

# How Can I Change the World?

## Chapter One

During track club, it was rare that Olivia passed Reyna. In fact, it was rare that *anyone* passed Reyna. She was so fast, running five miles in three and a half minutes and not even breaking a sweat. She brought a water bottle that had two gallons of water in it to every track meet, but she never drank a sip, and just offered it to people who ran hard and brought no water, claiming that they were a whole lot stronger than they looked. But this track meet, Reyna had things on her mind. Other things. Her friend lived in Minnesota, and there had been a major blizzard that flooded their house. Her friend had to carry her baby brother in her arms and call 911. After that, of course, she called Reyna. It had been four days and she still hadn't been able to get in touch with her parents, or anybody answering 911, for that matter. Reyna didn't think it was fair. Sure, their state got some good snow every winter, and maybe one or two blizzards every year, but the state had protections put in place for this: special storm sewers in every house specially built for getting snow out of the storms during blizzards. In Minnesota, they got big blizzards. A lot. They were lucky to have only four—during *one season*. But her friend's house didn't have any protections put in place. If the smoke alarm's battery died, too bad! If the storm sewers got clogged, oh well! If the basement door got jammed and there was a tornado, just curl up and hope for the best! Reyna was not happy about that. She had a friend who lived in Australia, and there was a flood, and they had no protections put in place for that either. They just had to pack their bags and run up a hill. Reyna enjoyed safety, of course, but she hated safety—or anything, really—if it was not available to all people. Because that wasn't equal. And everyone deserves to be treated equally. So, halfway through the track course, when not only Olivia but Dana and Hailey had passed her as well, she walked off the track. Dana, one of her good friends, called, "What are you doing, Reyna? We've still got half a mile to go!" Reyna didn't answer. She just grabbed the tiny thermos she had brought, threw on the vest she brought to track meets just for water breaks, and pulled her phone out of her shorts pocket. She typed in her mom's number. After three rings, she answered. "Hello? Reyna? I'm in the middle of a conference, if you get sick from all that running, I swear—" "No," Reyna assured her. "I'm fine, really. I was just wondering if you could send someone to pick me up?" Reyna's mother was the CEO of a very important company in New York City, and had thousands of taxis working just for her. "Sure," her mom sighed. "They'll be there in a few minutes. But my watch here is telling me that you have eight minutes left of track!" Reyna rolled her eyes as she zipped up her soft blue vest and said, "I know. I'm stopping early. I don't feel well." As she realized she had made a mistake, she said

quickly, "But don't worry, I'm sure I'm just a little sleepy. I'll rest at home in the apartment and watch some TV and I'll be great." "Good," said her mother. Her voice relaxed. "But be sure to drink lots of water. You barely drink anything at track meets and I'd hate for you to be dehydrated. Oh, and dear, there's salad in the fridge and—" Reyna turned off her phone. She wasn't about to hear her mom's lecture about the growth of cabbage and how vegetation is a necessity for the world. Reyna remembered what her mother had said in her last vegetation lecture: "*Nothing can live without plants or vegetation! Think about it. We eat meat, and that meat, when it lived, ate the plants! And the plants are dying. Too much pollution!*" Then she launched into a rant about air pollution and how poor birds were dying from flying into polluted areas. As the car pulled up to pick up Reyna, she got into the backseat and asked the driver for a notepad and a pencil. He provided one right away. Reyna, in her best cursive writing, conjuring up special vocabulary words from the back of her mind, wrote herself a note.

#### *Agenda*

- *Make sure that protection in buildings apply to where they live*
- *Stop plants and all vegetation from perishing*
- *??? Help with air pollution???*

#### *Chapter Two*

Reyna had been busy for the last three days. She had been working nonstop, by herself, except for her trusty pal named Google. She didn't use him for very long, though. He was very annoying in his ways of trying to guess what you were going to type next. (She shut off her tablet for half an hour, and then she had to get Google back out again.) She had a whole notebook of research, a brain full of it, and she had printed out several examples of arguments that successful debate teams used. She had written four of her own arguments, revised each one twice, and had come up with seven very convincing reasons in each argument. She had also Googled 'things to say when you meet a government official.' Because the next morning, her mother was taking her to a government office to explain her reasons why climate is important. Like, *really* important. But throughout the day, Reyna's friends, like Dana and Olivia and even one of her newer friends, Kayla, heard what she was doing through social media and peppered her with other things to tell the government, once again, through social media. Right now, Reyna's lengthy agenda now read:

#### *Agenda*

- *Make sure that protection in buildings apply to where they live*
- *Stop plants and all vegetation from perishing*



- *??? Help with air pollution???*
- *Help with water pollution-pick up trash from the waters*
- *Make sure that people with the government are being truthful to others*
- *Remove all stereotypes from the world*
- *Create a world with no war at all*
- *To not advance technology because it is our doom (!?!? A random person said that, not sure if it's worth telling the government?!?)*

Reyna could sum up her mood in one word: *tired*. Incredibly tired. So insanely tired that she felt like curling up in bed and sleeping. But she wasn't going to go to sleep until everything on her agenda came true, except maybe that last one.

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As Reyna made herself presentable for the government, her friend Hailey called her, which was a bit of a shock. You see, Hailey never called anyone. She was like a stereotypical older person in that she despised technology. Get out your iPads? She'd throw a temper tantrum and bang her fists on the floor like an overwhelmed toddler. Get out some notebook paper? No problem at all. Sharpen your pencils? Fine by her, so long as she didn't have to use the electric sharpener, only her handheld Snow White one. Reyna set down her lip gloss, careful that it didn't fall down the drain, as she was doing it in front of the sink, and accepted Hailey's call. "Hey, Reyna!" she chirped. "Are you at the government office yet?" "No," said Reyna. She held the phone to her ear with one hand and applied her lip gloss with the other. "But it sounds like you're going somewhere!" As the engine of Hailey's family's rusty old Jeep rumbled in the background, Hailey giggled and said, "Yeah, to the taco place. My brother got an A plus in math, so we're going out for tacos and ice cream." "Cool," said Reyna. "I wish my mom took me out for tacos and ice cream whenever I got an A plus in math." "Don't you prefer enchiladas?" Hailey said. "If my memory serves correctly, also sherbet." "So what?" Reyna said. "Did you need something?" "Yes," said Hailey urgently. "We can't afford repairs to our car, and a car lot that claims they do free repairs wouldn't fix our engine. It's still loud and dying. Can you ask the government about that?" Reyna nodded. She set down her lip gloss and her phone. She knew, no matter what, she would try her hardest to change not just the world, but the universe.