

City Of The Future

The water glistened beneath the afternoon sun. The coastal streets hummed in the distance. For Darla, the city was as familiar as her own reflection. Boats docking by the wharf, seagulls picking and preying, even the smell of the salty San Francisco water felt woven into who she was. Yet beyond the comfort of the known, fate was already turning its gears.

Hidden in a stack of forgotten letters lied a post card. A paper doorway to the city of her future. Darla stared at the post card feeling puzzled. The city was bright, full of mysterious colours and creatures she'd never seen before. It wasn't a painting, it wasn't a familiar city nearby. The card wasn't addressed to her, but written in fancy cursive letters it read. "The city of the future." Darla felt uneasy, could this be a prank? It didn't mean anything, did it?

So to brush off the feeling Darla took a walk, the smell of the salty air was gone. Instead the trace of paint, bricks and metal filled the heavy air. When she arrived at the pier she stopped in shock. The one thing she treasured most was being fixed. She didn't want it to be fixed, Darla loved it the way it was, the old rusty coasters, the rigged fair games, the creaky planks that sat along the ground. She sat down on a nearby bench. Watching as they replaced her favourite rides with...actually she couldn't quite place what they were doing. She tried to dislike it, but it wasn't that bad. The idea of a different city ran shivers down her spine. Yet it was sweet, pops of colour being built around her, almost like a playground, swings made out of

vivid books, a slide built from delicate pages. Darla, looking flustered and confused, took a seat at a nearby bus stop.

Then all of a sudden a rainbow, luminous bus passed by, catching her attention. She peeked inside the tinted, dark windows, hoping to catch a glimpse of the people that would sit inside. With a soft hiss, the bus came to a stop. The doors folded open. One by one, people stepped onto the pavement. Darla's breath caught in her throat. Their clothes shimmered with colours she couldn't name. Some wore coats stitched from pages of books, while others carried glowing umbrellas despite the clear weather.

Tiny winged creatures fluttered around them like curious pets, and vines curled gently around their wrists. They looked almost alien, as though they belonged in a fantasy novel rather than a city by the sea. More passengers emerged. Then more. Soon they were everywhere she looked. They filled the streets, gathered around the unfinished buildings, and wandered along the pier as if they had always belonged there. Their laughter drifted through the air, bright and strange.

The city around her seemed to wake up, blooming into the colourful place pictured on the postcard. Darla reached into her pocket and pulled the card out again. It was a picture of the pier. The picture had strange people and a playground made out of interesting books, just like the view before her. She stumbled around, feeling a mix of curiosity, helplessness and oddly, déjà vu,

Year later, the rusty rollercoasters disappeared. The creaky planks were replaced. New buildings rose beside the water, painted in colours so bright they seemed to glow beneath the sun. Little by little, the city from the postcard became real. Darla grew with it. One afternoon, while walking along the wharf, she found herself stopping beside a small stationery shop. In the window sat a stack of postcards showing the city skyline. Her stomach flipped. It was the postcard. The same postcard. The same bright buildings. The same impossible colours. The same view she had carried in her pocket for years.

Without thinking, she stepped inside and bought one. That evening, she sat at her desk overlooking the water. The postcard rested in front of her, blank and waiting. A strange feeling tugged at her, like a memory she couldn't quite reach. Slowly, she picked up a pen. "The city of the future," she wrote in careful cursive. The words felt oddly familiar.

When she finished, she slipped the postcard into an envelope and dropped it into the post office the next morning. Then she turned toward the water and continued on her way, never noticing how perfectly the pieces had fallen into place. And somewhere in the past, a younger Darla stared down at a mysterious postcard and wondered who could have possibly sent it.