

# MUTATIO 1933

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*To my family*

## **Mūtātio**

mūtātio, mutatiōnis, f:  
*change, transformation, exchange*

## Background

New York, 1915. The entire city was ready for the opening ceremony of *Nova Vita*.

Among those present: the mayor, several political officials, journalists, an orchestra for the occasion, photographers from all over the world, and Times Square packed to the rafters in the pouring rain. They were all waiting for one person, the man of the moment, the one who, as the New York Times reported, “succeeded in obtaining the formula for immortality”.

“Make way! Make way!” the police officers whistled as a man concealed by several bodyguards made his way to the stage.

“It’s Adam West!” someone shouted.

A tall, distinguished man in his forties walked up to the podium; he had slicked-back hair, dark clothing and an ebony cane he used to help him walk; the handle of the cane: red. The music stopped.

“Ladies and gentlemen, citizens of the Big Apple, from today the shackles that force us to follow only one path in this life will be loosened. I am giving you all the keys to a future filled with possibilities”.

With those words he left the stage, as the red ribbon was cut, amid thunderous applause and the flashing of cameras.

The purpose of *Nova Vita* (that was the name of the newly established foundation) was to give everyone the chance to choose and make changes to their own life at any time. Through cutting-edge technology and with government help, bordering on the limits of formal legality, you could instantly change your occupation, social status and even your body in a radical way, through a process called *Mutatio*.

This latter aspect was the most popular and became a global phenomenon. Men and women from all over the world were travelling from distant countries to America to enjoy the benefits of *Nova Vita*.

Top industrialists, actors, world-famous sports figures, politicians: they all wanted to renew their own selves in the way that suited them best.

The most striking case was the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Terence Whitaker, who had been left paralysed in an accident and was able to restore his body to its original condition.

In exchange, one clause bound clients to forget anything to do with the process so that no one could duplicate it. Also, due to the complexity of the procedure, the patient was required to remain in the institution under observation for a fortnight before returning to a normal social life.

Those who could afford the foundation's services were living in unrestrained luxury, beyond the reach of the law and bureaucratic restraints, and the sums involved were truly colossal; it was enough to consider that just changing profession required a payment of tens of thousands of US dollars, reaching more than a hundred thousand dollars for body transmutation. Figures well beyond the reach of the

ordinary citizen.

Yet, the government was captivated by *Nova Vita* and the figure of West because of his extensive financial aid. So, a few years after the launch, it became the cultural and political centre of the country through funding and various political endorsements, and Adam West the most influential public figure at the turn of the century.

New York was renamed Nova York and in 1930, the Nova Empire Building was built as the new centre of the foundation. On the top of the building, a huge hourglass was built that would rotate twice a day, so that the sand inside would begin to fall again, an idea its creator wanted to represent a new beginning after the end.

Art Deco was chosen as the reference architectural style for everything that represented the *Nova Vita*. Between sunbeams and zig-zag motifs, aerodynamic shapes and sweeping curves, Adam West's architectural empire brought forward the idea of resourcefulness and looking to the future, which he made his trademark.

The symbol of the foundation: two serpents intertwined to form an hourglass.

Adam West only appeared in public a few times in the years to come, which led to the extreme idealisation of his persona among the ruling class. He was looked upon as a saint. One who, as they said, had divine powers.

But what West had created was only the beginning of the end.

A few years earlier, in 1926, a group of revolutionaries called "Truth" was covertly formed, their aim being to overthrow the now corrupt and uncontrolled system and restore the scale of values of life itself. Leading this group

was leader Ronja Brown, who began rallying followers who were determined to wage a civil war to stop Adam West before his Company was able to take total control over the rest of the country.

In the face of this threat, West had the full support of the government in creating his own chosen militia, which he dubbed “the Serpents”.

Under this guise, his men took possession of the city and became, in all respects, the main monitoring authority and established a real regime of terror.

In 1932, Ronja was captured and all traces of her were lost.

The fire of the revolution continued to burn, even if without her guidance. Until a year later, when everything changed.