

I Met a Man, Tonight...

Judith Nolan



I met a man, tonight. Even as I write those words, the whole event has already taken on the aspect of a mystery I cannot explain. I was walking in the park, with every happening, every sound, clear to me. As they have always been. But his approach I did not hear, until it was too late.

I think he saw and assessed me, in a single moment, and made up his mind to talk to me. He stepped forward willingly, showing no fear. I was shocked to be so freely accosted by a stranger. But then he did match me for height and size. His easy, self-confidence appeared boundless.

On a deep, unfathomable level, I felt I knew him. He said he'd come from the raucous party raging at the Tavern behind him. He'd left the event to enjoy his cigar, and the peace of the moonlight. He seemed to be deeply aware of the same sense of kinship I instinctively felt for him.

He told me he was a native New Yorker, as I am. An actor, it seems. By my clothing, he took me for one, as well. I smiled at that. I've been told I am many things, but this was a new aspect of my habitual clothing I had never considered!

He said his name was Ron Perlman, and he offered me his help if I was looking for acting work. He was generous, and open-handed in his offer. I declined, of course, even as I tried to explain my own circumstances. He appeared to understand my words. He wasn't offended, even as he shrugged off my refusal, easily. He said we could return to the party at the Tavern. We'd share a meal, and continue our conversation.

I wanted to stay and talk to him, even as I also wished to withdraw, to consider all that had happened, between us. He seemed to understand my reluctance to stay.

He detained me with an out-stretched hand, only looking to take mine in warm farewell. It would have been rude not to accept, so I shook hands with him, glad of the concealment of my stout leather gloves.

I made my escape as quickly as good manners allowed. But the powerful image of the man stayed with me, all the way home to the safety of my chamber. I sit here now, not sure of this odd meeting, and its implications.

I cannot share any of this strange, new encounter with Father. He will only rail against what he sees as my carelessness, and disregard for the dangers of going Above. The perils of talking to complete strangers.

I am deeply aware that Father worries for me. But must I always be caged, here in the tunnels, never to be able to never to be able to be a part of something more than the narrow limits my life now offers me?

My thirty-first birthday has already passed without fanfare. There is still so much of life that I wish to experience. Am I always to be limited, and controlled, by circumstances beyond my control? I wish I knew the truth...

Vincent

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