

Chain of Events

Joseph Simon lived in an old apartment in a small town in New Jersey. Joseph was a man who lived a life of loneliness. Joseph's only companion nowadays was his wife's dog Willow.

Everyday for 12 years ever since his wife passed away, Joseph would wake up at 6:00 AM to walk his dog Willow to a park that was near a factory. It has been nearly 50 years since Joseph lived in the town but he had never learned what was made in this factory.

Every winter season for 12 years ever since his wife passed away, Joseph used an old heater that his wife bought him for his 21st birthday. During winter seasons whenever they came back from the park, Joseph would turn on the heater and Willow would often crawl next to it. Willow particularly loved the buzzing noise the heater made and greatly took pleasure in imagining himself chasing little beetles in summer times.

Every Sunday evening for 12 years ever since his wife passed away, Joseph would spend most time in his room reading the unfinished novel that his wife wrote as a hobby. It was a story about a mysterious city and a woman who came from a world of simulated reality. Joseph was never quite sure how the story would have ended but always found it amusing just to imagine possible endings.

Although Joseph Simon often felt boredom from the simple and regular pattern in his solitary life at the old apartment in this small town, for him this unit was more than just a house. For Joseph, the house was the sanctuary from the harsh world, and a place that held the valuable memory of his beloved wife.

However, yesterday everything changed.

Yesterday precisely at 8:15 PM there was a blackout at Joseph Simon's house. Joseph Simon's old heater had been running for 12 hours and it caused the blackout.

It was 8:32 PM yesterday when the light came back on. Joseph was scared that his old heater might cause another blackout and went to bed without turning on the heater.

Today at 6:00 AM in the morning Joseph woke up to walk his wife's dog Willow. What Joseph had not understood about the blackout was that it caused a chain of events that would change his life forever.

At that moment during the blackout, 5646 miles away from Joseph's room, at a large house in the middle of a city was a 12-year-old kid named Lee who was sending a message to his friend, Mary using the internet. Lee was telling Mary that his father would be shutting down one of his factories in New Jersey.

Meanwhile, Mary who lived in the unit right next to Joseph's apartment was never able to receive Lee's last message because of the blackout. During the blackout, Mary's dad,

Charles was coming home back from work. Charles was the manager of the factory that was located near the park where Joseph would walk his dog occasionally.

Because of the blackout, Mrs. Smith who lived right below Mary's unit went outside to buy a candle and a lighter. On her way back home she accidentally dropped one of her candles. The candle that had slipped out from Mrs. Smith's shopping bag rolled down the street and finally stopped as it was stuck between empty bottles of whisky that Charles and Charles's coworkers drunk after work.

That very night in Joseph's room, Willow barely was able to sleep. Without the soft buzzing noise of the old heater that Willow was so much fond of, he just couldn't go to sleep.

Today at 6:01 AM in the morning, Willow prepared himself to be walked by his friend Joseph. Willow watched Joseph changing his clothes and brushing his teeth. Willow never was able to figure out why human beings took so much time brushing their teeth but found it fascinating how the gentle strokes of the toothbrush could create such amazing sounds. As Willow saw Joseph grabbing the dog lace he knew it was time for his performance. Even though Willow felt tired he jumped and wagged his tail with effort to indicate that he was ready to be walked.

Joseph and Willow were on their way to the park. As usual, Willow was sniffing his way to the park when he realized there was an odd scent, somewhat like whisky. Willow put his nose closely to the whisky bottles that were thrown away by Charles and Charles's coworkers the night before. As Willow's nose accidentally hit one of the whisky bottles, the candlestick that Mrs. Smith dropped was no longer stuck between those bottles. The candlestick started to role down the street. Despite lack of sleep, Willow felt a sudden rush of excitement to see the remarkably interesting white object rolling down in front of him. Willow decides to chase the candle stick.

That morning at 6:15 AM Charles went to work a bit earlier than usual without realizing that he would be laid off that evening. Today during afternoon, he would also hear the shutting down of his factory. Suddenly, Charles saw a dog jump into the road. Charles hit the brakes and turned his handle only to hit the poor old man who was running after his dog Willow.

At that precise moment Joseph Simon wished that he were at his home where he and his wife used to be so happy together. For him his home was more than just a house. It was a place where all the beautiful memories were tied into. For him, his house was where he could feel the warmth of his wife. It was...

Joseph Simon found himself standing in the middle of the mysterious city. There he found the woman from the world of simulated reality. In this dreamlike atmosphere the woman was his wife. Joseph was standing in the world between his real life and the impossible.