

Talk of “corona virus” is like listening to a song on repeat.

At first, the riveting melodies transport me into a world of fantasy. A world in lockdown where school doesn’t exist; staying in pyjamas all day is acceptable, and video games my main physical activity. Despite the constant crescendo of bad news, it seems alien; a shadow that will never trespass into my sunny haven.

Soon, all the television channels direct their attention onto warning me about the new infections and deaths. Regardless of that, I shut my bedroom door and stay in my own little world, my own little bubble.

However, bubbles can be popped.

One day, my dad comes in and, looking sad and forlorn, tells me that my grandmother has caught this infamous corona virus. I try to smile and pray that her fragile figure can withstand this outlandish monster.

Why would she die? I am invincible and so is my family, despite this notorious disease taking thousands of lives. My grandma is strong. She survived World War II as well as my grandfather’s death and continues to give me cosy hugs just like the woolly socks she knits.

A few days pass. The warnings increase.

I am now beginning to feel anxious but remain quiet as I don’t want to scare my little brother. I calm myself by biting my nails and try to ignore the constant stream of texts I receive about how bored people are in quarantine.

Then, the news hits.

The bubble explodes.

My pyjamas become constraining.

A cacophony of noise slams my ears again and again.

All I hear is ‘She passed away last night.’

Repetition. Repetition. Repetition.

Nothing is said on the television. She is just one of many. Despite her importance in my life, she is just another name that people will acknowledge despondently in corona’s daily death toll.

Now, I can understand the true meaning of corona.

A relentless killer with no morals.

I realise I was somebody who complained about quarantine; somebody who would laugh at my friends who were disobeying the rules; somebody that regarded the corona virus as unimportant as the Corona beer.

I was selfish. I was ignorant. I was also breaking rules.

And now Grandma Mavis is no longer. No longer sweet, loving and warm.

She is in a shallow grave; dug quickly because there were plenty of others to dig.

The music is unbearable. I go to turn it off.

However, it is everywhere I look: on television, on social media, in quiet conversations in the family room.

The bubble is popped and I am drowning. Drowning in a murky abyss, careful to keep my cries concealed in the night because the walls are so thin and hating myself even more for all those thoughtless outings I took.

Perhaps if I hadn't gone to McDonald's and given my grandmother a kiss on her rosy cheeks upon my return, she would have survived untouched. She would still be visiting us, her flowery perfume wafting before her, bestowing her homemade apple crumble.

This is a lethal pandemic that has robbed so many people of their lives – and will continue to do so...

Yet another day passes and night time soon follows. Lockdown continues and I fall asleep feeling lucky to be here, safe at home with my family and lucky to be alive.

Serena – age 14