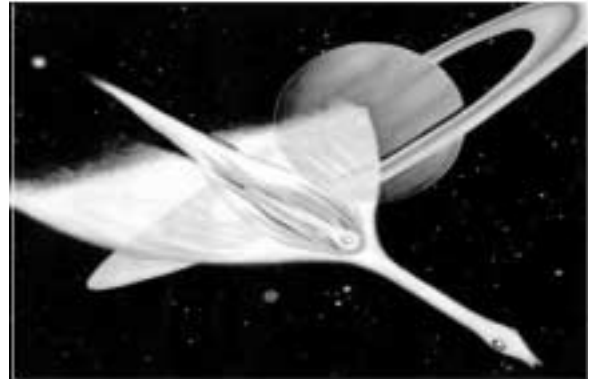

Cosmic Swan Summary

by Bill Copeland

Terrible earthquakes and upheavals plague northern India, centered on Mt. Kailas, the holy mountain of the God Shiva. Worldwide concern focuses on the death and destruction. The governments of India and China have ordered all people to leave this region of the Himalayas,



because of the growing danger. The area becomes depopulated except for a growing cult, a branch of a Hindu Shiva sect, that refuses to leave, despite many injuries and deaths. The leader of the sect is Kusoom, a tall, beautiful, Kashmiri woman. She holds her devotees spell bound with her deep blue eyes.

Mark Joff, a USGS geologist, is dispatched to the scene in the Himalayas by the United Nations to determine the cause and scale of the growing disaster. He flies into a village near the foot of the mountain in a high-altitude helicopter, flown by the Indian Air force. As he is setting up sensors, transmitters, and computer equipment, he meets cult members. Being a good scientist, he



explains the danger and tells them they should leave immediately. They tell him no, Kusoom has foreseen the rise of a great being from this Holy Mountain of Shiva. So they will stay to protect the mountain and the great being when it emerges. It will emerge soon, says Kusoom.

Astronomers high atop Mt. Hamilton, a couple of young graduate students, Caroline and Jack Schwann, discover a moon-sized, mysterious comet. The comet, named Schwann, moves rapidly toward the solar system. The scientific world is all excited by the prospect of studying such an unusual object. At its core a small blue star shines that cannot be explained by the astrophysicists.

As the comet nears the earth, it becomes frightening. All comets change their orbits by small amounts due to outgassing, but this one is adjusting to line up with the Earth's orbit. It seems to be acting intelligently. Is it going to crash into the Earth? why is it here?



Radio astronomers discover that the comet has started transmitting strong, low-frequency radio waves at the Earth. Shock! A response in the same frequency starts up from beneath Mt. Kailas. No one can decrypt messages if there are any, but calls from the comet result in responses from under the mountain.

When the comet communication starts, the earthquakes accelerate and region around Mt. Kailas rises even more rapidly. Temples fall down, valleys are filled with debris, and Kusoom's devotees lose more people, but they stay and converge on the mountain. Mark persists in his geologic investigation. He discovers that a great column of hot material is moving up under the mountain.

An eruption becomes certain.

Mark goes looking for Kusoom to reason with her, and convince her that she must lead her followers down the mountain. He finds her. She is beautiful, and captivating, but she wisely listens to all he has to say about the danger of the mountain. She looks at him with her deep blue eyes, and speaks. He looks into those



hypnotic eyes and must listen. This is a birth process she says, and she must stay to help. They will not leave, but they will help him with his scientific investigations. He agrees despite logic, because he has fallen deeply in love with her.

With the help of Kusoom and her followers it becomes clear to Mark that it must be a living being that is emerging of monumental size and power. He radios this information including scans to United Nations science headquarters. He also tells of the belief in the rising of a great being.

Soon all the world knows that all of northern India and southern China will be destroyed by the giant creature as it emerges. Conferences are held in the United Nations to determine what to do.

Two factions emerge. One faction, led by western powers and their allies in western Asia, determine that to save the world the living creature must be killed. They develop plans to bore into the earth and place nuclear bombs around the creature. The other faction is led by India, and supported generally by developing world countries, and those who believe that we must bow to the will of God.

The nuclear powers begin their drilling, despite the protests. All around the area of emergence, low level warfare erupts as the two factions

battle each other. Kusoom and Mark transmit by radio their plea to leave the creature to be born in peace.

The debate rages in the United Nations about whether to detonate the bombs. Virtually every city in the world is rocked by protests, as the Himalayas are rocked by even more massive earthquakes, and Mt. Kailas rises intact by meters a day for weeks.

Regular communication is now heard between the comet and the emerging creature beneath Mt. Kailas. But it is now clear that it is no comet, but a moon-sized life form with magnificent, giant diaphanous wings. Named for the discoverers, it is now called the Cosmic Swan. It adjusts its orbit to line up with the Earth. It now glows in the sky for all to see. Its pale blue star illuminates its smoke-thin wings that slowly push the magnificent creature toward the Earth.

The nuclear powers decide to detonate their bombs without agreement from the United Nations. If Kusoom, and their followers wish to survive, they must leave now. They refuse. The protests turn the civilized world into chaos.

Teams of devotees sneak up on the drill sites, and disable two of the bomb sites. The third bomb site, however, cannot be stopped.

The Cosmic Swan comes close to the Earth. Tides respond. The atmosphere becomes turbulent. Satellites are blown away.

The countdown starts. The Cosmic Swan flies as low as she can, but is too fragile to penetrate the atmosphere, and save her offspring. The underground bomb detonates, throwing up rock and dust into the atmosphere.

The entire chain of the Himalayas breaks apart. The injured young Cosmic Swan struggles to free itself. As the smoke and clouds clear, Mt. Kailas is seen pushed up onto the back of the newly-born Cosmic Swan. Like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, the young Cosmic Swan slowly unfolds

its wings. The lower body struggles to free itself from the cold mountainous Earth with an injured left wing.

Surrounded by dust, smoke, and clouds, Kusoom, Mark, and thousands of followers rush onto the mighty back of the still shuddering young Cosmic Swan. It carries on its massive back air, rivers, plains, and mountains. The young Cosmic Swan stretches its wings and struggles to lift off the Earth to join its mother. The left wing nearly fails, but manages to hold long enough to push the creature and its human cargo above the atmosphere. The mother flies below and lifts its offspring up into space.

Kusoom, Mark, and all the believers watch as the broken Earth slowly falls away. They start a long journey on the back of the young Cosmic Swan to a new home in a galaxy far, far away.

