



Sing, Meadowlark, Sing

A novel by

Helen Ruth Schwartz

PROLOGUE

They say it began with the April 25, 2010 march when more than a million people gathered before the Department of Justice Building in the District of Columbia, demanding equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The right-wing fundamentalists, seeing the event as an opportunity to increase their flock and fatten their coffers, preyed on the fear of Americans by suggesting that the march was the beginning of a homosexual takeover of the United States.

“It’s a sad day, indeed,” shouted bull-horned Patrick Olmstead of the First People’s Ministry, “when nude perverts with whips and chains line the streets of our nation’s capital and proclaim the right to rule America.” Photos of three topless women and a man in tight leather shorts with handcuffs in his back pocket were repeatedly shown on right-wing television stations. Viewers were told that these were the leaders of the “depraved” march.

In little more than three months of the march, Olmstead’s sentiments were being echoed throughout the country by a generation of Americans who were tired of economic chaos and unemployment. They were willing to believe anything in order to have an enemy against which to rage. By the end of 2013, homosexuals had become the enemy. That march in 2010, instead of being a source of strength for gays and lesbians, became a rallying symbol for heterosexuals who began to openly preach discrimination and violence.

In 2016 and 2017, twelve states passed legislation that encouraged discrimination against homosexuals. Sodomy laws were reinstated. Gay-bashing became commonplace. The president of the United States, who had aligned himself with homosexual rights during

his campaign, retreated from his earlier position and chose to ignore the festering evil.

The situation catapulted in 2017 when First Person magazine put Patrick Olmstead on the cover as the best-loved man in America. Gay and lesbian gathering places and organizations began to disappear. Homosexuals became the majority in the unemployment lines. And the violence increased. Lynn Bremmer, one of the topless women from the 2010 gay rights march, was found dead on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., a handwritten sign placed next to her body that read *Kill the Queers!* Her murderers were never found. By 2018 there simply was no control, and homosexuals were fair game without punishment or blame.

The earthquake changed the focus of public attention. On June 30, 2018, the great earthquake, predicted for decades, hit California. Thirty-two thousand dead, 180,000 injured, 4,000 missing, billions of dollars of property damage. And a new island formed.

The earthquake traveled up the state of California, forty miles east of the coast line, creating a chasm that quickly filled with the raging waters of the Pacific ocean. Destroying everything in its path, the ocean split off a land mass 40 miles wide and 720 miles long, separated from the mainland by ten miles at its narrowest and eighteen miles at its widest point.

Fearful that aftershocks would wreak further havoc on the involuntary residents of the island, the military and national guard evacuated its inhabitants within 24 hours after its creation. No one remained to extinguish the fires that raged out of control. Mud slides and flooding destroyed what the fires didn't get, and within three weeks, nothing remained except a billboard that read *Patrick Olmstead for President*. That billboard, visible to the crews who flew the military helicopters over the island, was considered a sign from God by members of Olmsted's growing flock.

For a year the island remained untouched while Americans recovered from the effects of the earthquake. When the island finally drew attention, public discussion confirmed that nobody wanted to inhabit it; its future was too precarious. Scientists could not guarantee that the unstable environment would not cause the strip of land to further divide. "It will likely be gobbled up by the sea," was the favorite prediction of solemn geologists.

Such was the atmosphere of the country when John Robb, president of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

Coalition, met with the president of the United States. It was not a public meeting but conducted in great secrecy and privacy, and might not have been conducted at all had John not been the president's closest political advisor and confidante in earlier years. It was a meeting the president owed him, and John took full advantage of the debt.

"Mr. President," John began. "We live in a time of great evil. For too long, too many remained silent and allowed the right-wing religionists to establish a foothold in the country, a foothold that is threatening to destroy the constituency that I represent. Sometime, in the not-too-distant future, Patrick Olmstead will come to power, and a holocaust will occur. As a man of compassion, you are urged to take a role in its prevention."

By the end of the historic meeting, several major decisions affecting gays and lesbians were made, primary among them was the granting of the new island to the Gay Rights Coalition for habitation by homosexuals. All homosexuals would be given the opportunity to relocate to the island by 2022. Those homosexuals who chose not to leave the United States would be subject to the same laws that governed gays in the military: they could march in parades and gather in gay bars but could not engage in homosexual conduct, including kissing or holding hands. People remaining in the United States who disobeyed the laws would be subject to arrest and a lengthy jail sentence.

To make sure that all homosexuals were made aware of their options (and their sexuality), the government, spurred on by Patrick Olmstead, began a series of DNA-chromosome testing. All persons who tested positive for the so-called Scarpetti gene, named after the physician who discovered it as an indicator of homosexuality, were encouraged to emigrate. Parents of minors made the choices for their "gay gene" children. In 2022, there were no more choices. All newborns would automatically be tested for the Scarpetti gene. Those testing positive would be sent to the island of Cali no later than their third birthday.

Contrary to expectations, many homosexuals joyfully accepted the opportunity to relocate to Cali. On May 12, 2020, the first day of the Great Exodus, one million people left, including seven U.S. senators, fourteen members of the House of Representatives, the leader of the Democratic Party, eighty-three professional athletes, a bevy of millionaires (who took their money with them), and 1400 members of the entertainment industry, including Ray Breyer, America's heartthrob.

Encouraged by the first wave of the exodus, the number of emigrants quadrupled by the end of the first year and included one justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, a member of the President's cabinet, three more senators, the wife of the attorney general, the country's leading

tennis player, and Ellyn Hargreaves, billed as the world's greatest blues singer. By the end of the second year, the number of departing gays and lesbians drained American's military forces, necessitating the reinstatement of the draft; the court system was left in chaos by the absence of judges; the National Football League was forced to cancel the 2022 season; and the emigrants joked that America was on the verge of requesting financial aid from the new island country.

Such was the beginning of Cali, the homosexual nation.

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