

The Choice

This time, the scooter didn't stop when Skylar worryingly pressed hard on the back wheel; it didn't stop when Skylar pulled it back with all her strength, it just kept on going, faster and faster, as it gained speed, down the hill. The vision became blurry and instead of houses she saw lines, instead of the road she saw a neverending ribbon that gave the scooter energy. Skylar bent down not to fall off, catching her breath, and then, suddenly, she felt miraculous. The Sun, hidden behind the clouds all this time, shone onto her sweaty forehead and on her freezing cold palms; and, forgetting the speeding scooter, the road as dangerous as a tiger, Skylar smiled and closed her eyes, remembering all the happy moments of her life. It made her feel happier, and satisfied, like on a perfect summer day.....

Suddenly, everything went slow, like in a bad dream. The cars screeching wheels, the neverending energy of the scooter and the hard pavement - that was all she felt that moment. Then there was nothing. Skylar was tired to think, and collapsed into the white nothingness.

Skylar woke up after some time. In the white nothingness, a couple of meters away from her, stood, his back turned, a teenager, with a long-tailed furry creature on his shoulder, humming a two note monotone tune.

"Hello?" spoke Skylar, uncertain.

Sharply, the teenager turned. Black hair, in which little leaves grew, made him seem like he was part of nature, his pointed ears were remarkably thin and elaborate.

"Salutations. My name is Autumn Salisbury. Welcome to Noompiopia. Don't stay here too long, for you can lose your mind. Follow Nature, the true teacher of humanity!" and he turned his back to Skylar, continuing his humming.

Skylar felt the nothingness oozing into her brain, emptying it... She must find a way out, but how? *Follow Nature...* What did he mean by that?

Just then, a dandelion smoothly fell into her hand, a small, green and white and perfectly ornamented, so to say, with little parachutes. Without thinking, Skylar blew and all the parachutes were freed from their prison and danced and danced into nothingness, happy to be free, forming a long, dancing natural ribbon. Thoughtless, she followed them, as they flew fast, away from Noompiopia.

Soon, the mist cleared. The parachutes suddenly disappeared and Skylar stayed still, as a beautiful landscape materialized. She finally felt the ground beneath her, and took a breath of the fresh, cool air.

As she went towards the city, a massive, magnificent structure came into view. The Chrysler Building! New York! She recognized it right away. There was a difference though - Nature was in balance with the infrastructure and human activity. She ran, forgetting time, overwhelmed with happiness. Central Park was filled with sunlight, happy children playing catch, and their parents playing chess and reading books. The beautiful blue sky had not a plane track in sight; the birds sang triumphantly. As a speeding train zipped through the sky, as a drone stopped at a house to drop off a delivery, Skylar clearly saw the enhancement in technology and development of humankind.

"Hey, how ya doin'?" asked a friendly, orange-haired girl.

"Ah, alright. Which year am I in, may I ask?" asked Skylar, uncertain.

"2090, of course. I'm Oceana, what's your name?" asked the girl.

"I'm Skylar," muttered Skylar, hardly believing her ears. She would never imagine such a perfect future, even in her wildest dreams.

"Mom, dad, let Skylar come over to our place!" said Oceana, laughing. As soon as Skylar came to Oceana's home, she collapsed on the sofa, as if stricken dead, and fell into a deep sleep.

Skylar woke up to find herself once again in white empty Noompiopia and... saw a dandelion fall into her hand. This time it was broken, shrivelled and black. As she blew it, only one "parachute" was freed, whilst Skylar followed it, uncertain....

Soon, once again, the mist cleared, to show a world... that was different. The dark sky, covered with grey clouds through which lightning struck the ruins of the city. The sound of planes, tanks, commands. The world was full of death. Just then, an explosion in a distance destroyed the last standing skyscraper. The Chrysler Building! New York again! But in such a state...

A piece of newspaper flew into Skylar's hand:

“20.12.2090 - In need for more weapons”

she read, but the piece flew away.

The ground was filled with ashes, not a tree, not grass in sight. As Skylar hid behind a fence, an army passed, shooting down all that was still alive. At that instant Skylar took notice of a little group of people, trying to flee the awful place. She joined them unnoticed. And then - gunshots. The group ran. Someone grabbed Skylar's hand and they got into an old shed, seeking a place to rest.

“Who are you?” asked Skylar, almost terrified.

“Louise, Louise Maypaw!” said the girl, whose hair was a mess, and whose rags hang loose.

“It's impossible to flee, I will die in this miserable place, like many others!” and Louise started to cry.

As the tears touched the ground, a long forgotten seedling started to grow through the ashes, and turned into a dandelion. The light shone and lit up each and every of the “parachutes”, each one a different shade of blue.

Not believing their eyes, both girls blew on the flower and made a wish.

Louise's wish turned negativity into positivity in the destructed, demolished world, whereas Skylar got into a whirlwind of heat and light, and suddenly, all the emotions and feelings started flowing back to her....

She was in a hospital, the nurses and doctors stood around her, worryingly.

“She lives!” one managed to cry.

And as Skylar looked around, she knew that the choice is on us, we make our future, and to make a correct choice, we have to listen to Nature, the true teacher of humanity.