

THE GUTSY TALE OF GRETA THUNBERG

SWEDEN



Greta shifted around, trying to get comfortable on the hard ground. The cobblestones underneath her were cold and rough. People walked by, looking down at her, then glancing at her homemade sign. She had been sitting here alone, outside the Swedish Parliament building, for six hours.

IT WAS NEARLY TIME TO LEAVE,
BUT SHE WOULD BE BACK AGAIN SOON.

It was Friday 20th August, 2018. Greta promised herself that she would sit here every single Friday from now on, come rain or shine. She would never give up because there was too much at stake. The future of the Earth was in peril – she couldn't let climate change be ignored anymore.

When she was eight years old, Greta Thunberg learned about climate change and wondered why more wasn't being done about it. Greta and her family did their best to recycle their rubbish, they

were conscious of not wasting water and they tried to cycle instead of drive. Greta even became a vegan to try and reduce her personal impact on climate change.

Then, in the summer of 2018, a scorching heatwave hit Europe and devastating forest fires broke out in Sweden. It was impossible for Greta to overlook this. She knew it had happened because of climate change. Greta was 15 and she realized she had to do something more – for her generation, and for all generations to come.

SO, SHE DECIDED TO GO ON STRIKE.

She painted a sign on a piece of wood that said 'Skolstrejk För Klimatet' – 'School Strike For Climate'. Instead of going to school that day, Greta cycled to the Parliament building and sat down outside. She would make her voice heard. She would make the government and the big companies take notice of her and take urgent action against climate change.

That first day, Greta sat alone. On the second day, a few people joined her.

SINCE THEN, GRETA HAS NEVER BEEN ALONE.

Gradually, thousands of school children from more than a hundred countries around the world have joined her, holding their own climate strikes on Fridays.

Greta had started a movement, now known as 'Fridays For The Future'. She has appeared on TV, and spread her ideas

by giving TED talks and by speaking at important world events, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

This is even more of an achievement for Greta, as she has Asperger syndrome and often finds it difficult to communicate with other people. But she doesn't let this get in the way of her goals. She knows that stopping the effects of climate change is the most important thing in the world.

Greta's message is clear: This is the greatest threat that humankind has ever faced, and we need to take action – now.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

HERE ARE SOME SMALL CHANGES THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE:

- Don't use a car for short trips. Walk instead. You'll be fitter and it will help the environment at the same time.
- Always turn the light off when leaving a room.
- Don't leave TVs and computers on standby. Switch them off at the mains.
- Recycle everything you can and try not to buy things with lots of packaging.
- To save water, turn off the taps when brushing your teeth. Take showers, and fewer baths.
- Buy and use less stuff. Ask yourself if you really need something before you buy it.
- Eat less meat. The farming of animals contributes to climate change. Replace some of your meals with vegan alternatives – such as oat milk and soya mince.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

- Our planet is slowly heating up. The changing climate is making our weather much more extreme. As temperatures rise, some parts of the world are getting wetter, while others are getting hotter and have droughts.
- Trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide. When forests are cut down for wood and other products, we have fewer trees to get rid of the carbon dioxide.
- Climate change is mostly caused by humans. Our cars, planes, homes, factories and farms use fuel and release gases that trap heat from the sun.
- If climate change continues, it will continue to have very serious effects on the future of animals, plants and humans.

HOW TO BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

1. **Get informed.** Find out as much as you can about climate change, its causes and its effects. Why not start an eco-club at school or with friends?
2. **Give your time to the cause.** Volunteer and help out in any way you can.
3. **Make your voice heard.** Sharing your views could help to change other people's attitudes.
4. **Don't give up.** It can take a long time to make a difference but it will be worth it. Every little helps!

XIUHTEZCATL MARTINEZ

USA

Xiuhtezcatl Martinez was taught from an early age that protecting the Earth is everyone's responsibility. He has made it his mission to share these views and uses rap as a way to make his voice heard. He is the Youth Director for Earth Guardians, a group of activists, artists and musicians from around the world who work together to make change happen in their communities. Hip-hop artist, activist, voice for his generation, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez is changing the world, little by little, every day, whether performing hip-hop at music festivals or speaking at rallies.

THE INVENTIVE IDEAS OF **WILLIAM KAMKWAMBA**

MALAWI

William balanced on top of the tower that he had built from wood and bamboo.

It was a strange-looking contraption. It had an old bicycle wheel attached to the top, a large fan alongside it and various other machine parts. A gust of wind blew and the fan's blades began spinning around. William held up a light bulb that was attached to the machinery. The bulb flickered and died. Then it lit up brightly.

"He's made light!" shouted the crowd, which had gathered below to watch this crazy boy. They were right. William had made electricity. But how?

A few months before, 14-year-old William Kamkwamba had been sitting in the library, trying not to think about how hungry he was. This wasn't an everyday

kind of hunger – this was starvation. The maize harvest had failed in Malawi that year and there was hardly anything to eat. People were starving, selling anything they could just to buy a few grains. Nobody had food or much money. William went to the library to learn because his family could not afford to pay his school fees.

A book called *Using Energy* caught William's eye. He'd always been interested in how things worked and had spent hours fixing old radios. On the book's cover was a picture of tall, grey towers with large, spinning blades. William was intrigued. He flipped through the pages to find out more. These machines were called wind turbines and they used the energy from wind to make power. This was exciting! If William had a windmill,



**"HE'S MADE LIGHT!"
SHOUTED THE CROWD.**