

President's Message

The Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels – The Journey Continues

We had promised to keep a watchful eye over the Young Woman as she set out on the perilous journey awaiting her. She was, of course, the bearer of the Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels, into which she had lovingly poured the Elixir of Do It Your Way. The Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels, (Reader: remember!) was the Book of Rules on Do It Your Way that three-times-ten years ago the Wise Ones in the Hall Of Talk had debated and created in the Little Land where there was much, much Do It Your Way. As Books of Rules come, it was as simple as simple can be, a sleek little vessel with only nineteen simple rules. And that was why it was called (Reader: remember again!) the Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels.¹

Lofty was the mission with which the Young Woman had been entrusted: to bring the Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels to the Goldsmith, who would polish some jewels, to burnish some rules. Resolute, confident, she trained her eyes (azure, hazel or brown, it matters not) on the horizon, and off she went. Never doubting, through fields she passed, tall mountains she climbed, cold streams she forded and deep rivers she swam. She braved the rain, the biting cold, the parching sun, never wavering. Oh yes, a butterfly would flutter in her heart, a little tremor would whisper in her soul, as she reflected on the task she had been given. But, since true fortitude always prevails, at the end of her travails she found the Goldsmith, in the City On The Hill In The River Bend, where bears once roamed.

The Goldsmith was not one, but several, but they thought like one. They were young but wise, with knowledge in their eyes. Do It Your Way was their way, and with boundless fondness, they beheld the Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels. They turned it this way and that, looking from every angle, seeing the jewels shine, feeling the gold so fine, it was silky-smooth in even every groove. With reverence they agreed, *“Our Hall Of Talk did a fine job with this one! Yes, we must touch up this and brush up that, maybe prune down here and beef up there. But let's keep it simple as simple can be – Yes Siree! – for this is what made it the cause of so much envy among the people of Do It Your Way and their Distinguished Talkers in the Halls Of Talk worldwide!”*

Because they were young but wise, they sought some advice from a few Elders, who breathed Do It Your Way, who congregated with the Goldsmith in the City On The Hill In The River Bend, where bears once

¹ “*The Cup of the Nineteen Jewels*”, 33 ASA Bulletin 1/2015 (March).

roamed. There talked and talked, they thought hard once and harder twice, even harder thrice (and so on), applying their minds to touching up and brushing up, pruning here and beefing up there, and after much, much hard and harder work, they had their Roughly Hewn Idea of how to polish some of the jewels, and update some of the Rules.

“Now, they all agreed, let’s ask all and sundry throughout the land, all those who love (or love less) Do It Your Way, who know much (or think they do) about Do It Your Way, all those who are (or think they are) Distinguished Speakers in our Hall Of Talk, all those who populate the Halls Of The Black Robes, all the teachers of rules. It’ll be a great consultation for the whole nation, who we shall ask: what do you think of our Roughly Hewn Idea?”

At that juncture their enthusiasm was nearly punctured by Those Of Hush-Hush, who said, *“What? Why touch up or brush up or prune down or beef up, or do anything at all with the Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels? Are you fools? It’s fine as it is, and listen to this: Do It Your Way is now a dirty word that should never be heard in the Halls Of Talk! Hush, Goldsmith, Hush!”* To be fair, Those Of Hush-Hush might have had a point, for as told when this story began, Do It Your Way was seen by some to have lost its way. Even some People Of Good-Will turned their back on Do It Your Way, when as too often it aped the Do-It-Like-This and the Don’t-Do-That and Do-It-No-Other-Way-Than-This of the Halls Of The Black Robes. The Strong And Nimble were making the headlines with tales unsavoury, and Do It The Strong And Nimble was in a bad, bad way. And when people were seen to be downtrodden by the Masters Of The Electrum Stater and their Do It Their Way, some Distinguished Speakers (and many more of the would-be sort) even brayed *“Down with Do It Your Way!”* in their Halls Of Talk. And the Makers Of The Papers were gleefully selling more and more paper, repeating, amplifying and shouting, *“Do It Your Way is rubbish, and that’s what it pleases us to publish!”* One very wise and true believer in Do It Your Way even lamented, *“Winter is coming”*, and he had a point too.

But the Goldsmith and the Elders, following the example of the Young Woman, remained steadfast and resolute. They asked all and sundry throughout the land (etc.) what they thought of the Roughly Hewn Idea. And lo and behold: what was the response? There were no screams, there were no shouts (let alone pouts!), no-one said that Do It Your Way should be thrown out, stamped out, snuffed out!

Of course, there were some who had their own Grand Ideas. Some said *“Why a Cup of only nineteen jewels when we could have many, many more rules? Why a mere cup when we can build up to something altogether*

more bigger and bigger, and more greater and greater? Why simple as simple can be when we could deviseofy a huge Do It Your Way Jamboree?"

And, yes, there were others who opined, "*Well, we're not sure that what's not forbidden is permitted, so we'd like to see committed to Rules, in no uncertain places, anything and everything we can and will do in our actual cases. Can I do this, can I do that? Tell me what to do and what to eschew in a big Book of Rules, and if in the end we call it the Jug Of The Gazillion Rules (for Mules), so be it: Do It Your Way might sink, but at least I won't have to think.*"

But on the whole, the answers were thoughtful, they were wise, they were, quite frankly, very smart (and not just in part). The Disputatious Ones were uncharacteristically measured; those in the Halls Of Black Robes were perceptive and supportive; the Distinguished Speakers in the Halls Of Talk did not balk. It was all rather nuts and bolts, so dreary and arid, so beautifully boring that the Goldsmith and the Elders could scarcely believe their eyes. And, rolling up their sleeves in the City On The Hill In The River Bend, where bears once roamed, the Goldsmith and the Elders again applied their minds, under the benevolent gaze of the Young Woman, to polishing and burnishing, to touching up and brushing up, to pruning down here and beefing up there that wondrous Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels. Yes, they decided, let us continue our work, and before long we'll present for discussion in our Hall Of Talk a Less Roughly Hewn Idea of our beloved Cup Of The Nineteen Jewels.

Here, dear Reader, my story pauses, for we shall leave the Goldsmith and the Elders to complete their task. It will resume, of course, all in good time, for the Young Woman's journey is far from over.

ELLIOTT GEISINGER

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