

## What Lies Beyond the Edge, Beyond the End?

Selene floats in a milky electric-blue sea, her gray eyes open. Towers from the power plant and billowing clouds curl around the edges of her vision, surreal and strangely familiar. Aditi drifts nearby, eyes closed, seeking a private world. The water laps against her flushed cheeks.

They find their hired car waiting in the silvery mist. Selene remembers her sixth-grade geography teacher as they drive. He loved to joke that Iceland was green and Greenland was icy. *Not in March*, she thinks. *Iceland in March is as beautiful and desolate as the moon.*

Selene and Aditi have an entire farmhouse to themselves in Fljótssdalur, . By dusk, their initial delight has faded into a vague and crawling discomfort. The staggering views of the glacier-capped volcano Vatnajökull have been devoured by the night; the world beyond has fallen away. None of the doors lock, though their fears are not the kind that can be locked out. They leave again at dawn, Aditi now driving, though she stalls on steep hill and cannot restart, so they frequently switch places. Selene knows then that she will never teach her children to drive.

The girls stop to watch icebergs drift out of the bay in Jökulsárlón. Soon they will be specters. Aditi offers a gentle prayer, an apology to ancient gods in an ancient land. They drive deeper into the eastern fjords. It begins to snow steadily. Selene's knuckles are white on the wheel, but she keeps going, toward the edge of the world.

As they descend, the moon rises over Seyðisfjörður. The sight surprises Selene. She was expecting a different orb.

At Lake Myvatn, they stand still among the craters. Outside the cave Grjótagjá, an ominous sign warns that the spring has been known to boil abruptly. Inside, Aditi takes a picture. The surface flashes - a black mirror, reflecting the stalactites above in shades of blue, green and gray. Selene cannot see where one begins and the other ends. *What do we know of the oldest things, in the deep places of the world?*

Aditi kneels, whispering another prayer, a blessing. Something compels her to touch the surface, to break the spell.

Selene was wrong. The water is clear, the cave fathomless. When she leaves, she is alone.

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Selene opened her eyes to a pale blue glow and a pattern of obsidian hexagons. She stretched, letting the memories settle and set.

She swiped her palm against the wall, changing the hexagons from opaque to crystalline. She could see Earth hovering beyond, neither rising nor setting. It gleamed blue-green and red-violet against the ebony void.

Selene reached for a tablet. She needed to reproduce the images from her dream before the detail faded. The sketches went to the architects and engineers, those survivors with the expertise and arrogance to recreate one of Earth's most singular landscapes here on the moon. *Maybe then, she thought, the ancient gods would return.*

She tried but found that she could only draw Aditi's face.