

## Once Upon a Time in Yusay

*By Dennis Payton Knight*

Once upon a time, on a faraway planet, existed a country called Yusay. It was a diverse nation mostly of immigrants and their descendants who had arrived decades and centuries ago to make new lives.

The people were of many languages, colors, and faiths. They were tall, short, thin, wide, lazy, ambitious, religious, agnostic, humorous, and dour. None was identical to another, yet Yusay was founded on the radical idea they were all equal. It was a free country, so, as you would expect, various points of view about government and taxation, war, and peace, held sway at different times, with ebbs and tides of cynicism and idealism. It was not a utopia, and it was clumsy in all the ways free peoples tend to do things, yet Yusay was admired by people around the planet as a safe and prosperous place.

That is, until a fellow got himself elected president in a flurry of rants about their beloved country. He donned a cheap red hat, and promised to make Yusay great again. He promised to repeal years of actions and compromises to preserve the environment, and initiatives to advance health care. He promised to build a wall to keep immigrants out, and make the other countries pay for it.

He was born into substantial economic wealth, and he inherited unbounded self-love, too. Yet he was impoverished when it came to manners, social graces, and any semblance of respect for people, especially women. He built an empire of casinos and glittery hotels, cheating along the way contractors and tradesmen who poured his foundations and connected the beams of his glitzy palaces.

Campaigning for President, he courted and even got the vote of the same kinds of people he spent his life exploiting. He claimed to be smarter than anybody else, even the generals, yet he couldn't form simple sentences without hyperbole, and he grasped none of the complexities of statesmanship or governing. Even the notion of national security befuddled him.

Ironically, when the election came and ballots were counted, he lost the vote but won the presidency. He was inaugurated President of Yusay, and installed a crew of lackeys to help him build his wall and deliver on other promises. But they had no better grasp of governance, the constitution, law, or logic than he did, and he didn't listen to them anyway. The office was in chaos within days.

But this was a man whose career and candidacy were based on puffery, or what his administration soon began to call "alternative facts." It was showy bluster that played better on the campaign trail than it did in the newspapers he so despised. He figured he could ride out four years, even eight, if he just stayed on the trail.

At last sight, the new president was seen wearing his red hat, waving his arms, and wandering up a path leading to what used to be the Yusay Mental Home. Except it was rebranded now, with gold letters emblazoned above the entrance, reading "Trump Asylum, A Really Great Place. I Promise You."

And they lived happily ever after.