"Caroline!" a female voice called, "Come down! It's lunch time!"

Caroline groaned and rolled over on her stomach on her periwinkle bed, staring out the window opposite her pillow, except there was nothing to look at. All the polluted dust clung to the glass, making it impossible to peer outside.

Caroline rolled off her bed, falling hard on the ground. She winced as she got up, grumbling all the way. Her holographic feed was beginning to fill with the latest news.

She looked in the small mirror on the wall opposite the desk, and saw her beautiful face. Her pale green eyes stared back at her, and she immediately saw a pimple right in the middle of her forehead. She rolled her eyes and put on her sleek, indigo iGlasses.

"Caroline!" her mother called again, louder this time.

"I'm coming!" Caroline yelled back. She stuck her tongue out at her reflection before taking the stair-vator to the main level.

Caroline's father smiled at her distantly, a sign that he was reading the news on his iGlasses. Caroline clicked in to check, and sure enough, the headline stated her worst nightmare.

Today: Earth Spaceship Being Sent Out To Mars With Families!

It was why she gave her parents the "cold treatment". She wished they hadn't signed up for the one-way ticket to Mars. It meant she would have to say goodbye to Ellen. The very thought made her sick.

Caroline looked down at the table, her iGlasses giving her the reassuring *bleep*, telling her the area was free of pests and harmful bacteria. She opened the eco-friendly container of her nutritious diet and threw it away. She was going to severely regret that later. Everyone was dependent on their meals tailor made for each individual.

"I'm going." Caroline went to the closet and pulled out her gas mask.

"Where?" Her mother asked, her attention glued to her iGlasses.

"Saying good-bye to Ellen." Caroline mumbled, and put on her rubber gas suit and gas mask.

Her mother nodded distractedly, "Come back in time."

"I will." Caroline spoke loudly, for the mask muffled every sound, and then left the house into the polluted air.

She walked to the playground that hadn't been played in for decades. The swings were rusted from the dust in the air and the small merry-go-round's paint was peeling badly.

Caroline sat down on the wooden bench on the playground's edge. It was fractured and looked like it would collapse any second. Any tree, blade of grass, or flower in sight had wilted to a brownish yellow corpse, fragile enough for the wind to blow away. The air around her was thick and gray, swirling around dust and grime.

In the hazy distance, Caroline saw a figure coming towards her, and her mood brightened. It was Ellen.

"Hey Caroline!" Ellen said enthusiastically, plopping down next to her.

"Hi." A lump formed in Caroline's throat and her iGlasses warned her that her mood had severely dropped. She shared this with Ellen.

Ellen nodded and hugged her, "I'm going to miss you."

Caroline hugged her back and felt tears pour from her eyes.

They pulled apart after a while, and Ellen said, "Remember the time when I made you laugh so hard, water shot out your nose."

Caroline chuckled, "Yeah. And remember the time I made you go on that roller coaster and you were screaming the whole time in my ear."
Ellen laughed. Caroline's feed made a *pling* and a video of that fond memory pulled up before her eyes. The sight of it made her giggle, which brought Ellen into fits of hysterics.

"Oh…Okay." Ellen gasped, her cheeks rosy red.

Caroline hiccuped, tears had started to form from laughter.

"Are you leaving tonight?" Ellen asked suddenly, her tone of voice sad.

"Yeah." Caroline felt a lump form in her throat again, "Are you going to watch the launching?"

"I can't come to the real thing…" Ellen said softly through her mask, "But I will watch it on TV."

Caroline nodded, tears of relief and grief pricked her eyes. They were silent for a few moments, before Caroline asked, "Will you ever forget me?"

"No, of course not!" Ellen exclaimed and threw her arms around her, "How could I ever forget you?"

Caroline sunk into the hug. "I'll never forget you." Caroline said and hugged Ellen tighter. Hot tears poured down her cheeks.

Finally, after a while, they pulled apart. Ellen's eyes were red, and her cheeks slick and shiny.

Caroline's iGlasses beeped. "I have to go now." Caroline stood up.

"I'll miss you." Ellen said, "I love you."

"I love you more." Caroline whispered.

They pulled in for their last hug, and then they went on their separate paths with tears in their eyes.

Caroline arrived back home, and took off her "gas gear", and went upstairs to pack. She put some outfits in her suitcase, and her stuffed animal lion, whom she had since she was five. She looked around her room one last time to see if she forgot anything, and she did. A small photo album was sitting quietly on her shelf waiting for its turn. She smiled sadly, pulled it down, and ran her fingers along the cover. A smiling sun grinned back at her. This album held lots of her good memories. What a shame not to bring it with her. Caroline gently placed it in her small suitcase, and headed downstairs.

Her parents were there and they wrapped her in a hug.

"Time to go," her father said, and they all put on their "gas gear" and headed to the taxi cab waiting for them.

The launching station was huge, and outdoors. The rocket ship looked so majestic next to all the small families waiting to board it. The name painted elegantly on its gleaming metal side.

Earth 2.0

Finally it was time to board it. Reluctantly , Caroline moved her feet into the spaceship. It was high off the ground so she was able to look out over the city. All she could see, though, was yellow smog, and the small, hazy crowd in the distance.

10, 9, 8, 7

They were doing the countdown. Caroline looked out the window of the spaceship and muttered along while putting on the last touches of her space suit.

6, 5, 4

She will never see Ellen again. Her iGlasses noted her heartbeat rising.

3, 2, 1! Blast off!

Caroline grabbed a hold of something. She didn't know why, maybe just a reaction, but she found herself hugging the object with dear life. The noise of the

launching covered her sobs, and after a while, everything was silent. They were in space.

She quieted down and looked out the window of the spaceship. She stayed there for a while, looking out at earth. Its yellow-y surface with the occasional blue and white.

Caroline must have fallen asleep, for when she woke up they were so far away from Earth, she was only able to see stars shining. It was beautiful. Caroline saw nothing like this in her life. The smog covered everything in the city, you weren't able to see the sun, moon or stars.

As she admired the beauty of the twinkling lights in front of her, she realized one of them must be Earth. She was so far away now. So far away from Ellen. Forever.

They were coming nearer and nearer to Mars, and Caroline put her hand against the window.

"Good-bye Earth," She whispered softly, blinking back furiously the tears threatening to spill over, "Good-bye Ellen."

Then she turned around from the window without looking back, and greeted the red planet with open arms.