



Illustration by Jennifer Stolzer

Segment 11: Word Arrives in Ko-Lat Village

(Late afternoon; Toolie pulls his wagon into the schoolyard and walks to the open door; Guru is sitting behind the teacher's desk, preoccupied with his studies. Only occasionally does Guru look up during their conversation)

TOOLIE

(calling)

Young Guru, still in here working?

GURU

Hey, Uncle Toolie! C'mon in!

TOOLIE

I was looking for your father.

GURU

He's not back yet. He went to Jeeno this morning to get something.

TOOLIE

Something for the opera I guess.

GURU

Opera? What are you talking about, Uncle Toolie?

TOOLIE

Aren't you putting on an opera tonight? I'm sellin' tickets.

GURU

(bewildered and a little irritated)

An opera? Uncle Toolie I have absolutely no idea what you're talking about! My students all went home three hours ago. And none of us have ever had a music lesson in our lives! Where do you come up with your bizarre ideas?

TOOLIE

Oh, I must be getting old.

(Toolie turns and begins to walk back out to his wagon)

Well, I best move on, young Guru. Oh, I almost forgot. I have a riddle for your father: "The person with the poison is the person with the cure." Could you pass that along please?

GURU

(repeating dismissively)

The person with the poison is the person with the cure. Sure.

(then, whispers in disbelief)

Opera Tickets?

TOOLIE

(calling from outside)

Oh, one more thing, young Guru. This afternoon the Commissioner told me that he got a message for you - something about a friend of yours coming.

GURU

(not looking up)

Another one? I just can't keep 'em away, Uncle Toolie!

TOOLIE

A young woman...

GURU

Oh, the women come in by the busloads! Father and I might have to add a new parking lot.

TOOLIE

Her name's Twimfina.

GURU

(dead silence)

TOOLIE

She's expected to cross the Heretic border before dawn.

GURU

(dead silence)

TOOLIE*(with chuckles)*

Young Guru, are you still in there?
 Run out of smart answers?
 Would you like to buy an opera ticket?
 Please say 'hello' to your father for me.

(Toolie picks-up his wagon and exits the stage as Baba arrives on his tricycle cart with a basket full of groceries. He heads directly towards the schoolhouse.)

BABA

I'm back, son! Let's go inside and start the fire. We're gonna have a good supper tonight! How did your classes go today?

GURU

Father, I have something I need to tell you - something that I'm afraid will be upsetting.

BABA*(concerned)*

What is it? Are you alright?

GURU

I'm fine. It isn't about me.

BABA*(chuckles)*

Well then, it can't be all that bad.

GURU

Can you promise me that no matter what I tell you, you'll support me?

BABA

Guru. That's no question to ask your father.

GURU

I'm sorry. It's just that Toolie told me that a friend of mine is coming to visit – a pen-pal friend – a woman pen-pal friend. She's expected to cross the Heretic border before dawn.

BABA*(disappointment in voice)*

Guru... not a Heretic.

GURU

No, she's not a Heretic. Much worse. She's an American.

BABA*(shouting)*

Absolutely not! Absolutely not!

GURU

(gently)

Father, you promised.

BABA

(still shouting)

They have killed my wife! They have killed my daughter! They have paralyzed my son! They have taken everything from me! Everything!

GURU

Father, you promised.

BABA

(still shouting)

They wiped-out our entire village looking for their imaginary demons! Oops – wrong village. Sorry about that! Sorry that your Ko-Lat Village is collateral damage. Sorry that your Ko-Lat lives are collateral lives. I hate these people! They are murderers!

GURU

Not this person, Father. Not Twimfina.

BABA

Yes this person! Yes this Twimfina! Yes this anybody who voted for their bloody leaders! Yes this anybody who paid for their bombs! Yes this anybody who is ignorant of what happened here on that day 14 years ago. They are all murderers! They are all guilty!

GURU

(always with a calm, gentle voice)

Father, *I'm* the one who lost a mother. *I'm* the one who lost a sister. *I'm* the one who lost much of my body. All I have left is a father – and I can't afford to lose him. I need him to always be my rock – my rock of stability – my rock of happiness.

BABA

(in a less-agitated voice)

I'm sorry, Son, but this is asking too much.

GURU

Father, everybody's got all this built-up anger. Everybody wants to blame somebody for our misfortune. But Twimfina was just four years old at the time. Four years old! We cannot blame her. She has nothing to do with our past. She has nothing to do with our misfortune. Please, we've got to protect her from this anger.

BABA

That'll be hard, Guru.

GURU

Not for us. We've gotten through many things together – many things much, much harder than this. This is nothing, Father. This is popcorn. And we do love popcorn, don't we?

BABA

(chuckles softly)

Yes, Son, we do love popcorn.

GURU

(with some hesitation)

And there's one more complication.

BABA

(knowingly)

You didn't tell her about your... situation?

GURU

(remains silent)

BABA

(softly)

Guru, how could you?

GURU

Father, I never dreamt she would actually come. I never dreamt she would just ignore all the travel bans. I never dreamt she could ever get across our border.

BABA

Why is she doing this?

GURU

She wants to help me teach in the schools.

BABA

(with a soft, defeated chuckle)

Teach in the schools. Ah, life is so funny.

GURU

(handing photograph to Baba)

Here's her photograph. Her name is Twimfina. She's a real person, not some symbol, not some representative, not some ideology.

BABA

(holding photo)

Twimfina.

GURU

Something tells me that this needs to happen, Father. Something tells me that this really needs to happen.

BABA

(resignedly, after a pause)

Well, if it needs to happen, then I guess it needs to happen. You should probably start preparing things. I'll go in and get ready for my trip to the Heretic border.

(Baba goes indoors; Guru remains alone and sings)

GURU

(singing)

THIS HAPPENING MUST HAPPEN.
I FEEL THE UNDERTONES
OF SOMETHING GOOD APPROACHING FAST
I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES.



Score on page 158

I FEEL A DOOR HAS OPENED
A DOOR I MUST GO THROUGH.
THIS HAPPENING MUST HAPPEN,
IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DO.

I FEEL THE GROUND IS MOVING
I FEEL IT AT MY CORE
I FEEL A KIND OF PULLING, PULLING,
I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE

I DON'T KNOW WHY I FEEL IT
BUT I FEEL IT THROUGH AND THROUGH
THIS HAPPENING MUST HAPPEN
IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DO.

I FEEL IT COMING, DOWN IN MY GUT
I DON'T KNOW WHY, OR WHEN, OR WHAT.
MY WORLD IS CHANGING, A DIFFERENT STAGE
A DIFFERENT PURPOSE, A DIFFERENT PAGE.

I FEEL THE GROUND IS MOVING
I FEEL IT AT MY CORE.
I FEEL A KIND OF PULLING, PULLING,
I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE

I DON'T KNOW WHY I FEEL IT
BUT I FEEL IT THROUGH AND THROUGH
THIS HAPPENING MUST HAPPEN
IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DO

THIS HAPPENING MUST HAPPEN
IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DO.

END OF SEGMENT 11