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“2020 and COVID 19”

Never Have I ever been so excited for a new year as I was for the year twenty-twenty, since this year had promised me so much. I am a Pakistani immigrant and came to the United States 3 years ago. In all these years, I missed Pakistan so much and was looking forward to the day to finally go and visit Pakistan again, meet my friends and other close relatives. In 2020, I was extremely eager to visit Pakistan during summer vacations. Along with that, I was looking forward to the many senior events such as prom, senior trip, graduation. I was particularly excited about the graduation ceremony because I would get to give a speech as the valedictorian. I had so much planned for this year before COVID 19 came into action.

It was March 15th, when the Governor of New York, Mr. Andrew Cuomo, and Mayor of NYC, Mr. Blasio, announced that the schools will be closed for about a month. Well, who does not get excited to know that there will be no school for a month? At that time, I did not have any idea of how serious this virus was, I was just happy to have a break from school. It wasn't long before the number of cases went up to thousands and tens of thousands and the death rates became higher too. That now was an alarming and disturbing situation. It was announced that schools will remain closed for the rest of the school year. Not just that even the flights got canceled all over the world. The whole world was disturbed and finding ways to prevent this virus from spreading. Meanwhile, the cases were going up from thousands to lac.

Covid-19 made the most exciting year for me, the most disturbing. My life just like everyone else changed completely. We were all so scared even to step a foot outside the house or to meet anyone from the outside. We had to live with the fear of our life because you don't know when you can catch the virus, as I knew some people who even after so much care caught the

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virus. On the other hand, the remote learning experience was very new for all of us and thus, we were quite worried about our studies too. Nothing went as it was planned for this year. This also meant that I won't be able to visit my home country or enjoy any of my senior events. I won't even be able to just spend some last moments with my classmates and teachers which was extremely saddening for me and all the other seniors. The excitement that I had for giving the speech in front of everyone on the graduation day was just taken away by COVID. I just felt like all my hard work of all these years went in vain.

Where this virus was devastating for the whole world, for some it proved to be good in some ways. For instance, in our busy daily life schedule, we don't get to spend time with our loved one, this virus gave us that break to spend some quality time with our families. Every year, many students don't graduate high school just because they haven't passed their exams, due to COVID exams got canceled and the students graduated on time. Also, after the flights got resumed again and I came to Pakistan, it is due to COVID and remote learning that I got to spend more time in my country. And most importantly, our planet got a bit healthier, the ozone layer got a little better after COVID because of less pollution made by the world due to fewer vehicles and other stuff. Therefore, where there were hundreds of bad effects of the COVID, there were a few positives too for some people, but those positives will never outweigh the negative because the lives of the people affected are irreplaceable. Finally, COVID taught us a very important lesson that things might not always go as planned but we still need to be strong and be ready to face any kinds of circumstances with courage. My conclusion for the covid is that we plan and God plans, but everything happens according to God's plan.