

The Resistance

By Jessica Barkley, Age 12

As south as is possible there lived a small quiet city, Evergreen, the people there were innocent, however there is always a downside to anything if you think about it hard enough.

Though the city of Evergreen was peaceful, within these last few years, something had changed, it had gone unnoticed at first, like a whisper in the wind. As time went on, it was becoming more noticeable.

A scientist called Rachael Kenny was one of the first to notice the trend. She was the town's lead infectious disease specialist, and had noticed that her patients who came in for routine treatments were no longer responding to the standard antibiotics. One by one their conditions worsened. None of this was making any sense; their own bodies seemed to be fighting against the very medicine meant to save them.

As though things weren't stressful enough, it then hit close to home. Her own daughter, Penny, fell ill with a stubborn cold that seemed to drag on for days. At first it was a mild cold and congestion but then Penny's fever flew up and she complained of a deep aching in her chest. Dr. Kenny immediately rushed her to hospital, certain that the antibiotics would cure it- however something inside seemed to be telling her a different point of view. She gave Penny a strong dose of penicillin, it did nothing.

The next day, Penny's condition had worsened. Her chest wheezed and rattled with every breath and her skin had an unnatural pallor. Desperate, Dr. Kenny ordered more tests but the results only left her speechless and pale; the bacteria infecting her daughter's lungs was not being touched by any source of medicine they had available. The room was filled with machines, none of which were showing any signs of improvement. "Mum, I don't feel too good," Penny whispered, her voice barely audible. Rachael held her hand and the realization struck her like a physical blow—there was nothing left to try. The infection was growing, evolving, worsening each minute. The antibiotics no longer stood any chance. She felt that all the negative emotions she had EVER felt had collected right at this moment in a huge pit at the bottom of her stomach. They were fighting a losing battle and nobody had noticed until it was too late...

This must be resistance, she had seen it before in the rare occasion of a patient who had been taking routine medicine often. Though this didn't feel like resistance any more, it felt like the evolution of a new strain.

By the third day Penny looked pale and sweaty and almost ghostly, Rachael knew now, in her gut, they had lost the war, patients came in with similar symptoms, and the feeling of guilt that they were all going to suffer, perhaps die, under Rachael's watch, was too much to cope with.

Then It began.

Something unknown to humans happened later that night. The dead people in body bags shifted and groaned. Rachael sharply turned on the spot, sure she had heard something. Then an elderly granddad ripped open the sheet that was covering him. In the dim room his appearance was gory. Blood dripped from his mouth and his eyes were jet black. This happened to his neighbour and so on. What was happening? One opened their mouth to reveal jagged, sharp unnatural teeth. She bolted down the corridor, her mind was racing, she couldn't stop thinking. This wasn't just an infection it had adapted into something beyond human comprehension and it was spreading. These people weren't dying, they were rising, becoming something else driven only by the bacteria.

As the infection spread through Evergreen, everywhere you looked people wandered through the streets, their bodies twisted and decaying. This once quiet, peaceful town descended into chaos.

As the darkness thickened, Rachael realised the awful truth; this wasn't the bacteria, it was in the world itself, the world had been poisoned. This new infection could no longer be stopped. It was part of the world now. There was no cure, no hope. Only everlasting silence as the disease spread.

In the end Evergreen just became another forgotten space, lost in the great mist of time. The town of Evergreen was swallowed by the darkness gone unnoticed like so many others had.

To this very day the silent strain of antibiotic resistance marched on, consuming EVERYTHING in its path.

