

SERENA - A NOVEL ABOUT HELL

3 Paulina

Paulina and I were destined to be together. We met while on a ski trip up to Big Bear in early April, 1994. I was with a couple of buddies from med school — Jim Dresden and Dennis Sabine — and she had tagged along with her sister and her sister's boyfriend. I had seen the trio in front of us, and had noticed how super-cute the two girls looked all decked out in their crunchy-tight ski-bunny outfits. As we neared the lift, I slid my single blade up along side of the twin-bladed luscious looking dame who seemed to be by herself, where we promptly introduced ourselves. From the beginning she was completely natural, just the sweetest princess on the mountain, and I was enthralled.

"Enjoying your time with the love birds?" I began, with a smile and then a smirking nod towards her friends ahead.

"Nothing like sitting in on a honeymoon," she facetiously proclaimed with a minor "twitch-of-the-unexpected" coupled with a sprinkle of quiet delight. Her personality and aura already seemed to compliment the tasty façade of her scrumptious appearance. Her soft voice was warm and confident, just like the soothing rays that continually pour down from the almighty and glowing star that floats across our sacred sky every day. As if smiling its welcoming approval, this warming April morning was beginning, as well, to brighten and glow and bloom into a colorful Spring day full of the provocative splendors of youth.

"Hey, yeah," I chuckled a bit, forced, but genuine. "I'm Ethan." I sounded warbled, distant, and too loud. Like it wasn't me. Gusts of wind raked my face.

"I'm Paulina. That's my sister, Teri, and her boyfriend, Rich." This girl was automatic!

I glanced ahead at the two and caught them in a love nuzzle, tugging on and playfully poking each other, exchanging little ripples of innocent tickles. Teri threw a couple of quick and darting harmless glances in our direction. I looked back at Paulina in time to find a growing grin giving birth to a huge smile. The puzzled look on my face must have been evident.

"They're not actually married... yet. Just in a perpetual honeymoon. Yep, disgusting, believe you me, I know it."

"Hey, they look great together."

"Yeah," she mused. And then, "They just got engaged and have been celebrating nonstop every weekend. They made me come along on this spur of the moment ski trip — what with this unexpected snow storm." We slid forward a bit.

"Excellent."

"He proposed to her a couple weeks ago while they were out on Catalina Island. It sounded so beautiful," she almost whispered. "They were hiking on the backside of the island where the cliffs are and stopped to watch the sunset. And he pulled out her ring, ah (she let out this cute little gasp), you should see it, and he proposed to her."

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Teri and Rich were pushing forward and sliding up to the line, ready for the obedient lift chair to sneak up from behind and rudely whisk them off their frozen feet and up into the fresh breeze and warm sunlight beaming off the north face of the freshly dumped-on mountain. We were next.

On the Mountain High Silver Mountain lift, we chatted about work, and life in general here in Los Angeles, and decided to have lunch together when we got back down the mountain. We spent the rest of the day together, finding it very easy to get acquainted. This woman — Paulina — was like mother's milk to a baby; like clean, smooth, silken sheets on a freshly curated warm and waiting bed; like your softest smug socks swallowing up your burrowing and tired metatarsus; like a first waft of an opiated perfume of ionized L-DOPA settling over the nucleus accumbens in your brain's pleasure center; like the pitter-patter of precious praise itself. Paulina on parade was positively flooding my dopaminergic pathways with some of the purest serotonin proteins my hypothalamus had ever experienced! Like skin on a seal, this Paulina creature was undeniably devastating my Amygdala's ability to deliver decisive advice! Or to even remember why my hippocampus was so hungry and unequivocally perplexed, pondering such outlandish and placating platitudes of such an inane existential nature while peacefully promulgating the absurd notion of diving even deeper into the dizzying depths of this exquisite creature's soothing dopamine! I was on the dope train! Damn squared and Thrills cubed! Like jumping into a perfectly and comfortably warm sauna jacuzzi tub with that lavender body-salt tonic water our fleshy skin relishes in! That was our genesis.

That and This are not even *distant* cousins. Vehemently unrelated! Loathsome and bitter enemies. Strangers til the end. That was good, great. That was the *Glorious Period!* This doesn't even have a name for itself — a true bastard born out of the death of That. This is the Horrible Happening! We are driving full force and steering headlong into This, the Coming Horror! Fucking This! Damn squared and Hells cubed!

That was "all that" and more. That was an era of perpetual vernal genesis wherein every day was birthed a new and fascinatingly titillating delight that titivated each breath of love with fresh excitement! It was an era of perpetual 2:22 on my mind's onboard clock. The numerology of "222" portends a new beginning; a new cycle of expansion. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." [Lao Tzu] My step was a comprehensive leap out of selfishness and into THATness! Springtime is replete with ritual — cleaning, unpacking, refreshing, planting, procreation, replenishing, new growth, emergence, arrival, advent, dawn, and birth as if some wayfaring, virgin, Bohemian, gypsy girl endeavors to dance herself to death. Paulina's warmth and love poured out over every corner of my universe. Together we were dancing, living, floating, existing on the highest most elegant and majestic cloud perched on God's smile singing Heaven's Prelude! We were going to populate the world!

When Amber came to us Heaven lost an angel. The aphorism came with a sting though, as developmental milestones where not being met by 12 and certainly 18 months. An assessment pointed toward an autism spectrum disorder, or ASD. The most likely candidate: Aspergers.

Amber was always the center of our world. Amber had thrived in her environment and grew mentally and physically in leaps and bounds. Amber lived largely in her own little world, more-so than most two year olds. Amber was ready, and soon we were pregnant again... then, the accident! The horrible accident! Seven

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months pregnant — with Amber's unborn sister. *This is the Horrible Happening!* She never got to meet her sister. Her sister never got to meet the world. I lost three beautiful people. Why did *THIS* happen to them! What force participated!

Inside this torturous existence my daily writings had begun to manifest a vicious, sadistic disposition. Glancing back through my journal last night was striking. For over two hours I poured over my "Personal Reflections" notebook, the most recent one. I've kept these journals all my life and it's always interesting to see the evolution of my perception of the world and the drama within. I needed a fresh start. Reboot.

The Present Writer (P.W.) loves to peruse the writings of Ethan Alexander. If eyes are "windows" to the soul, then poetry and stream-of-consciousness writings are the insights and transcriptions of sentiments that sail on vessels of light through these "windows" to and from the mind. The P.W. will periodically shine and illuminate reflections through "windows" and share portions of the colorful insights that constantly swam freely through the mind of the doctor during the Glorious Period and beyond.

The COLLECTIVE Eye: (Havoc Admired)

All the time I love this life I make

What God brings is for us to take

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(Island of Saturation:)

My Impudent mind holds this body hostage
Unwilling to negotiate, the cage is chain'd
Angry and tender, Disturbed and tossed!
All love lost, life inflamed, hang all hope on a prayer
A wish is strain'd, the rose of despair

Would not the tide like to glide? (in the lofty ship of air)
Glide wide and divide my fractured pride? (slice the life of the beast's despair)
Pray for despair (an intrinsic parade of native nobility)
Face drowning deep inside! (the Burning Place of primal hostility)
I hate the life I hate the face I hate the fucking sick disgrace

If i had in my palette a sensual blade
i'd paint blood art across my façade
Until a gentle streak of laughter took pause
Quick is the wilt on the island of saturation

Life is but a mere mote —
A mote of the almost
Would it were that i had a brush!
Brilliant color would feed my lust!
Quick is the wilt from the island of saturation

The sweetest breath lures sleeping panic
Canvas leaps from my reach, manic
Drunken horrors drown sorrow filled hours
And again entreat cemetery flowers
Quick is the wilt in the island of saturation

Palpable terror and delicious horror
Will i stop when i die, or die when i stop?

Dispel the notion of placated unrest
While oceans of motion roil to a crest
Orthogonal moments in torrents cry out!
She sees in the seas the artist's buoyed doubt
Quick is the wilt, I'm saturated

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