

It's in my Blood

The war started and ended, the bombs went off, and nuclear winter covered the world. Most people who didn't die says it's hopeless to keep going, and that I'm stupid for trying. But I've always been stubborn. It's in my blood.

I live in the school building now, like what the youngest kids from before the war thought. I teach a lot of different ages too, not just the little ones. I teach English, art, literature, and poetry for all ages. And I run a lot of the clubs that the kids like. Today, it's the gardening club.

The youngest kids are pulling on my arms, dragging me forward to the indoor gardens that we're lucky to be allowed into since the scientists don't want random people messing with our food supply. The older ones are asking questions about before the nukes. They're all surprised to learn that I've always been a teacher. It makes sense, most people got different jobs, being delegated to what's "useful" for survival. But I hope these kids will get to do what they love. It's not their fault they were born into this mess.

We get to the farms and the kids all rush off to look at all of the plants. I try to explain I can. For the little ones I explain that some plants grow underground like carrots and potatoes and beets. And for the older ones, I explain the process of photosynthesis, and how artificial sunlight and enhanced soil have changed things. But I also tell them to talk to the agricultural scientists for more information. I can only teach them so much.

It's always such a joy to see them run around and learn, to ask so many questions and watch their faces light up as I tell them all I can, but they all have too much energy for just me.

I sit on a bench and watch them all have an impromptu lecture from one of the scientists. I mouth a thank you while I rest as much as I can. My phone beeps and I take my medicine, exactly on time.

My health is declining. The radiation hit me badly, the kids ask about my burns sometimes, and I don't know how long I have left.

The doctors are confused though. They think I shouldn't be as strong or lively as I am now. That, even with my health, I'm stronger than a lot of the healthier people here.

I know why, it's in my blood. I'm a teacher, and my kids need me. So as long as I have kids to teach, I'll keep going. I'm stubborn like that.

The lecture ends and the kids rush up to me to ask more questions. And I answer as many as I can, for as long as I can.