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Lyra



The city stretched on endlessly, a patchwork of tilted buildings and uneven streets. It was a place where nothing seemed to fit quite right—angles clashed, walls leaned, and windows gaped like missing teeth in a crooked smile. The roads below buzzed with people in a hurry, each moving as if the world might collapse if they stopped. Sometimes, it felt like it did.

From her window, Lyra watched the chaos unfold. A cart rattled by, its wheels wobbling as if deciding whether to obey gravity. Beyond it, a vendor's crooked stall collapsed under its own weight, scattering fruit across the cracked pavement. No one stopped to help; they just stepped over the mess and carried on.

Lyra sighed and pulled her sketchbook closer. With a soft pencil, she traced the beginnings of a circle. She tried to see beauty in the city, but nothing quite came together. There wasn't any... harmony, I guess you'd say. No matter how hard she tried to put pencil to paper and draw her vision of a better way, the lines wavered, the edges didn't quite meet, and symmetry was nowhere to be found. She could never make her visions real.

Her pencil hovered over the page as she stared at the unfinished circle. The image in her mind wasn't just a fantasy—it felt like a memory she couldn't quite place. Somewhere, somehow, she was certain such harmony existed. It wasn't just a dream; it was a promise the world had made and forgotten to keep.

Lyra closed her eyes, letting the noise of the city fade into the background. In her mind, the world was whole. The city and nature were one. Gardens unfurled in perfect spirals, each flower petal a perfect echo of the one that came before. Lakes shimmered with rippling patterns, and the city rose like an intricate puzzle, each piece fitting flawlessly into the next. The city didn't seem to start anywhere because nature never ended. The integration was beautiful in itself.

She could almost feel the warmth of this imagined world—a place where harmony wasn't just possible; it was inevitable. In this world, everything was bound as one, every form had intent, and every soul had a calling.

But then she opened her eyes, and the dream evaporated. The

sketchbook on her lap looked pitiful by comparison. Her circle was uneven, her lines wobbly. She felt the frustration. She felt it deeply.

"I'll get it right one day," she whispered.

Bang! The door to her room burst open without warning. "One day? You've been saying that for years," came a sharp voice.

Lyra groaned. "Hello, Eryx," she said without looking up.

Her brother strode in, his movements precise and deliberate. He counted out loud the exact number of steps to reach her desk—twelve, no more, no less. He peered over her shoulder at the sketchbook, his brow furrowing. "What's this supposed to be?" he asked, pointing to her imperfect circle. "An oval convention?"

Lyra turned in her chair, glaring at him. "What do you want, Eryx?"

Eryx didn't answer immediately. Instead, he began rearranging her desk, lining up pencils and erasers with mechanical precision. "Honestly, Lyra, it's a wonder you get anything done in this chaos."

Chaos, she thought. *The world seemed to be run by the likes of Eryx—perfect know-it-alls. But if they were as brilliant as they claimed, why wasn't the world just as perfect?*

"It's my desk," Lyra snapped, snatching a pencil from his hand. "I like it the way it is."

He ignored her protest, picking up the sketchbook to examine her work more closely. "If you're trying to fix the world with circles, you might want to start by drawing them properly."

Lyra crossed her arms, biting back a retort. She knew better than to argue with Eryx—his logical superiority was his favourite weapon, and he was an argumentative so-and-so, too.

"Do you need something, or are you just here to critique my

life?” she asked.

Eryx smirked. “Can’t I do both?”

Before Lyra could reply, the doorbell rang. “I’ll get it!” she said, leaping to her feet—any excuse to get away from this dingbat.

“I’ll save your sketchbook from more crimes against geometry while you’re gone,” Eryx called after her.

Lyra ignored him, bounding down the stairs two at a time. *Big head*, she thought. Whoever was at the door couldn’t possibly be worse company than her brother.

As she reached the door, a strange feeling settled over her—an unusual but familiar flicker of hope she couldn’t explain. It was as though the universe itself had paused, holding its breath. She didn’t know how or why, but for the first time in a long while, she felt it: the promise of something new, something extraordinary.

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Task

Lyra’s city is far from perfect. Just like her sketches, things don’t always line up as they should. What follows are two images of her crooked city—but something’s changed. There are five differences between the two images. Can you spot them all?

Look closely... In a world of tilting buildings and missing pieces, can you find what’s out of place?



SOLUTION



Did you notice the subtle shifts? The missing details? If you found all five, congratulations—you've got an eye for detail! If not, don't worry. Even the best of us miss a thing or two in a world this crooked.