

The Deeper Magic

by [Lucius Falkland](#) (December 2023)



Alone (Elles)– Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1896

The Deeper Magic

That Sunday as you slept I simply lay
Awake. I felt the fur coats in a row.
I saw that ornate lamppost far away.
The chilling air; the crunch of frozen snow.
For so long, I'd been certain this was right,
Now trees were spikes, all love had turned to stone.
Like that fawn, I shivered through the night:
A Yule-less winter once more spent alone.

You snapped. You couldn't cope with all the lying
Anymore; the double life, the fear, the looks.
It must all be sacrificed, like Aslan dying,
Though what we'd done was not for children's books.
Like those children, for a while, I remained there.
Your Jadis-spell brought winter to my mind,
Sub-zero cold below what I could bear;
Regret our frosty branches ever twined.

But in spiritual love, as there, time goes fast.
Soon I heard that gush of water, all the snow-melt.
A daffodil was pushing up at last.
There'd been a change but still we both felt
Completeness. It can't be placed on the stone table.
Let the cynics scoff they've "heard the tale before
And know how it ends" but they're unable
To understand. It's like a deeper magic; a more ancient law.

Orangutans in Tweed

I assumed that I would feel a sense of pity.
At the very least, I thought I'd slightly care
To see you in the flesh, with her there gazing
Into my eyes, but you had such manky hair!
Five foot four, perhaps? You couldn't have been taller.
You wore glasses, and you weren't exactly thin.
And why that beard that aged you by a decade?
To hide yourself? Perhaps a double chin?

What was that self? The conference all around us
Full of friendly chaps, you scoffed at with disdain.
Disgusted by a world you thought inferior.
Was it all just a way to cope with shame?
Shame about resembling Mr Tumnus?
Shame your life all came to you on a plate
From "Daddy": Cut-glass job and all the contacts?

Shame I was there? Did you know it was too late?

Like an insecure orang-utan, albeit dressed in tweed,
You kissed her, but she smiled in my direction.
You hugged her and smirked at me, faux-confident.
Was I watching infidelity detection?
How much had you intuited? Surely, something.
As if love ever happens at first sight
It happened with your girlfriend and this family man
When we met at 5pm that winter night.

Now, I'm never going to walk out on my children
And pregnancy by you gives her the "the Ick."
Scared of being alone, you just got lucky:
You're helpful to her career. This may sound rather sick
But she's a hatched a plan. I've met you. I'm persuaded.
You can raise it. Please make "Daddy" proud. Our problems are
all solvable.
I knew it as I watched you sneer at all those genuine faces:
I have never met a man who's so eminently cuckoldable.

The Friendly Folk of the Border

I watched as your eyes became opaque
I could see the change; perhaps a sense of hatred.
To you, it was so clear. You felt awake.
Your deepest fears and me were now conflated.
A thoughtless remark, a flippant tone,
From the one you love, who soothes you, brings such glee.
"He's let me down. Will I end up alone?!"
"I'm at the edge and he does this to me!"

Nothing ever hit me quite so hard:
"I can't do this anymore! I can't! I'm sorry!"
Before long the world was opaque shards.
I was part of it, a threat, and every worry,
Even rational ones, all suddenly mutated,

Into the nuclear winter you saw ahead.
You were thrown from guilt, to ruthlessness, to hatred.
Eventually you wept upon our bed.

Next afternoon, you'd left me on the train,
You'd fixed the glass a bit, spent time together,
When I realised I didn't feel the same
About you anymore. I wondered whether
I had actually fallen out of love with you.
I told myself you'd had a "BPD
Psychotic Episode" and that I clearly knew
You were ultimately dangerous to me.

My spiritual double's nymphet shell
Hid something without feeling; something black.
I realised that I had tasted Hell
With this girl. I was a saint under attack.
She'd caused this: The betrayal; all the guilt.
How could I? Was I somehow not awake?
The numbness then the anger that I felt:
Is it possible my eyes became opaque?

I would finish it. Repent of what I'd done.
I'd abase myself, genuflect; confess.
She was threatening, unstable, to be shunned.
There was no such thing as "true love," just "prelest."

"I'm very sorry about everything." All it took
Was your note to bring me back to mental health.
But watching you that night had made me look
Into the darkest aspects of myself:
The despondency that sometimes overcomes me,
The fear of ending up alone,
The rage that only those I love see:
A thoughtless remark, a flippant tone.

In love, there's no power like similarity,
When you know that you are her and she is you,

But sometimes it can bring such frightening clarity
About what you are and the things that you could do.

Come On, Slow Coach!

Furtive, hoping the trespass warnings were for the cars,
We made our way through the Kings Lynn docks,
Through every grimy marker of reality:
International paper factories, reeking shellfish concerns,
To the autumn grassland by the River Ouse.
I walked behind you
And entered our own world at a specific moment
As if the lady's hand had emerged from the dredged waters.

"Come on, slow coach!"
Your tone was teacherly,
One of those kindly teachers, calmed by age.
Almost twenty years younger,
I was surprised you knew the phrase.
It transported me.

The dredger was a horse-drawn barge.
The sludgy waters danced with sunlight.
I saw the Georgian windmill
I visited on a school trip, aged five.
The millers gave me a grain of corn.
It was good luck.
I should never lose it.
The coach back to school broke down three times.

"Come on, slow coach!"
A gleaming past merged with the "if only,"
A life that could have been,
By the Ouse, we were outside our real selves,
We could be a couple there,
Until forced to return to the factories and silos.

Proposing on the Moon

Our childhoods screamed at both of us that something wasn't right.

Aurora green on darkness, we felt we were insane.

We watched the others, confident, await love at first sight

But when someone professed they loved us, perhaps it wouldn't come again.

Not invited to those birthdays, we settled, out of fear,

For a cosy central heated house, though something was awry:

Ikea-furnished, white-washed walls; little intimacy here,

Mere glimmers of that celestial night that makes poets want to die,

Until we found each other, amid props from the theatre:

Skeletons, Green Men, ghosts; that pub would make old ladies swoon.

Family far away, him working, we could once more be together

In our other world. Our booth was a glittering crescent moon.

I bigamously proposed a Gnostic marriage to you that night.

If we can't be legally wed on earth, let the bells ring on its satellite.

[Table of Contents](#)

Lucius Falkland is the *nom de plume* of a writer and academic from London.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)