

The boy who lived for us

For Duy

The boy lived in a small house that was hidden between trees; trees that reached deep into the big, blue sky above him. They were trees of a wild forest that had formed years after the small house was built. The boy's little home was friendly and modest. Though, it didn't seem like much, it was rich in warmth and peace. His house was his home and his home was his comfort. The small house was the place where the boy felt the happiest and safest. But despite the bliss he felt in his little home, he yearned for another form of happiness that existed outside of it.

Everyday the boy left his small house with hope and wondrous eyes, his glowing heart in his right little palm carrying it carefully. With steady steps he walked the broad trail that connected his small house to the city. Since the trees that surrounded his house grew so high, they hid the boy's house from daylight. Thus, constant night was his house's

blanket. The more he distanced himself from home, the brighter and the bigger the panorama in front of him. The trees of the forest were one by one replaced by other giants made out of glass, which reflected the sun's light beautifully to the east.

Once he left the last tree of the forest behind him, he could sense the air change. It wasn't cool and crisp anymore, instead it carried buoyancy and a smell that somehow reminded him of the color grey. A block of lively chatter hit his ears, when he set foot on the first pavement. It was summer. The atmosphere was static and people were enthusiastically roaming the streets in small and big herds. A thin layer of air was glimmering above the hot asphalt streets promising an at least lukewarm night. The boy, still with his glowing heart in his palm, stood at an intersection and watched the busy wandering. The sight in front of him was both bewitching and unnerving. He took a deep breath and pushed his heart back into the cave of his chest, where it was secured by a delicate golden chain.

"Let's go, then," he exhaled.

On his way further into the city the boy watched the people smiling and humming like honey bees. Their skin emitting a subtle luminescence. Their faces and aura as bright as the first daisies of spring. The boy envied them. Everyone had a place to be and someone to be with. Though, he seemed to have both, too, it didn't feel like that these places and those people were truly meant for him.

When the boy arrived at the city's central post office,

the old guard in the lobby acknowledged him with a knowing nod. Whenever he set foot in the ancient building, the boy found himself in a constant awe.

The boy had worked at the post office for a couple of years already, but still felt like he'd only been there for a couple of days. The post office functioned as one of the city's most important central nervous systems, where all the information was collected, checked and redistributed. It was located in the city's oldest building, which one could only reach after climbing a fair amount of stairs. The giant building was a living creature itself, consisting of porous sandstone walls whitewashed with a mixture of lime, rice glue, casein, and lead. As it was maintaining law and order, the building would from time to time approve with an amorous sigh or disapprove with flickering lights of the events occurring inside him. Someone once said, that only the most pure-hearted creatures were allowed to work there, since the letters and everything else that came in, mustn't be corrupted. Billions and trillions of letters had been tunneled through the ancient construction since its establishment. Letters of happiness, letters of love, letters of hope, sadness, despair, envy, understanding, fear or anger. Every single emotion meant to be untouched for only its recipient to feel and understand.

At work the boy would oftentimes stand in one place for minutes observing the happening overhead. All emotions imaginable mixed up whirling around and dancing weightlessly in transparent pneumatic tubes above him, like white doves

flying. All letters came together there greeting and meeting each other but would eventually go their own way. The boy loved being part of a letter's journey helping it finding its way to a worried family member, to a lost lover or sometimes even to a sworn enemy. The boy always had to giggle thinking of the latter one. However, the most wonderful part for him was that every letter, with its secret message inside and feelings attached to it, was at times like a cry into the unknown entrusting strangers with keeping your inner most precious secrets and finding the right person to listen to it. Each one equally entitled to be delivered. And the boy would make sure of it.

During his break he would sit with his colleagues in the gardens listening to their stories about this and that. With every story shared their bond seemed stronger and their friendship evolving. The boy felt nervous whenever he opened his mouth to tell one of his own stories. He would tell it as quick as falling water in fear he would bore his colleagues, anticipating their irritated looks. His attempt to connect with other creatures ending up in growing distance between him and them. Though, he enjoyed their company, the act exhausted him. Everyone was so nice to him and there was truly no one to blame. Still, he felt profoundly disconnected and lonely any time he was among them. He was an intruder, an outsider.

The boy felt his heart shrinking in its cave loosing its glow. But like everyday, the boy put on a brave smile and

adjusted to the current of his environment. Fortunately, his colleagues were dancing in their own little world and didn't sensed the boy's uneasiness. Rather than talking about his discomfort and being the centre of any attention, the boy preferred being an extra. He was the perfect audience: attentive, reactive, supporting, affirmative. His reactions encouraged the group's behavior and confirmed its self esteem. It was the easiest way he thought. Everyone was happy.

For the rest of the day, the boy helped his colleagues with several kinds of tasks and listened to some more of their stories, all with a smile that never reached his eyes let alone his gloomy heart. After work the boy joined his colleagues for dinner. The atmosphere was carefree and fun. With every burst of laughter, their luminescence even more obvious. The boy's laughter on the other hand, was shadowed by the feeling that his presence was only a matter of politeness and tolerance. After dinner the group bade farewell to each other and made their way home.

"See you tomorrow, right? Tomorrow is the day," one of his colleagues shouted from afar with a wide grin on her face, after the boy had already crossed the street.

"Yeah, see you tomorrow," he shouted back watching the rest of his colleagues heading to a direction that wasn't his.

So, today again, he thought resigned.

On his way out of the city the boy's slender body created a thick, black shadow in front of him. At sunset, when the other creatures made their way home and turned in, he felt

the most lively. The giant, orange bulb was hanging low above the city's skyline. He watched it slowly disappearing behind the wall made of glass giants. Every night when the clock struck nine, he felt the loneliness finally evaporating from his bones. The firmament transformed its shimmering orange skin to a thick, dark blue sea sprinkled with billions of silver dots, that were pulsing to a silent beat. The boy looked up asking himself why he felt the way he felt. Staring at the vivid spectacle he wondered whether the many stars above him were trying to answer his question or were laughing at him adorably. With a frown on his face he turned to the moon, who seemed to be as clueless as he was.

When he reached the edge of the forest the boy turned around and admired the blazing view on the city. The boy loved the world, but he was so afraid of the creatures that inhabited it. They seemed so wild and out of his reach. He was afraid of the loneliness that lied in every relationship with them. Therefore, the boy loved the night. There were no responsibilities, was no pressure and no shame. His world in the woods was fantastical. He could be everyone and anything he wanted to be without the unsettling feeling of expectations, rejection and discomfort. *Why can't life be as magical as these woods*, he wondered.

Upon his return, the boy was welcomed by his forest friends. Wild lilies were opening their buds greeting him with their luring scent; trees were rattling their branches causing a light, refreshing rain shower. A silver fox lady suddenly jumped

out the bushes and started strolling next to him. Her fur as soft as satin, her gaze fierce and piercing. Tilting her head to meet the boy's eyes, she looked worried.

"I'm fine," he assured her with a soft smile. Unconvinced she stopped him in his steps and rubbed against the boy's legs. The boy squatted down and patted her head.

"Thank you," he whispered smiling more genuinely. The silver fox lady, with her eyes closed, was smiling, too. They continued walking and headed to a glowing ship in the dark sea of the forest which was giving light to his way home. They passed a small lake, its mirror-like surface covered with frost, though it was the middle of summer. Ducks were sleeping peacefully on top. For the boy, it was the most magical place in the forest. The boy would put a blanket at the lakefront and would be reading then snoozing on the woolen square. The lake had granted him many vivid dreams of marvelous adventures deep in the endless realms of the ocean that was hiding underneath the lake's shiny surface over the years.

When the boy arrived at home, the silver fox lady once again rubbed against his legs promising him that tomorrow would be a better day. Then she bowed and left.

The boy let out a long sigh of relief, happy to be home. His small rectangle house consisted of two low-ceilinged stories and a dusty attic. Its white outer walls were grayed over the centuries and overgrown with solanum. Four dark-brown pinewood windows on the front of the house peaked through the vegetation. A small garden that included patches of

raspberries, strawberries, cucumbers, a few hazel bushes and a wooden narrow bench surrounded it. When he crossed the doorstep of the entrance the scent of clove and cinnamon tickled his nose. It was a familiar smell that immediately caused his exhausted body to relax. It was the smell of home.

The boy's small house was filled with old relicts of past decades and resembled a museum of peculiar objects, whose exhibition theme, when looking at it, made only sense to its curator. On a teak sideboard, a two inch tall figurine of his favorite cartoon character was standing next to an rusted pendulum letter scale and a hat-like construction built of papier-mâché. A pair of worn ballet shoes was hanging down from a yellow kite in front of one of the windows. It was a collection of souvenirs and antiquities, which put in mind of both his own adventures and of the idea that his life was a link within a long chain of past, present and future lives and events, whose ghosts were occupying these very objects. Feeling weary the boy headed straight upstairs to his bedroom leaving the ghosts be as they were for that day.

The boy detached his heart from its golden chain and laid it down in a small glass cradle next to his bed. It was smaller in size than at the beginning of the day and its glow less brilliant. Now, resting in its cradle it could breathe more freely swaying from side to side in a slow and calming rhythm. The boy felt the tensy leaving his body and warmth sinking in. His bed already calling his name.

After he cleaned himself he put his body to bed and

turned on his little nightstand lamp for one or two more hours of reading to come. This was his favorite part of the day. He settled into his nest and opened his book. That night, his process of reading was occasionally interrupted by unintentional recollections of the day. Feelings of lonesomeness, rejection and failed expectations streamed through his body. He shook his head to get rid of the dispirited thoughts. The boy had been strong, so strong. Everyday was a challenge for him. Yet, he never gave up and had promised himself to try and try again. *Tomorrow will be different*, he thought, *tomorrow is the day*.

The next morning he awoke to the creaking sound of growing branches. His heart - back to its normal size - was pulsing in excitement next to him. After he was done with his morning rituals he reattached his singing organ to its usual spot and left his small house and his forest zealously. The sun had reached its zenith and gifted the city with its energy, which transformed it to more heat and buzzing creatures. The city had a different smell that day. It wasn't grey but yellow. And the many glass giants seemed even bigger than the day before, stretching their broad frames to the sky.

"Hey! There you are," a familiar voice called from the other side of the street. His train of thoughts interrupted, the boy turned his head to trace the source of that voice. It came from a tall, dark-haired creature with eyes as warm as amber. He, too, luminescent. The boy knew this being since birth and called him his best friend. The boy's best friend was - how

many would call it - a man of the people. He was one who understood and sympathized with the concerns of every ordinary creature. He had a rapport with them. Creatures would come to him and find refuge. He was a reliable being with a heart as big as the ocean. And as big was his courage. The boy's friend never seemed to even flinch at challenges and obstacles thrown his way. Everything he did, he did with a bright shining smile and heartening words for others. The boy was thankful to have someone like him in his life.

The tall creature had already crossed the whole width of the street when the boy returned his friend's greeting. They hugged each other with laughter and began to chatter away. A few moments later they were joined by their other friends. All were part of the city and different forces of nature; their confidence and will indestructible. They were the kind of creatures the city was fueled by.

The boy and his pack continued their way to the center of the city jumping and laughing joyfully feeling fortunate to be in each other's company. When they reached their destination, one after another flopped down on soft, green grass taking in the colorful air. It was the heart of the city. Wide, narrow hills soared in the middle of everything wrapped in plain, green lawn. Herds of creatures splattered in random patterns on verdant satin.

It was a special day. All creatures of an certain age gathered to be mated with a star. It wasn't a romantic arrangement, however. Both star and earthbound creature

would unite to be each other's faithful companion trusting one another with their most intimate thoughts, feelings and lives. For that, once a year the stars were allowed to come down and take their destined partners back with them. The chosen creatures wouldn't return for months or even years. But everyone would come back eventually. Most importantly, everyone would be chosen.

The event wouldn't take place until after sunset when the sky and the earth would fused into one single canvas. The big celebration started at noon and festivities would last the whole day. When the herds began to mingle to share their excitement with one another, the boy felt his anxiety creeping up again. There were no trees to hide behind and no forest to protect him. Now and then he was greeted by creatures passing by or he would try to participate in existing conversations. His friends leaving to converse with other creatures, he sat by himself and watched the scenery. How could he feel so lonely, when he wasn't alone? How could being alone give him more comfort than being with his own beloved friends? Why couldn't he feel and be like everyone else? In moments like these, all figures turned into shadows. Their shapes were sometimes blurred, sometimes sharp. But all they did was to only resemble the actual reality granting access to a play about a world he was not able to experience himself. Once, the boy had been back to be by himself, however, the figures and colors returned.

Finally, the sun began to lower its body. The change of color signaled everyone to settle. When the clock struck nine

they were on their backs facing the sky. Their bodies finding connection to the earth beneath them. Despite the darkness, the boy could detect endless shades of black, blue, purple, silver and white in the night sky. A constantly shifting painting created by the universe. It was breathtaking. The boy's best friend lied next to him. His amber eyes were glistening in the darkness with desire.

"Are you ready?" asked his friend, eyes to the sky.

"I think so," the boy answered rather timidly.

"It's going to be alright." But his friend's encouraging words had no effect on him. The boy's head was filled with doubt and anxiety. All his life he had been told that when he had been united with his star, everything was going to change for the better. That all his sadness and pain was a temporary condition and it was going to vanish once he met his destined partner. *What if nothing was going to change afterwards?* What if the boy would be still the awkward, lonely kid that didn't find his place in life? Though, change was seemingly impossible, because of his star, there in a dim corner of his heart, had always been something small and shiny. A dull glimmer of hope, that someday all would be well. He depended on something to help him make it happen. He depended on his star.

Darkness ran through the city. Only the stars giving light. The hills, the city, the whole world turned quiet. The boy's body rested on the smooth ground as he gently stroked the blades of grass beneath his fingers. The grass was dry and

clean. The tips raised a tingling sensation through his hands. It was a welcoming feeling that helped him to take the focus from his daunting concerns. The boy closed his eyes and listened to his own breathing and pushed every other thought aside. All he wanted to feel, was the calmness of the ground underneath and the warm summer air, which was covering his body. At last, the soothing sound of air filling and leaving his lungs lulled him gently into sleep.

When the boy awoke, he didn't know what to expect. *Am I in heaven?* His eyes half opened, all he perceived was darkness. In that darkness a single tiny, white dot was twinkling in the distance. The boy stirred. A rustle could be heard. *Grass*, he thought. He was lying on grass. Slowly he sat up. His vision still blurry. The boy opened his heavy eyes more widely and let his inert pupils adjust to the darkness. Little by little the boy was able to recognize different shades of blackness and could identify what was around him. The boy was still on earth. He was still on that hill. Baffled he sprang to his feet, but the sudden jump left him feel dizzy. He carefully put one foot in front of the other and wandered around aimlessly. Maybe this was how his encounter with his star was supposed to happen the boy thought. But the tightness in his chest said something different.

The hills around him were empty. Not one single creature in sight. The boy was the only one left. He froze. The realization hit him like a brick wall and all the falling bricks of the smashed wall, were burying him alive. The boy's big eyes

instantly filled with tears and terror. His whole body was trembling. Everyone had been chosen except for him. He cried loudly calling desperately for his friends, but no one seemed to hear or to care. How could that be? For what felt like an eternity the boy lied on that empty hill and cried his eyes and heart out. All his fears had been confirmed. It was clear to him. He wasn't deserving of love, for not even his destined star was fond of him. The realization was deeply painful but it finally confirmed his assumption of why the boy had always felt rejected and unwanted when trying to reach out to someone. After some more eternities he was able to stand up and climb down the hills on shaky legs. All he longed for was to return to his small house in his dark forest. He wanted the woods to swallow him and deplete him from his anguish.

When the boy reached the foot of the hill, the street lamps went back on one by one in a roaring wave starting from the center and running out along the city's edges. The city started buzzing again, creatures moved from one place to another as if time had only stopped for an imperceptible brief moment and was now running again. It was like nothing had happened. But something had happened. The atmosphere, that had captivated the boy's mind and heart before, was now overwhelming and threatening. His muscles twitched at every shrill sound, the creatures' luminescence too bright for his eyes. The street lamps shed light on passing pedestrians who were staring at the boy confused. But the boy couldn't care less.

That night the boy wandered home with a shattered

heart tangling on its golden chain. Head hanging low, big, hot teardrops rolling down his soft skin. The silver fox lady was already awaiting him at the edge of the forest. She seemed to have sensed his return, moreover, his dire pain, its power covered him like a heavy cloak. She reached him just in time, when his body eventually spent the remnants of energy it was able to retain from its core. The boy fell to his knees. His fall was caught by the silver fox lady's solid body, as the boy clung onto her narrow shoulders. All his grief and hurt was looking for a way out as he sobbed uncontrollably. She stood entirely still letting his compressed emotions time and room to expand into the thick summer air. Both creatures stayed that way for some time before the boy's arms grew tired and his hands hit the ground.

"I'm so tired," the boy said weakly.

"I know." She looked at him.

Just like the silver fox lady, the rest of the forest felt the boy's broken presence. As both creatures started walking, one could hear swishing and rustling throughout the forest. Flowers were turning and losing their colorfulness. The creatures of the forest were watching him with concern, but held their distance out of fear they would importune the poor little boy.

When they were about to pass the lake the boy halted. Though, he wanted to be home badly, he felt a gentle pull that he couldn't resist. He followed his instinct and made his way to lakefront, where he sat down and rested for a while. The silver

fox lady seated next to him, the boy watched islands of frost gliding on the lake's smooth surface. Some collided and turned into continents. It was a mesmerizing dance that cleared its audience's senses. Gradually, fatigue made its way through the boy's body. His eyelids drooped as he felt a nudge on his left arm.

“Just lie down. I won't leave. I promise,” the silver fox lady seemed to say looking at him, eyes full of affection. The boy obeyed and curled up into a tiny ball. The ground was surprisingly cosy. The silver fox lady situated herself behind his back. Her body heat was radiating through her thick satin fur and passed onto the exhausted creature in front of her. The warmth was welcomed by his fatigued frame. The boy felt so tired. Every single part of his spent body cried for relief. He kept his numb limbs close to his chest as though this position would protect his heart from further damages. But nothing could take away the pain that already had been caused. Even his dearest forest wasn't able to give him the solace that he so needed. Mercifully, sleep took over quickly. All unkind feelings seemed to drain from his slender body, when the boy fell into a deep slumber under the tall trees of his forest.

Years passed by and seasoned took turns in an unswerving loop. Yet, the boy and everything inside the forest stayed ignorant of all changes. The tall trees of the forest watched over the sleeping boy and shielded him from everything that was happening outside the woods. Through the

years the silver fox lady never left his side.

The boy woke up from his slumber many years later. The silver fox lady greeted him eagerly with her head rubbed against his shoulder. Despite the chilly air, his body had kept its warmth thanks to the silver fox lady. He sat up carefully letting his stiff body slowly adjust to the long awaited movements. Dizziness clouded his mind.

“Hey.” His first word after many years. It lingered in his dry mouth. “You must be starving. Go fetch something to eat,” were his next words. The silver fox lady looked at him indecisively for confirmation.

“I’m fine.” He gifted her an invisible smile only she could see. “Don’t worry. Just go. You know where to find me,” he said patting her head. With those words the silver fox lady disappeared into the woods.

The boy looked around trying to detect any changes that might have occurred during his restful sleep. But everything seemed the same. So did his heart. The shattered pieces of his tiny heart had grown back together but its glow was still missing. The seeming emotional relief was nothing but a temporary, numbing illusion, which had loosen its effect. The memories of what had happened were foggy but the feelings were well conserved. The fine lines on the palms of his hands were the only signs that indicated the many years that had come and gone without him noticing. They had deepened and grown tiny branches. All the people he knew and loved must had forgotten him by now the boy thought. The powerful

feeling of hopelessness, pain, rejection, loneliness and grief rushed back all at once. But this time, it hit nothing. Instead it was sucked in by a raging blackhole within his chest, which had been born out of a dying heart.

As soon as he got up, his feet had a life of their own. After a few steps taken, it was clear that they would carry him to the place that had been waiting for his return since the day he left. The violets on the sides of the trail were wiggling in happiness to see the boy awake again. A host of golden buttercups and common bluebells joined their cheerful greeting. The creatures of the forest came out of their lairs, one by one, sticking their heads out in curiosity and kept guard just in case their friend needed support. The boy knew it must had been the morning hours by the veil of mist that coated his skin with a brisk, moist layer. Condensed water dribbled from the leaf points of bushes and trees, that were still drowsily dreaming. He took his time to walk the trail while inhaling every little detail around him like he was seeing it for the first time.

Suddenly, a bright, white beam of light appeared in front of the boy's eyes. It came from the direction of where his house supposed to be. The light was pulsing in a slow, strong rhythm. Then it dimmed. The boy stood completely still, clueless and curious of what it could have been. Again, his feet didn't wait for his consent and started their tramping. The boy didn't know whether it was his curiosity or his unwavering longing for home that triggered their naughty behavior. The

closer he got the more the glowing mass at the end of the trail took shape. The source was long and narrow. Its light felt warm and pure. The boy spotted limbs and something what could have been described as a head. No doubt it was a creature. But surely one of a kind he hadn't ever encountered before.

The light abruptly dimmed until it became nothing more than a dull gleam. And there it was: a girl. A woman. The boy couldn't tell. The creature seemed to be ageless, though her sorrowful eyes mirrored the many centuries that they must have already witnessed. Her skin was translucent and white as milk. Her long silver hair fell from her shoulders like silk. The boy looked at her in awe.

"I'm so sorry," the fragile figure said with a shaking voice. The sound of her words vibrated in a clear and deep tune. Somehow it sounded familiar.

"I hesitated," the gleaming creature continued. "I was so afraid ... you'd be disappointed and would reject me, when you see me. I'm not the brightest star. Neither am I brave nor wise. But I knew I needed to be with you. There is this pull. There is this yearning for you. I hesitated for only a moment. But one moment up there can be hours on your earth. Before I was able to take heart you were gone. So I came down to look for you. Your friends came back, too, and showed me where I might find you. But since none of your friends have ever entered your forest, they couldn't tell me where exactly to go. I wandered the woods for a while. Then, I finally found you. Your were sleeping so soundly. I couldn't bear to wake you. I could

sense the pain that I have caused. Since then I came back every year hoping and waiting that you would wake up and return to us. I sat next to you and brought food to your friend. She is such a good creature.” She paused. Her frantic words becoming more frail.

“I don't expect you to forgive me but...I want you to know that none of this was because of you. It was my fault alone. I should be the one you can rely on but I already failed you at the first step. I am weak and I am a coward. You deserve so much better. Please believe me, you are loved. So loved. And I am so sorry for making you ever doubt it.”

The boy stood in silence. He wasn't sure if he was still lying next to the lake sleeping. *Was this a dream?* She was looking at him with timid eyes. Her milk-white skin had turned gray.

“I'm so sorry.” The star's words barely audible. The boy dropped his gaze to escape the stars's sad expression. He could feel her beady eyes all over his body. They were trailing sparks on his tender skin. The sparkling sensation stirred up the vast storm which had built up in his still dizzy mind. All that had happened, all he had endured, she being here, all she was saying - it was all too much to absorb or comprehend. There was a blank canvas and colors were washing over it from every direction. The stains that stuck layered. A mess of paint that created a new picture at every twist and turn. When the storm in his head calmed down and the colors began to dry, they unfolded their true character. The boy stepped forward closing

the gap between him and the glowing being.

"It's ok," he breathed out. It broke the unbearable silence, its thickness had kept both creatures still. The boy's voice was calm. He lifted his eyes to meet hers. He fell into dark, deep oceans.

"You did well." As the words left his mouth, the boy enfolded his star in his arms. She froze at the sudden gesture. She felt ghostly, yet strong in his embrace like a heavy autumn breeze. Her silky hair tangled between his fingers.

"All this time I thought...that I was alone, that I was somehow broken. Not worthy of affection and love. That it wouldn't matter if I am there or not. People were just tolerating me I felt. And I kept telling myself that I am fine with that. That this is just the way it is. But I wasn't. I envied them. All of them. I wanted what they had. A place to be and someone to be with. I was chasing a phantom. I didn't see what was right beside me. I didn't realize that I already had what I was looking for. That I meant something to someone. And not just anyone. I didn't see the love they were, they *are* giving me. My blindness made me so restless, always looking for something that wasn't there to begin with." He bit his lower lip. Pools of salty tears emerged and blurred his vision. "I put all responsibility on your shoulders to change my life and to fix the broken pieces. It wasn't fair of me. Yes, you hesitated. Because you were afraid. So am I. I've been hesitating my whole life and never risked anything. But unlike me, you got over your fears. And though you were afraid, you are here. And that's all that matters."

The star melted into his arms when she realized that she had been forgiven. In fact, there was absolutely nothing that she had to be forgiven for, the boy ensured her. Both creatures held each other tightly crying out tears of pain, guilt and fear. At last, the boy felt at peace. For the first time in his life he felt loved. He had realized that someone cared for him, not only his star, but also his pack, his colleagues, the silver fox lady and the whole entire forest. He felt sorry that he had ever doubted that. They were all true friends and he would try his best to be one for them, too, from now on. Above all, he realized that even a star as beautiful as this one, could think so little of itself though someone like the boy thought of it as perfect. All of the sudden the world felt less lonely.

“Are you ready?” his star asked.

“Ready for what?” the boy replied with curious eyes.

“Today you're going to see the world.”