

Landslide Part Three

Fletcher ran down the mountainside, the images of the two possible worlds ringing in his head, swirling impossible colors and emotions. Images of despair and of hope battling a war inside his body.

In his haste, the rocks of the mountain cut against his palms, against his knees and elbows. The bowstring rubbed a line against the back of his neck as he tore through shrubs and scabbled down perilous slopes. He barely felt the pain in his determination to get back to the village.

Fletcher never felt so clear, nor so estranged from reality in his entire life. The visions were so distinct, so real, and both so close at hand. In truth, the result was not up to him. He knew that if he told the villagers what he saw, they would as easily reject him as embrace him.

But he realized that was the point. The whole point of the fates, the wall, the landslide. Their threads wove through the fabric of life, like a sunflower toward the sun, always leading towards the future. It was so easy to get stuck in the fruitless

it's just is how it is, or

changing is too hard, or

the odds are too great, or

it's really better this way.

Fletcher knew those words were all powerful, as powerful as the fates. Perhaps intrinsically tied to the fates themselves. But the fact that those phrases had that power meant...meant that the phrases have power. Words have power.

Power so strong that it could tear down divinely created walls and an old woman's life.

But the despair hid something else. Something that Fletcher could finally see.

He could see the village now, the landslide a dark scar in the night, marring the original layout of the village from Fletcher's viewpoint on the mountain pass. The Hex facility was just a little further down, closer to him than the village itself. It was lit up against the moonless stars, brighter than the village. Still churning. Still working.

He had a choice then. Continue to the village, or to return to Hex.

Fletcher counted his arrows, tested their strength, placed them exactly where he needed them, and made his way to the gates of the fracking company.

“Hey man, good to see you. The boss is going to be pissed, you know. You missed your shift.”

“Yeah, sorry about that. I was just going to go talk with him about it. You know, beg and plead my case.”

The gate guard laughed. “I wish you all the luck in the world.” The gate guard buzzed Fletcher in. “Oh, by the way, I heard about what happened. Horrible. I’m really sorry.”

“I know. It is horrible.”

“If there’s anything I can do, we’ve got a cot back at the camps you can—”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ve already got something figured out.”

“Alright. See you.”

Fletcher simply smiled and made his way inside the gates. The guard called after him.

Fletcher waved, and walked on. He went to the janitor’s closet. He gathered what he needed and headed back outside.

He knew the rounds of security at this point. He knew where to be, and when. He knew what to hide, and where to hide it.

As he set the stage, he made sure no one would be in range. This wasn’t about avenging the old woman’s death. This was about hope. This was about change.

He made his way back out the gate and the bored guard, his old counterpart.

“Bad news?”

“Yes. Onwards to bigger and better things, I guess.”

“Shoot, well. It is what it is.”

Fletcher smiled as he walked away. “Not always.”

Fletcher made his way back up the mountain, to the cliff where he could see the Hex facility below. Humming, a well oiled machine. Bright. Light. Visible. And off in the valley, the village. They would have a choice, he would even see to it that he spread the word to those he thought would best receive it. But first, he had to break down that wall. The wall between the past and the future.

Fletcher, in his old life, was taught by the very best bowwoman in his village. They were hunters, they lived off of the land. He could see her face then, superimposed beside the face of the old weaver woman, telling him that their way of life was dying. That it must, in the face of the future. But still she taught him how to cut down a bow, to shape and bend it to his will, to string it, to aim carefully, to breathe. To feed his family. To only take what was needed.

To only use the old ways in service to a better future.

Later, there would be an outcry by management, calls of terrorism, even though the only blood spilled was from the landslide caused by their greed. But by then, Fletcher was long gone. He left behind a message to the villagers, a message of his vision at the temple of the fates.

“I know they can build another facility. That they will say it will bring jobs and stability, that the village is dying anyway. That you can simply leave, and live elsewhere.

Perhaps the future isn't inevitable. You simply need the courage to change.

I saw the fates, I spoke with them. The ones that built your wall, that promised safety. This is the world, though. It comes knocking or barging down your door. You can either fight it, or let it in.

I know that Hex is powerful, more powerful than anything you can handle alone, or that even the village can fight alone. But I suggest that you do for more people what you did for me. Invite strangers in, give them a home, give them a view of this beautiful mountain. The people who come, even the cameras and the gawkers, show them your skills and your hopes and your dreams. Because at some point you need to realize that our fates are shared. Our fates can be shared. If you want a better life, a better future, you must be willing to listen to nature. It thundered through your lives, you can't escape or ignore or build a wall against it. Listen to fate. Listen to your hearts.

You know the path. I simply cleared the way. You choose to go down it or not.”

That night, in the village blessed by fate, Fletcher took his bow, and took note of the dark, handmade explosives against the generators and the pumps and oil drums.

He waited for the security guards to clear each area. He aimed carefully. He breathed. And flew his arrows into the future.