

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 2nd Prize]

As we saw in the movies

(Original)

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Brazil, January 1st, 2030.

Dear Peixoto,

I always thought the world would be over by 2012, as the Maya Calendar predicted. I remember being in my father's car, looking to the night sky through the window and imagining how our existence would vanish. When the year came to an end, but we were still here, I realized that what could destroy humanity wouldn't come from far away, it was already here: our lack of empathy, our hate and our prejudices - and only we, together, could save ourselves.

Unquestionably, you have already made this analysis, because by the time I, or rather we, were 17 we could not accept the inequalities that exist in the world. Although, to be true to ourselves, just by being born a girl into a race mixed family in a South-American country we could never understand the reasons why people were worst treated due to their ethnicity, gender, social status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We no longer have to understand the incomprehensible, or try to justify horrendous discriminations, as many did in the past. Therefore, I must say not even in our best dreams and hopes we had a glimpse of what our world would come to be. It's all so different now, Julia! You would be completely amazed and happily overwhelmed by the changes we managed to do.

The process started through education, as we always believed it would. Schooling - in all its levels - is now free for all, thanks to public education and UNESCO's efforts everybody has similar possibilities of studying, and that makes admission in colleges and jobs much more fair than it ever was, since the line where we start our professional journey is the same for all students. In addition, good education now includes studies in race, religion and

gender, teaching respect, understanding and inclusion of the differences that make each human unique.

As a result of the democratization of education, we've also made significant breakthrough in science, the world is now powered solely by renewable energy, the diseases that affrighted society are curable, vaccines that prevent pandemics to happen are offered to us all with no costs.

Likewise, health care as a basic human right exists all over the planet, we no longer have to wait in long lines for treatments we wouldn't have because we couldn't afford, the medical supplies are never short as they were in war zones and underprivileged areas. Every human being can live in dignity through the medical care offered.

Furthermore, art and cultural expressions are now highly valued as basics rights and seen as essential to the social living. I know, Julia! We never thought art would finally be recognized as a key part of a society reconstruction, but it is. You always felt the importance all forms of art had in preserving memories and paving the way for the future experiences and that is what you have been doing, you are a movie director and an activist as you dreamed.

We documented through our films the changes that were only fiction before. The steps society took in order to become an equitable and fair community are forever recorded in our cameras and in our minds. The movies we directed were protest pieces that showed the inequality spread across the social relations and the enforcement of rights, but now our motion pictures are reminders of where our hate and injustice led us in the past.

You must remember the power of change that exists within art, it will help you into the right path and you shall never forget that, just like in the movies, decisions made in the very first scene have consequences to the final sequences. Our movies are important proof of what happened and can't be forgotten, since knowing humanity previous mistakes and misjudgements help us never let them happen again, otherwise our history will turn to be a repetitive collection of errors and omissions.

No rights should be taken for granted, Julia! Even now when the situation is ideal, we keep fighting, so nobody will ever suffer again.

With great hope in the changes humanity can make,
Júlia Peixoto.