

The Voice of Truth

A twenty-seven-year-old Eloise nervously fidgeted with the rings on her finger as she splayed them across the file that contained her notes. She heard the sound of confident steps clacking their way up and down the back of the stage. The smell of slightly burned coffee wafted from a door that was slightly ajar. She stopped her habitually twisting of her rings and listened to the distant voice of a man, her boss, on stage speaking with confidence:

"Our company assures the people that this enhanced form of oil will be safe for the globe." Eloise huffs in annoyance at his false words and again scans over her speech, full of the same fallacies as her boss's. She tunes her ears to the sound of her boss' booming voice as he approaches the break in the script where she is introduced. She inhales deeply while she steps onto the stage. A roar of applause greets her entrance, and she beams, squinting her eyes as they adjust to the dazzling lights.

Suddenly, a hand grips her arm in a vice-like grip to stop her movement across the stage, and the gruff voice of her boss quietly warns her, "Remember to stick to the script." Eloise grits her teeth and nods subtly, shaking off his grasp and shuffling quickly to the podium. Her piercing blue eyes sweep across the swarm of people seated in mundane black plastic chairs and then dart to the papers in front of her. She opens her mouth to deliver these erroneous statements when she catches the innocent gaze of a young girl with similar blue eyes and brown, wavy hair as Eloise had as a youth. Without warning, her mind conjures her second-grade classroom, teeming with the chaotic energy of wild children, recognizing their freedom from their parents' eyes. Yet, the room becomes stagnant as a seven-year-old Eloise triumphantly stands upon a desk, emphatically exclaiming how the waste of plastic is overwhelming foreign developing countries. Another lurch in time as Eloise observes a budding thirteen-year-old during an assembly at her middle school, illustrating to her classmates the importance of awareness of the countries around the globe that compete for the water resources and nutrients America could provide. A third vision of a mature eighteen-year-old donning a professional look, preparing to vocalize the distress of Africa's people as they struggle for resources daily. Then, to the moment of inspiration for all those past moments: the evening her mother dragged her to a TED Talk that encompassed the notion of cosmopolitanism. Finally, the flow of memories ceased, and she was sent tumbling back to the present, where the black ink letters upon the blank piece of paper seemed to clamor their disdain for her to even ponder about speaking them. In front of the crowd, her boss, and the visions of herself, she tore her script to pieces, and her mouth opened to speak the only words she wanted to: the truth.