

# *PERADAM*

*OR*

## *HERSELF, MET*

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They had spent days, hours, and seconds climbing, climbing the mountain and -----'s faux tomb was the final summit's beginning point, its gate to the end, which was no end, really, but rather a middle beginning, pointedly peaking and then descending to the flattened soil once again.

This was a Roerich mountain, grand and pointed and painted: icy blue cresting over even icier blue. She was climbing up with a party of four or five, none of them talking, all else affiliated with each other, all staring blankly ahead and never at their companions. Seeing how far it was to the top made them more tired, more mundane, more robotic in their trudging: how timeless, that scene.

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It had been days, and now this night was nearing its dawn. They made their way around one of the most difficult switchbacks and noticed, at once, something odd on the horizon: there up ahead, inwardly lit a shining-sun-yellow, was a glass mausoleum, Lenin-style, with someone---a man---in it laying all aglow. At the sight everyone started murmuring and wondering, reluctantly wakening themselves. Who would be interred in this desolate place? Why did it look like he was alive, still?

Acute excitement speared through her previous half-away state exactly, instantly, when she realized she knew who that someone was, and that she would be able to approach him this time. An uncorkable bolt of joy shot through her and into the fridgean air, popping gleefully out of her in the form of a yelp, and, in turn, causing most of the weary heads behind her start upwards. To avoid providing them an explanation, she pretended she had stubbed her toe and bent back down, taking the moments afforded her to contain her excitement to its only rightful home. Waving one arm up to hold them off, she ran closer, best as she could run in the deep, wet dust, while the others started to make their way up to the mausoleum more slowly, periodically pausing and gazing at her, the stranger, in increasing but politely deflected curiosity.

She walked closer, now. The candlelit-colored glow emitted from the pod-globe and as she approached it seemed to glow even warmer still. He was so still inside, and yet she knew with absolute certainty that he was actually alive---totally alive. He was alive, yes, and so close to her, finally---and yet, he was also just so deeply asleep. Drinking in the sight, her whole body ran awash with warmth, vibrating anew. She took a deep breath and pushed her face towards the glass expectantly, curiously.

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With no one thread dominant in her blinking brain, she stared at him---stern of brow, lengthened of body---for the longest moment. It was most fitting, she thought, that during their first close meeting he would be on such an icy blue mountain, wrapped in bleeding scarlet, lit golden.

Looking closer, she could see, she could feel that none of his thoughts, whatever they might have been, were going outward, though; every sound external seeped in and settled in the universe between his ears, pooling there wine-dark. Someday, when he was awake again and creating, this store of thought would gush out at opportune movements, during creative bursts, transmuting into jagged lasers cutting through dimensions. He would dissemble the dulled or blank realities offered to him so that he could recreate, reconfigure, reinforce, reinvent his own glittering matrix---a private, spectacular audial show that he mostly hid from others on the basis that they, too, were capable of creating their own realities, and so shouldn't need to borrow his.

He would not stop to consider that they were not all as capable in this regard as he, but whether that belief was due to his soul's kindness or not was less clear.

Eventually, his work, inspired by something within him he knew but knew not, would stretch itself far out, cobwebbing here and there in elegant electric bundles over the far reaches of his earth.

And this would develop. In the dusk of his life, when his creative production hit a frequency rampant, he would begin to hate, rather than purely dislike, the attention that his anonymity bred. They would strive to name the man who never wished to be named directly in many phrased manners: as a dreamer of great relevance, a bilocator, a transverser of a million realities; as voice of a mountain, even: a keeper of collective consciousness trusted with a little more information about our universe than the average whoever; a man given the talent to invest the stars he had given birth to before they melted away into the duller morning sky.

Attempting to quell the bright nature of his being from warming too fondly the listeners who increasingly invaded his sphere would, unfortunately, only make them ache to get closer to his reach over time. This attention would cause within himself, and had always caused, a mild but constant suffocation of his mind and heart, which were the same and worked as one. Eventually, those seeking him out would get more intense in their pursuits, and would go so far, even, as to find out and name his name. This was really the only thing that would genuinely upset him, to the point that he would ultimately choose to drop out entirely.

But all of that would never happen in this place, and none of it would come to be for years to come.

Sensing the other climbers' slight impatience, she turned around again and held up an arm (the other one this time) to keep them off for another moment. She then turned back around and tilted her top half downward towards him once more.

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Peering longingly at his finely-angled face, she directed willfully her never-uttered love from her head to his with utmost concentration. These transmissions were muted not by the thick glass; they were heard by his head and perhaps by something else, too.

She stopped again, and then continued on. She told him of how far she had traveled, and of how her trekmates had assumed she was of their world, though one, a Mr. Sogol, seemed to have suspicions otherwise. She told him that she had always expected to meet him on a mountain but that she hadn't ever considered it being a cold mountain. She told him a little about her own world, too, the one she hoped to leave behind once a mutual space could be found, where their

energies could be shared and perhaps even fused. She told him of the colors that she could see and how they each made her feel, the names she believed to be common in all spaces, the titles of stories and poems that she loved, and the differences between herself and those around her, which all too often made themselves harshly, stingingly evident. She told him she felt that he might feel the same way, somehow. She told him that she wished to come back there together someday, or perhaps to someplace like it. She told him many other things that were perhaps too secret in nature to tell a stranger, though a stranger he was not.

Backing away once more to tuck her hair behind her ear before wishing him what she hoped was a temporary goodbye, to her insurmountable astonishment, she saw two suns rising from opposite horizons of his sleeping face. The corners of his lips slowly, sensually unfroze from his mouth's peaceful transpose: he smiled.

Nothing else existed at this time.

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Once she said all she had to say, with cheeks blossomed, eyes starred, both her upper and lower hearts pulsing golden gushing light, she stepped first backward and then onward, allowing her trekmates their inevitable time to gawk while she continued her trudging up the mountain, only to go right back down again. She was slower than the rest, and was not on the journey for the same reasons they were on it, anyhow--it just made sense for her to get going, to go on the rest of her way alone. She was, for now, content.