

6 Emancipation

A terribly violent, dark, ancient being lies at the center of the earth. It controls life and feeds on it greedily. Will Otus the young owl and his friends manage to free the birds of the dark greenhouse from this cruel dominion?

The attack

Otus the young owl flies over the clan with a group of clear light birds. They have just soothed a great horned owl from the dark greenhouse enough to make him turn back.

He lands near his friend Chévia the young owl.

— Hello Chévia, he says, smiling, proud of his feat.

— Hello Otus, she replies. One more, then?

— That makes five since yesterday. We're getting better and better at this, he tells her, waiting for a small compliment ...

— Soon it will be the whole dark greenhouse coming, and then, will you be powerful enough? she asks him. We still need more time! Excuse me, she adds, joining Pilo, another owl, I must finish my work on the young birds' training.

Otus leaves, a little hurt at receiving so little attention from Chévia, and he doesn't like seeing her with Pilo all the time!

He joins Bubo, who is working to reinforce the magnificent luminous dome that now surrounds and protects the Clan.

— Hello Otus, says Bubo, well done for your intervention! You're becoming more and more effective.

— Thank you Bubo, I wish Chévia would also recognize my work, instead of spending all her time with Pilo, Otus laments!

— Yes, Chévia works a great deal, replies Bubo, and the clear light training program is already finished thanks to her and the whole training team!

Let me tell you a story from my youth, Bubo continues. My first clear light teacher was named Musso.

— Like the Musso in our greenhouse? asks Otus.

— Yes, this is his grandson. So, Musso the grandfather was very powerful and also deeply in love with a beautiful young bird. Their relationship didn't last, and he drew such great bitterness from it that he shut himself away in violence. We weren't able to help him find calm, because mastery of clear light was very limited in those days. In the end, he became a tyrant, claiming to protect the community! He died smothered by that violence, and his agitated spirit traveled so far away that we lost all trace of him.

— Did he turn, asks Otus, into one of those dark and violent creatures?

— It's possible, replies Bubo, but we don't really know. What I wanted to tell you, Otus, is not to follow Musso's example. He stopped producing clear light and lost all caring connection with other beings.

— What a shame, exclaims Otus. I've already felt that deep, intimate connection several times myself, especially with Chévia, when we weave our clear lights together. It's wonderful!

— Ah, I'm glad for you both, declares Bubo with a broad smile. Then you have what it takes to seek out and discover the deep nature of love, and to tell Chévia what you feel for her!

Otus returns to his little tree to fall asleep. He is alone; Chévia is still working.

Suddenly, the alarm sounds. He takes off at once, and sees a multitude of birds approaching, led by an immense eagle. The dark greenhouse, he thinks!

As in training, he joins the group of clear light birds, who then create an immense luminous halo and share it with the eagle-king and his retinue. But it isn't enough!

Chévia joins Otus. Together they weave their clear lights once more into a gigantic fountain that bathes all the birds as if in a magnificent ocean of light. Otus feels the help of powerful, enlightened spirits who add still further to the flow concentrated on the eagle-king. His flight becomes hesitant ... He stops ... And finally turns back, followed by his whole troop, to the great relief of the clan's birds!

Otus then feels a huge wave of surprise and anger.

— Bubo, he shouts, the dark creature at the center of the earth is about to attack us, right now!

— Thank you Otus, replies Bubo, who alerts all the birds.

The shadowy spirits

They approach the entity that is trying to drain their life energy at once.

— I don't feel well, says Otus. I have the feeling it's targeting me first.

— Yes, I feel it too, says Chévia, who has just joined him. Quick, let's unite our clear lights!

Once again they produce that gigantic fountain of light, joined by all the other birds.

The allies, ever more numerous, also add their clear lights, in a blaze that eclipses the sun and all the stars. The creature's shell of dark clouds then breaks apart. Several small, dazed beings, of shapes unknown on earth, then appear, immediately taken in by spirits of light.

Otus feels relieved. He senses, more than ever, the connection through clear light with all the beings and spirits of the universe, all of the same nature beyond species, kinds and worlds. And he understands then that clear light is as necessary to the flourishing of life as oxygen, water, food, and the light of the sun and stars ...

Bubo joins Chévia and Otus.

— The two of you make a fine team! he says with a broad smile. Love truly works wonders, it has guided and inspired every bird here, and now our many allies too!

— Yes, agrees Otus, happy. During this I felt the presence of Musso's spirit, the grandfather, who was helping the dark creature. He has just gone back far away into the universe.

— Could you lead us there, Otus? asks Bubo.

— Count me in too! says Aquilus, who has just joined the group.

— Yes, let's go! says Otus.

They set off, accompanied by many allies, in search of the spirit of Bubo's former teacher. Thanks to Otus's abilities, they quickly find him, and brightly illuminate him. After his dark shell dissolves, the small, dazed spirit is taken in directly by Bubo, who leads him to the nursery caring for beings long cut off from clear light.

— Careful, warns Orias, one of the allies present. There are many other dark creatures nearby.

— I have the impression they're all coming from the same place, says Otus.

— Yes, Aquilus continues, they're coming from that area over there. It looks like a hole in space!

— It's the being you just illuminated who is the source of it! Orias clarifies.

— What's behind it? asks Otus.

— Another universe, very dark, without any stars, without clear light ... replies Orias. A universe where extreme violence reigned, for a very long time. Living beings came to feel superior, enslaved all the others, and became these extremely powerful dark spirits. There was much misfortune and suffering there.

— Is there no life left? asks Otus.

— All the life energies were absorbed by these shadowy beings. The universe darkened progressively and then came to a halt, replies Orias. Unable to evolve on their own, these shadowy beings are now rushing through the hole opened by Musso to continue their predation in your universe, and destroy it the same way.

— And the other living beings, what became of them? asks Otus, his heart tight.

— Multitudes of beings suffered here during their lives, replies Orias. They are still suffering now in the spirit world, because there is no more clear light to help them journey toward the beyond. They are stuck.

Otus returns to the clan with his friends, wondering how on earth to seal that hole.

Precious and fragile gifts

The next evening, all the birds hold a celebration to mark their collective success, with plenty of music, singing, and dancing.

Bubo, Tycia, Chévia and Otus share in the warm joy.

— Bubo, says Otus, when Chévia and I united our clear lights, I felt that connection with all beings again, even stronger than before.

— Same for me! Chévia breaks in, looking at Otus with surprise and attention. We had never talked about it before, I thought I was the only one feeling that!

— Then I'm happy for you both, says Bubo. You share a beautiful and rare experience of complete connection to life, thanks to clear light and thanks to your love.

Otus and Chévia blush, looking at Bubo, who gives them a little wink, smiling.

— Chévia, says Otus, we've worked hard these past months, could we now spend a little time together, go fly toward the sea, unless you'd rather go for a walk with Pilo?

— Ah Otus, I thought you'd been avoiding me lately, I was sad. Working with Pilo is pleasant, like with all the other birds of the clan, but it's with you that I want to go flying! So yes, I gladly accept your offer! replies Chévia.

— This is a good time for it, you can leave as soon as tomorrow if you like! Tycia adds, looking at them with affection.

Back in his little tree, Otus thinks of that universe lost to violence and suffering, a dead universe, motionless, lifeless.

He also thinks of Chévia, of their promise to nurture their relationship, of clear light and of love, of these precious and fragile gifts that must be cared for.