

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Some perspective emerges from mild quake

MIRANDA and Eddie were sitting at Cafe Venetia on University Avenue, sipping their lattes, when the earthquake struck.

“That’s a mild one,” said Eddie. “Probably not too much damage. We’re close to the epicenter.”

Some of the people on the street seemed not to have noticed the shake.

Miranda watched the plants sway. It was an indicator for her of an earthquake — that the plants would sway.

She got out her phone and checked. The earthquake was 2.6 degrees on the Richter scale, near Milpitas.

“Mother Earth is just readjusting,” said Eddie. “Trying to shake us off her back.”

“Mother Earth has other plans,” he continued. “Humans have become too arrogant. We need more humility.”

This is part 30 of a 24-part fictionalized serial, written by John Angell Grant.

“Look at the smog up there,” Eddie said to Miranda. He pointed up at the brown-tinged sky. “When you and I were growing up here in Palo Alto, there was none of that.”

“I remember,” said Miranda, thinking of her recent cross-country and global airline flights, and the horrible and increasing smog that blanketed the globe.

“If you walk up in the hills now,” said Eddie, “Where Tom and I used to grow pot — do you remember our pot farm?”

Yes, Miranda remembered.

“Anyway,” continued Eddie, “if you walk up in the hills and look over to the East Bay, it all used to be blue sky. Now it’s all brown sludge.”

Miranda had taken a walk the day before on the Dish and witnessed with sadness heavy smog hovering over the water of the Bay and the hills of the East Bay.

As a child, that was all blue sky. Not so many years ago. Things had changed so quickly. She felt sad.

Eddie added, “The German renewable energy sector is booming. Pushing 40%. It was at a mere 6% a few years ago. Germany isn’t exactly the Sun Belt. Why are we running so far behind? We’re knuckleheads.”

“It will be a close call, whether humans survive or not. I like to be an optimist. But Mother Nature is telling us that she’ll be getting rid of us soon, if we don’t change our ways.”

“Auto-immune disease and all. That’s a warning flag. The human body’s

immune system is now attacking itself. Have we reached our time?”

“If so, that’s OK. Nothing lasts forever. We had a good run.”

Then Eddie burst out and began to croon the REM song, “It’s the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine. ...”

Miranda laughed.

“Whatever happens, I enjoyed today’s little shake,” said Eddie. It keeps life in perspective. Interesting things occur when you’re in town, Miranda. I hope you stay.”

Eddie’s cell phone rang. “Gotta go, Miranda,” he said, “Got a meeting.” He waved and headed up University Avenue.

Miranda wondered what kind of meetings Eddie attended.

More tomorrow.