

Owe-ver Drive

by Kelly Ishikawa



My son was repairing a basket, but it was too stiff. Owe-ver Drive showed him to work in a stick as a lever to draw the ends together.

Better branches for baskets would be nice. We'd failed in our search for the trees used in weaving baskets and the beautiful ceremonial shrines of old. The stories made it seem like they were just a walk away, but even after scouring our entire planet, we had nothing but the crude shoots my son was using now.

The stone workers had their own stories and lamented the misplaced quarries that provided the excellent marble found only in vintage towers—the

ones always autographed with silver stars.

Among the worlds reachable by our ships, we sought the friendly alien faces mixed among us in the classic paintings depicting our squares and streets. We searched for the blinding, gleaming crystal mountains depicted in old masterpieces with pigments we could no longer find.

Owe-ver Drive had lured me along by presenting an antique and completely erroneous planisphere. He said the stories spoke true about the nearness of better branches, more meritorious marble, and peerless pigment.

So, the stone worker, the painter, myself and my son, decided to go along with our visitor. We were able to borrow steeds, carts, sturdy clothes and even food for the journey. Everyone in town hoped the trip would pan out.

Half a day's travel and we were at the gate to the great water-filled chasm. Stories of monsters had deterred visitors for generations, as did the giant boulder blocking the way.

Owe-ver Drive placed his hands upon the stone, and the red badges of his costume flickered and flashed. The orange ones radiated waves of energy. As he heaved at the boulder, his frame seemed to grow. Red energy coursed

his arms as he strained, and the giant stone was lifted aside.

We had concerns. “That was an astounding feat to witness,” said the stone worker. “But, if the stories are true, much more strength will be needed. That seems to have taxed you to your limit.”

“I’m not even sure what my limits are,” Owe-ver Drive said. “I borrowed the strength that was needed for the stone. I can borrow more if needed.”

When asked from where he borrowed, he said, “The universe.” He lead us through the gate, and we finally saw the great chasm. “I’m doing work for

the universe. Think of it like the company card.”

The setting certainly seemed out of a long lost tale. Down a steep slope of rocky rubble stretched the wide chasm, enormous, bizarre struts emerging from the churning waters, bracing against the walls.

A great wind began to move grey clouds along the sky. The struts shivered and shook. “It senses me,” Owever Drive said. Ages of collected grime and growth fell free, divulging chitonous material beneath. The struts contorted at newly revealed joints and the nightmare rose from the waters in the form of an enormous oceanic ar-

thropod.

No black eyestalks protruded, and there were great glowing gaps in the cracked carapace. “It’s not really alive anymore,” Owe-ver Drive told us, as his form crackled with power. The badges on his legs began to blink yellow lights. With blazing speed, he ran to the closest of the crab monster’s giant legs. Orange lights flashed, and his frame increased to get a better hold. Red energies coursed, and he dislodged the leg from the wall. The giant



beast's form shook and rose. Owe-ver Drive ran down the monster's leg, and grabbed hold of another. He yanked it away from the wall. "I can see the bridge!" he called back.

When the monster began trying to re-lodge it's legs against the cliff, Owe-ver Drive had to change tactics. Orange energies rippled. "Voluminouser!" Yellow lights flared. "Velocier!" Red power cackled. "Vigorouser!" He was suddenly much larger, pummeling at the crab shell with incredible speed, cracking and shattering it with thunderous poundings. Nothing left to support the legs, they all gave way and tumbled into the roiling waters.

Whatever this “Owe-ver Drive” engine was that drove him, it had risen to the challenge. I worried about the awesome energies he’d expended against the beast. What would the universe require of this man in return? He treaded the waters, which rose violently, until suddenly, they began to drain away. A great, wide floor rose along the entirety of the great chasm, filling the gap as far as we could see.

We crossed that glistening rock and followed Owe-ver Drive to the open plains beyond.

“The chasm, the monster, the water—it was all to interrupt your use of these lands. Even if you went around

the chasm, the water's churning curse would've stopped your meandering, which is the great answer you've been seeking."

As night descended, we walked far into the grass and he explained the miracle of the meandearth. It was land that also stood on other planets out in the cosmos, and once was used for traveling. We four were chosen because he believed we had a knack for doing it.

The stone worker thought he saw a trail of silver flowers right before we lost track of him. The painter shielded his eyes, then donned sunglasses and wandered into the dark.

And out of the dark came a different person. An alien person, wandering towards us from across the plain, a face like ones in old paintings. A visitor had already refound us.

No, I realized, as I noticed the stars above. We were the visitors. I saw in my mind the strands that would reach across space as more meandered. We would no longer shiver in a cold corner, but breathe back and forth along lines that darned the cosmos. Creation would flourish, and the universe was back to owing him.

© Copyright 2020 Kelly Ishikawa. All rights reserved.