

Amanda Cobb

Learn to Fly

Based on Ruins.

The cities used to be known as Concrete Jungles, their skyscrapers standing as tall and as numerous as the trees once did. That was before they came. The new government, Terra Firma's new conquerors and masters, the Uldili, who discovered Earth because of the Voyager Project. Now the concrete jungles are grown over, Mother Nature reclaiming the land humanity had destroyed. There are a few humans left, thousands out of billions. It was a rather effective genocide, Earth had nothing to match the massive ships and advanced weapons. It did not help that the politicians of the world spent more time pointing fingers than fighting the enemy. If a house divided cannot stand then a planet at war with themselves will fall to their extraterrestrial enemies.

You wonder how I know? I am one of the last humans. The Uldili kept one thousand alive in each region. What used to be the United States of America became Middle East, Middle North, Middle South and Middle West. I imagine it was the same in every country, except those like England. So small they did not merit more than one thousand. The Uldili killed all of the adults, from age twelve to age one hundred. They kept the children, because the children were moldable. They went a step further, equalizing the races and genders until the numbers matched perfectly. They tried to eradicate religion, telling the children that human made gods

were false. They failed, but only because they neglected to destroy the books. All of humanities religions were contained in libraries.

It took a while, because all were children, but eventually, centuries later Archeologists emerged from Uldili schools, trained to be cynics and to hate their ancestors. Then they found the concrete jungles, over grown with organic trees. I am one such Archeologist. We are outlaws, breaking Uldili mandates by educating our children about their forbearers. We work separately, ten per region, one per community. I was exploring one concrete jungle when it happened. One of the Uldili monitoring machines caught me. The old cities are off limits; we are taught that there is nothing there for us. To survive, I have to out run the machine. The chase is harrowing, and ends in a suicidal move that I am ecstatic to say I survived. The death Machine did not. It will take the Uldili five weeks to provide this region with a new one, it has to be built. Yes, I have created more work for my friends in the region, but they will not mind because now I, the teacher, can take our children to the library.

They have learned to read from books I stole, Hemmingway and Austen passed around from school to school. Each region now has two thousand children for every one thousand adults. With the knowledge gained, and languages learned in the concrete jungle, in three hundred years or less, Humanity will rise again and retake their planet. The Archeologists have already begun, we smuggle books and music to our children, arming them with Mathematics, Languages, Histories, and Science...knowledge really

is power. After all, if they understand physics and learn about Icarus, Earths
children can learn to fly once more.