

The Circle of Goodbyes

By E. Sadler and A. Shurter

And just as quickly as he had come, Martin was gone. His saucer was a spinning silver disk of light in the starry night sky as it disappeared into the darkness. When the sun rose again, all that was left in Martin's memory was the giant henge of stones and a memory that Eric and Belle wouldn't ever forget.

Before Martin had fallen from the sky, Eric's only true friend was his cow, Belle. The two would spend most days in the open fields just outside of the village, watching the sky and recording what they saw. Occasionally, brilliant rainbows would arch across the sky after storms dissipated, and shooting stars would appear in the night sky, but nothing too unusual ever really happened. The lack of excitement was fine for Eric for a while, but eventually lead to him wanting more from his life. One evening, Eric was lying in the grass with Belle by his side, sketching a small cow on the edge of his parchment, when he suddenly tossed the work down. Belle looked on with concern as he spoke:

"I want to do something with my life. I can't do this anymore. Nothing ever changes, and I feel like I'm going insane."

Belle sighed.

Eric sighed.

They sighed together.

The peace of the moment was shattered though, as a giant blazing orb came hurtling from the sky. Eric watched in disbelief as the fiery object, which appeared to be small at first, seemed to grow in size until it was smashing into the ground right in front of him. As the enormous chunk of metal made contact with the terra firma, Eric felt the Earth shake beneath his feet. Both Belle and Eric were thrown to the ground, left to watch the scene that unfolded before their eyes.

After several seconds passed, the ground stopped shaking. Eric stared at the flames trying to make sense of them. Heat radiated off of the strange object.

“Maybe I’ve already gone crazy” Eric said to Belle. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a dark figure emerge from the curious object. It seemed to be a person! Someone from his village perhaps? No way, the people of the village wouldn’t be in the sky. Eric considered for a moment that they might have just witnessed a god coming down to Earth.

That was when the figure started towards Eric and Belle. As it got closer they realized they were definitely not looking at a human. Well, the creature did have human qualities- a man-like build, groomed hair, and eyes that twinkled as water would on a summer day, but its skin seemed to have a bluish tint, and Eric noted that its hair, curiously enough, had the same bright mix of colors as a rainbow. Having only ever seen the mundane earthy hues of the hair of the village locals, the strange being’s hair was intriguing to them both.

Before them it stood, and Eric heard Belle exhale uneasily. He himself wasn’t quite sure what he was feeling- the series of events that had happened in the past 20 minutes or so should have struck him as alarming, or even frightening, but he was really just feeling excited and apprehensive. Was this foreign person going to hurt them? What did it want? Why was it there? What was about to happen? Thoughts raced through his head, and he was nearly startled when the *thing* spoke. In a soft, strong voice, it spoke, like wind dancing on fields of grain on a summer’s day:

“Hello creatures of the Earth. As you can see I crashed my ship into this here field.” Eric wondered what a ship was but knew better than to interrupt. Then the mysterious creature introduced itself as Martin and claimed he was from the sky, where he had lived his whole life. He seemed pretty down to earth. He explained he had been trying to find his home planet when the magnetic pull of Earth had pulled his ship through the atmosphere and into the ground.

“I was wondering if you two would be of assistance in getting me back to my home?” Martin’s soothing voice was very convincing but Eric hesitated before answering. He hardly knew Martin but he felt sympathy for the poor alien. After conversing quietly with Belle, Eric agreed to help Martin get home.

The next day, Eric and Belle walked back to the field, half expecting everything to be normal and last night just a dream. But of course, it wasn’t. The

silver ship was in the dirt and Martin lay beside it. When Martin noticed them he hopped up to his feet, greeted them with hugs, and thanked them again for the help. Surprised but comforted by the physical connection, Eric realized he had made the right decision to help Martin. They spent the rest of the day planning how they would build the launchpad, which was what Martin said they would need to create in order to get him home. Using Martin's technology, Eric's knowledge of the terrain, and Belle's strength, they would bring together stones to create the launchpad.

Weeks went by as the three worked together, perfecting measurements and placing the rocks in their corresponding places. As the launch pad grew more powerful, so did their friendships. Eventually though, the launch pad was completed. On the day Martin was to leave, the human, cow, alien trio exchanged bittersweet goodbyes. As Martin climbed into his ship, Belle shed a single tear and Eric waved goodbye once again. The last thing they saw of him was his brilliant rainbow locks as he powered up the ship. With a flash the launchpad sent Martin back into space and onto the path to finally get home.

Although the generations to come might forget about the unlikely friendship that was created here, they won't forget the stonehenge that was left behind.