

Hielo y Mentiras, 2056

A glacial wind licked through the valley of Los Angeles that mid-August, its rivulets bellicose fangs of icy steel, piercing frostbitten lips under a wintry gray sky. Here lay the sad ruins of a smoky city once pulsing with life; the buildings seemed to weep with the nostalgia of a ferocious sultry sun sucking dry the red earth; the art students with their brown bare feet, painty fingers dabbing at canvas memories; movie stars in their black sunglasses and sparkling cars, glistening chemises of silk the color of smoke; and everywhere the ethnic beat of the Southwest; sweaty Spanish fingers pricked on spindles in sweatshops tucked away in a gaseous orb. It was a fruitless wasteland now of ice and chill; a valley of snow nearly fifty below, still engulfed by the noxious haze that was insufficient to insulate from the age of ice that had long since swept the globe.

From where she sat below a single dangling light bulb at the Los Angeles Temporary School for Orphaned Youth, Clara Menendez suffered the August chill. It seeped through the cold stone floors, the steel walls six feet thick and even through the tendrils of her fiber-optic warmth blanket, to the very core of her seventeen-year-old bones, icing over her heart in an eternal deep freeze. The lights were dim, but Clara's saccharine chocolate eyes had grown accustomed to reading in the semi-darkness; her bone-thin fingers, brown by blood but not exposure, turned the yellowed pages of her book. *Utopia* by Thomas Moore; so wonderful and yet so unlike the present were the ancient monk's words that she wanted to laugh and cry at the same time. Clara had read it so many times over that she could easily have absorbed the lines through her fingertips, but the Los Angeles Temporary hadn't received any library donations since the brink of the third World War. Besides, they said, nobody read books on paper anymore.

The sleeping sounds of the little ones enveloped Clara in a soft blanket of sound and breath. Their emaciated backs rose and fell methodically under the whirring heated blankets, exhaling visibly into the subzero night. Most were brown with dark hair and almond eyes like Clara, the forgotten race from the azure seas and golden sands of Mexico, now nonexistent under two miles of ice. Like her, most had lost, or were losing, parents and siblings to the futile war that raged around them in the icy night, abandoned to the dank darkness of the orphanage barracks of east L.A. Clara watched them as they waited patiently in the breakfast line, nodding a grateful "gracias" at the lifeless androids who served them, how they took to bed without question, how their soft little hands came together under woolen blankets uttering hopeful prayers to an otherwise forgotten God in the vacant night. They prayed for the souls of their parents, ravaged by the war in lands unknown; for memories already lost to the wandering Santa Anas that now blew gusts of snow a mile high over the frozen San Pedro Bay.

Occasionally, one would be reclaimed. One tiny brown face would alight with joy as they were led from the stony quarters, trembling with the cold; adopted, maybe, or if they were truly lucky, their parents had come to claim them. One by one over the years, Clara had watched them go in silence, knowing that with each moment she grew farther from the family

that had abandoned her so many years ago, growing farther from an age where anyone would want a daughter. She remembered what they had told her, so many years ago. She remembered them as if she had seen them yesterday.

“El ejército es el mejor lugar para mí, mi amor,” her father had whispered in his melodic Spanish like silk over bare skin, while her mother had sat beside him in silence, fat tears rolling down her warm cheeks. *The army is the best place for me, my love.* “I’ll come back for you.” He’d said it as if he’d had a choice, as if he’d wanted to go. She had known it wasn’t true, even then, and yet she chose to believe, to trust, to hope, like the tiny little ones scattered at her feet, clutching to their fiber-optic blankets, with their parents in their dreams. She hated herself for still believing they would come, for hoping that one day she would see their happy faces behind the chrome bars. She was just like one of the little ones.

“A qué por diez años, usted nunca se va,” Maria, the old Temp nurse, had once told her. *You here for ten years, you stay here.* “Get used to being cold, *muchacha.*”

Clara had been cold for too long; her people were from the Yucatan, she was a daughter of the sun, the same sun that had been enveloped in the miasma of broken dreams and lost souls.

Across the room a sleek chrome machine whirred and clipped faintly, glowing emerald on and off in the semi-darkness. Another little one had stopped breathing. Deathly sickness from the cold was not uncommon in the Temp, and it had become more of a hospital than an orphanage. Slowly, the programmed respirator revived him; his breaths came long and slow, fanning into mushrooms in the night air that was cold like a switchblade. Clara wished she could be like that; every time she shut down, a program would make sure she came back on, that everything was alright again, that someone cared enough to ensure that she kept going, kept hoping. Even if Clara *had* problems breathing in the deathlike grip of arctic chill, she doubted she’d be fitted with such a luxury; she was too old now for anyone to pay the government anything for her. All around Clara was the humming of machines; respirators, wind energy fans and the creak of solar panels larger than jet planes, eking out energy from the barren sky. Why did they bother, she wondered, when the sun was hidden in clouds? Outside, the wind howled across desolate plains and storms the width of nations made strong by the cover of night stung the ruins of the lonely city.

Somewhere down the hall through the barred doors, heavy boots clicked on a metallic chrome floor and a machine gun was adjusted in its holster. It was not a foreign sound to Clara; army guards often patrolled the hallways at night, especially when the action was near. Since the great ice had entombed Los Angeles, and all of the great cities for that matter, all city buildings had been retained into single stations to better conserve the heat energy that so quickly was running out. This, of course, was the war’s sole cause. With each day, the country’s supply of fossil energy grew scarcer, and the enormous barracks of Los Angeles grew all the more frigid. They were quiet now; long, chromatic halls emptied of their inhabitants. It was -50 and falling as autumn came on, too cold to stay. The wealthy had gone south or flown to the moon; the

poor and the ethnic had been drafted. Only a few army legions and the Los Angeles Temp wards lingered. No one cared if the immigrant soldiers' orphans froze to death. The frequency of army guard appearances did not lessen Clara's trepidation; grateful that she crouched behind locked bars, she closed her book with a start and pulled the abrasive, whirring blanket right up to her round ruby lips. Her heart pounded beneath layers of porous Goodwill sweaters as the footsteps came closer and a hard, muffled man's voice grew audible. Funny, she could have sworn her heart had iced over.

Clara held her breath as the electronic keypad clicked; the guard was entering the code, he was coming in. The heavy bars slid coolly open and a towering man with leathery dark skin entered in stiff, glossy camouflage white as snow, a heavy machine gun at his side. He was followed by a boy, slightly older than Clara, tall and white as the endless snow with hair like sand and sapphire eyes that sparkled in the artificial light. The boy was casually dressed in jeans and a heavy polar jacket; too young to be a soldier.

"Don't get comfortable." Hissed the soldier forebodingly to the boy, "We're not finished with you yet." To Clara's surprise, the boy simply smiled widely and puffed a few smoky breaths into his ungloved hands, blackened by frostbite, rubbing them together for warmth.

"Try me," He countered with a grin. His voice was youthful but confident. There was no familiar tinge of Hispanic accent in his facetious response, no California drawl. This boy was not a local. The soldier grimaced menacingly and crashed the gate behind him, heavy boots clicking all the way down the shiny hallway. Antonia, a young Temp nurse, gestured silently in the fidgety, awkward manner of one who feels out of place, toward the bunk that was to belong to this boy, and helped him pack his things away in a trunk. He didn't have many, but then, neither did most arriving at the Temp in the dead of night. He nodded to her indifferently and reclined on the stiff pillows with both hands intertwined behind his sandy-blond head, cerulean eyes wide open, staring blankly into the night air. The nurse exited without a word, sealing the heavy chrome doors with the code in haste.

"What'd they get you for?" Clara asked after a few moments, not wanting to scare him, though her curiosity overruled her. Her rich Spanish voice was unfit for the frigid silence. They sounded like a prisoner's words, a convict confiding in a fellow criminal. It wasn't much different, she thought, being forever locked behind bars in a frozen cell. There were no prisons anymore, though; just going outdoors was danger enough. Only orphans and poor kids were lock-ins now. The boy started, having thought, she was sure, that he was the only waking soul in Los Angeles, but smiled and sat upright, blue eyes glittering like the nonexistent seas. He was handsome, to be sure, but different than the young soldier boys who trod the hallways of the Temp. There was nothing boyish in his jaw, no jauntiness to his brow. There was maturity, respect. He had the look of one who had seen too much in too few years. He could not have been much older than she, but Clara felt she was in the presence of an adult.

“Murder, break-ins, armed robbery,” He answered flatly. His smiling eyes deceived his witticism.

“I’m serious,” She whispered, chuckling softly into the night.

“Who are you?” He asked, squinting into the darkness to get a look at her with a hesitant smile. Cautiously, Clara slid the humming blanket down from over her face and sat upright, allowing him to get the view he wanted. She saw his eyes widen and his lips turn up at the corners in a pleased smile. She was used to this; the soldiers whistled at her in the breakfast line and told her she was beautiful, smiled strangely at her through the bars while she sat and read. It was times like these when Clara was grateful for her enclosure, unconscious of her dark curly brown hair, her heavy chocolate eyes, her wide lips deep as the mud of the ancient deserts and her skin soft and brown like caramel under the sun. She was a Spanish woman, round and dark; she was mysterious, she had been told, the only beautiful thing in Los Angeles. There was something different about this boy’s gaze, it was soft, respectful, and kind; he seemed to see her as a beauty to study, to admire, not to harness or to own.

“Clara,” She whispered self-consciously, and then added, “Menendez.” There was no point in protecting her identity anymore. She didn’t even think she really had one.

“Jack Singer,” He returned, smiling and crossing the room to offer his hand. Clara shook it; it was warm and soft, not wet and frigid like those of the little ones who grasped hers for attention. Somehow, she already knew she could trust him.

“You’re not from around here,” Clara commented inquisitively after a few moments, leaning upright and resting on one outstretched arm, rubbing it with her fingers to relieve the numbness. “And already you’ve made enemies.”

“Yeah, well,” He sighed and reclined once more, “I tend to have that effect.”

“What are you doing here? What have you done?” She persisted, then shrinking back, “I’m sorry, I don’t mean to pry. We don’t get many visitors or new recruits of any kind at the Temp, especially those not soldiers’ children or orphaned castoffs. This is the longest conversation I’ve had with anyone anywhere near literate in over a year.” He gazed at her with a curious smile, resting his chin upon folded hands.

“Okay,” He sighed, shrugging, “If you really want to know, I just arrived this morning from Chicago, or at least, the only part still accessible beneath the mile-thick glacier that’s covered the Northern Hemisphere. I’ve been on the run from the army recruits for over a year now; I had my eighteenth birthday the June before last. I was already enrolled at Oxford in England, but when it became inaccessible beneath the ice to any newcomers, the government tried to snag me before I could apply anywhere else.” Clara sighed wistfully; she had ceased to be educated beyond her fourteenth birthday in any matter except modern political policy, and both this and her impoverishment had destroyed any hopes of college education. They were

buried now, like the parents whom she knew were dead, beneath miles of snow or sand on foreign terrain.

“Why’d they have it out for you?”

“My parents used to work for the government; they were climatologists at NASA. When they started telling people the truth about the ice age...”

“The truth?” She interjected with a curious smile, “Everyone knows the truth.” He laughed sincerely, his pale cheeks flushing in the darkness. The sound was foreign to the stone cell.

“Oh yes?” He chuckled. “And what exactly have *they* told you brought on this ice age?”

“You’re serious?” He didn’t respond, and she hesitated for a moment, irresolutely. “Okay, the Iraqis and the Chinese conspired to stop channeling the fuel and resources that the United States needs to produce the gases that warm the planet, everyone knows this. Before modern civilization, our planet was enveloped in a constant ice age. It was only the development of technology that would allow for our stability at a temperate level. They want to suck out our money, and our soldiers’ lives, and once they do, they’ll crank on their machines again, and we’ll be warm. What do you think we’re fighting for, if not for oil, for what we need to create constancy?” She spoke in the manner of one who was merely pointing out the obvious and gazed at him curiously, studying his brow for signs of stupidity or craziness. It was a universal truth, everyone knew so. She found neither; in fact, he looked surprisingly dejected.

“If there was never temperate weather until the development of modern technology,” He asked quietly, not quite looking at her, “how did plants, animals, dinosaurs, and even humans evolve? How did we begin? Can you answer that, Clara Menendez?” There was a catch in her throat like cold keys in a rusty lock. She’d always known the answer, had never been afraid to give the wrong one, and yet his questioning made sense. She wondered why she hadn’t thought of this before.

“I...I don’t...”

“And if the Chinese and the Iraqis *had* refused to channel fossil fuels, don’t you think the other nations; Europe for example, would be fighting on our side?”

“I don’t...”

“And if modern technology was the *only* sustaining factor in maintaining a temperate climate, don’t you think there’d be other countries with this technology, not just the United States? Do you *really* think countries like Russia and China, the new modern superpowers, would compromise the lives and industry of their own people to retaliate at the egocentricity of the United States?” He paused, his cheeks flushed with angry passion, standing now. A few of the little ones had awoken, but he didn’t mind them; instead, he paced the tiny cell, running a

hand through his sandy hair agitatedly. Clara felt sick, she wanted to run, to scream, to hide from his ideas; they were sensible, and yet, she refused to accept them. She wanted so much to believe that they were in the right, that she had not been deceived by her own government, that wherever her parents had died, and by whose hands, it had not been in vain; she would not and could not believe that the thousands of lives she had seen taken were for the advancement of the United States egoist government.

“I don’t believe you!” She cried at last, catching her head in her hands and cradling herself, refusing to allow tears to flow. “I can’t believe you.”

“The United States used all of the fuel and now the world is clambering like flies over a dead animal for the few drops that remain; never caring that *we* brought on this ice age. They refuse to admit that *we* caused the cataclysmic global warming, melting both ice caps and halting the core ocean and heat circulation paths that kept us warm. I don’t tell you this to hurt you. I’ve just met you, I wouldn’t do that. People *need* to know the truth Clara; we can’t be deceived any longer. Our world is rapidly plunging into devastation, and something must be done.” His words were eloquent, and so sincere that she could not help but trust him, despite all that he had destroyed for her. A warm tear trickled down her cheek. She didn’t fight it anymore.

“I’m sorry,” He whispered at last, sitting down beside her, trembling with agitation. “It’s just...it’s frustrating. I imagine you must feel the aggravation too; rage, maybe, or hatred. How does it feel to know that, for your entire life, you’ve been lied to, been misled? That this whole war is a campaign for the energy that *we* wasted, that our people are suffering and dying by a natural disaster caused by *our* indifference to the many warnings issued by scientists all over the world?”

“So the war...my father’s life...spent for nothing,” She whispered, gasping for short breaths that slashed her tongue like spears in the frigid night.

“My parents spoke the truth to campaigns all around the world until three years ago,” He sighed with eyes heavy like the snow and dark as the sky, “They were assassinated by United States army intelligence while on the podium at a climate convention in Amsterdam. It was a direct order from the president.” He paused for a moment and looked away. She could not have understood better. “They were the last to go, and their ideas died with them. I was their only child, and I swore to myself I’d never be corrupted by the deceit of the government. I meant to teach their ideas at Oxford, and when it became impossible for me to get there I decided to take it up at the heart of the problem-in the U.S.-at Columbia University in New York City. The government was hot on my heels, hoping, I’m sure, that I’d be killed on the front lines in war. I’ve been running from them since, teaching my ideas to all who will listen (that is a very selective few) and refusing to let fact die.”

“So you’ve done the research, you’ve seen the results...it’s proven...”

“I have no doubt.”

“And Iraq? China? The Russians?”

“All and more posed a severe threat less than five decades ago, before the Great Freeze. Every article, every fact about our problems with them has been erased. Those who knew were killed. And they blame it on the ice.”

“What kind of threat?”

“The U.S. was once the supreme nation, or at least, we thought we were. Slowly, China’s industry grew; they produced nearly all of the goods consumed by our nation, and their economy skyrocketed. When scientists began to propose a problem of global warming stemming from factory emissions, however, they refused to acknowledge them, just as we did. A protocol was proposed as early as 1998 in Kyoto, Japan, to plan for better control of greenhouse gases. Both our nation and China refused to ratify it. At the time, however, the U.S. was ‘at war’ with a crumbling Iraq; it was more of a massacre to cover up for our then-president’s error in invading the country.”

“Oil?”

“You would think so, and it may have been true. He claimed they bore weapons of mass destruction. Have you ever heard about September 11, 2001?”

“No.”

“I thought not; it’s been erased from the records. Every successful attempt of domination over our country by fundamentalists has been smothered. It’s the only way to keep the image of strength these days. Anyhow, our success in Iraq and nearby areas of the Middle East disgusted both China and India, and they attacked with atomic bomb in 2010, only forty years ago. Millions were killed, and our nation ravaged. It was a disgusting time of morality, for all sides. Russia joined them, and they helped Iraq to its feet. It joined Afghanistan in the opium market and soon was a burgeoning superpower. Sick. The new U.S. president signed a peace treaty with all four nations, and it seemed all was at rest. The global warming issue had, however, been put on the back burner, and things steadily grew worse. His ideas, unfortunately, were not channeled to his son who, still enraged by the bombing, attacked the Middle East and purged it of its oil, and refused to further trade with China, no matter how it damaged our economy. The U.S. was on the rise once more, and was hated by all. China, Russia, and India eventually ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and United Nations diplomats begged us to do so. U.S. scientists could not have been more pleading in their efforts to make the U.S. sign, but it was to no avail. While other nations, though perhaps too late, finally revamped their energy production to solar, nuclear, and wind-generated, we sucked up the last of the fuel that we had stolen. Eventually, nature took its course and brought on the ice age, something feared and predicted for decades. Fearful for loss of power, our government became corrupt beyond belief; the role of president became hereditary and the word ‘scientist’ has come to mean a figurehead spitting out voluble explanations of what the people want to hear. Enough fuel to support the economy

of a country about the size of China for five years remains welled deep beneath the ice in the tiny uppermost portion of what is now the Middle Eastern Empire, in a country previously known as Kuwait. We invaded ten years ago for it, and have been fighting with every country in the world ever since.”

“World War III.” He nodded. Clara bent and wept uncontrollably. She felt no shame in doing so before a stranger, nor before the tiny, bewildered faces of the little ones. Nothing seemed to matter anymore. “So,” She asked after what felt like hours, not wanting to know the answer, “what now? Do we wait for our extinction?” He paused before answering, running a trembling finger over the whirring blanket as a man would caress the cables of a bridge from which he is about to leap.

“I don’t know. I’m doing the best I can, but I can’t do it alone, especially on the run. Most of the scientists, or people for that matter, who know what I know have been killed. I want to believe that I can make a difference, that I will die knowing that this world was headed in the direction of good, but I feel it may not happen that way.” He sighed and shuddered, but not with the cold. She could tell how very afraid he was. Cautiously, she slid her warm brown hand into his trembling one, and gazed at him with friendly eyes.

“I believe you.” She whispered.

“I can’t tell you how much that helps.” He sighed.

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Jack and Clara passed two frigid weeks at the Temp in silent friendship and understanding, keeping to themselves beyond the mindless tumult of unknowing soldiers and sad, condemned orphan children, hanging on to any word of the war that raged outside. Both knew that it was only a matter of weeks, now that he was under the watchful eye of the army, before Jack would be summoned away from the Temp, possibly killed. By night, he taught her every science fact, every history explanation that he knew.

“It’s a lot to ask, I know,” He told her, “But you’re the only one who believes me. When I...when I am...when I...*leave*, I need someone to carry on my work. You must understand how important it is.” She could, more than he knew. She worshipped his every word, hung on to every fact, because it brought her life, a purpose. He was nothing to her and yet, he was everything; she had nothing else. Something had to be done.

“Okay,” She whispered, sitting beside him at the empty cafeteria table in the deserted Temp eating area. Jack was alone and hadn’t eaten a thing; his cheeks were pale and his eyes gaunt. He knew what was coming. The soldiers avoided him like the plague and the children likewise; the latter were afraid of him and the previous feared having to be responsible for his death. “I have a plan.”

“Plan?” He asked absently after a few moments, barely looking at her. His eyes were glazed like cataracts and his frail shoulders trembled with the cold. It pained her to feel his fear, his agony.

“I have a plan to get us out of here.” She grinned for the first time in weeks. He looked at her with disbelief and shook his head absently.

“It’s too late for me, Clara. They’re coming for me in the morning. I heard the soldiers at breakfast this morning, arguing over which one would...do it.” His terrified stare penetrated her, but she refused to be defeated.

“We leave tonight.”

“How...?”

“Just leave it to me.”

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It was late and the hallways were silent like a tomb and dark like night, though neither could see the blackness from within. Clara’s heart throbbed within her chest like the hammering of native drums, so loud she was surprised all of Los Angeles wasn’t awoken by the dissonant rhythm. The heavy plastic of her army uniform betrayed her, pulling her to the floor, and her eyes swam with exhaustion under the weight of her stolen helmet. Beside her, terrified and equally exhausted, Jack followed her, holding his machine gun at length in disgust. In the distance was the marching of a thousand heavy feet like a funeral procession through frigid snow. They were almost there; it seemed to easy...and then...

“¿Dónde el infierno usted le piensa va ? ” *Where the hell do you think you’re going ?* The voice was harsh in the darkness, not one she had heard before. Clara stood paralyzed for a moment, trembling and sweating beneath her camouflage. “¡Conteste a su oficial en jefe, usted imbécil!” *Answer your commanding officer, you imbecile!* Jack sprang into action with a life Clara had not realized was still in him.

“Sir, we are headed for the docking port to board the carrier ship for base A-908723, China.” He thrust his voice full and confident like a man, straightened his posture and saluted with dignity.

“The airships for said location began boarding five minutes ago.” His voice was harsh, deep and accusing, not at all the harmonic Hispanic that Clara’s father had once had.

“Sir, we were sent to cell EW092247 to secure a prisoner for tomorrow’s execution, sir.” Clara thought back to her careful planning, how they’d stuffed the beds with sweaters and stolen the uniforms, how she’d left everything; her mother’s jewelry, her father’s glasses. None of it was safe with her now. *Utopia*, however, was nestled comfortably in her right boot.

“Very good.” The officer grunted deeply. “Fall out, the last planes are boarding.”

“Sir, yes sir!” Without a word or breath the two clamored through the suffocating hallways and, more easily than could have been imagined, boarded a plane and soared above the land of icy desolation that had entombed them for so long, over miles and hours of nothing but white and frigidness, cold like death and empty like the abandoned homes, over miles of bombings and guns and screaming and warfare. She had never seen anything more horrifying.

“That was brilliant,” She whispered to Jack after they had been securely fastened in a helicopter, far out of earshot, “I thought we were done for.”

“I was terrified, to be honest,” He mumbled with audible relief, “I just churned out some cheesy military lines from some movie my dad told me about once.”

They were quiet for a moment. “It was a brilliant plan. I owe you my life, Clara.” He smiled.

“Don’t mention it.”

The enormous, high speed machinery entombing Clara churned like the uneasy uproar deep within her; the escape had been too easy. The army would be after Jack in a heartbeat, and she knew all too well that they wouldn’t hesitate to kill her, too. She didn’t know where they were going or how they could possibly help, how *she* had become involved, but they had to try, had to keep fighting. How trivial her life seemed now, when death was before her. How little she had done, accomplished, aspired to. Such a limited time; and so little done. Below her foreign city lights glittering like an incredible machine, a tiny whirring computer chip, hanging on for life in the age of cold and darkness. For them, Clara had to carry on. The orphan children of the world clung onto her now. The icy winds caressed her hair and cracked her swollen lips; the wind howled outside and an ominous frost crept over the glassy windows. How quickly Clara had been reclaimed from seclusion; despite her desperation, her hunger for family, she could, if only for this moment, feel contented. She took his hand and was warm again, light, free, as if her whole life had led up to this moment, this freedom. With her purpose before her and even with the troubled world below, Clara had never felt more alive.

El Extremo

(The End)

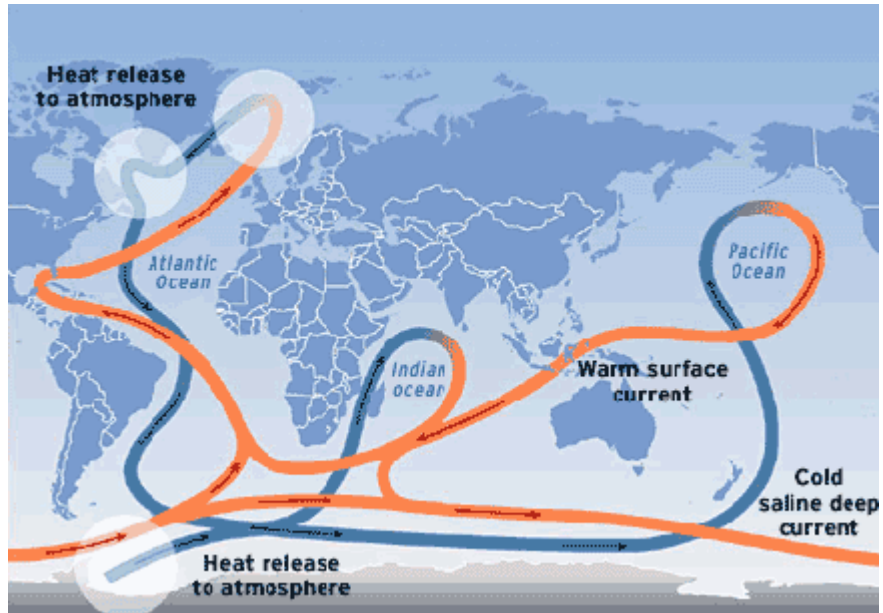
Afterward to *Hielo y Mentiras, 2056* by Katherine Kinkel

The inspiration for *2056* came from general knowledge stemming from both in-class discussions (my science class is focused primarily on earth science) and media information about the current issue of global warming. My science teacher explained to our class that the earth is an unequally heated system, one that is always trying to bring these inequalities into balance. Because of this oscillation, there are constant fluctuations in the different methods of energy transfer on our planet. I came to understand the thermohaline, or deep ocean circulation. In this system, ocean water is first evaporated nearer to the poles, increasing its saline content and therefore its density, and causing it to sink and travel along the ocean bottom towards the equator (see graph 1). This displaces the water's volume and leaves room for warmer water, having flowed northward or southward from the equator, to rise to the surface and go through the same process. Global warming causes the icecaps on the poles to melt slowly, increasing the volume of the ocean and making this process more difficult. Without the thermohaline circulation, it is nearly impossible to keep earth's heating constant throughout the globe. The melting of ice caps also slows the path of gyres like the Gulf Stream, which bring warm water northward to the British Isles, keeping them from becoming frozen like the other islands at their same latitude, for instance, Iceland or Greenland. It has been predicted that if Greenland were to melt entirely, global sea level would rise by as much as 20 feet.

I then focused on examining how severe climate change really was in comparison to past climates of the earth, since I know that there have been times of much higher carbon dioxide concentration and warmth. The scale developed by Dr. C.D. Keeling (graph 2) shows how much CO₂ levels have raised in the past few decades. We are currently headed towards a concentration of somewhere near 500 parts per million, astronomically high over the normal 200-300, maybe 150 during an ice age. There has not been a level like this since the Eocene Epoch, thousands of years ago.

All factors combined, I considered the logical situation at hand, both politically and scientifically. It is unlikely that the United States will reduce emissions, as they have consistently refused for decades to do, as well as burgeoning economies like that of Russia, China, and India. As illustrated by the film *The Day After Tomorrow* (which, funny enough, I hadn't even seen until after writing my story), it is uncertain, but interesting to imagine, the possibility and irony of a global ice age ensuing from global warming. It would take many decades, but if this sort of event were to occur, a chain of events would keep it from relenting. As the thermohaline slows and the gyres stop running, spreading ice over the northern hemisphere, sunlight would just be reflected, and not trapped by the greenhouse gases. This was the starting point for *2056*, during World War III, in a time where trees and forests had been forgotten and ice had consumed the globe.

Graph 1: Thermohaline Circulation



Graph 2: The Keeling CO2 scale

