

SHORT STORY

HOW A LOVELY ISLAND GOT DOOMED

Once upon a time, there was this lush, well-endowed, resource-rich island. It was simply called "Lovely Island". Its inhabitants were 20,000 people called "Egozens", including 10,000 illiterate, literate or highly educated adults with voting rights.

The Egozens co-existed with a variety of species and life-forms. These 10,000 adult Egozens delegated the responsibility of Lovely Island's management, governance and (market-based) economy to just 10 Egozens, five of whom were criminals, thugs, rascals (the Crime Cartel), and the other five were flawed, evil-minded geniuses (the Flawed Five).

The 10 representatives (the Terrible Ten) then were given a free hand, absolute power, and were not held accountable at all.

The Terrible Ten then went about amassing wealth, plundering Lovely Island's resources in gay abandon and then wasting them on trivial pursuits (cheap thrills, addictive comforts and luxuries, pleasurable conveniences) that the 990 adult Egozens had to produce to eke out their livelihood. This concentrated power in the hands of the Terrible Ten.

The Terrible Ten had no real long-term vision nor risk-mitigation measures or emergency plans (except grand statements, empty slogans, and rhetoric). Slowly but surely, the society/community on Lovely island degenerated for want of law and order and due to misgovernance, corruption, environmental degradation, etc.

The Terrible Ten and their descendants, however, repeatedly grabbed power over several generations through fake democracy, subversion of institutions, vote-buying, post-poll horse-trading, slogans, emotion, intimidation, fear, muscle power, crime, dirty tricks, tech-based frauds, etc.

To keep the majority 990 Egozens busy and from revolting, the Flawed Five and the Crime Cartel cleverly worked together in close cooperation, throwing crumbs of cheap thrills, addictive comforts, pleasurable conveniences as rewards for the pet dog-like majority Egozens who all were busy running the rat race on a treadmill.

All of this made the 990 Egozens greedy, egotistic, lazy, ignorant, selfish, self-centered, fearful, insecure, mediocre, etc. All systems and institutions of governance, society, community on Lovely Island meanwhile reached a precipice. They were on the verge of a collapse. The degraded, over-exploited Lovely Island itself faced an existential threat.

But Lovely Island's 990 Egozens continued to adopt a stance that it is the responsibility of the Terrible Ten to somehow save the island and safeguard the 990 Egozens. The 990 Egozens assumed all they had to do was continue to help the Terrible Ten to produce cheap thrills, addictive comforts, pleasurable conveniences, and run the rat race on the treadmill, in order to gain access to them and enjoy them.

But there was no way the Terrible Ten would have reformed themselves and did their professed job (running society, economy and safeguarding Lovely Island). The only thing the Terrible Ten knew, and were interested in doing, no matter what, was what they, and their ilk, had been doing all along till now.

- 1) How can the 990 Egozens save themselves and their Lovely Island?
- 2) Do you think the 990 Egozens should and can do something?
- 3) Do you think the 990 Egozens would be glad to die/perish whenever the society and Lovely Island itself collapse due to the misdeeds of the Terrible Ten?
- 4) Are the Terrible Ten the only villains on Lovely Island?
- 5) Who are the real villains in this story?

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Postscript

5) Who are the real villains in the LOVELY ISLAND story?

Well, the answer to the fifth and final question – you'll still have to find answers to the first four questions yourself, mind you – is this: the real villains are *not* the Terrible Ten; the real villains are *not* all of the 990 "Egozens" either.

Then who are the real villains? That's the key question indeed.

The *real* villains – hear, hear! – are just a few Egozens among the 990 non-elite inhabitants of Lovely Island. That's right.

For ease of understanding, let's put a number on them. There must be around, say, 90 Egozens among the 990 adult inhabitants whose lifetime ambition is to "rise" in life, climb the corporate, political, bureaucratic, scientific or celebrity ladder, to be among the Terrible Ten.

This ambition of theirs could be a hidden or well-concealed one, or brazen, expressed, secret, sugar-coated, misportrayed, or misrepresented.

That's right. These 90 or so Egozens' lifetime ambition is to be part of the Crime Cartel or the Flawed Five!

Let's call them the **P**seudo-Elites or **A**spiring Elites or **W**annabe Elites.

Better still, let's coin an abbreviation for these rascals (who could be male, female or transgender). Let's call them **PAWs** (**P**seudo, **A**spiring, **W**annabe elites).

These **90 PAWs** either masquerade as self-appointed representatives of the Terrible Ten or are their real secret agents in society indeed. *Beware!*

For these 90 PAWs, the system of the Terrible Ten ruling over 990 adult Egozens represents a Great Opportunity to make it big and thrive. For the PAWs, the Terrible Ten are role-models, heroes – but the PAWs are 'smart' enough not to openly admit to this.

These 90 PAWs are, therefore, invested in perpetuating the flawed system, the status quo. These 90 PAWs among the majority Egozens are the real poison in the body fabric of any society. They are the vermin. The snakes. The jackals and the foxes. The one drop of lime juice than can spoil even boiled whole milk.

How to recognize, deactivate and disempower the PAWs? They exhibit some tell-tale or unmistakable signs as well as subtle (hidden or well-concealed) marks (or traits or characteristics). They can also be found out through their *modus operandi*.

First their features. They have almost all of the drawbacks of other Egozens: mediocrity (lacking in intrinsic merit as well as the spirit of excellence), selfishness, self-centredness, greed, fear, cowardice, insecurity, ignorance (no real depth in any subject except a bit of domain expertise), etc.

On top of that, the PAWs are slimy, wily, duplicitous, Janus-faced, conniving, full of cunning. They can be soft-spoken, glib, sweet, externally polite (that unsuspecting Egozens could mistake for genuine humility or true modesty), with agreeable demeanor and a smile-/grin-embellished face.

The PAWs are unapologetically materialistic even while professing belief in "Spirit". Most of the PAWs are given to "vices" like consumption of "bad" or harmful substances (liquor, tobacco, drugs, extremely spicy/hot foods, or foods extracted through cruelty or violence, etc).

They try to trigger, ignite or activate greed, negativity, unreasonable ambition, ego, primitive fear, anger, baser impulses in others. They excel at double-dealing. They profess one thing but all their actions in real life testify to the opposite of what they profess.

The PAWs never lead in the real sense of leadership, nor follow change-makers, but take delight in acts of wickedness, fake diplomacy or concealed jealousy or envy – they specialize in thwarting, scuttling or sabotaging other Egozens they perceive as rivals, threats or change-makers who could change the status quo.

The PAWs can spread canards and sow seeds of suspicion and confusion among the Egozens, especially the opportunistic fence-sitters and the self-centered, seclusive, reclusive cowards.

The PAWs are divisive – they are good at creating factions, sub-groups, splinter groups, dissidents. They excel at calculations, scheming, tactics, strategies, volte-face (U-turn). They are turncoats. Pretense, posturing, denial, delusion, betrayal, backstabbing, backbiting, biting the hand that feeds them ... these come naturally to the PAWs.

The PAWs are also timid with low self-esteem at their core. They are like those fabled frogs -- they believe in order to rise higher, the first thing they have to do is pull other frogs down.

For PAWs, the way to the top, into the elite club of the Terrible Ten, is to perpetuate the existing system by ensuring status quo. They seek to perpetuate status quo by pre-empting change, by sabotaging, scuttling or thwarting potential change-makers among the Egozens.

Since change-makers typically tend to be key opinion leaders (KOLs) or thought-leaders, the PAWs go to extreme lengths to ensure the Egozens do not get influenced by KOLs.

[It is another matter that the PAWs don't realize the Terrible Ten can clearly see through their layers, will exploit them to their (elites') benefit, will never allow them entry into their exclusive club, and will expose PAWs at an opportune moment. The PAWs also don't realize all their machinations, chicanery and perfidy won't save their skin ultimately nor the substratum of their existence, the Lovely Island.]

So, the real test for Egozens is *not* how to get rid of the Terrible Ten but how to choose wisely between the PAWs and the KOLs, in order to save themselves as well as Lovely Island.

And then ensure everyone becomes a KOL himself/herself.

The 990-for-10 model, or the "many-for-few" model in various avatars, forms or versions, which has bedevilled humanity from the beginning, has outlived its utility, and needs to be replaced URGENTLY with an "all-for-all" model.

There is no more any place for the Crime Cartel, the Flawed Five, the PAWs and the Egozens on this planet.

Take it or leave it.

All efforts from now on should be toward ushering in the "All-for-All Model" (AFAM).

AFAM. ASAP.

Do or die.

JaiHind! Sarvejana Sukhinobhavantu. Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.