

Aariana Nori

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### To Rebuild

“Did you hear about the fire last week?” Amanda glanced up from her lunch and nodded. “It was so cool!” Lisa blurted. “I could see the flames from my house!”

Returning her sandwich to her plate, Amada replied, “I don’t think the fire was as amazing as you believe it to be. Many people lost their homes, and some even their lives.”

Lisa shrugged. “That’s their problem.” Amanda stared at her, appalled. “How could you even think that?” She breathed. Lisa shrugged once again. *Why is she so concerned about strangers?* She wondered.

“Well, anyway, since we are on the subject,” Amanda continued, “I am assisting at a food drive for those who lost their homes in the fire. You are welcome to join me.”

Lisa sighed, annoyance prickling her skin. “No, thank you,” she muttered. “I would rather not help people who I have never met.”

Lisa twisted her head around to the scraping of a chair against the tile floor. “We’ll see about that,” Amanda called before her green hoodie disappeared out of the cafeteria.

Lisa stumbled through the door, exhaustion tugging at every limb. “I’m home,” she called weakly, struggling up the long staircase.

Her mother stood at the top, regarding her with a cold gaze. "I hear from your friend that you refused to attend a community service event." she growled. Lisa nodded meekly.

"Her mother narrowed her eyes, distinct disappointment gleaming in them. "I see. In any case will attend this event, whether you prefer to or not. It will teach you how to respect others," she ordered. Lisa groaned, but did not argue, for she knew this was a battle she could not win.

"I really don't want to be here, and so early too!" Lisa whined as she followed Amanda into the building in which the event was occurring.

Amanda looked thoughtful as she tightened her grip on the soup she was holding. "I think your attitude will quickly change once you realize the great trauma these people are suffering, and how much we are helping them." *I doubt that*, Lisa thought.

After setting up, the event began. The room quickly became crowded with people. However, the mood was not as Lisa expected. Every person who entered the room stared stolidly ahead of them, showing no signs of emotion; wandered aimlessly, and spoke in quiet, hushed tones. They all seemed forlorn and depressed, as if they have given up on the very prospect of life.

Then, out of the corner of her eye, Lisa spotted a familiar face, just as diminished as the others. "Amanda," She whispered. "I see one of our classmates!"

Amanda glanced over quickly, and proceeded to spoon more soup into a bowl. "Not surprised. Many people were affected by the fire."

In the back of the room, she heard several people talking. "Right now I am having issues finding a place to live. The expenses on any apartment are too expensive, as I am barely paying for food for my family and college debt as it is. I don't know how much longer we can strive," one choked miserably. Just then, Lisa realized the extent of this problem, and the affect it had on the community.

"Excuse me," Lisa heard someone say. "May I have some soup, please?" "Of course! Just a minute," she answered. Quickly, she scooped the warm liquid into a bowl, and served it.

"Thank you!" they exclaimed, their faces brightening slightly. "You know," they whispered, "you and your friend are allowing us to pull ourselves back on our feet after this terrible incident more quickly than we ever imagined. Thank you." "I am glad to help," Lisa replied.

As they were walking back to the food drive, Lisa confessed, "I am sorry for how I felt about the fire. I did not realize the horrible impact one event can have on every person around us. I guess we need to work together to assist everybody, to keep a stable community. If one suffers, we all suffer."

Amanda smiled, her green gaze warm. "Yes, I agree. This is our community. It is our job to keep it safe."