

Trickles of sweat run down my filthy brown skin. The thick air is so humid I can hardly breathe. The rancid smell of the slums lingers until the rich, stifling scent of incense banishes them to the shadowed corners.

My feet drag across the litter-strewn pavement until I find my sister Dia sitting on a rubbish bin. “Wait to you see what I have today!” I say tossing my bag into her lap. She ravenously digs in, finds half a sandwich and takes a famished bite before handing it to me. We’ve always shared like this, always a team.

A few years ago, this silvery grey dump was a thriving city where we lived in a refugee centre. That was until the government relocated the city of Jakarta to Nusantara, so everybody left. Except us. We were apparently going to overbalance the population. So, they left us behind.

“Let’s get some rest,” urges Dia, letting out an exhausted yawn. I follow her deeper into the vile alley until we reach our tiny shelter – just a few rusted tin sheets leant against a graffiti smeared wall. I lie down on the gravelly floor, my whole-body aches. I dream of Nusantara, wishing we were there feasting on ripe mangosteen. Instead, we were abandoned, with no purpose and no comfort besides each other.

My eyes swell, as a hot, salty tear dribbles down the side of my face and I let out a heartbroken sob. Dia wraps her arms around me and holds me tight whilst she strokes my dark straggles of hair lovingly. Gradually, I drift off to sleep.

Pale sunlight filters through the towering washed-out skyscrapers. Dia has already woken and I can see her walking round the corner. She suddenly freezes, a look of pure horror etched on her face.

The sound of crumbling buildings and splintering glass follows. I sprint towards her, out of breath. I follow her gaze and see a monstrous wall of black muddy water crashing and foaming towards us like a hungry giant.

“Run” I scream, shaking Dia out of her trance. I run – we run – my heart pumping, my chest burning. The gaping mouth of water now envelops the city, rising quickly, ready to swallow us whole.

Out of no-where, I see a concrete building plummeting towards us along the swirling rapids, dislodging us from our earthly ties. I lose my footing and tumble towards the frothing mouth of the tsunami. The last thing I see is Dia’s panic-stricken face and her wide, gaping eyes before everything goes black.

The sludgy water pulls me under. I desperately thrash my arms and pump my legs, but nothing works. My fingertips brush against something familiar. I latch onto Dia's arm, and we intertwine our hands as we're whisked away like toys amongst the turbulent swell. My eyes flicker, and my body starts to feel limp and powerless. I see a glimpse of sparkling sunlight ahead, shining on the violent foam.

I'm almost there. We're almost free.