

Thaw

by

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As the young woman observes her first sight of snow, she reflects on how much she loves new beginnings. Everything around her seems to come together: the crowd, the happiness, the beautiful white snowflakes that land on her shoulders. She starts to think about the changes she wants for herself as all these exciting things take place around her. She imagines herself greater, more sophisticated, even though she loves her cloak and necklace made of gears. The people around her wear uniforms and fine clothes—if a bit dated. She realizes she wants to fit in, but would rather stand out.

As she walks the streets of Grant Park, she enjoys the lively energy and this drives her imagination. Who do I want to be? What do I want to do? She thinks about her next move as she dances in the snow. As the day goes on, she explores the city and learns more about Chicago and herself at the same time. She's just young enough to still have a good time, but old enough recognize her developing responsibilities as a young adult. It is 2072 and all of these positive influences are finally starting to drown out the darkness of the past. There is a woman president, new technological inventions, the first snow, and even the promise of coffee—she is ready to evolve.

Her phone rings. The voice on the other end tells her she has been selected to speak at the upcoming Veterans Banquet. What an honor. And what an opportunity. She gets excited about being able to speak up and perhaps even inspire a group of survivors. Then her mind transitions, what will she wear? She imagines not just an outfit but statement piece—clothing that showcases her confidence and happiness with her prosthetic arm. Perhaps a confidence that can be contagious to others. She pictures beautiful flowing pants and a sleeveless embroidered top. She wants to embrace her feminine side and move away from the combat uniform style—even if she has to repurpose pieces previously used for that very task.

With a new mission, she heads to the store to gather and buy materials. She has made her own clothing in the past, but she's ready to try something new. She picks up some used fabrics of various textures and colors and some accessories with no known significance and now lying in the sale bin. On her way home, she walks through an alley and finds a recycle bin full of gears that appear to have been discarded. The young woman appreciates the materials she has and goes the recycled route—like everyone else, it is second nature to utilize what already exists.

She arrives home and starts creating the new her. She spends the entire night sewing and glue gunning as she lets her creativity flow. The war is over and she finally wants to show she accepts herself despite the damages of the war. She wants to step away from the harsh war look and move toward a more feminine style. Being in the war was the biggest struggle of her life thus far, and she is grateful to have survived—but it wasn't without scars. She hopes her fashion choices will not detract but instead enhance the power of her words on her special night.