

Perihelion

Perihelion marked a pivotal moment in the story, where the characters grappled with profound personal loss while seeking new horizons. Sol, devastated by the recent death of Papa Griff, found herself emotionally shaken but chose to conceal her sorrow from others. Her grief was channeled into a vehement hatred of the lake, the very body of water that had claimed the lives of her two uncles and now, tragically, Griff. This intense animosity became a symbol of the unresolved grief that haunted her, making the lake feel like an unyielding enemy. In contrast, Girard, Sol's companion, mourned in silence, not voicing his sorrow but clearly affected by the loss in his own way. Meanwhile, Evelyn, who was also struggling with the weight of grief, took refuge in the kitchen, perhaps trying to distance herself from the emotional storm that surrounded them. An hour later, the group ventured into the northern forest, carrying with them a picnic basket. They stumbled upon a peaceful clearing surrounded by tall, fragrant cedars, a calm sanctuary that provided a moment of solace. In the center of this tranquil place, they discovered stone markers that resembled obelisks, each one standing as a silent tribute to the lost members of their community. Evelyn explained that the land had been set aside as a burial site by a local landowner, who had wished to honor the unclaimed body of her late husband by burying him here, away from any formal cemetery.

Though Sol was steadfast in her hatred for the lake, the group opted to picnic beneath the shade of the cedars, hoping that the peaceful surroundings would provide some form of emotional respite. The narrator, however, was drawn to a different kind of journey. Feeling a deep pull toward the unknown, he chose to sail to the Slate Islands during perihelion, the time when the Tashi comet would make its spectacular appearance. While Jolie was hosting a vibrant local festival filled with music and festivities, the narrator longed for something more. He believed that the journey out to sea would offer him the opportunity to encounter something meaningful, something that went beyond the temporary pleasures of a festival. Evelyn and Girard, ever supportive, provided him with supplies from their extensive library, equipping him for the journey. Upon reaching the Slate Islands, he was greeted by wildlife that evoked cherished memories, sparking feelings of nostalgia for a time when life felt simpler and more carefree. As night fell, however, the clouds obscured the comet, and the narrator found himself caught in the stillness of the island. Rather than engaging in his usual activities of reading or making music, he decided to simply embrace the quiet and enjoy the ambiance of the island. The peaceful solitude of the night provided a sense of calm, and the absence of the comet did little to detract from the beauty of the moment.

The following day, the narrator ventured out to explore the beach, noticing wildlife tracks scattered across the sand, yet the island itself seemed deserted. A storm began to roll in, bringing heavy rainfall and a deep sense of isolation. As the rain intensified, the narrator retreated into the shelter of his small quarters, resigned to a quiet evening indoors. He made a simple stew and enjoyed the last jar of preserves from his supplies, savoring the simplicity of the meal. As he settled down to rest, he was swept away into a dreamlike vision of his friends, their faces changing with the passage of time, showing them a decade into the future. This vision stirred both nostalgia and hope within him, awakening a desire for the connections he once had and the future that lay ahead. The storm continued through the night, but by dawn, the rain ceased, leaving behind a sense of renewal and a desire to return home. As he made his way back toward Jolie, he learned of the changes that had taken place in the community. The arrival of Rachel, a new bassist, brought a fresh energy to the local music scene. Her unique sound filled the air with a sense of melancholy and wonder, and the narrator found himself captivated by her performance. This new vibrancy stood in stark contrast to his own simpler approach to music, and it sparked a new appreciation for the beauty of change and growth. As the Tashi comet reappeared overhead, the narrator made his way toward the lively gathering at Jolie, reflecting on how often he had overlooked the beauty that surrounded him. The events of the past few days had offered him new insights into life, loss, and the unrecognized moments of beauty that could transform even the simplest of journeys.