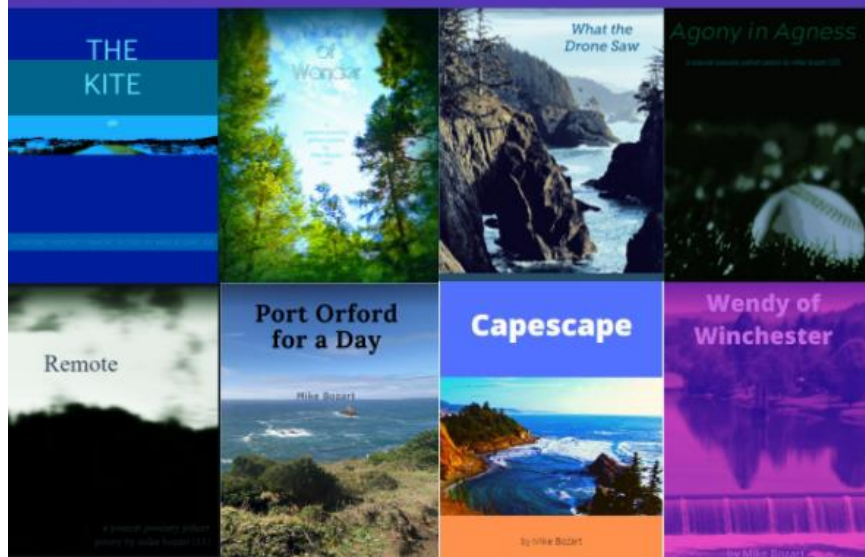


# SW ORE TALES

an octet from southwestern Oregon



by Mike Bozart

psecret psociety pshort pstory pseries

**SW ORE Tales**  
an octet from southwestern Oregon

by Mike Bozart  
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# THE KITE



A PSECRET PSOCIETY PSHORT PSTORY BY MIKE BOZART [33]

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



**The Kite** by **Mike Bozart** (Agent 33) | November 2020

## **The Kite**

by Mike Bozart

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The grinning-from-winning, late-40-ish, Caucasian, Toronto-Blue-Jays-capped Canadian gentleman arrives at the vacant checkout counter with a bag of faux onion-ring snacks and a bottle of Diet Coke. “A Dollar General right on the corner of Easy Street. [at US 101 / Oregon Coast Highway] Life is grand in Brookings, eh?” *Who is this guy? Probably a tourist.*

“There are worse places to be, I suppose,” the mid-20-something, rusty-brown-haired male clerk states sans emotion at 5:37 PM PDT on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018. “So, will that be all today, sir?” *Bet he’s from the St. Lawrence Lowlands.*

“Yepper, this will presently suffice. Oh, your [Southern Oregon] Kite Festival was absolutely wonderful. Splendid sunny-yet-mild weather. [66° Fahrenheit; 19° Celsius] So glad that I decided to partake this year. Well worth the ground-to-air-to-ground journey.” *Ground to air to ground?*

“It’s going on tomorrow, too,” the clerk stoically informs.

“Yeah, I know. But, I’ve already accomplished my goal. Thus, I’ll be heading back to Ontario early tomorrow morning. And, yes, it was a soaring success.” *But, there are no competitions. Weird guy.*

“Oh, did you participate?” the clerk enquires.

“I did. I brought down one of my puffy-thought-cloud kites.” *Puffy thought cloud?*

The clerk completes the scanning and points to the card reader. “And, what kind of kite is that, sir?”

“You know, those thought clouds, or bubbles, that are in comic strips/books and cartoons. Well, my kite consisted of one large, blank, white, crescently [*sic*] crenulated oval with three smaller ones in descending-size order acting as the tail. When it rose to about 200 feet [61 meters] – which didn’t take long as there was a brisk breeze out of the northwest – I gave the line a snap. The release latch opened just as designed, and she sailed away. I imagine the landing spot was somewhere in southern Harbor. Hopefully the finder will follow the directions.” *Directions? He’s just dropping litter out of the sky into someone’s backyard. Or, onto someone’s roof. Or, into the ocean. Or, possibly onto the windshield of a car or truck. What a kook!*

The clerk bags the two items. "Have a nice rest of your day in Brookings," the clerk nonchalantly states.

"Likewise. Hey, which way to the Brookings Institution?"

The one-quarter-Tolowa clerk is not sure what the Canadian fellow is talking about. He now has a puzzled look. *Is that part of the Oregon university system? No. Is it a private research college? No. Hmmm ...*

"You know, that American dead-center-to-left-of-right-left-centerfield think tank, depending on which way you think while tanked," the Mississauga resident clarifies. *What?! Oh, wait ...*

"Isn't that in Washington, DC?" the clerk replies after making the mental connection. *A leaking think tank leaving memories to rust. What an inane thought.*

"Just checking," the white-haired Canadian says as he begins to exit the variety chain store. "Might be a good day to buy a lottery ticket." *Wonder why he said that. Did he win big on Lotto Max?*

The next day the store clerk, Abe, attends the second day of the local kite festival with a couple of his friends, Bill and Yvonne (who are a live-in couple). The afternoon weather is similar to the day before, just a wee cooler. At precisely 3:33 PM PDT, it appears in a plethora of kite types and a smorgasbord of colors: the white thought-cloud kite.

"That's the one that he was talking about," Abe emphatically states while standing and pointing skyward. "See it – the one that looks like a big blank thought cloud with some smaller ones below."

"Yeah, I see it," twenty-six-year-old, stringy-blond-haired Bill responds while seated on a portable lawn chair on a grassy field adjacent to the dark-teal-colored Chetco River. "Odd kite there."

"Who?" twenty-five-year-old Amerasian Yvonne interjects while seated on a matching chair next to Bill.

"This strange older Canadian dude who came in the store yesterday," Abe announces. "He described a kite exactly like that one to me. He said that he was flying it, but then 'released' it on purpose, so that it could be found by

someone. He said that there were 'directions' on the kite."  
*The guy must have been wacked.*

"Directions?" Yvonne is incredulous. "Directions for what?"

"Maybe the directions say to re-fly and re-release the kite," Abe posits. "The guy over there who is flying that kite is not him; he is shorter and much younger – our age – maybe even younger than us. Want to go talk with him?"

"Sure!" Yvonne shouts. "I'm dying to know what was written on, or attached to, that kite." *Curiosity killed the cat. Wish she would just stay here with me and chill out. 'Just let Abe talk to him one on one – alone.' That guy might start eyeing her. Up and down. Checking out her ass. Why did she have to wear those super-short shorts on such a brisk day? Don't want to deal with that kind of drama right now. Though, he'll probably think that she is Abe's girlfriend. When is Abe going to get a girlfriend? Bet he would like to put his worm in Yvonne's slot. Need to just chill out. Don't worry about anything. Let's just quash all of the paranoia here and now.*

"Tell you what, my buzz has just started to kick in," Bill divulges. "Think I'll just stay here and watch our stuff." *Didn't know that he took anything. How sly of him. Wonder what he ingested. Probably something from Dave. [a chemist-acquaintance]*

"Ok, we'll be back with a full report in ten minutes, darling," Yvonne states with verve aplenty. "And, you had better have something to share with us, you sneaky little thing." She giggles and gives him a wry expression.

A summer tanager whizzes by on an errant course.

Bill just smiles, nods, adjusts his sunglasses, and tips his African safari hat down. *He's already baked Alaska.*

The short-fishing-rod-equipped, thought-cloud pilot is about 100 feet (30 meters) away. Abe and Yvonne begin weaving their way through the throngs of upwardly-tilted-heads-with-eyes-looking-south-southeastward kite gazers. When they emerge from a dense clustering of folks, they look up in unison. They are shocked: their aerial item of concern is nowhere to be seen. *Oh, man! Did he already release it? Guess so. Darn it! / Oh, no ... It's gone. Where in the world did that kite go?*

They rush up to the dark-haired lad who is reeling in the now-kite-less monofilament line. *The one that got away.*

“Did your line break?” Abe asks the younger Caucasian man. *I’ll just feel him out. Let him assume that we think it was an accident.*

“Sure did,” he replies. “Must be pretty gusty aloft. I should have used 60-lb. [27.2 kg] test line instead of this old spool of 50.” [pound; 22.7 kg]

“Where did you get that kite?” Yvonne asks. *How direct. She’d be a good TV news reporter.*

“Uh, I forget the place.” He looks frazzled. “Sorry, folks, got to run along,” he blurts as the end of the clear line passes through the rod eyelets. “Must retrieve it before someone else does. It’s very valuable. Really liked that lucky kite. A hard-to-find one-off. Looked like it went down around Marks Lane.” He then fast-walks, with his fishing rod looking like a lance, to the Boat Basin Road parking lot.

“I think he’s lying, Yvonne,” brown-eyed Abe states once the yellow-jacketed man is out of earshot. *Wonder why he broke up with his last girlfriend. Was she cheating on him?*

“About what, Abe? Everything?” Yvonne has a pensive expression. *Bill sure got lucky. She’s one cool chick. Too bad her twin sister is nothing like her.*

“No, not everything,” Abe responds. “Some things.”

“Like the part about the line breaking?”

“That actually may be the truth, Yvonne, as I didn’t notice any hardware on the end of the line.” *Wonder what his hardware is like. ‘Yvonne, you naughty girl.’*

“Great observation, Watson,” Yvonne jokingly states. *Wonder if they are still in the humping-each-other-like-mice phase. Bet they talk raunchy to each other during sex. Need to stop thinking about such.*

They then make their way back over to Bill, who is just a-chillin’ like a villain in his forest-green folding chair.

“We’re back!” Yvonne boldly blasts towards his left ear.

Bill slowly looks over at Yvonne and Abe. “So, what’s the deal? What did he say?”



“He was kind of evasive,” Yvonne answers. “Not 100% truthful.”

“Yeah, Bill, I, too, got the feeling that he’s hiding something.”

“Hiding what? The key to the universe?” Bill guffaws gutturally.

“Very funny, wise-ass,” Yvonne retorts.

“In all seriousness, you didn’t happen to see that particular kite go down, did you?” Abe queries Bill.

“Actually, I most seriously did,” Bill replies. “The suddenly untethered thought-cloud express went down over there.” [points south-southeastward] *That would be where he said it went down – the Marks Lane area.*

“Well, Yvonne, he wasn’t lying about that part,” Abe certifies.

“I just wonder where he got that kite,” Yvonne discloses. *Me, too.*

No replies, except for some cawing seagulls.

The trio would stay and watch the kites for an hour or so. Not much is said, just some oohs and ahs are uttered as a couple of guys do some rapid dives and near misses with their stunt kites.

Not amused in the least by her boyfriend’s state of waste, Yvonne would then drive an incapacitated and now mumblingly incoherent Bill back to their apartment on the east side of Brookings.

Abe would remain seated on the verdant lawn for several more minutes and wonder about the thought-cloud kite. *Should I go look for it? But, it went down over 70 minutes ago. That guy – or a homeowner, tenant, or passerby – must have found it by now. Well, nothing to do – nothing scheduled. Might as well take a cruise along Oceanview Drive. Maybe stop in at Tim’s [an old friend] later. See what he’s up to in his [McVay Creek] abode. Abide, abided, abode. Bodes well. Bides time. Swells. Breakers. Repeat. Over and over. And under. Way down under. Bones from 623 AD. Why did I think of that year. Is 623 a prime number? [No,  $89 \times 7 = 623$ ] Must remember to research that later.*

Eight anticipatory minutes later, Abe right-turns his midnight-blue, 2010 Kia Rio onto all-residential Marks Lane. However, there is no sign of any kite on the short people-less street. When he turns around at the end, he can hear and smell the Pacific Ocean. He muses. *Sure would be nice to live right beside the sea. Need to think up a lucrative business model. Something internet-based. Maybe join forces with Tim. Take his online game to another level. Make it unique. Add another dimension. But, what? Hmmm ...*

Abe exits the small neighborhood via Sea Cliff Drive and Bathiany Lane. Still, no sign of the kite. He turns right onto Oceanview Drive to continue heading south. A mid-'70s Pontiac Firebird begins to tailgate him. *Always some in-a-rush-to-go-nowhere asshole to ruin a leisurely Sunday drive. Is he the tie-breaking vote at an important shareholders' meeting? Sincerely doubt it.*

Wanting to avoid a needless road-rage incident, Abe flicks the turn signal and makes a quick right onto Sea Court Lane. The putrid-lemon-yellow Formula 400 with holey tailpipes roars by. Abe almost immediately hits his brakes. There is a barrier spanning the road. *Whew! Thank God it's daytime. If it was night, I would have crashed right into that closed metal gate. Would not have been good.*

Behind the gate is a very small oceanside neighborhood in an incipient phase. The land has been cleared, graded, divided into lots, and prepped for home construction, but the ground is still just foundation-less grass. He steps out of his car and looks through the wrought-iron spindles. There is a flat, fabric-thin, white object in the middle of the newly paved road. He excitedly walks around the gate, and then jogs towards the thingamajig. But, it is only an empty, folded-over, plastic trash bag. *Wishful thinking. Just like when I purchase those damn scratch-offs. Really need to stop. Digging a financial grave.*

"Interested in buying a lot?" a baritone male voice asks from the direction of the gate. *Huh?*

Abe looks back and sees a burly man in a blue uniform approaching. *Where did he come from? Is he private security? Or town police? Good, he's just a security guard. Guarding vacant lots? Maybe there's a 5:30 appointment.*

"Well, if the price is right," Abe offers.

The pot-bellied, 50-ish, Caucasian security guard is now ten feet (three meters) from him. “So, are you one of those millennial millionaires?” *Huh?*

“Um, not hardly.”

“Didn’t think so.” *Not with an eight-year-old Kia.*

“To be honest with you, I’m looking for a kite that appeared to crash-land very near here,” Abe candidly reveals.

“Ah, so you were up at the kite fest. How was it?” *This security guard seems glad to have someone to talk to. Maybe his wife has stopped communicating with him. Or died?*

“Yeah, me and some friends went today. There was this one kite that was quite different from the others. Just white thought clouds. It looked like –”

“Yeah, it landed in here yesterday afternoon, right over in lot 3. [points northwestward] I gave it to my 22-year-old son. He’s a bigtime kite enthusiast.”

“Oh, by chance did it have a message – or directions – printed on it? Or attached to it, perhaps on the back?”

“It did. There were neatly printed instructions that said to go to some website and enter what you thought the moment that you saw the kite, and to fly and release it within a fortnight for good luck.” *Wow! Wonder what that URL is.*

“Did you enter anything on that website?” Abe enquires.

“One never really knows.”



North  
of  
Wonder

a  
psecret psociety  
pshort pstory  
by  
Mike Bozart  
{ 33 }

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



**North of Wonder** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | NOV 2020

## **North of Wonder**

by Mike Bozart

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A single, focused, smartly attired, 28-year-old Cantonese American female right-turns her slate-metallic, shiny-blackwall-tired, 2015 Toyota Corolla LE into the dusty gravel lot on the south side of triple-concrete-arched Caveman Bridge (Oregon Route 99 / SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street). It is cool, misty, and overcast on this first Friday of fall 2016 (September 23<sup>rd</sup>) in Grants Pass. The hidden-away-under-semi-mature-bigleaf-maple-trees, eight-hundred-six-summer-suns-faded-sienna-painted-siding, disconnected-gutter-downspouts-a-dangling, single-story lounge on the Rogue River is open for late lunch and early afternoon suds. Monica's slender right hand retrieves the smartphone from the vacant passenger seat. *2:02. Two minutes late. Not too bad considering that traffic jam. What a gruesome wreck that was. Wonder if Carol is already in there. Probably. She has always been punctual. What a hole-in-the-wall of a place. Well, here goes. Hope I make it out alive.*

"Yey, you're here!" a 29-year-old, flannel-jacketed, short-haired brunette shouts as medium-length, jet-black-haired Monica strays into the weakly lit, sparsely populated tavern. *Caveman Bridge leads to The Cave. Why, of course.*

"What an out-of-the-light-of-day place, Carol. Never would have found it without your detailed directions. It doesn't show up on any of the popular map programs." *No make-up. Hmmm ...*

"That's why I like it, Monica. There's rarely ever a tourist in here. The regulars are respectfully irregular. And, it's always so quiet and dark." *Can't wait for tonight.*

"It's dark alright. Almost tripped over something at the door." *She'll be tripping alright later on.*

"Monica, I've stumbled on that raised threshold plate, too. Many a near-faceplant. You almost feel like saying 'Hey, I'm not really drunk, I swear'. But, no one even notices anymore. No one in here cares."

"Why doesn't someone just screw it back down?" Monica asks. *Screw? For sure. Really should bring a screwdriver next time and do everyone a favor. Wonder if it's a flathead or a Phillips. Or a Torx. Torques all night; sleeps all day.*

<ding><ding><ding> [an older male voice emanating from an invisible overhead speaker] "Question du jour: What two-digit Celsius temperature, when the numerals are

transposed, is closest to its approximate Fahrenheit equivalent?”

“What in the world was that?!” Monica can’t believe what she has just heard.

“The owner is a crazy old mathematician who got fired from RCC,” [Rogue Community College] Carol informs. *Why?*

“What did he get fired for?” Monica enquires. *Sex with a student?*

“Not sure, my dear. But every afternoon at a random time, there’s another bizarre math-trivia question.” *What a weird place. Wonder how Carol found out about it. Well, she’s always been a low-flying social butterfly. Wonder what she wants to tell me. Guess I’ll find out soon enough. My dear? Hmmm ...*

“Do you win anything if you get the right answer?” Monica queries with sincere interest.

“Don’t know, my lovely longtime friend,” green-eyed Carol responds. *My ‘lovely’ longtime friend? Hmmm ...*

“I’ve yet to come up with a correct answer. Maybe someday. Though, I was never good at math like you, Monica.”

“Ok, Carol, please cease with the all-Asians-are-great-at-math stereotype; I was just a B student.” *Please ditch that trope. / B+*

“I wasn’t insinuating that, honey.” *Touchy-touchy. / Honey?!*

“Hey, I bet that we can solve it together,” Monica optimistically proclaims. *Perhaps she can. I’ll be no help, especially if it involves algebra or calculus.*

“Maybe,” Carol replies. “Hey, I’ll go get us a couple of low-calorie amber beers while you mull it over. Is that ok, gorgeous?” *Gorgeous? Does she want me to be part of a threesome with her and Steve? Is that what this is leading to? Is that why she invited me here? Hmmm ...*

While Carol is at the bar awaiting the tap-filling of the steins, Monica swipes the screen of her cell phone to the left. The weather forecast from Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> (2016) appears. *That was a nice-though-chilly, pre-work jog through Lithia Park. [Ashland] The low was 48°. [Fahrenheit; 8.89°*

*Celsius] Well, that certainly isn't the correct answer: 84° Celsius is equal to 183.2° Fahrenheit. This summer has almost felt that hot sometimes. Hmm ... The high that day was 82° Fahrenheit ... which is equal to ... 27.78° Celsius. So close. If I start with 28° Celsius, the exact Fahrenheit equivalent is 82.4°. Only  $\frac{4}{10}$  of a Fahrenheit degree off. I bet that's it! The question said 'approximate'. Yeah, 28 C and 82 F. That has to be the pair.*

Carol soon returns with two, extra-large, 22-oz. (651 mL), clear-beveled, bubble-glass mugs. "Here ya go, precious." *Precious? Me? It's now obvious where this is going. I'll play oblivious. Wonder where Steve is right now. Probably at work.*

"Why, thank you, Carol. That will be enough for me today. My alcohol tolerance is still quite low. Oh, I think that I've solved the math riddle; the pairing is 28 and 82, Celsius and Fahrenheit, respectively. To whom do we report this?"

"I'll go tell the bartender. One minute." Carol departs again for the dew-yew-planked bar.

Monica wonders what the prize will be. *Is it \$50? \$100? No, the owner couldn't afford that. Maybe just \$5. \$10 at most.*

Carol returns four minutes later. "Nope, that wasn't it, dreamy. However, he said that you were close – second best." *Dreamy? Too much. Second best?*

Monica sighs. *Darn.*

"You want to do some hiking later?" Carol asks.

"Sure, I prefer hiking in cool weather," Monica replies.

"Great. The high today is only expected to be sixty-one degrees, [Fahrenheit] Carol states. *Hmmm ... 61 F = what in Celsius?*

Monica gets the temperature converter going again on her Samsung smartphone. *Let's see ... 16° Celsius = 60.8° Fahrenheit. Wow! So very close. Only a mere  $\frac{2}{10}$  of a Fahrenheit degree away from dead-on. This must be the couplet! It has to be 16 and 61. Or, is there an exact match? Hmmm ...*

"Think I've got it now, Carol. I believe that it's 16/61. Oh, thanks for the hint." *The hint?*



Carol returns to the bar for a third time. Monica's second guess is correct.

After getting off the phone with the owner, the 30-ish, stout, dark-haired Samoan American bartender hands Carol a plastic, earth-brown, driver's-license-size card. She thanks the mustachioed gentleman and heads back to the booth.

Monica looks at the card that Carol has just handed her and silently reads the text. *'The Cave – Genius Club – Every 6<sup>th</sup> beer free for life.'* *Is it per sitting? No, that would be inviting a lawsuit or criminal legal action. They must keep track at the point of sale. Point of sale. Ha! I'm such a nerd. Wonder what qualifies as one beer. Is it 12 fluid ounces? [355 mL] Is this mug worth 1.833 beer credits?* "Too bad that it's not transferable to a brewpub in Ashland, Carol."

"Oh, I think Grants Pass might quickly grow on you, especially my place north of Wonder." *Wow! 'My' place?*

"Your place? Where did Steve go?" Monica has a shocked expression. *That sure wobbled my girl.*

"Oh, you know how the 20-something men are around here, Monica. Just like male dogs. He ran off with some skank that he met in Medford. 'I've found my true soulmate,' he insisted. They're now shacking up down the road in Phoenix. She's a full-blown heroin addict, and he's soon to be. Don't miss him. At all. Good riddance." *Woah! Guess she just wants me for a trial lesbian experience. What am I in for? Do I want to do this? I love Carol, but like that? Well, maybe just once. But, will it then ruin our friendship? Wait. Is there now someone else on the periphery? Am I just going to be the exotic hors d'oeuvre in some backwoods orgy? No, she's not like that. I don't think. Hmmm ...*

Monica takes a gulp of the light-yellow ale and digests what Carol has just told her. She is speechless.

"Well, that's my update, angel. Now, tell me yours." *Angel? She really wants me. Wonder what she has in mind. Bondage? Please, no. My luck, the key would get lost. Hot wax? Yow! Whips? Ouch! Role play? Hmmm ...*

"Well, no boyfriend – or girlfriend – for three years and three months."

"So, what type of vibrator do you prefer?" *Wow! How bold!*

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