

Shaking City

By: Joyce K.

Chloe Miller looked at her sister, Emily, watching the clouds slowly move across the dark blue sky and buildings flash by from the car window. Emily pressed her face against the window and read all the signs that passed by. “Emily, stop being so unsanitary. We haven’t even got to the hotel yet,” Chloe said. Emily pulled her head back and sat in her seat. “Emily, we know you're excited since this is your first trip to San Francisco but you should calm down a bit.” their mom, Mrs. Miller said. Chloe sighed and rolled her eyes. “We’ll be there soon, right mom?” She asked, nodding her head, signaling for her to go along. “Yes dear, only ten more minutes until we arrive,” Mrs. Miller responded.

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When they got to the hotel room, Chloe looked around. Two beds with white covers were against the wall and they were separated with a dark brown cabinet with a lamp on it. The beige walls had paintings of beautiful sceneries. A large cabinet in the middle of a wall held a TV. In another room, there was a dining room and a kitchen. In the bathroom, a white sink was attached to a wall along with a bathtub and toilet. “Emily! Chloe! It’s time to brush your teeth and go to sleep! You have to sleep early if you want to go to Golden Gate Park!” Mrs. Miller called. Chloe took out a bag from her backpack that held her toothbrush and toothpaste. After Chloe finished brushing her teeth, she turned off her bright lamp. *I didn’t even want to come here. Why couldn’t I just stay home?* Chloe thought. She blinked her eyes shut and tried having a good night’s sleep.

Chloe woke up as she felt her body shake. “W-what’s happening?” Chloe muttered as she saw paintings tumble on the floor and lamps falling and shattering. “Oh my god, it’s an earthquake! We have to get out quickly!” Mrs. Miller yelled hoarsely. Chloe jumped off the bed and started to run grabbing Emily’s hand. They stumbled on shaking and falling debris; it wasn’t easy for them to move on. Continuous shaking had kept them from proceeding. She had never felt this kind of horror and fear before. It seemed death had not been far from her. Emily lost her balance quickly and fell onto the ground. Chloe pulled her up when she saw her mom was

coming out of the hotel behind them with her purse in one hand. She saw a cluster of people wearing pajamas or nightgowns on the 3rd floor running toward the staircase onto the cracking ground. When they were getting to the exit Chloe heard a thud behind and looked back. Her mom had fallen down under a thick, heavy wood piece from the collapsing ceiling. Astonished at the sight of her bleeding head, Chloe and Emily ran over to her mom through all the splintered wood and dusty air. A piece soared through the air and went into Chloe's arm and another barely missed Emily's cheek. Emily fell down next to her and hugged Mrs. Miller tightly. Chloe and Emily pushed the log off the log with all their might and grabbed Mrs. Miller's arms and slung them onto their shoulders and hauled her outside just before the roof collapsed. They set their mom down and they tumbled onto the floor, panting. Emily stared at her mother's face. The earthquake slowed to a stop. Tears brimmed Emily's eyes. "I-is mommy g-going to be o-okay?" She asked nervously, tears trickling down her face. Chloe gulped as she looked at the blood coming from the glass shards. "She'll... she'll be alright," she said, gripping her wounded arm. Emily cried and hugged her mom as Chloe put a hand on her shoulder. Chloe looked up and saw people running from the crumbling building. Emily looked at Chloe. "Isn't there something we can do, Chloe?" she sobbed. Chloe looked into her fearful eyes and said something she never said before. "I don't know..." Emily cried as Chloe inspected their mom's wounds carefully. "Thankfully, her wounds aren't fatal. But, we still need to have her at a hospital soon," She said. She looked over to see a man calling 911. He looked over to them and their wounded mom and reassured us that the police and the ambulance would arrive.

Around twelve minutes later. An ambulance came followed by three police cars. Chloe watched Mrs. Miller get strapped in a stretcher and get loaded in the truck. A police officer walked up to them and asked for their names. "My name is Chloe Miller and this is my younger sister Emily," Chloe replied, staring at the ambulance truck with their mom inside it. Chloe explained what had happened as the police officer wrote down a few things on a notepad. The police officer scrunched his nose as smoke came from the hotel behind them. Chloe turned around and widened her eyes. A fire was burning the remains of the hotel! People were gathered around taking videos whilst screaming. The police officer calmly called the fire department as Chloe led Emily away from the fire. When the officer finished calling, he turned to them and asked, "Is your father here?" Emily shook her head. "He's in Houston, Texas. We came here for a vacation and this happened." Chloe responded. The police officer sighed and said, "Here, I'll

let you in my car and we can see your mother at the hospital,” Emily’s eyes brightened as Chloe smiled softly. “Thank you, sir.” she said.

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Chloe looked at her mom’s scarred face. Her eyes filled with tears as she imagined the worst. She bit her lower lip to stop myself from crying. *What if mom died..?* She shivered as Emily buried her face in Mrs. Miller’s hospital bed. Suddenly, a doctor came in and softly rubbed a wet cloth on Mrs. Miller’s forehead. “Don’t worry, she’s doing fine,” He said kindly. Emily and Chloe looked at Mrs. Miller’s face again to see her flutter her eyes open. “Emily... Chloe...?” She asked weakly. “Mommy!” Emily cried, hugging her tightly. Chloe wiped a tear rolling down her cheek. Their mom smiled and accepted the warm hug.