

## Falling Star

In the night sky there is a blue star. This star watched earth for as long as she could remember. She watched it when it was black, and the sun crept around the side of a rocky grey world. Blue spread across it, leaving small blots of rock. The grey turned green and white and yellow, then all of a sudden, white lights appeared at night, making the earth glow like it's own star. Blue lights at sea, and red ones broke out quickly and faded.

And then she realised she felt left out. What was going on down on this little rock? Deciding to give it a visit, Star let go of the sky and fell. It felt like floating through nothing, her flames flickering as she bumped her way down. Until she hit the atmosphere. She never gave it much thought, what was that little white glitter surrounding the earth like a glass ball, but it hurt. The nothing around her got thicker, and started to scream as she fell, flames burning brightly and growing hotter then dying. There was a big yellowy surface zooming up towards her, and the impact was loud. The sand flew miles up in the air, falling back into the crater she created. The Star felt herself change. No longer hot and glowing, but cold and small. Burnt. Then shrinking and shifting. She blinked up at the bright blue sky (Why was it the wrong colour?) and tried to shade her eyes from the giant yellow sphere. The Sun! She knew him, passed him every now and then. He was a bit snobby, but good at heart.

Weakly, she waved. He didn't stop or come closer, just kept floating past her. He didn't see her. Her last bit of strength gone, she fainted, still lying in the crater. The sun set, lighting the sky on fire with reds and pinks. Still the Star lay in the crater, unconscious. Then night spilled across the red sky, and one by one the stars came out. Fireflies started to buzz, little stars on earth, night animals came out, bugs woke and the animals of the sun retreated into their burrows. No one noticed that in one part of the sky, it looked a little less bright. Soon, astronomers will look into their telescopes, and discover that a star is missing, and run to tell someone it exploded.

The Star awoke. The night was here, and her friends beamed down on the world, twinkling. Star jumped up and crawled out of the crater and waved. No one looked her way. She jumped up and down, hollering to them in a language she didn't recognise, but understood. Defeated, she sat on a rock and looked around. Where were all the lights she had seen? From above, it had looked like you couldn't move without knocking one over, but it was dark except for her friends and an asteroid hanging in the night, glowing a silvery light. She waved to it, but it was still too far off for it to see her. The Star got up and started walking towards it. Maybe then it would see her. She walked for a long time, but it never got closer. Frustrated, she sat again. Then she realised there was a strip of a hard grey stuff in front of her. She looked to the east, and it went on. To the west was the same. Forever and ever, unbroken by hills or turns.

She whistled, then with a start, found she could. She never could before. She enjoyed the sound

so much she kept  
at it. Up down, up down. The sound carried far off.  
There was a crunching sound from across the grey line. She watched a shadowy figure cross the  
line. It was low to  
the ground with four legs and a long nose and pointy ears.  
"Hello?" She asked.  
The beast stopped. It looked at her with glowing yellow eyes, then trotted over. It whined a bit  
and sat down with  
her.  
She rubbed behind its ears. "Hello. What sort of creature are you?"  
It sniffed. "I'm a coyote, little human. How are you talking with me? Most of your kind run when  
they see me, or  
take out these long brown sticks that go bang and kill."  
The Star looked shocked. "Why would they do that? I'm not a human, by the way. I'm a star."  
The coyote barked a laugh. "A Star? There hasn't been many of them down here. An honour to  
see you." He  
dipped his head. There was a howl in the night. "I must leave you now, Star. I have to join my  
hunt. But, a  
warning. Be careful around the road. There are big yellow and white lights that travel down this.  
They go at  
incredible speeds and rarely stop. If they hit you, you will die." He bowed his head again, then  
scampered off into  
the black.  
Star looked up and down the road. No lights, so she started to walk down the middle of it,  
humming a song she  
heard on radio waves from the planet.  
A while down the road, she heard another sound. Not a coyote, but a smooth, slithery sound.  
She looked at the  
ground and saw a strange long animal crossing the road in S shapes. It hissed as it passed her  
feet but continued.  
"Hello?" She asked it.  
The long animal stopped and looked up at her. "Yess?"  
"What are you? I'm a Star." she said kindly, picking the animal up.  
"A snake." The snake sounded amused. "A star, you say?"  
"Umhmm." She said cheerfully.  
"Very well. Star, what are you doing down here on earth?"  
"I wanted to see what was happening." She told him. "Why do things keep calling me a human?"  
"You look like one. Two legs, high off the ground. Hair on the top of your head, and small round  
eyes." The snake  
said, twisting in her hands. "You speak like one, in strange short sounds. But you have the  
understanding and  
language of the Beasts. Star you are. No humans have had that ability for a long time."  
She nodded and put the snake down. "Well, goodbye snake. It was nice to meet you."  
The snake raised its head. "Before you go, you should know. There is a terrible thing on these  
roads. Four rolling  
great black circles. They squish you into the pavement. Be careful of them."  
Star waved him off, and stood on the road. Two things she had to watch for. Yellow lights and  
black circles. Were  
both human made?  
Even before she started to walk again, she met another animal. This one was very small, encased  
in a black shiny  
shell with 6 legs and long antenna on the top of it's head.  
It landed on her arm, and felt around before she noticed it. "Oh! Hello little one. What are you?"

It turned and looked up at her. "A beetle, Miss. Who are you?"  
"A star. I fell." she explained.  
It nodded its little black head. "I see. That's why."  
"Why what?"  
"Well, normally, when human girls see me at your age, they shriek and run. You didn't. Plus I can hear you. Their voices are much too low pitched."  
She patted his back and he fluttered. "Do you have any warning for me?"  
"What?"  
"Everything I meet here has a warning for me. About giant rolling circles and glowing lights."  
"Well, I do, in fact. There is a glass pane that flies. It follows you about and goes much faster than you. It bumps into you, and you die. SQUISH! SPLAT!"  
"Wow, sounds painful. Goodbye little beetle."  
Soon she was walking down the road again. There was a whirring sound in the distance, like something rolling along at an unnatural speed. Then there was the lights.  
She gasped and jumped out of its way. She saw the black circles under the lights, a metal body, and the glass pane.  
The monster.  
The thing screeched to a halt. It was humming very deeply and roughly. It clicked and its side opened. Standing there was a human, looking confused. She was older than Star, with red hair pulled up into a tail at the back of her head. She was staring at Star.  
"Hello?" She asked Star.  
"Hello!" She chirped.  
"Where, where are your parents, little girl?" The woman asked. Star pointed upwards. The woman obviously misunderstood something, because her face fell and she looked horrified. "Oh, I'm so sorry. What are you doing out here all alone?"  
"I fell. I'm a star." Star told her.  
The woman's forehead creased. "What?"  
"I'm a Star." Star said happily. "I came down to see what was happening."  
"Oh, come here dear. You're in shock." The woman got a blanket and gave it to her. "Climb in dear. I'll take you into the city. We'll find you a place to stay until your family comes to get you."  
Star sat happily in the front seat of the thing called 'A Jeep' and watched the scenery pass by. She saw a coyotes eyes in the bushes, but nothing else. Star didn't mention the animals because the woman seemed a bit surprised at the mention of her being a star.  
There was an orange glow in the distance, growing closer. "What that?"  
"The city dear."  
"Oh. Are there animals there?"  
She laughed. "Funny. Depends what type of animals."  
"What?"  
"Oh... never mind. Animals... in the zoos, I guess."  
Star happily told the woman about her conversation with the coyote. If the woman had animals in the city, she must have talked to them sometimes.  
The woman didn't say anything else for the whole trip.

The city was BIG. No, big was an understatement. It was HUGE. GIGANTIC.  
And all orange lights and moving yellow ones, on things like 'the Jeep'. Star stared in wonder,  
until the night sky  
disappeared. Then she got worried. Where was it?  
The woman brought her to a white building. She brought her inside the white thing, and put her  
in a chair, and  
told her to wait. Star got even more worried. Why were the people inside this thing, like they  
wanted to hide from  
the outside?  
A minute later, the woman came back with a man in a white coat. He smiled at her and told her  
that she was going  
to stay here with them for a bit.  
Star nodded. "Why are you in here?"  
The man laughed. "No, I'm not a resident. I work here."  
On the wall somewhere was written the words. "Mental Healthcare Clinic." She watched the  
words pass as the  
man brought her to a small room and put her in. He closed the door, and she heard him talking  
to the woman.  
There was a small bed and a table, but the room was barren besides that. There was a small  
window high up, where  
she could see the dark blue night sky. She sat on the bed, still worried.  
Star realised she was far from home. A heavy hand was weighing down her heart, and she  
started to cry. She only  
wanted to get back to the sky.  
The Doctor came back in. "Hello. What's your name?"  
"Star. I'm a star. Please sir. Let me go. I want to get back." She pleaded.  
He patted her shoulder. "Now, now Star. We're going to take care of you. Is there anything you  
want? A book?  
Some paper?"  
She looked blankly at him. "I want to go. I've got to get back soon. I need the sky."  
"I'll get you some paper." He left, then returned with a stack of paper and a few coloured sticks.  
"Goodnight. I'll  
talk to you tomorrow."  
Star sat on the floor. The bed was wrong. She picked up the black 'crayon'. It felt waxy, the  
paper smooth. She  
started scribbling black on the paper, leaving little white spaces. There was a cluster, and in the  
middle of the  
cluster, she drew a blue one. Her. Then she stuck it over the little window. And she slept.  
The days passed in a blur. People asked her questions she didn't know. They asked her where  
her hometown was.  
What her last name was. Asked her about the picture she drew. Without night, everything  
seemed one long stretch.  
Artificial lights lit up the white halls. Star grew paler and paler, her hair got thinner. She didn't  
eat the mushy  
food they served, and no one seemed to get that she needed the sky and the dark. Star was  
feeling the flames inside  
of her die.  
One day, as she sat on the floor drawing the horsehead nebula, the Doctor came in.  
"Hello Star. You do love the night sky, don't you?"  
Star didn't answer, but kept filling in the pink dwarf stars and red giants.  
He sighed and took out a file of her drawings. "You know these constellations exactly. How?  
They're like... like  
maps."

She put down her red crayon and took up a blue one.

"Star. You know it's ridiculous that you insist on this story. You need food, you need human company."

She put that drawing aside, then started to draw her family again. The doctor looked at her side table. There were some flowers lying there.

"Humm..." He picked them up. "You haven't given these any water. How come they're not dead?"

Star looked up at him. Her eyes were growing clouded, and even if she couldn't save herself, she couldn't stand

seeing anything else die. "I keep them alive. They talk to me."

They weren't as interesting as the coyote and snake, but they gave her sympathy and understood her situation. She

made a discovery, that she radiated life-force, as the flowers put it. They couldn't die while she was around.

He frowned. "Star, that woman who saved you is here. She wanted to see you. Her name is Mrs. Shaw."

He left, and the redheaded woman came in, looking worried.

She sat on Star's bed.

"Hello Star."

Star mumbled, and kept colouring.

Mrs. Shaw looked at her drawings. She shook her head, and glanced at the door, as if to see the doctor wasn't there.

"Star," She knelt by her. "Tell me truthfully, are you from the sky?"

Star looked up at Mrs. Shaw's eyes.

"See, I've been having these dreams every night. I'll be standing out in the desert, like you were.

There's a coyote,

a snake and a beetle around me. I'll just be looking into the sky, all those stars as I've never seen it before. Then

one will glow brightly, and fall After a moment, the stars will rearrange themselves into a face.

It'll look down on

me, and say 'Where is she? Where's my baby?'

I'll stutter an answer, and the stars will cry. A hand will reach down and touch my face, saying,

'Bring my baby

back to me. Bring her back...' And every morning, When I wake up, I'll find sand on my feet and this fine silver

powder on my cheek where the stars touch me." She finished.

Star looked up at Mrs. Shaw. Slowly she reached out and touched her cheek, leaving a fine white powder. "I'm

burning out." She whispered.

Mrs. Shaw left. Her heart pounding, she applied for a form to take a patient out.

"How long?" Drawled a bored old woman behind the counter.

"Only an hour or so." said Shaw quickly.

"Here you go. Fill it out and I'll get it checked."

Shaw scribbled down the form, and sat on a chair. 15 minutes later the woman came back. "Go ahead, bring Star

back by 9:00 PM." She stamped it and went back to the crossword puzzle she had been doing.

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Mrs. Shaw sat beside Star as they drove to the desert. "Will you get back?"

Star nodded. "I just have to call to them."

As soon as they were away from the city lights, Mrs. Shaw pulled over. Star got out, said "Thank you." and

walked into the dark a bit. "Don't look when I change. It'll blind you." She called.  
The coyote came out of the bushes. "Hello little star."  
"Hello." She said.  
Star watched the sky. The stars flashed a bit brighter. She raised her arms to the sky.  
"Take me back!" She screamed to the sky.  
She felt Mrs. Shaw sitting in the jeep. She felt the coyote's heart pounding beside her. The stars formed a hand,  
and reached to her.  
A cool mist surrounded Star. Then she glowed. For a moment, she was every living thing around her, then in a star burst, she exploded into a ball of bright white light, and ascended into the black sky.  
Mrs. Shaw had covered her eyes, but now she looked as a bright blue light flew into the sky, like a falling star being reversed. There was a coyote standing where Star had been, it howled and trotted away.  
For a moment, it looked at Mrs. Shaw, then ran off.  
She sighed and started up her jeep, driving back to the city.  
The following day's newspaper read.  
"Scientist baffled, Star that had disappeared from night sky for nearly 2 weeks...  
Back."