

Quis hic locus

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by [SLWalker](#)

Summary

(2250) - Corry hauls out the poetry (again); Scotty tries to keep up.

Notes

Even though Eliot wrote *Marina* from the point of view of Pericles, he set it on Casco Bay, Maine. This story also references the story 'Ground Swell', which took place in 2247.

“Okay, so the poem opens with a quote, right? Eliot’s quoting Hercules via Seneca asking *where am I?* But the rest of the poem takes inspiration from the point of view of Pericles.”

Scotty blinked over at Cor, bemused. “What are ye even on about?” he asked, feeling like he’d missed a chunk of conversation he had been expected to participate in.

Corry was holding a new copy of the works of T.S. Eliot he’d picked up from Sherman’s, along with their coffees and fancy toast, and gestured with the book in one hand and his coffee in the other. “The poem *Marina*. It’s a direct reference to the daughter of Pericles -- one of Shakespeare’s protagonists -- but like pretty much everything Eliot writes, it’s also introspective. *What seas what shores what gray rocks and what islands--*”

They were sitting on one of the benches overlooking the Damariscotta; Scotty had sat on that same bench many times, usually while Cor was up here shopping and he just wanted to relax and maybe pick his way through a tech journal. Now, though, they were neither of them in any hurry to go anywhere; it was a fine day, bright and warm, and they were waiting for Abby this time, who was still in the bookstore.

And somehow, this ended up in-- literary discussion? A lecture on poetry by Professor Corrigan? Scotty had no clue, but he sipped on his coffee and listened.

--both parts ask basically the same thing. *Where am I, what kingdom is this, what quarter of the world?* Hercules asks after waking from his delusional state, having driven arrows into his children and wife. But also, so asks Pericles. And so asks *Eliot*. And-- I think, so asks the reader,” Corry went on, getting more animated. Scotty reached over and liberated his brother’s coffee, which was threatening to exit the travel cup for one of their laps.

Not that Cor noticed. “It’s one of Eliot’s most optimistic poems, at least according to analysts. And-- I think I agree. I’ve noticed different things about it every time I’ve read it, as I get older.” So said the thirty-year-old. “But-- I don’t think it’s optimism in the straightforward *happy, upbeat* sense.”

Scotty set the coffee out of the way. Every once in awhile, Corry would haul out some kind of poetry, but the last time he’d quoted Eliot had been three and a half years ago, roundabout. That recitation had made him shiver; as neutral as Scotty was on poetry, he never forgot that.

“So-- what d’ye mean?” he asked, part indulgence, part curiosity.

“Pericles finds his long-lost daughter, who he thought was dead,” Corry said, looking down at the book, voice softening. “He’s been adrift for a long time, and now he’s an old man; as he says:

“What is this face, less clear and clearer

"The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger--

"Given or lent?" Cor recited. "But that's not the end, either. Because he finds his daughter, but-- well, listen:

"Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat.

"I made this, I have forgotten

"And remember.

"The rigging weak and the canvas rotten

"Between one June and another September.

"Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.

"The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.

"This form, this face, this life

"Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me

"Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,

"The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships."

Corry was good at recitation; he could fall into the rhythm of the words. And just like the last time, it made Scotty shiver, a quick thrill up his spine and across his shoulders.

"Theory being that he, worn out and threadbare, comes back to the world and his daughter and accepts this as a new beginning," Cor murmured. "But I think that what he's reaching for is-- closure. The hopeful new beginning for his daughter, but also peace in his own ending."

"And that's optimistic?" Scotty asked, skeptical, after a long moment of trying to work through it.

"Yeah," Corry said, thoughtfully, looking across the river. "I think it is."

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