

Title: The End of an Era

Author: Morgue

Characters: based on real life. Some situations have been exaggerated.

Prompt: the end of the world, eighty minutes

Notes: no warnings. Done in fifty minutes, not counting notes and intro titling... based on real people and sadness. Overwhelming angst. Rating... PG for the sappy and the angst. 610 words.

He says goodbye like he's not leaving to die. Like he's still going to come home after the war. And she can't say a word. The tears fall from her eyes, copying Alice and her flood of tears. If it won't rain, she knows where all the water has gone. A flash flood in a teardrop.

She realizes what he says in the message is nothing like what she thinks. He's sorry he can't be with her at that moment, knowing it's the last chance they'll get to see each other. And she can hear what sounds like frustration in his voice as he tries to find some way to see her in the next 30 hours. Somehow... somehow, finding a way to tell she's everything and nothing in a moment. And then, he's resigned. "I'll... I'll see you in September, ok?"

She's everything and nothing to him, and she knows it's true. "I love you. Bye." She's weak, she's weak! The wall catches her like a concrete hand, guiding her to the floor. He can't be leaving... September? Her family stares, wondering why her hands are flitting over her eyes, resting like butterflies on burning lids. She's weak.

She won't speak, and she forgets for a moment, an hour, two, that she's even breaking. She even pretends to be whole until she lies in bed and remembers. There's no air! No air and the biological watch just hiccupped its timing. She sends him a message, and hopes he gets it while he's in bed. It's one a.m. and there's no reason to think he'd be awake. He calls back and he is very much awake. And drunk. She bites her lip and says a soft hello.

He speaks like she's always known him to speak and she knows now that it's the end of an era. September isn't only a few months away. It's two. Years. Away. The flash flood is back again and where have her vocal cords gone? He says he's drunk, but that he wishes they could have seen each other. And, no matter what happens, he's coming back to her. Is she listening to him? "Yeah," the only word in her vocabulary since he's going.

The end of an era as she knew it. An era where no one died in their teens and only one boy shipped off to the war. But he shipped off far from the danger, and his name hasn't been on the news. The end of an era as the first boy she loved heads straight to the thick of the danger to do the most unprotected job known.

She doesn't get the chance to say goodbye to him this time. Her smile becomes a death's head grimace. He laughs and signs off, the line clicking silently. She drops the phone to her bed, trembling mass of nothing that she's become. The countdown has begun for the end and there's no escape.

The world is ending, and she knew it ahead of time. Three months and she could have stopped it from happening. Somehow. A word of reassurance instead of the silliness she exuded. Two days until the world ends.

One day, and she can't stop thinking of him. She text messages him that she can't sleep, stay safe, and call before he leaves. She wakes twice in the early morning of the day, and nothing. No missed calls. No accidental pick ups during the night. Nothing.

The day. And the world doesn't end with a bang. It ends with a whimper and a sigh. The end of an era as she knew it. And she knew it all along.