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The Guardian Under Quarantine

by Corinne Silver

I have been trained from a young age to deal with disaster. To expect it.

I grew up in a city plagued by hurricanes. In a home with wildly unstable finances. In a body with late-onset, chronic illness. In a school that required me to be at the top of my game, every single day, no matter what was happening.

In training to be a school administrator, I have been prepped to deal with one thousand different scenarios, personalities, and environments, all while trying to keep 300 or more teenagers safe, while still attending to their individual needs that interact and clash.

In fiction, I have lived a thousand different lives with one thousand different circumstances. Drilling myself to be ready for anything. Dystopian societies. Evil dictators. Jump headfirst, save self on the way down. Sacrifice self to protect friends. Never give up. Never stop being brave. Never stop loving. Never stop fighting.

I never thought that the hardest thing I would experience in my life would be, “stay inside and keep doing what you would normally do.”

Nothing outside is normal.

People are dying.

People are in cages.

People are suffering from economic downfall.

Our presidential election is going to shit...again.

The worst part is, I can't Katniss Everdeen or Buffy Summers or Sailor Moon or even Corinne Silver my way out of this. There's no spinning-kick, flip, tour jeté superpower that can solve these problems before dawn.

Trust me, I have tried.

To someone trained as a guardian, the most frustrating thing I can hear is, “sit down and do nothing.”

Quarantine is not covered in my operations manual.

Most days, I feel useless.

Today, I went for a walk around my apartment complex. I found a gimpy adolescent robin. It didn't seem injured, but it couldn't fly high enough to land back in the trees. Its tail feathers looked short. I brought it some breadcrumbs and water. It hid under a car and did not come out.

That was the best I could do today.