



A tale of the sunken city

Takouhi Minassian

Magic

A pair of spectacles was seemingly glued to the window, and through them curious, hazel-coloured eyes observed the glass buildings, an outer glass elevator, and glass-like sky.

Through her eyes, she was fantasizing that she could penetrate through the window and could reach out to the sky.

A deafening sound like an African elephant's trumpet provoked Aurora's imagination. A message in neon letters appeared on the sky:

"You will see an ancient sign, cuneiform writing."

Aurora adjusted the plastic-rimmed spectacles on her pointed nose, grabbed her notebook and coat, and ran out toward the bridge.

Glittering snowflakes fell soundlessly, taking their time before they reached their destined places of rest. The snow was damp; every step felt like walking in mud.

Lusiya was marching in place to stay warm when she saw her friend approaching and waved at her eagerly.

"Aurora, hurry up," Lusiya said. "This terrible sound makes me panicky. Where does it come from?"

"The creaking sound travels here from that glass building that's shaped like a melon," Aurora explained. "A glass elevator is docked on a metallic meridian that moves vertically along the melon building and causes this irritating sound in the upper registers."

Lusiya was following the sketchy description when Aurora amused her even more.

“Whilst I was contemplating the glass world around us, my gaze touched the sky that resembles glass. The clouds seem to pass from amorphous gas to a solid, amorphous state like glass. My greatest focus was on the glassy sky in neon letters: “You will see on ancient signs, cuneiform writing...”

Lusiya looked at her girlfriend as snow sat heavy on Aurora’s glasses and she wiped them with her handkerchief. The snow was now harsh and biting. Lusiya felt as though arrows struck her fingers, her eyelids, and slammed into her upper lip.

The friends continued to the other side of the bridge to the main road. They crossed the road and went down the small streets leading to the gallery.

They opened the heavy door of a modern exhibition and found themselves in an empty room with a bed in the middle and scattered on it a nightgown, a book, and the quilt hanging off the bed to the floor.

Lusiya stared with astonishment. She wasn’t expecting such a praised modern exhibition. She turned around, but Aurora was not there. She continued along a corridor in a pale-white light and scent of violets.

“Hurry up, come and see something that describes my understanding of ‘fashion in the imagination,’” announced Aurora, waiting for her friend at the end of the corridor.

A strange figure of huge size filled almost the entire space of a room with a high Victorian ceiling.

“This is a tesseract,” whispered Aurora, “the four-dimensional analogue of the cube.”

Small clockwork mechanisms were found on the top of each angle of the figure, and they were ticking like a wall clock.

“The tesseract has a hypersurface with eight cubic cells,” whispered Lusiya.

Tick tock, tick tock... The ticking was even, and the cells began to move.

Letters emerged between the various cells that assembled a title: “A Tale of the Sunken Town.”

The title approached the young guests of the gallery, tinged their foreheads gently as a light breeze, moved past their faces, and disappeared.

There was a noise, a screech. The tesseract resembled a turquoise-blue lake. Aurora dived, followed by her friend, with a sense of lightness and no need for oxygen masks.

They explored the underwater world with its legacy oxygen of millions of years ago. They passed by freshwater fish, jellyfish, vegetation, and pebbles before they came to a church bell. The bell was made of a heavy alloy, and its rounded surface had hieroglyphs and Byzantine numbers engraved. It was positioned like a pot lid on a pink, rocky material.

Aurora was trying to read, but unsuccessfully, and Lusiya passed the remains of buildings, tree trunks with hundreds of layers...

Their mysterious swim in the sunken city continued. They were passing floating copper finds; a strange alloy in blue and silver, like belt hinges; helmets; sculptures; and remnants of monuments; again with these strange inscriptions and signs.

Lusiya touched everything she came close to and decided she would take a little treasure. She instinctively squeezed her hand as the trumpet sound came back to her.

Lusiya was out of the tesseract and stared at Aurora, who was looking for her glasses, fumbling for them as touched the floor and the walls.

On leaving the gallery, Aurora reached into her pocket and pulled her plastic specs out.

The cold grew when the two friends had already crossed the half of the bridge and the trumpet sound emerged again.

Aurora wiped her glasses and looked up at the sky:

“UTRARU.”

“UTRARU,” repeated Lusiya with chattering teeth. “That’s the mirror image of URARTU—look down on the frozen river.”

Aurora hugged her friend.

“The sunken city is in the kingdom of Urartu,” she said, and her gaze stopped on her girlfriend’s little fist.

“Why don’t you open your hand? Your ungloved fingers will freeze. What do you hide?”

Lusiya slowly opened her hand, but there was nothing in it.

“Aurora, all the time I thought I had taken a little cross from the lake. It was made of metal wires, like lace,”

Lusiya whimpered.

“You carry it in your heart. It belongs to our predecessors,” answered the little philosopher friend.

Lusiya still felt the impression of the cross on her fragile palm. Her heart beat with the rhythm of a wall clock.

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