



BASCOVE

LOST GENERATION

BY KELLY HOFFMAN

Kurt Cobain committed suicide. River Phoenix died of a drug overdose. Magic Johnson has AIDS, and Michael Jordan quit. The President is constantly ridiculed by the media and his opponents. The heroes for my generation are being torn down and destroyed by today's society. Who do we have to believe in?

We are told that our generation will be the first generation of Americans to be worse off than their parents. Every year jobs are harder to find. The economy is weak and it will probably collapse right when our generation comes to power. What do we have to look forward to?

Criminals roam the streets and more murders are announced every night on the evening news. Even from a very young age girls are told to never go out alone. When I was 13 all the girls in my class attended a mandatory self-defense course instead of P.E. When I was 14 a man took fifty students hostage at a high school only thirty miles from my school in California. Five students and one teacher were killed. Many members of my generation aren't even safe in their own homes because of child abuse and domestic violence. Where can we go to be safe?

The environment, once a hot topic of national concern, has faded in the minds of many politicians but the planet is still being destroyed. Fresh water, forests and countless species are becoming scarce. Our resources and energy are being consumed at lightning speed and could be wiped out completely in the next century. Even though the environment is in bad shape now, it is getting worse every day and no one seems to be

stopping it. What condition will the planet be in fifty years from now?

Everyone knows someone addicted to drugs. Everyone knows someone with AIDS. Everyone knows someone who committed suicide and someone else who was killed by a drunk driver. Everyone knows several students who are pregnant and several more who have dropped out of school. The problems that once seemed so distant and strange are now affecting our community, our schools and our friends. My generation sees these problems and lives in these conditions every day. What do we have to hope for?

People often generalize my generation into one big group. We are seen as the MTV generation, watching *Beavis & Butthead* and idolizing *Reality Bites*. We are all apathetic and lazy and we don't feel like worrying about the future because, well, Who Cares? And many people don't care. They are more concerned with basketball, or dating, or passing geometry to worry about the country's problems. But many of us do care. We know that someday we will inherit the country and it will be our turn to lead. But what condition will the country be in when we come power?

My generation is the future but we do not control the future. Those in power today need to realize that their children and grandchildren will be the ones to suffer if they do not start working on the problems now. The problems may seem too large to handle now but unless we start working on them today they will only get larger. But it seems that the politicians of today have forgotten that there is a future. They are often too concerned with re-

election today and popularity today. Did the Congress that failed to pass a health care bill last year think about the future when they voted? Is the Republican vow to reduce environmental restrictions intended to improve the conditions of the country for future generations? Those in power today seem to have forgotten the responsibilities of leadership and that everything they do today will affect everyone tomorrow.

My generation does not have a big voice in American government. Our concerns are rarely heard by those in power. We have little voting power and less lobbying power. We need the older generations to speak for us and to let our concerns be known so that hopefully tomorrow will be an important concern to the leaders of today.

We need our leaders to work together to improve the future. True leaders look to the future and they have a driving vision that goes beyond political parties and re-elections. Our leaders need to *lead* the country to a better future. The problems are large and the solutions are difficult, but if we do not begin work today the problems will be insurmountable. But we can fix the problems our country faces if those who care about the future unite and start working together to improve the country and allow my generation to see a better world tomorrow.

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