ALICE from Lockdown by Julia Edwards

It was just a day. I guess you’d call it average. Like one of those days when you’re complaining about how unfair the geometry final was and what a pain in the ass that kid Lance is. It was just...normal. And then you hear this noise. I would say gunfire but that’s not what it sounds like because it’s not like it sounds in the movies. And normal is turned inside out like one of those frogs in biology class. You don’t know what’s happening but you do know it’s bad and you do know right then and there that it’s going to take years to recover from this. You’re like: this is traumatic. I’m experiencing trauma. And it races through your body like this terrible disease. Your heart is in your throat and you think you’re going to choke to death if it beats again. And then you get this rush of adrenaline. Like those animals on National Geographic who suddenly realize that they’re surrounded. Your legs start moving. You’re running faster than you’ve ever run before. You don’t even know where. You’re doing this thing called saving your life and your brain is completely offline. And all of a sudden there are these people there holding you and telling you it’s over.

Your teachers and your parents and all the politicians are saying that you need to talk about this. There’s nowhere to go to escape it. Except in your head. So you decide to pass the time reading the dictionary and hope to hell that you’ll feel better about life before you hit zyzzyra, but you always keep your running shoes handy just in case you hear the noise again. Just in case you have to run for your life.