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Foundations



It was late at night. Sitting on an old stone bench ideally situated a few meters above my house, in a shallow depression of the rocky shouldering ridge it was built upon, I was looking at the stars, wondering about the future, and the past... Of course, I knew it wasn't beneficial to dwell too long in those imperious illusions, and that the present should be my main focus with all those stars shining in the sky tonight, but it was the best time I had found to indulge myself a little bit into some planning of what I was about to do, and some remembering of things I had done with my life up to that point. So it was rather a positive move, considering the current state of my life, way too many petty things to manage or deal with on an ongoing basis.

Consequently I was deeply immersed in that kind of reflection when I heard a cracking noise coming from the woods just above the house, and from the sound it made I knew it wasn't just a little wild rat nor a gerbil; it was something heavy... I suddenly shifted from my half-laid-down position to a crouched one on the tips of my feet, ready to jump and defend myself if necessary. The first things I noticed were its two whitish pupils glimmering against the darkness of the night, and then the shape of its ears just when I was about to "unleash the fury". In a blink of an eye, I was fully relaxed again and getting back to my former position, then I threw: "Max... Damn it! You scared me to death!"

Max was a lynx I was quite familiar with, to a certain extent I mean... Lynx are very mysterious and solitary animals; though along the years, Max and I had done some amazing things together. It came down towards me, gave me a little nod with its head and laid down at my side. "Ah... Max my friend, you know... life is a heck of a journey...!", I said; "and I've been a little bit tense lately."

- "That's alright, no offense taken," he said while seeking some comfy spot, "I can see that anyway..."

- "Hmm... Yeah sure", I commented.

- "So! Where have you been, dude? It's been an eternity or two since you came here the last time," Max started, straight to the fucking point, as usual.

- "Well, you know how things go on all the time, dragging you off the tracks you know you should stick to?" I asked him.

- "Hrrmm... Not really," he admitted.

- "You don't know your luck, my friend," I replied.

- "Of course I know, dude... who do you think you're talking to?" he argued; and he was bloody right, obviously...

- "Anyway. How's Joe?" I asked.

- "He was pretty fine the last time I saw him; he was flying a bit lower than usual, he saw me and made some acrobatic moves to salute me. He's a true artist... But hey, let's not digress, what's your problem? Tell me," he insisted.

- "I'm just fed up of... all that bullshit, yunno...?" I started, "and when I say 'fed up', I'm just... polite, see?"

- "Hrrmm... Not so surprising, my friend, haven't I always told you such a level of agitation was unhealthy?" he reminded me.

- "Yeah! Sure, I know...", I admitted. "Now I can feel what you meant, in my very flesh, and it makes a huge difference with simply understanding it in principle."

- "Yes. That's how things work in this universe!" he confirmed. "That's also what I meant when I told you one could tell the biggest secrets of the universe to a crowd of willing students, it wouldn't change the least bit of them. Because, unless they have a way to make total sense of it from their own practical experience - their true personal power, it won't mean anything useful in practice for them. And the most likely probability is that, if it were actually the case for them, they wouldn't need to come and listen to someone telling them what they'd already know and practice on their own."

- "I hear you, my old friend", I commented, "but maybe I went too deep into their 'Open Land' to get back to the real world this time... Or yet, too 'open'... Maybe, I'm just definitely fucked up."

- "You ARE definitely fucked up anyway, whatever you think you can do to avoid it," he bluntly stated. And suddenly it struck me...

- "Ah yeah... you're right, Max. After all, it's just a ride, huh?"

- "Exactly! That's my dude!" he joyfully concurred.

I put my arms behind my head, and contemplating the landscape, I claimed: "Damn...! This place is so peaceful, dude. You're lucky to live 'round here." Max was about to say something but suddenly, I heard a strange voice at the bottom of the ridge we were sitting on. "... Pills...! Pills...!" It had some sort of cavernous echo that - somehow - didn't fit with the sound scape of our location. Max was definitely talking to me but I couldn't hear what he was saying. I told him: "Someone is calling my name down there!", indicating the bottom of the cliff with the tip of my finger. "... Pills...! Pills! ... What'ya're doing, man!" I walked a few steps downwards, trying to see who was down there, and when I turned back towards Max just to wave goodbye, I couldn't even see him anymore, there was too much wind and dust in the air... "PILLS!"

I woke up abruptly from that controlled dream session, bitterly understanding that - at some point - I had lost control... Lossy was molesting my shoulder, screaming my name like he wanted to wake me up from the dead. "PILLS!"

- "Fuck, man! Are you out of your fucking disrupted mind? Don't you see I'm dreaming?" I asked him, visibly pissed off, and my head still stuck right up in my shit hole.

- "Sorry mate... I didn't know what to do," he explained.

- "And what part of 'Never wake up a dreamer, unless their life's at stake' didn't you get?" I rhetorically asked, while quickly assessing my belongings: bed ok, desk, computer and guitar ok, wearables ok, anxiety busters ok. "Well, it seems everything's fine, nothing is on fire, doesn't feel like we're drifting or anything, so what the fuck...?!"

- "It's just that you told me if I saw Nepta," he began, "to tell her you had to see her face to face, and actually... I just saw her going towards the launching platform, and she said if you have to see her face to face you'd better hurry cause she's going for a 90 cycles' tour across the system and she's not even sure to come back here, 'cause - I dunno... - she wants to move to er... 'a more sensible location' or something like that... So, I thought, maybe it could - technically - be classified as a 'stake' your life could be at, somehow..."

- "Fuck! Thanks mate! Love ya..." and I was gone.

I swifted my ass off towards the launching platform. "Swifting" consisted of the subtle art of being on a rush in a low-gravity environment, and in this instance, the way was composed by several corridors and ladders and a couple of lifts. I finally dashed out of the last one of them into the main hall of the platform, from where people were guided to their departing ship by colored lines on the ground, walls and doors; of course, their identity and flight check-in information were ascertained by the different automated systems of the station, but I wasn't looking for a commercial-lined ordinary flight anyway, just for Nepta's small cargo-holder ship. I looked through the glass bay from where non-passengers could wave their relatives goodbye, while they were boarding on ships, hoping to spot Nepta's ship among the dozens of middle to super-sized vessels aligned along the cliffs of the huge chasm we called the "Great Rift". There was an opposite one, much smaller, at the other end of the ellipsoidal rock we were living on, in the middle of the asteroid belt, we called that other one the "Dork Rift", nobody knew why at that time. Fact is, it was still bare rock, only the big one had been used for architecturing the station around it, so that, from a certain distance, it could look like some weird kind of moss had grown only on one side of it. Then, several things happened roughly at the same time: I got my mind back online, I saw Nepta's ship docked on the third deck below me, and Nepta herself walking towards it, in the last corridor before the docking booth from which you can board the ship; so I mentally ordered an urgent instant message to her account saying: "Please wait for me, I'm just behind the departures' glass-bay, I'm coming to you!" - wondering why I hadn't used that sooner. I saw her receiving it, stopping and looking in my direction; we made eye contact and then she did the universal sign for "speed up your stupid ass!" with her fist so I got back to what I call 'my very best boosted swiftin'... When I finally got to her, I quickly checked that nobody could hear us because what I had to tell her required a certain level of secrecy; but first of all I had to make sure that what Lossy had said was just a joke, that she was actually coming back after her tour:

- "Nepta... *cough* *cough* Just tell me I'll see you again..." I barely blew out, completely out of breath.

- "Pills... Look at us! Now, consider what we are slowly adapting to...!" she said. "This is not the kind of life I... we wanted to live, my love; I need some space, some fresh air, big trees, running water, I want a place on what is our legitimate legacy, on our 'homeworld', on Earth! At the very least, I could be temporarily satisfied with something on Mars or on one of the last generation of moon bases on Mars' or Jupiter's satellites or even on the Moon itself, but I'm fed up with this rock, yunno! This is the very ass hole of the solar system, if we stay here, we're going to end up as two not-that-old senile perma-vegetables!"

- "Damn...!" I let drop. "Here we go again!" I thought... "We've already talked about that, sweetie, do you remember the price of land on Earth? We are out of their league, don't you get it? It's been designed that way, they don't want us there; so even if

you could find a way - and believe me, you couldn't - you'd spend the rest of your miserable life paying the high price for it and hearing on daily basis that you are no Earther anyway, that you should 'get back up home, into the void where you belong'... Besides, it's not completely false, 'cause our bodies are not fit for Earth's gravity and you'll have the hardest of times adapting to that (and I'd tend to assume some kind of similar situation for our minds). In addition to all this, I'd bet they don't lack pilots at all down there..."

- "Pfff! And how do you know that, huh?" she asked, with the associated typical attitude of the one who knows they can't be wrong. "Aww... you bastard...! Do you have any kind of plan to get us out of here anyway...?"

- "A plan?" I repeated as an educated parrot.

- "Yes! A plan! You know what's a plan, right?" she pushed.

- "Err... Well, technically no, I mean, yes I know what's a plan, but I don't have one right now. It's just that, I think I've found it!" I surreptitiously referred, once again after checking for attentive ears.

- "What are you talking about?" she inquired (you always hook 'em when you're surreptitious... Works everytime lads ;)).

- "The way in!" I said, "... To the old base!" I added.

- "What base?" she asked.

- "The secret base of the Cosmik Tribe! Don't you remember?" I urged her.

- "You mean, this is about that stupid legend you once told me about? You made me late on my flight schedule because of a fucking urban myth? Ok, Pills, forget about me, stay in Woowoo Land, I got work to do yunno, so as the adage says: 'hasta la vista baby'..." she threw all of it in one single breath, and she turned around, heading back to her ship.

- "Okay, you don't remember..." I muttered to myself; then I caught her up and told her: "You don't understand... What did they allegedly successfully invent...? Please! Work it out...!" I couldn't stand it anymore.

- "... What...? I don't know what you're referring to, and I'm just sick of that shit anyway, yunno? So, please, leave me alone...!" she said, half-disappointed, half-pissed-off, trying to get out of my grip. Though I couldn't let her go yet; I couldn't say it out loud, and so I had to tell her in her ear.

- "Tele...fucking...portation...!"; I whispered, sure that she will finally realise what we were standing on.

- "TELE...!" she tried to repeat but I stopped her right away.

- "Shhhh...!!"

- "Pills..." she began, watching her shoes first, then looking right into my eyes, "You are lost for my science... There's nothing I can do for you anymore, my love. Just... just take care of yourself, alright?"

- "Nepta... It can't all end like this"; I said, "it's too damn stupid; we're at an arm length of everything we've dreamt about together...! I don't get it, you were saying th..."

- "These were dreams! Dreams!" she flung out. "What part of it don't you get?! You need to come back - down - to your senses, Pills, you really do. After all those centuries, if it was really possible, don't you think they would have come up with something, at some point...? So, find something useful to do with your life, forget about that sci-fi bullshit, or you'll end up fucking crazy in some psychiatric orbital station, watching whatever planet's surface passing by..."

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- "Okay, listen..." I told her, "Go do your job, it will change your mind anyway and I won't be on your toes pissing you off with my 'fantasies'; but please, promise me to come back here, at least to say goodbye before moving elsewhere. Could you just do that?" I asked.

- "Aww, okay! Whatever... Bye dude." she finally uttered, after an eternal bunch of seconds... And she swifted promptly through her ship's dockstat's security booth. She was gone. 90 fucking cycles...

Notes

Updated on 2012.07.27 - few minor grammatical enhancements

Updated on 2018.01.16 - integrating ramonskian proofreading