

Darla Wilshire

By Sheila Angeles

Chapter 5: Parafutures

As Greta Garbo was being debriefed on the Sci-Bass integration issues by Juan and Carry Grant, she thought forward to an upcoming sales challenge. She had been read-in on management plans to sell Paravalley on Musk-Koggi C.G.I. The Sci-Bass integration was essential in that effort. If Fun Macro dropped the ball on integration, that sale could not go through. All eyes were on all involved.

When Juan asked her if she had any questions or concerns, she let him know that his work was much appreciated by everyone at Musk-Koggi. If he ever found himself out of a job, he would be quite welcome joining the Musk-Koggi family. She did not use the term lightly. Ever since their C.E.O. caught wind of one of Brad's tech talks on conical inefficiencies, he had a bee in his bonnet to make the place run more like a functional family than a dysfunctional start-up.

Execs at Warmer Brothers noticed the change in morale at Musk-Koggi as inefficiencies were dismantled both wholesale and one-by-one. The reforms were bitter medicine to NOOP managers who had been bleeding a plush livelihood from the organization at the expense of morale and financial stability. They fled the halls of technology for the comforts of dive bars. Their resumes wound up in wastebaskets all over the West Coast as word got out that they shared the middle name of Deadwood.

Brad Yayger completed his cruise through Fort Meyers as he headed for the Tampa region where the Canine Lady's parents lived. He experienced a magical moment when a bald eagle soared near his car headed in the same direction. Birds had special meaning for Brad. He was quite familiar with the eagle as a symbol for both Zeus and Jupiter. An Episcopalian said they associate it with the author of Mark's gospel (founder of the orthodox seminary in Alexandria). Charlatans have always been adept at coopting Pagan imagery.

Back in L.A., Carry escorted Juan to Reception where he thanked him for the information and for the leg-work behind it. Juan let Carry know of his plans to stop in at Stow Rage to check in with their server crew. This surprised Carry. He knew Juan to be a hands-on guy, but that was more hands-on than expected. His respect for Juan went up a notch. Carry reminisced about his time at Stow Rage when he got to kick back in Slim Whitey's restored Duesenberg S.J. It was a fond farewell to the star that lit the way to a more brilliant future. Now, that was a genuine bringer of light!

Carry caught up with Greta in their boss' office. She was filling him in on the update from Juan. He invited Carry to join them. It would be the first time Carry got the inside skinny on management plans for future business development. The boss let him in on the future for sales to Paravalley. He was to keep it under his hat. The sales manager gave Carry a quick run-down on corporate secrecy and how parasites used such secrets to make extra cash from insider trading.

Carry should keep mum for reasons other than insider trading. If he blabbed about plans for future development, he would get a reputation as a bonehead in the industry. It was in the interest of his future employability to respect the trade secrets of his current employers. The guy then went on to explain how secrecy within an organization leads to an erosion in faith in management on the part of front-line employees.

On the other coast, Brad reminisced about a trip to Tampa with the Canine Lady as he crossed the Bay Bridge. It is an elegant structure that has been replicated elsewhere. He thought of the manatees that struggle in the wetlands on the brink of extinction. They connected in to “Cien Años de Soledad” and its mention of a breasty marine mammal. He had left a message for the Canine Padre that precipitated a cascade effect behind the scenes. The details of the cascade are fodder for a different framework. Suffice it to say that Brad’s suspicions of his fake-ass father-in-law were spot-on.

As the news of the Paravalley plans sunk in, Carry began to have a very different idea of his own future than before. It was clear that Greta would probably be promoted once the account was established. She was being prepared for management, and so was he. This prompted a mix of feelings that included both dread and joy. He knew that management was a waste heap where has-beens were sent out to pasture. At the same time, he realized that future organizations would not be the same.

As Greta left him at his office, she asked about his plans for lunch. He admitted that he had none. “Let me treat you to one of Brad’s favorite venues. It’s the one where we dined with Slim back in the day.” Carry thought for a moment how best to receive the invitation. It was not long before he was grinning from ear to ear. Is that the one where underemployed actors dance on the countertops? “Bingo!”

Carry leaned in close to Greta as he delivered his acceptance kiss on her cheek. “You know that I am putty in your hands.” As he backed off to observe her reaction, she gave him a wink that assured him of an ecstatic experience to come. It would be a trying time ahead as he anticipated curling up with Greta for a festive afternoon of celebration over their future opportunities together.