

# A small revolution

In a pure, perfect world the word unique lives only in ~~dreams~~ nightmares. A reality our ancestors foresaw in much a contrasting context. They would see difference as something to banish or kill. Although that was the past I am sure this mentality may reinsert itself into the minds of our future lines of heritage. This utopia is a depressing thought. At least in a dystopia everyone is killed. Aida lives in a world such as this. She doesn't think it is right that people look the same. How on earth is she supposed to differentiate. She can't even identify males from females let alone her own friends or family.

Oh, but the economy! It thrives and so Aida lives in a utopia. Everything works perfectly because everyone is unidentifiable. Aida often wonders why this is. But the chip in her arm stops her philosophy. There is no war. Unless you count the conflict in Aida's head. But no one counts it. No one even knows that its Aida they are looking at. Everyone are too caught up with their own battle torn minds. No poverty ever strikes the clean streets of Aida's homeland. Everyone is happy... enough to not fight or steal or kill or hate but no one is happy enough to sing or dance or to embrace or to love. How can you love another part of a system that you yourself are in as well? The romantic tale of the two cogs. Entangled in the same world of mindless work yet entangled further in a relationship. The nature of attraction has to be similar to nature of magnetic attraction: mutual movement. A clock could never work if the spiral movement of the cogs are interrupted by another kind of movement. This is how Aida thinks. This is how Aida was taught to think.

Things work perfectly because there is no alternative worth choosing. Heaven's beauty is not there for its member's pleasure; it is there to remind them of what terrors lie below. Contrast will always portray one thing as better than the other and therefore portray one thing as the better option. Even if it isn't a good option, it will always be better than the alternative. Utopias and dystopias are not exactly opposites, you see. A utopia is just a slightly better option than its counterpart. They are very close on the positive-negative spectrum not on opposite sides of it. No one dies anymore, yet, Aida has not even been alive all her life. She is yet to feel like she is her own woman not just a part of a machine.

She walks in a sorrowful stutter of sharp-heeled shoes and boring jewellery. Clothes she didn't choose but were perfectly suited to her complexion and

posture by a machine. Her grey suit stands out as the only one in the crowd without a badge at the breast. She was going to quit her job today. She didn't need money, no one needed money, and she didn't need to feel fulfilled and purposeful unlike all other badge-wearers. This was one step towards individuality. It made her so angry that this was meant to be a good place. It was meant to be a revolution for mankind. Peace at last. There was no peace within a thousand miles of Aida. She was in a world full of people pretending. Pretending to have made peace with their surroundings. But there is a difference between making peace with what's around you and just simply accepting it.

As she walked away from the building she now used to work at, she thinks of the Cleansing. A terrible process. The world was stripped of all things that were useless for humans. The harmful bacteria that caused humans to cough and to heat up was taken and burnt, every last atom of it. There was no disease, no death and no passion. No animals, all the bacteria they thrived on were burnt and all the fungus they used to survive were cremated in a lab. Soon all the animals died and all trees shrivelled to dead masses. The only living things on this earth are humans and the animals that caused this atrocity. Aida missed the animals, the plants, even the common cold- she just wanted to feel something, anything. Someday she would make herself feel something but her wounds didn't hurt and they healed before they could even drip blood. Aida hasn't felt anything for thousands of years. There were no dynamics in this life. Everything was so flat. So uninteresting. Aida didn't see herself as a maverick but she couldn't understand why everyone was so content with what surrounded them. How can they live like this? She wanted something to happen. Anything. And then something did happen.

Aida lived in the centre of the floating city. But 50 miles in any direction of her flat would be the edge of the island. There was sound coming from below the north side and then suddenly, something crawled over the top of the ledge. It had managed to pass the barrier put there to stop things from the underside of the floating disc coming to the topside and, in turn, to stop things from the top side from going down below. There was never a cleanse on the underside. Things live freely and run wild below the disc. But now curiosity had driven something to pass the boundary between the two worlds. It was disgusting. A massive slimy blob of misery and chaos. It had two large, black eyes and a pointy nose that stuck out at an angle that was not in the least correct. It moved like a slug- sliming along leaving a trail of sadness and regret. When it jumped over the fence its whole body quivered with anxiety and nauseating curiosity.

This thing was the only thing anyone on the topside had ever seen that didn't have their own face for thousands of years. And people didn't like it. The upper side of the disc had its own system. A system that it was impossible to hate or hurt or kill but the system didn't accommodate for things that were so utterly disgusting as this. And so the world turned in on this big, slimy creature. As the beast moved its embarrassing body across the road towards the distant buildings of the city, it was shot dirty looks and words of dissent- all with intentions of forcing this ugly mass to leave and 'go back to where it came from'. One young boy, with directions from his mother, threw a rock at the beast. It cried out in anguish and pain and hurried itself along the road.

Aida didn't like the city. It was too full of perfection. She would walk in the countryside sometimes- at least it had always been perfect there. Before the disc, before the cleansing, Aida was a writer. She would sit in the middle of a field or a forest and write about where she was. That was how one would make peace with their surroundings. But today she wanted something different. This is what frustrated her. There was nothing else. Excitement came from work and but she hated it. How could she live if her life wasn't meant for living. Living isn't feeling contentment or comfort all the time; living is having contrasts- dynamics. The concept of ups and downs does not live on this disc. In the old life, the downs would make the ups feel even higher. Here, now there was nothing to make Aida feel happy nor sad and so this dull monotony drove her to do something she never had done in her life. She was going to go to the edge. There were people that lived by the edge. They were always either border control or ex-mercenaries used in the rare occasion of something happening at the border. Yes. She went to the edge.

The monster had made it about 15 miles when he sat down to rest. He was under an apple tree. It took him little time before he fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was shining beautifully. He looked up at it. The sun was terrific. A ball of light up there in the sky. Just floating peacefully in the sky. As it sat there looking at the sun, an apple fell from the tree right upon its head and bounced in front of him at his feet. It looked up. Then to the apple. Then to the branch above him and then back to the apple. It thought for a long time. Looking from the apple to the branch at various intervals. It then made a gesture of acceptance and took at tentacle and reluctantly took the apple in its grasp and inspected it further. Then he ate it.

Aida had been walking about 15 miles when she sat to rest by the side of the street. She was starting to enjoy herself. The first time in a thousand years. She

didn't yet feel alive, however. This road was too straight. The paving stones were too smooth and lacing cracks. It unnerved her. Too perfect. It wasn't living. As she drifted off to sleep, she thought of her parents. How she was ripped away from them. Full individuality is granted as soon as one reaches eighteen. They never see them again. Adults that rely on parents to live don't get jobs and so don't make money for the companies they don't work at. Aida got a job as soon as she left. Although she can't remember their names, she remembers their voices. Her mum had a crisp, sweet voice. When she spoke it felt wonderful. When she sang, Aida felt like she her heart had been gently pulled out of her and put back straight and warm. Her dad had a stern but gentle voice. He would sing too. They would sing together. A harmony so memorable, so symbolic of a simpler time. Her dad had left when the disc came to be. He was the one who engineered the whole thing. There is no hate. But Aida could feel confusion. Aida closed her eyes. She slept. She dreamt of her dad.

It got up. It rose to meet the eyes of an old woman. She wore thick glasses that enlarged her eyes to a hellish extent. Those hell eyes were examining every part of the monster. The beast was taken aback, what was she doing?

"Who are you?" She asked.

The monster took off. It was scared of the woman. She spoke to him in a language he didn't understand. She had eyes bigger than her head and she had a large metal thing protruding from her handbag. The sort used to keep its family on the underside in line. Sometimes they would make a loud noise and someone would die. Someone would die if they did the wrong thing or even if they were doing the right thing but the guards were angry for some other reason. It heard a shot from behind. She had begun to shoot.

"Go back to where you came from!"

Aida woke with a start. The sun had disappeared. It wasn't there in the sky just a dark mass. She looked elsewhere. There were more dark masses around her. She began to rise. She had been wrong. The sun hadn't disappeared; the dark masses were people. But not the right sort: Imperial guards. Employed to keep the topside safe and the underside suppressed and contained. They were all looking at her.

"What is it?"

"Madam, it has been alerted to our attention that you quit your job earlier today." The taller one was speaking

"Yes. Is there a problem?"

"No of course not. Well, there is sort of a problem."

“Well spit it out then.”

“Can I ask where you are going, madam?”

“No.”

The man straightened his tie.

“There have been reports of a dangerous being scaring and posing a threat on the locals.”

Aida pretended to be scared but the scream she felt in her inside wasn't of fear- it was excitement.

“Oh really, OK. I will be careful. Goodday, officer.”

“Wait. You can't go that way.”

“And why is that?”

“Because of the monster.”

“Monster?”

“The being is from the underside.”

“It is?”

“Yes. That is why it is imperative that you don't go right into its path.”

Aida noticed the large metal thing protruding from his side. Usually they keep them hidden.

“I'll take my chances.” She set off running

“You can't go that way!” He sounded angry but Aida was already far in the distance.

The officers ran off after her. Aida felt good. Alive, finally.

Only when the sounds of that terrible machine had faded did it stop running. Stopping to catch his breath only to begin his trek again 5 minutes later- this time walking. It didn't know whether it was being followed so every few seconds its head would turn to see. This place fascinated the monster. The city's skyline looked ominous in the misty distance. Slightly closer was a group of trees huddled together as if they were sharing a secret. The monster made its way to the gang of vegetation. The secret the trees were all sharing was beautiful. A medley of flowers and smaller apple trees and right at the centre was a structure of stone and glass. It was a shrine. A place to worship and give thanks to the creators of the disc. The beast sat right in the middle and looked around. As the beast was beginning to get up and move from its spot, a hand landed right on its shoulder. It looked up to meet the mean face of a man in an overcoat and hat and gloves- despite the weather.

“You shouldn't be here.”

The man brought out a smaller version of what the monster's previous friend had carried in her handbag. The man held the metal weapon up to the disgusting creature's head.

“You shouldn’t be here.” The man repeated.

The creature would die. The topside would discontinue to have a bottom-sider. Pain and misery would be banished once again. The man repeated his phrase once more and loaded his gun.

Aida laughed. She had stopped running. The soldiers had given up when she ran into the corn field. In their rush to chase after her, the soldiers must have left their positions completely. When she tracked back to retrieve her pack she noticed the soldiers’ bags lying there in the dirt. She searched them. There was a canteen of water and some sandwiches upon which she set to work on in an efficient fashion. Aida had also found a gun. She had pondered on whether to take it. Her for argument was based on potential danger along the world. She took the gun and put it into her bag. She was back on the road now and had stopped at the edge of what looked like a small wood or forest. She took a minute to catch her breath before stepping into the strange clump of trees. She stepped out into something like of which she had never seen in her life. A flower medley of terrible beauty. The world of pretty hate stared up at Aida’s amazed face and relaxed in the soft breeze. There was a flower of every colour imaginable in this sea of contradiction. Aida knew where she was. The Shrine. A place to come and be grateful for those few that brought utopia for the many. At the centre of the disgusting clearing Aida saw a small stone structure. It seemed to mourn, for what it represented was too despicable for a small clump of stone to comprehend. A twisted mass of politics and promises of freedom. All leading towards to a terrible fate. The sun shone its light right through the shine from the opposite side to which Aida was situated and so the deathly thing was just a black silhouette. Joining the depressed building in dark haziness were two figures below the crumbling roof. Despite the lighting, Aida could make out what was going on.

“You shouldn’t be here.” One of them said.

She understood now. This was the creature. A disgusting mass of insecurities and false confidence. She opened her pack. There was the gun. She loaded and cocked it. Breathing in and out, she took a few steps towards the monster.

The beast heard the shot. It seemed to be so close. Opening its eyes, it saw nothing. Why wasn’t the man in front of him celebrating? Or laughing, like they usually would. The man was on the floor. The beast stood back in shock at the man lying down with a bullet hole in his head. The creature looked around. There was a woman. With a gun in her hand and a kind expression on her face. She must have missed, thought the monster. It set off running. The monster didn’t have a direction anymore.

Aida hadn't missed. She had hit the monster. Her anger was composed of the frustration she had with her fellow topside members. How could they be happy with their life? How are they so content with how they live that they would kill any threat to their 'perfect' lives? Aida refused to accept that the being in front of her was a thing. It still had a brain that thought feelings. It still had a heart that pumped blood. He was a man. A man that came to the topside and was oppressed and almost killed by the people that Aida was a part of. No wonder he was running. She couldn't let him go and get caught by the soldiers- or worse yet: a member of the public.

"Wait!"

Aida ran after him. He was fast. Aida was faster.

"I won't hurt you, I promise!" Aida realised that she still had the gun. "Look at me!"

She said this with such authority that he turned. Aida threw the gun in the bushes.

"I'm not going to hurt you. I'm different to the others. I didn't miss."

He believed her now. He wasn't quite sure why, though. He walked towards her. Who was this woman? The monster exhaled. Ever since he crawled over to the topside, he had been abused and hurt and almost killed but now this woman was making peace. She looked exactly like the old woman but just younger. But she had thrown her gun away. She might have another one. The woman stepped towards him.

"I am Aida. What's your name?"

The monster didn't talk. He was still on edge.

"I will take you home. To my home. In the city."

He was surprised. The city?

"The tall building in the distance," They looked beyond the trees. "That is where I live."

Aida wanted to cry. What had they done to him? As they walked back towards the metropolis, he walked with an air of sorrowful relief.

He was finally safe. This kind woman had saved him. He owed her his life. But in some way he had already given her life. This he had no idea of and so any time a car passed he blocked Aida from harm. Any time she was near to a pothole or ditch he would make sure she would avoid them. She laughed. A wonderful laugh. They walked together in silence. He was happy. No one was hunting him. No one could touch him. He laughed. It was a hoarse metallic laugh but it was still a laugh. He laughed all the way home.