



The Year without a Summer

by Sue Thompson

I read about it in the books we have left in the library; 'the year there was no summer'. I cannot for the life of me understand what it would be like to have heat radiating down on me. A heat so intense that you cannot even look at it, with your naked eye. People's skin burnt under its rays. I read about the children playing out with only one layer of clothing on, running barefoot in the sand. Swimming in the vast oceans that have since disappeared. Flowers swaying in a gentle breeze, the smell of their sweet nectar, insects that I can only imagine from the pictures in books. What would a bee look like? I read that they collected the nectar from the plants, they were an integral part of the environment. Pollinating the food crops.

But the humans back then didn't appreciate just how fragile the earth was. The year there was no summer was the beginning of the end, we have learnt about it in school, no one could cope with no sun, depression set in, people became angry, intolerant of each other. The dark winter had led into a dark spring and then the summer never came, the earth could not heat up. The suicide rate increased and a third of the population was lost. People were just out for themselves; it was a dark period for humanity.

Of course, now we are better equipped to deal with having no sun. We have adapted, we are strong, food is no longer an issue, we have replaced it with injections, they give us the right nutrients to survive, water is collected from the rain only. We are not reliant on the old way of life, computers are no longer legal, technology died out, it was intrusive.

As I look out of my window over the South Downs there is a bleakness about them, the mist clings to the earth, we live in a world of greyness, the clouds roll in over the sand where once I assume the sea ebbed and flowed. I walk sometimes over the sand and if I dig a little, I find the remains of what must have been fish, and crustaceans. I would have liked to have seen these creatures in person, but it is not to be.

We no longer need the sun, we are indestructible, we have grown a new world.

We have survived.