

PSYCHE: CONVERSATIONS

A Series of One-Act Plays

By

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For Psyche, our soul in space.

**THE ONE IN WHICH THERE ARE NO MIRRORS
LARGE ENOUGH AND SO WE MUST FIND ANOTHER
KIND OF REFLECTION**

[NARRATOR is sitting cross-legged on the moon. EARTH spins and spins. As they chat, NARRATOR skips rocks across the sky when waiting for EARTH to come back around.]

EARTH

Tell me, what have you found that has you so curious about that asteroid out there?

NARRATOR

Do you know what a mirror is?

EARTH

I do. Though, there has never been one large enough for me.

NARRATOR

We have found the reflection of your soul out there.

EARTH

I am discovering myself.

NARRATOR

But, there are limits. Why do you think we have invented mirrors? X-rays? Made ourselves see-through? We want to know.

EARTH

You are always wanting. Why are you wanting to know me?

NARRATOR

It's our nature, isn't it? To ache to discover. Your center is unexplored territory. Too hot, your heart is.

EARTH

And Psyche is what you're looking for in me?

NARRATOR

We think so. As they say, "When you cannot search within, you must explore without."

EARTH

Who says that?

NARRATOR

We do. I do.

EARTH

If I knew your language, I would help.

NARRATOR

I know. But, you know only the language of yourself. It's alright. We have found another way.

EARTH

I see.

NARRATOR

We hope to see soon.

EARTH

You and your hope. It warms me.

(EARTH spins slowly. NARRATOR skips a rock. One, two, three, four. The EARTH comes back.)

I bless you. Go off in search of my reflection. I would love to know what it feels like to be see-through.

THE ONE IN WHICH WE MEET A CHILD AND THEIR EYES TURN SKYWARD FOR THE 100,000TH TIME BUT THIS TIME IT IS DIFFERENT

[A CHILD is laying back in the grass in an infinite field. Her hands tangle in the grass. Above there is sky. The NARRATOR sits nearby, smiling.]

CHILD

What is so great about the sky?

NARRATOR

It is endless.

CHILD

So is this field. The ocean. So am I.

NARRATOR

It is unknown.

CHILD

So am I. You don't even know my name.

NARRATOR

It is new, every single day.

CHILD (*shrugging*)

So am I. Yesterday, I liked pink. Today it hurts to look at.

NARRATOR

Out there in the distance is an asteroid made of the same stuff as what's miles below your hands. A soul out in the darkness, and we want to know what it looks like.

(CHILD drops the grass in her fingers, some of it clinging. She tilts skyward.)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It is out there, aching to be known.

CHILD (softly)

I know how that feels.

NARRATOR

That's what's so great about the sky.

CHILD

Does it have a name?

NARRATOR

Psyche.

CHILD (mouthing silently)

Psyche. Psyche. Psyche.

THE ONE IN WHICH THE DISCOVERER SPEAKS TO THE DISCOVERED

[DE GASPARIS sees something in the distance and names it after the soul.]

DE GASPARIS

I have studied numbers. Engineering. The mechanics of the sky. The classics of literature. I have discovered others like you. Named them after a ruling family. A Greek siren. One was named after a nymph. The most recent one, I named after order and law. The way of things, all of them in their rightful place.

But, you. I know nothing of you, and yet I must name you something special. Different. What else do we know nothing of?

(DE GASPARIS thinks of it then. A simultaneous discovery. A name that means everything.)

I will name you Psyche. Psyche. Goddess of the soul, out there among the stars. Safe and star-lit and beautiful. Tell me, is there anything better to name you?

**THE ONE IN WHICH THE EARTH AND PSYCHE
PLAY GO-FISH**

[There is a table. A stack of cards in the center. EARTH sits at one side. PSYCHE sits at the other. They each have a hand of cards in front of them.]

EARTH

Do you have any iron?

(PSYCHE hands a card over.)

PSYCHE

Do you have any nickel?

(EARTH hands a card over.)

EARTH

Do you have any nickel?

(PSYCHE hands a card over.)

PSYCHE

Do you have any iron?

(EARTH hands a card over.)

EARTH (sighing)

This is useless. We have the same cards.

PSYCHE

Same core.

EARTH

Maybe. You look different than me, though.

PSYCHE

There was an accident. I am a survivor.

EARTH

Ah! You're hope.

**THE ONE IN WHICH WE CONVINCED A STRANGER
ON AN ELEVATOR TO DREAM**

[STRANGER enters the elevator on the 16th floor. NARRATOR is already inside. They nod to each other. STRANGER asks NARRATOR why he's in the building. NARRATOR begins to talk about Psyche.]

STRANGER

Oh, yeah? What's all that going to cost?

NARRATOR

In comparison to other things? It's low-cost. But, I'm more concerned with what it'll cost us if we don't go.

STRANGER

Meaning?

NARRATOR

All those possibilities. Knowledge. The wonder. Isn't that what we should be seeking?

STRANGER

Sure. In my dreams, maybe. But this is reality.

NARRATOR

This is a chance for the dream to seep through. Do you have any children?

STRANGER (lighting up)

We've got a baby on the way. Any day now and she'll be here.

NARRATOR

Don't you want her to be surrounded by wonder?

STRANGER

More than anything.

NARRATOR

Then we must keep finding wonderful things.

(Then, between them, an understanding.)

THE ONE IN WHICH PSYCHE INVITES US TO TEA

[NARRATOR speaks to PSYCHE. PSYCHE speaks back.]

NARRATOR

How does it make you feel, knowing that we are coming?

PSYCHE

No one has ever seen me up close. I think I want that. To be seen. I don't know what that feels like.

NARRATOR

Sometimes it is scary. Mostly, it is kind. To be seen is to be known.

PSYCHE

I want that, more than anything.

NARRATOR

The whole world is going to see you, after this.

PSYCHE

And love me?

NARRATOR

And find hope in you.

PSYCHE

Even better.

NARRATOR

So, can we come? Will you give us permission? Let us see you up close? We promise we won't touch you.

PSYCHE

Now? You must. You *must*.

About Psyche

Psyche is both the name of an asteroid orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter – and the name of a NASA space mission to visit that asteroid, led by Arizona State University. The mission was chosen by NASA on January 4, 2017 as one of two missions for the agency's Discovery Program, a series of relatively low-cost missions to solar system targets.

To learn more about Psyche and the Psyche Mission – A Mission to a Metal World, visit:
<https://psyche.asu.edu/>

