

# Assiduity Twenty One

by J. Mykell Collinz

Blue skies greet us as we exit the forest. Early afternoon sunlight reflects from the snow covered ground. I squint while carefully selecting each step on the sloping path to the house. Luv, sitting on my arm, faces the sun with her eyes closed. Uzma follows in our trail.

I unlock the back door, and Uzma says:

"You're still doing that, even way out here?"

"A redundant gesture," I reply: "One of many. It reassures the alarm system everything's okay. I'm programmed, after years of keeping track of my keys, to continue using them."

Little Luv smiles when she sees me watching her standing on the kitchen floor patiently while her mother bends down to remove her pink snow suit.

"Alarm system?" Uzma says: "Do you really need one?"

"People living around here are mostly survivalists," I say: "They belong to one of the several militia factions who conduct training exercises and war games in neighboring areas. I've had no problems stemming from that yet, but it's a growing phenomenon and a potentially volatile situation."

Uzma sits on a chair by the kitchen table with Luv falling asleep in her arms, and says:

"This world, it's becoming an armed camp, ruled by top guns. They should just get on with it and blow one another away."

"They could blow us away, too," I say.

"Yes, I know that," she says: "Which is why it's so important for people to organize now into alternative communities based on cooperation and sharing before it's too late."

"I don't need to ask how, I know what you'll say."

"And you also know this, John," she says: "I would be with my cooperative community in the city right now if it wasn't for the massive, shock and awe raids coordinated by government authorities using privatized security forces, local, state, and federal."

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They claim the raids were intended to disarm gangs and militia groups throughout the city yet what they've actually done is upset the balance of power, unleashing more chaos and violence."

"Which justifies more raids."

"Yes," she says: "Raids by government contractors owned by multinational corporations run by transnational executive who do not give a damn about the plight of the American working class."

With an air of finality, she rises from her chair at the kitchen table, being careful to not awaken Luv, who sleeps peacefully in her arms.

"I think I'll lay down in the bedroom and nap for awhile, myself," she says: "The forest is inspiring. I can still feel its presence. Thank you, John, for having us here."

"You're more than welcome, Uzma," I reply as she exits the room.

Alone in the kitchen, I begin to worry. The world is changing too fast, what's next? The ability of government agents to infiltrate and influence militia group behavior has been clearly documented. Yet the authorities are not likely to attempt disarming the widely dispersed militia groups outside the city. An alliance between these militia groups and street gangs could become a potent political force. Don would be a perfect future leader for such an alliance. I'm wondering where he's hiding and I'm hoping to hear from him soon.

