

The Last of Us

The Year is 2118. The human population on Earth has reached 22 billion. In 2023, a vaccine was created that provided immortality. But, it was only effective if given directly to newborns, from their first breath. The last generation of people without it are about to die out. Joseph Brooks is living at the age of 96, born in 2022. None of his older relatives are alive, but he knows that all of his descendants will, most likely, live forever.

"It's funny, isn't it?"

"What is, Mr. Brooks?" replied his nurse, after pouring him some tea. She came round every day at 11:15 to Mr. Brooks' house.

"I, I had to be one of the last ones. If they just made it half a year earlier. Or, I was born a year later. It wouldn't have to be me. I'm too tired for this."

He looked towards his right to see his tea cup full. His nurse didn't know how to respond, as, really, she didn't have anything to say.

"How does it feel for you, Amy, that your mother will always be there? And so will your brother, your grandmother, and your children. You will never lose them. But, me? Oh, I have seen death. I have seen famine, terrorism, and the world halt itself to a near stop. You won't have to. Oh, how beautiful you have it, Amy. How lucky you are."

He sat still staring out the window, not whispering a word. "It's a beautiful thing you have, this, immortality."

"I wouldn't say so." Mr. Brooks turned towards her, speechless.

"What if life gets too long? What if I feel that my time on this planet is up? That I have lived life to its fullest, and now it is time to go? Only then, one has to make the hardest decision to break a natural cycle that we have made unnatural. You, Mr. Brooks, and everyone before you, have been lucky enough to not have to make that decision, that you know that one day when you have to leave, nature will do its thing. How beautiful you have it, Joseph, how lucky you are. I know that I will one day have to make that decision. You do not."

Mr. Brooks was the last person of the generation without the vaccine to be alive. His older friends had all passed away. His younger friends, they will most definitely see him die. The press visited his house every year to talk with him about being one of the oldest people left, and for many years the healthiest. But, of course, his age was catching up to him. "It shouldn't be," he said to Amy and the press standing in front of him, flashing cameras only minutes after entering his home.

Amy was sitting beside him. "It isn't natural for man to outlive such a natural cycle." Amy smiled as she sat beside him. "I don't believe this will ever end well for humanity. People won't do things. 'Oh, I have time' they'll say. There will be no pressure to do anything in this world, as there will always be more time. Eventually, people's lives will be scarred with historical events, yet they live on. They will complete everything they want in life, and it will have no meaning. Life will be cold, miserable, and flooded with centuries, not knowing what to do with their lives. It will be a massacre. It will be a population crisis. Mark my words."

Joseph Brooks died on February 4th 2119, peacefully in his home in North Lynn in Norfolk, England. Amy was devastated, but she knew there was something special about him. She also knew that he would be the last person anyone would ever witness die.

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