angry mob found someone, they brutally murdered them, covering the walls and themselves in the victim's blood. They ran around yelling incoherently at their victory and continued to search for others. Somehow they were led into a padded room and locked inside. By dawn, out of the 150 people in the building, 20 remained alive. All but one of the air filters survived.*

*Those still living placed the bodies in one room and sealed the door. No one could look at anyone else. Only three rooms out of the whole building were untouched, and that is where we stayed. These rooms contained no windows. We had no idea how long we had stayed there, for one of the mob's men had been mistaken for dead, but was alive and trying to hunt us down. We wound up killing him to save our own lives. At this, each person went silently to any room in the building to be alone. I accidentally walked into the room Dan chose to occupy. He was staring out the window at the sunlight. I did not notice the sun at first, nor did he. We realized it at the same time, and we both ran through the glass, into the fresh air. We did not stop running until the building was out of sight.*

June 17

Dan read it over and grunted that I skipped a lot of the horror, but what I wrote will do. I suddenly yelled at him that he had to write down what he remembered too. He sadly smiled and responded he had, but he left the notebook with his dead sister back at the school. He then promised he would write his story down once we find another notebook. At this he suddenly pointed, and I saw the sea. Something was out of place, and it took a couple seconds for me to realize what it was. The sky over the ocean was clear, and there was green grass right before the sand dunes.



## Afterword

My Aunt is a vegetarian and very cool. She came over to my house and mentioned this contest, even showing it to my family online. Following her suggestion, I read through part of the last contest winners and then thought how I should start.

I thought of all the environmental issues I had learned about during my years in high school and reflected on recent current events. Having received my learners permit and taken a look at the price of gas, I knew what I was going to write about. On *www.howstuffworks.com*, I found the correct elements that are produced when cars are run, and I remembered my ninth grade science class, talking about what would happen to the atmosphere if massive amounts of trees and oil were burnt. I then elaborated on this into a story. This also allowed me to portray what I feel is the general public attitude: naïve and uncaring.

We are taught so much in school about how much danger we are doing to the environment and how we could cut back, yet no one practices what they preach. There is so much waste in our society, and everyone knows it, they just choose to do nothing to help the environment.

Do I think this will happen tomorrow? No, but could this be our future, a world so far advanced with everything it needs, and then failing; falling in a blink of an eye with everyone sitting back and watching, doing nothing to stop it?