

99 Red Balloons

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A song inspired directly by the song it is named after. In other words, it is the exact same thing as the song. If you don't know the song, read the story and listen to the song at the same time.

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99 Red Balloons

Laura Rodemich

Nene Thomas walked out of the party store with a bag of red balloons. She rolled an enormous can of helium behind her. She got on the bus and drove straight to the park where she walked to a bench beside the large central lake. "Each of these balloons represent the dreams that I and everybody I know hold. God, let these dreams come true." She said to herself as she filled all of the balloons with helium, letting them go. She then reached into the bag to find no more. Looking at the bag, it said 100 QUALITY BALLOONS. "Dammit, I was jipped. Only 99. Oh well, I didn't need that last balloon anyways." She looked at her watch. "Time to go home!" she then walked back to the bus stop and got on, getting off at Decision Street, her home and base. She came back to be met by a group of people.

Before she could say a thing she was swarmed. "Thank goodness you're here, Nene! We need one more fighter! They're back, and our normal pilot went on vacation yesterday. We need you to stand in, Nene!"

"Umm... alright." She said nervously. She then ran into the base to get suited up for the flight ahead. She was met by the other 98 pilots. Her old friend Jake ran up to her already suited up.

"Finally made the squad, huh Nene?" before she could answer, he continued. "I'm glad you're helping us. These creatures just won't give up, y'know." He slapped her back. "Glad to have ya with us! See ya out there!" he waved farewell and left her to get ready. She got ready the fastest she could, but she was constantly fumbling with her uniform. She had never been on a real mission before. She was just constantly on the stimulator. And now they expected her, a secretary with limited experience, to fight the aliens? It just seemed so surreal. When she was finally ready, she left the locker room and went to the hangar.

The others were waiting for her. Jake smiled as he walked towards her. "What took ya so long, Nene?"

"Sorry... I've just never done this before." She said sheepishly.

"It's fine. Everybody has their first." He said, patting her on the back. "Anyways, aren't you the one with the best scores on the simulator? You should do fine! That's the most accurate pilot sim on the market today! You're well prepared."

Nene smiled. "Thanks for the confidence, Jake! I'm as ready as I can be!" she ran towards the fighter that belonged to the person that she was taking over for. The other 98 pilots followed her lead and did the same. Then all the engines fired up and they shot towards space...

`The first time is so thrilling!' Nene remembered Jake telling her. It was only now she realized what he meant. It was an electrifying feeling being up in a seeming infinity. She had no time to enjoy, though, because the first ship was already coming towards her. Just like in the simulator, she pressed the top button on the joystick and the alien ship did a tailspin, exploding in a fiery bang. **Good job, Nene!** she heard Jake say over the speaker. "Thanks! There's one on your tail!" Turning around, Jake shot it and quickly thanked her before finishing it off.

They're diving! They're diving! the commander shouted to the other pilots. Sure enough, they were descending on the city, charging up their lasers. Nene dove, shooting one of the ships before it fired. Unfortunately, other alien ships didn't get shot down, and soon enough the city that was her home since birth became a pile of dust. A few of the pilots also exploded as well. Nene landed safely on the rubble that was once the hangar. About fifty of the pilots were left, including her. Jake groggily got out of his fighter.

"Thank god you're alright, Nene. I thought you were a goner for sure." He said, mopping his forehead with his scarf.

"I thought you were a goner, Jake. When I saw the fighters go in flames beside you, I thought you were next..." she couldn't say any more. Shaking her head, she cleared her throat. "Well, this city's gone. On to the next city?"

He nodded. "Sure." He looked back at the other pilots. "On to the next city, guys!" they all saluted and got back into the fighters. Then the fifty of them flew to the next city. This was the fifth city gone in a month by the creatures from another world. Nene then looked at the sky in amazement. There were red balloons floating upwards.

"How could they..." she said to herself. How could they have survived the blasts when an entire city crumbled? Then she remembered- human dreams are a whole lot harder to break than a few rocks and beams of steel. Maybe if she kept her dream of the world being safe alive, it would come true...