

ELEVEN
THE OSANTIAN WHAMMY

What thereafter became known as the Osantian Whammy involved two epic episodes in the history of the three villages. One was the heroism of Ollallie and Jeremy. The other was the arrival of the Sages of Osanto and the making of the Manifesto of Mystifu.

For as earlier both Ollallie and Jeremy had been sent to Snarlsgrrrr for undercover work as spies, they did indeed meet up in Snarlsgrrrr, work together, become lovers, and as they slipped in and out of the tunnel into Snarlsgrrrr that Jeremy had discovered they learned much to feed back to Osanto for analysis.

They were first amazed to find that the tunnel was not the only one. Indeed, it was apparently the least of scores, even possibly hundreds, of tunnels spread out throughout the mountain in some kind of vast mining operation.

Their next report was of the use of a new kind of ComConBot Snarlsgrrrrr was employing as miners. Goggle-eyed, spindly, stripped of everything that bore any resemblance to a human, they chiefly looked like giant ants. They further seemed to possess the enormous strength of insects, which for their size makes humans look puny in comparison.

Wondering what might account for this uncanny strength, they captured one and hauled it back through the tunnel for analysis. But though the source was isolated to what seemed to be some kind of motor within the fat insect torso, just as with the shield that blocked penetration of the Snarlsgrrrrian secret chamber by the Osantian special powers, again

they found themselves up against a technology too far beyond them for understanding.

They were at first worried the ComConBots might detect them. But soon could see these giant ants weren't able to see, hear, or report strange humans moving among them. Tramping by in ever larger silent hordes, dutifully digging, digging, digging, they were apparently programmed to do nothing but dig and haul out debris from the tunnels.

As time went by Ollallie and Jeremy were ever more astounded by the extent of the tunneling. At first they tried to map it, but finally gave up before the task—all they could say was there seemed to be thousands of tunnels where originally they had thought there were only scores.

The mystery further deepened with analysis of ore samples back to Osanto. "It's coal for sure," the lab reported, "but why on earth they could want so much of that dirty stuff is beyond us."

As the days went by, Ollallie and Jeremy found they only had to be on the look out for the occasional Snarlsgrrrrian human who wandered in to tune up or repair disabled ComConBot slaves.

Then came the day Ollallie knew for sure. There was no way to further avoid it.

For weeks she had ached to tell him she was pregnant. Many times she almost did, but then held back for fear he would insist she leave him and go back to safety in Osanto.

Then came the shock of finding Hilda. So fast did the Snarlsgrrrrian strong woman move, one day she almost caught them. Ollallie instantly recognized her from the Osantian photos of her Snarsgrrrrian rival. Their hearts beat fast as Hilda's head lamp slashed the walls. Nearer. Nearer—then barely missed them.

For a few days they debated returning to safety, but always came up against the fact they still didn't know what they'd come for. What were the Snarlsgrrrrian's up to?

Then came an, at first, wholly mystifying change. For now the old

ComConBots were being replaced with a new variety seemingly programmed only to haul cart after cart of something new into the emptied tunnels.

It was like a block in shape, wrapped in black plastic, with a long wire trailing out behind it.

“What could it be?” Ollallie asked Jeremy.

He struck his forehead.

“Explosives!”

“What? How?”

Ollallie stared at him.

Then quickly she saw what he saw. It was incredible, unbelievable, but now she knew as surely as he did. *The Snarlsgrrrrians were getting ready to blow the top off the mountain, thereby literally wiping Osanto from the face of the earth!*

“I’ll run ahead! You come on behind me,” Jeremy said.

Confused, at first Ollallie watched him go. Then she understood. Of course. He’d raced on to warn Osanto. And putting himself ahead to take the risk of running smack into a Snarlsgrrrrian, he was being protective of her. Always the good Jeremy thinking of others.

The warmth of her love for him swept over her as she stood there in the dim, somber light of the tunnel, looking after him.

Then shaking herself, she began to move with caution, every minute or so holding back, waiting, listening to be sure the way was clear ahead.

Thus it was that on turning a bend in the tunnel she found herself looking at Hilda standing over the body of Jeremy.

His head was twisted, his eyes blank and staring.

Driven by all that Jeremy, and Osanto, and the child within her, and life itself meant to her, she hurled herself upon Hilda and despite fierce resistance overpowered her and then raced on.

Immediately every man, woman, and child in Osanto flung themselves into the historic task at hand. Within a week they managed to divert the

great high mountain river of Osanto into the Snarlsgrrrrian tunnels. Within another week the ComConBots, the explosives, and the snapped off firing wires were ensnared in a helpless floating mess as the tunnels filled. Within another week, with the pop as of a cork under great pressure from a bottle, the water burst from the tunnels to flood throughout Snarlsgrrrr.

It brought everything to a stand still—except Snarlsgrrrs own homeless and jobless and all the other long excluded Lower Ones. Paddling through the flooded streets from house to house the chant rose from them, “Occupy Snarlsgrrrrr! Occupy Snarlsgrrrrr!”

Forced to plea for relief, the Snarlsgrrrrian Powers That Be called for negotiations via the most incredibly nice, and smooth, and winning emissaries they could find among actors trained and suitably primed for such roles. Whereupon the Osantians dammed the river—but only temporarily, as this was a state of mind for Snarlsgrrrr of which the duration was, at best, pretty doubtful.

In the midst of all this the culmination came with the arrival of the Osantian Sages in Mystifu. On the return of Maureen the Thoughtful and the others all those still remaining alive in Mystifu gathered in the Great Governing Chamber to await them.

And what an arrival it was!

First, far off in the sky appeared a tiny sparking speck of light. This grew into a round disk that glistened as if it were made of metal. And then while they watched in awe it circled about them, as if looking for some place to land. And then with a great whoosh it dissolved and there among them stood the Sages of Osanto!

Clad in robes of varying bright colors, they were of all sexes, sizes, and ages.

And so it was that as, in an awe compounded of fear, desperation, hope and expectation, the Mystifuians clustered there to receive the advice of Osantian Sages, those who had traditionally held power in Mystifu

pushed to the front of the crowd expecting whatever the Sages advised would naturally be left up to them.

Deftly, then with increasingly loud voices, they petitioned to be so recognized. But great was their dismay and consternation when the Sages of Osanto stepped forth to impart their wisdom. For they insisted the petitioners must under no circumstances be allowed to participate in what they advised be done.

It was the small round little tub of woman wearing a purple robe they called First Sage who first broke the bad news.

“Consider your tragic history, in which one after another unto Mystifu there was born among you a succession of rarely endowed human beings who might have changed your lives immeasurably for the better had you provided a better social and spiritual cradle for them.

“Consider what happened to Michael, Jodie, Jonathan, Miranda, Oswald, and Jane.

“Is not part of the wisdom that we may draw from your tragedy that within the unblemished child we may find the guide to the realization of our species' greatest potential? And is not the other part that as you warp and befuddle and deny what is best in that child so you sow the seeds of your destruction?”

This Purple Sage, for so she was known, paused to let them contemplate these dire thoughts. And while there were frowns upon the faces of the petitioners, the rest looked upon one another and knew it was true.

Now the Second Sage of Osanto stepped forth. He was a large handsome man with a booming voice who wore a green robe and read from a scroll.

“A thousand, if not indeed a thousand thousand scientific studies by now affirm this simple wisdom,” he said, then paused to eye them so that those who were on the alert might make notes.

Thereon, emblazoned with the power of his unusual voice, were

intoned the words that thereafter became historically embedded.

“For social, political, economic, educational, spiritual, and above all moral, guidance, look to the needs of the child, rather than to the confusion of the adult.

“In other words,” he said, “when considering anything to do with the building of social, political, economic, educational, or moral and spiritual systems, ask yourself, ‘Will this benefit or weaken, will it enhance or discourage, will it advance or undermine the growth of a child into realization of her or his high potential?’

“For the good of all we must look to the message that generation after generation arrives upon this earth with the birth of every child—that indeed can be seen in the eyes of the child when first, having emerged from elsewhere, she or he looks upon the wonders of this earth.

“It is there if you will merely look into the eyes of the newborn child with the eyes of the child who remains within us.

“It is the message upon which we based the first foundation of the Code of Osanto:

Listen to the inbuilt voice of goodness

“Or to shift to the perspective of the child herself or himself, within the context of laying the firm foundation of the nurturing moral system—fundamental to the building of all other systems that will not crumble or fail—is not this the message the eyes of the newborn child brings us?

For my sake, oh my parents, and teachers, and healers, and all others favorably placed on this earth to do good or ill by me, please tend the garden of the wonders of this earth

with the sun of moral sensitivity and the water of moral intelligence.'

"Therefore, in drafting your Manifesto," the voice of the Green Sage boomed out to fill the square, "you want those expert in the valuing and nurturance of the child, including professional child care specialists, parents, teachers, and articulate children themselves."

"Now as to others, the skills of three specialties are above all needed."

A gasp of amazement burst from the assembled people as, with a snap of his fingers, the Green Sage disappeared in a puff of smoke (for the Sages had long ago mastered the art of making their lessons memorable with an impressive bit of stage business) and out of the smoke the Third Sage of Osanto stepped forth.

She was a shapely Oriental woman of average size clad in a russet robe with a silver sheen to her hair that glistened in the noonday sun. She bowed first to the North, then to the East, then to the South, and then to the West. Then she spoke to them in a voice that poured through them like the sound of water over rocks in a stream, but also, when needed, for emphasis soared to the immensity of the crash of a waterfall.

"You want the social and systems scientists so that your Great Document of Moral Renewal may be grounded—and we stress the term because of the lack of adequate grounding in most previous attempts—in the most advanced scientific knowledge of the real nature, needs, and potentials for our species." Thus said she known as the Russet Sage, then adding, "This very much includes the political scientists, who will have an intimate knowledge of the pitfalls of the past."

Then her face darkened and up went the forefinger of her right hand.

"But be forewarned. Accustomed to living out of their heads and uncomfortable with anything else, the *scientists* of Mystifu are dreadfully constricted emotionally, aesthetically, and spiritually. They will want to

load the Manifesto down with so many complex mathematical formulas, and staggering libraries of references, and obfuscating jargons, and conflicting pet theories over which they will want to squabble endlessly, your task will be hopeless if left to them alone.”

Again there was a gasp as, with a quick clap of her hands, the Russet Sage disappeared and the Fourth Sage of Osanto stepped forth. Clad in a Yellow robe, he was a very goodlooking black man who could barely have been older than thirty.

"For this reason you want the *poets* to put your Manifesto in a simple language that speaks to heart and soul as well as mind. But again be forewarned. The poets of Mystifu are so accustomed by now to expend the great gift of poetry on trivia, and so adept at hiding this trivia in pretentious word games to make it appear profound, and they live in such despair of finding a reader other than the editor of some obscure little journal or dilettante financier of some salon, and they are so constricted by the poses, postures and demands of these patrons, that your task will again be hopeless if left only to the scientists and poets of Mystifu.”

The Yellow Sage snapped his fingers. And when this didn't work, he clapped his hands. And when this didn't work, his lips turned down at the edges with puzzlement. His eyebrows went up, then fell into a frown—and then his face opened into a broad smile.

For a moment those assembled there stared at one another in bewilderment. Then realizing he was poking fun at himself and the show they were putting on (for the Sages knew the value of the surprise of humor in the serious context for making their lessons memorable) they roared with laughter. But then again they gasped in amazement as the Fifth Sage of Osanto stepped forth. For this was a child hardly more than twelve years old, it appeared. She was clad in a blue robe.

"For these reasons you want the *spiritual advisors* to, first, put the scientists in touch with the ever-renewing mystery at the heart of the life the scientists so ceaselessly seek to measure, but which they almost wholly

miss through habit and in fear of an opening of the door to this mystery within themselves.”

The Blue Sage paused to let them think about this, her eyes emanating a strange light that seemed to play about them, seemingly even to whisper within their ears in a way that made them feel both uneasy and comfortable at the same time.

“Secondly,” she resumed, “you want the spiritual advisors to force both poets and scientists to transcend trivia and go beyond surface to substance. *But here again be forewarned. Talk about spirituality and religion is just whistling in the dark unless animated by moral sensitivity and concern for moral evolution and moral transformation.* There are indeed many exemplars of true spirituality still left in Mystifu, but their voices have been mocked, stilled, or shoved aside by the Snarlsgrrrian seizure of the Con and Reg religious mind. These Prog and Lib exemplars you must somehow find if you are to succeed in the reclamation of Mystifu, for most of the ostensibly spiritual advisors who will come forth are of at least nine potentially disastrous kinds.”

She turned and a screen rose out of the platform behind her upon which was displayed, in turn, the all-too-familiar faces of each of the nine kinds of potentially disastrous religious and spiritual advisors. Of them then a succession of uncannily beautiful assistants to the Sages spoke.

The first of the assistants was a lovely young girl of 17 or so clad in a soft aquamarine robe, but with a voice as though hardened by fire.

“There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Mighty Sword and Shield* who, however he or she may pretend otherwise, is still firmly aligned to the warping of religion and spirituality through its catering to an abominable cultural requirement of male dominance.”

A muscular old man in a robe of saffron stepped up as she retired.

“There is his or her closest companion, *the Spiritual Advisor of the False Fire*, who would hide the policies of Snarlsgrrrrrrr—ranging from intolerance of all other beliefs to violence to force submission to the will

of the Powers—under the cloak of a supposedly unquestionable faith in their one and only Allmighty.”

An old Laatoonno woman with flaming red hair, wearing a teal green robe and stick in hand to demonstrate, stepped in place.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Swift Stick* who, by mystifying his students and striking them with a stick when they fail to answer unanswerable questions, seeks to break them and rule them as was done in Snarlsgrrrrrrrr.”

A tall and lean young man who appeared to be Spolian or Native Orocan took her place. He was clad in a robe of white.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Glacier* who, albeit dropping words like ‘values,’ ‘ethics,’ or ‘morality’ into his or her spiel, actually promotes what we in Osanto call Ice Age Spirituality—or the delusion that one can have anything worthy of being called spirituality without its being embedded in the practicalities and responsibilities of true, rather than false, morality.”

Next there strode up a young woman who, although comely in her robe of black, one could tell at a glance was not to be fooled with.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Clouds and Mists* who, spuriously or with inauthenticity warning of the dangers of being judgmental or dualistic thinking, will seek to so obscure the basic difference between Snarlsgrrrrrrrr and Osanto as to push you even further into the confusion that has brought you to where you are today.”

A barefooted young man wearing a cap and robe burnt umber in color appeared as if suddenly materializing before them.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Balloon Ride* who, again spuriously or with inauthenticity extolling detachment, will again try to rob you of the passionate activism of your present passionate involvement in the fate of Mystifu.”

Lastly there strode forth a young woman clad in a violet robe. There was a smile on her face that again readied them for laughter —particularly

when they saw the pictures on the screen. For one after another, onto the screen erupted the faces of all the strident or scary preachers on television they had watched or over radio had been forced to listen to; all the pompous prelates in their limousines attended by hordes of publicists; and all the so-called gurus who had abandoned careers as street magicians or as night managers of seedy hotels to purportedly bring the wisdom of the East to the needy and particularly the wealthy of the West.

Some began to shout and others boo, but then all quieted as she spoke.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of the Multi-Faceted Mumbo Jumbo* who so lards his or her perorations with mystifying senselessness as to numb the mind and seize what is left of soul, rather than lift and free both mind and soul with simple clarity.

"There is *the Spiritual Advisor of Cash on the Barrelhead*, who will insist you must give him all your money and build him a house and church and furnish him with a fleet of obscenely expensive cars before he can help you find salvation.

"Above all, avoid *the Spiritual Advisor who claims to be GOD ON EARTH*, for his or her self-avowed leadership is generally composed of lunacy, delusion, or chicanery, or compounded of all three."

With a mighty swoosh the picture screen sunk into the platform and the First Sage of Osanto stepped forth again, clad in her purple robe.

"Be advised should you avoid these pitfalls and find the scientific and spiritual advisor true to the promise of the future rather than the warping of the past you will find your best guarantee of success in curbing the excess and the weakness of such among you."

"And how are we to find such a scientific and such a spiritual advisor?" the people of Mystifu asked.

"Find among you the child whose eyes, after all the misery of life in Mystifu, still best reflect the pure light of the wisdom with which she or he was born into this earth," was the answer of the Purple Sage. "Have that

child then walk among all those who purport to be Scientific or Spiritual Advisors and tell you privately who he or she likes and feels comfortable with, and whom she or he feels unsure of. 'Thus will you know.'