

Encounter at Tokaido Road  
Olivia Plymouth Series  
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Olivia Plymouth, International Traveler and Fashion Consultant:

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## Chapter 0: Introduction

The idea for Olivia Plymouth is based on true events that happened while in Brazil. I was waiting for an evening flight back to the United States. In the terminal, I watched an impatient 8-10 year old girl happily and quite audibly drag her small red suitcase with well-worn wheels back and forth. The event seemed to drag on for hours. This appeared to me to be an interesting and entertaining premise for a story. Some 14 years later, there are four books and a short story on Olivia Plymouth. (A fifth and last book, a prequel, is planned for release in the future.) This is my most popular series.

This finale was planned back in 2004 but I wrote up only the barest of notes. Some parts had a few paragraphs written (including the last lines of the book in Chapter 24) but nothing more. Chapter 3 includes an idea for a beginning that came to me sometime later. However, the general direction of the last book was mapped out long before writing a single word.

I am thrilled that this book gives the series a well-deserved sendoff. However, there are mixed feelings in no longer being a scribe of Olivia's future journeys. Most of what happens below takes place against the wonders of *Nippon-koku* otherwise known as the islands comprising Japan. (Literally meaning the country where the sun originates.)

While visiting Japan, Olivia continues to mature as a person, confronts the shadows of her past, and does everything in her own unique style. Throughout the book, she deals with some interesting situations distinctive to Japanese culture. Will she find love and "her place in the sun?" You have to read further to find out!

I want to thank all of the many readers that have supported this series and made it this far to this final book. It is my wish that you find this last entry as humorous and entertaining as the others.

HG

## Chapter 1: The Way Things Happen

Wink Robé (Named after a character from the poem *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod* written by journalist Eugene Field.) was of two minds around the events that had just unfolded. Her generous inheritance allowed her to operate freely the online journal *Fashion Independent Weekly*. She was proud of the high standards followed keeping the *Weekly* a beacon of truth. Wink also had an encyclopedic knowledge of fashion, cultivated a long list of industry contacts, and relentlessly pursued getting the story by almost any means necessary. Even though this

continuously exposed her to danger, the published outcome was worth it. Each issue, the *Weekly* had the scoops that their bigger counterparts wanted badly. Wink was assisted by her excitable and introverted brother, Blink. He managed the financial and logistical aspects of the business. Wink had a motherly approach to her sibling. This included overseeing his fashion and dating choices. Left to his own devices, he would resort to the detestable selection of sneakers, tee shirts, and jeans. A non-repressible shudder and a growing feeling of horror thinking about that uncivilized fashion “choice” overcame her. Their reputation demanded that they both look dapper at all times to show what true fashion is all about. Sometimes Wink reluctantly joined his countless trips to the wild to observe nature’s creatures up close. She never really understood the attraction but loved her brother so she supported him the best that she could.

Recently, a third person joined the team. At first, this was an involuntary association brought about by questionable legal means. One day the Robé siblings had roused this poor woman out of a sound sleep to gather insights on an emerging threat FIT. (**F**ashion **I**s **T**error.) FIT encompasses many different factions such as advocates against silk scarves, proponents for weed clothing patterns, illuminated clothes, miniaturized accessories, black and white plaid, and many other offbeat or unusual clothing choices. The third person’s one-time Fashion School roommate, Jill G. Gremlin, created the “fashion freedom organization.” Jill wrote a “fashion manifesto” later expanded to a “fashion bible” on the perceived ills and injustices of the fashion industry and ho

*“Awake children of all ages and incomes. Your clothes are on fire. Created by the sweat of lowly paid unappreciated workers throughout the world. The world of fashion is built on top of the chains of misery. They are a different type of slave to fashion. Fashion is Terror. Terror is red and black plaid instead of white and black. Return to the age of simplicity rather than technology. Set your priorities straight. Wear clothes that you can spin rather than purchase. Don’t choose a fashion that is hot but one perfect for dealing with hot weather. Be FIT and proud rather than consume and discard. “*

FIT claimed to perform acts of education and awareness by enacting so-called victimless crimes. However, this conclusion runs counter to the thoughts of those that brushed against FIT and their public engagements. This includes numberless models briefly detained and released, various fashion businesses rudely disrupted and afterwards went under, and a style industry forced reluctantly to make clothing choices appeasing FIT. Consequently, in this current period of “the new normal”, fashion selections are heavily scrutinized and extremely limited.

Both of the Robé siblings immediately liked the third person, international fashion consultant Olivia Plymouth. In fact. Blink developed a serious crush on her. However, after their first and only date, he was relieved to having wasted little time learning that she was not his type. Instead, they became good friends. In addition. Wink trusted Olivia as a peer and a friend.

The three had discussed what was the best way to get FIT's story. Olivia volunteered to write an article praising FIT as providing an important and necessary correction to the excesses of the fashion world. She knew this would get the immediate attention of Jill G. Gremlin. The result was Olivia being brazenly kidnapped in the broad daylight on her way to work in Paris. However, this snatching was different because Olivia was taken willfully. Once arriving at FIT's secluded headquarters in Asia, she interviewed and photographed Jill. Olivia used the interview to challenge vigorously and capture fairly Jill's rationale. The organization's leader found it both refreshing and tiring. Olivia had also ample opportunity to interview the remainder of FIT's leadership vanguard. She was trying to figure out how to escape when Jill herself arranged for Olivia's retrieval. Her rescuer was none other than soldier and spy for hire Jack "The Tank" Wilson. Jack had met her ex-boyfriend first as a client in Brazil where they began a deep friendship. Before she headed back to Paris, Ritchie the ex-cameraman of FIT gave her a video treasure trove on the organization. He also escaped at the same time as Olivia.

Once returned, Olivia published this collection of photos, videos, and details on FIT. The resulting articles including Olivia's critique of the group proved to be very popular. In reaction, Jill and her confederates became very uncharacteristically quiet. Until that one day when Olivia caught by chance a protest of members of DRESS (**D**aughters **R**esponsible for the **E**radication of **S**ilk **S**carves), a FIT splinter group. Knowing that Olivia worked in Paris, Jill had tasked DRESS to give Olivia a short but chilling note:

*"O. I got rid of the deadbeats and crazies and kept only the true believers. FIT may be quiet now but we will be coming back strong. Tell the world and keep watching the news for our return."*

Olivia contacted Wink. In response, the *Weekly* published a provocative article "FIT's RETURN -- BLUFFING OR A MENACE NEEDING IMMEDIATE ADDRESSING?"

The world largely ignored the news. Still, others started to catch the drift of this disturbing trend. One of these was Olivia's rescuer, Jack "The Tank" Wilson. Through his contacts in the spy community, he was able to place FIT somewhere in Japan. Most likely, they were hiding in the northern part of the country. This led to talk about creating a task force including Wink and Blink. Once together, they would watch for FIT, plan their next move, and strike. In a few days, the task force was underway, Wink sent Olivia a text that said simply "**TIME TO END FIT ONCE AND FOR ALL. WE FOUND THEM HIDING IN JAPAN. YOU WANT IN?**" Olivia responded almost immediately, "**HECK YES. PLEASE CALL ME WITH THE DETAILS.**" They spoke briefly and Olivia was in. This meant putting her career on hold to confront directly the unstable and dynamic entity calling itself FIT.

The counter group would soon meet secretly to lay out their plans. Once their strategies were implemented and they cornered the culprits, then the authorities would be notified.

Meantime in Northern Honshū Japan, Jill G. Gremlin and her leadership team were reviewing plans of their own. They had long envisioned one “dramatic big strike” to put the finishing blow to the “old style” fashion in America and abroad. Euphoria was contagious that day for the underground group. Payback time was near.

## Chapter 2: Who is Olivia Plymouth?

*[This chapter gives a brief review of Olivia Plymouth’s life so far. Those wanting to follow the main story can skip ahead to the next Chapter.]*

It was a rare snowy day in the Seattle area and Richard Jackson appreciated the break due to the school closing. The well-built, 6'5", bearded man is a geology professor and a mountain climbing advisor at a local college. He used to be a guide to groups climbing Mount Rainer. That is where he met his ex-girlfriend Olivia Plymouth. Just thinking about her name brought forth a flood of unforgettable images. This included:

- An overpacked Olivia valiantly trying to move forward with all her might in the snow at the foot of Mount Rainer.

- A beautiful and elegantly dressed young woman that is visually stunning.

- Walking together hand in hand in the streets of Boston on an early spring morning.

- The look of her pure enjoyment on her face when solving a mystery.

- And there was that last image of her hair magically suspended in mid-air. This while pushing along her noisy suitcase and sustaining the philosophy of Joyous Travel. This approach transported one into a mindset of being at home regardless of the airport conditions and intimidating others by pushing a suitcase with purposely chosen noisy wheels.

There was a good part of Olivia’s life where he had not been present. This included her birth one wintry day in Boston to Kenny and Esmeralda Plymouth. Kenny is an archaeologist researching controversial theories. Esmeralda is a children’s magazine editor. The young fashion consultant loved them both dearly. However, her mother would often bring up tales and photos of Olivia’s childhood to unsuspecting visitors. And her father would argue with her about various aspects of her job. Then after one such verbal bout, the two of them came to a mutual understanding that

worked most of the time. Because of Kenny's job, the family traveled throughout the world with few breaks. So, Olivia learned about various languages and cultures along the way.

Olivia also has an older sister named Rose. They are very close and Rose would often join up with Olivia during her travels. Rose is a Product Manager at a growing telecommunications company in Boston. She is married to Charles Johnson. He is a tall, rarely silent man who was an art critic for a Boston paper.

Early in Olivia's childhood, she becomes fascinated with sorting and mixing colored blocks. She would play with them with hours on end and have various imaginary adventures. Sometimes, her older sister, Rose would join in. Although on most days, she left Olivia alone while spending time taking complex things apart and putting them back together again. When she was a little older, Olivia became acquainted with materials used in clothing. She progressed to being interested in all things fashion-related. One day she realized this is the field of work that best suited her. She applied and was accepted at the Mount San Real fashion consultant degree program. One year later, she graduated summa cum laude, with highest honors. This was due to the dedication to her subject as shown by her long hours and hard work.

But even good grades and a degree did not result into an immediate job. Potential employers were scared off by her age and inexperience. All but one. Sarah Pride of Pride Consulting in Toronto liked seeing a serious, confident young woman and hired her immediately. This may have been due in part to the company's specialty was junior model events. Their shows featured young women between 12 and 17 years old. Consequently, Olivia was working with people of her own age.

Olivia never forgot her first big solo assignment, which was at times was over her head. It was running a junior fashion show in the Bahamas. There were challenges to meet at every turn. However at the end, the show was huge success. Before heading home, Olivia needed a brief time to recover. So, she spent some time at the beach. While she was there, she ran into Christine from Columbus, Ohio who revealed the philosophy of Joyous Travel. "Bring joy to yourself throughout the travel experience. Always look your best at the airport and bring along a feeling of ease. Buy suitcases to intimidate. Have people hear your suitcase before they see you. Life is too short not to have some fun." Before leaving, the young fashion consultant visited a local shaman that tells her about Olivia's future.

*"I see a bright future for you. You will do much traveling and will meet your one true love. But there is darkness from the past that will threaten you and the world. You will confront this darkness directly but what happens after that moment I am unable to say. "*

Olivia stays four years with Pride Consulting. She learns a great deal from Sarah and gains a healthy dose of “in the trenches” fashion experience. She is always appreciative that Sarah took a chance on her while others looked the other way. In the end, the desire for milder weather and a strong entrepreneurial bent pushes Olivia to go off on her own. She researches for an untapped market where to launch a fashion consulting company. She decides on growing her business in the Seattle/Vancouver area. Then at age twenty, Olivia founds Better Colors Fashion Consultants. Not liking to travel much locally, she leases a building next to her house.

Olivia knows that she cannot do all the work required alone. As a result, she hires two employees. Sally Lennox, who is the office manager and serves as Olivia’s surrogate grandmother. She has been out of the job market for some time and wants to learn about fashion. She genuinely is concerned about her boss’s welfare. Tommy Loomis was hired as the first employee. He helps Olivia with the complexities of their contracts and logistics. He does what it takes to create highly satisfied customers. Other companies have tried to snag his services over the last three years. He stays because he loves working with Olivia. It is hard to find a boss that has offers such a fun work environment. Being around Olivia's contagious positive energy, her sense of joy, and thirst for continuous improvement was exciting. Just as important, Olivia always welcomes his input and appreciates his efforts.

Richard thought of two of the more important mysteries that Olivia solved. At the time, he was annoyed that these adventures meant losing important time away from each other.

The first puzzle solved was a sixty-year-old mystery in Fortaleza Brazil during the Valdiraini fashion show. Somehow, Olivia puts all of the pieces together, discovers what happened to young Nade Lua, and reunites a long lost family.

The second mystery was during her stay in Boston around the time of Rose’s wedding. Olivia not only attends and helps with her sister’s nuptials. In addition, she runs and finishes in the world-famous marathon. Just after arriving in Boston, she is sought eagerly by her sister’s colleague, Alanna Baldwin. Alanna wants Olivia to solve a mystery about the disappearance of her colonial ancestor Uriar’s Baldwin’s missing biographical work on prominent Americans. Uriar also published a second lost book on events and life of early America. The “fashion sleuth” finds the various parts of the first book along the way. A copy of the works are returned mysteriously to a local library and are republished.

One unpleasant event stayed with her. This was the experience running into the Boston chapter of FIT led by Toni Starhouse. While being detained against her will by the group, Olivia revealed her brief time as fashion school roommates with FIT founder Jill G. Gremlin. G stands for Gousand, her mother’s maiden name. They were good friends for four months and Jill was an

earnest student. Yet something changed deeply inside Jill and she became engulfed in the shadows. From then on, she wore black to show her allegiance to the impoverished fashion workers and only saw injustice not happiness in the world. Jill wrote a long manifesto about how she viewed the world and her suggestions to improve it. Here is the essence of that document:

*“People are asleep as to the true nature of what fashion is and can be. They do not realize the hardships undertaken to create what they are wearing. Without thought, they easily discard the outfits in their swollen closets to be current with the season’s apparel offerings. This lifestyle of being fashion’s slave is a misguided choice causing an unseen horror on the world. This blight needs to change following a simpler existence. But there is no need to be a solitary traveler on this path. FIT is your partner to guide you to the correct choices of being a responsible consumer.”*

Olivia respected some aspects of the document and formed the Better Fashions Consortium in part to improve the situation of women and fashion worldwide.

Life went on until FIT’s influence grew and the “new normal” described earlier took over fashion. Olivia tried to get a consulting gig in Malaysia. While there, she ran in the mysterious young shaman Saerah who “spoke” in Olivia’s mind the following:

*Olivia Plymouth. Heed well my words. Doors will be closed. Doors to be opened. Old loves lost. New loves gained. Old loves return. Work so familiar. Work so different. Tears at the start. Smiles at the end. Now is not the time to lose faith. A new life begins NOW.*

Realizing it was no longer a viable option to run a business, Olivia put the company on hiatus. After some interesting adventures, she ends up working for Sarah Pride in Paris. Before leaving, she breaks up with Richard, putting her career first. Olivia falls in love with the city and finds a potential new boyfriend in pastry chef Pierre Richard. Along this time, the adventures with FIT described earlier take place. Now, Olivia was risking a good deal by spending time tracking down and confronting FIT.

This brings us up to today. This follows in the next chapter.

### Chapter 3: Sudden Departure

Throughout the cities and towns of the world, there is a daily transformation largely ignored or unknown. After the close of work, a magical time occurs. Happily, many women eagerly escape the confines of business dress to slip into something more casual and comfortable. An important part of this task is “downsizing” from heels of all sizes to flats or convertible flats. Oh, that first

moment of liberation is a joy and a relief. This is so regular a task that many participants do it without thinking. It is just another of the numberless activities to complete during what makes up a long day.

Depending whether the person is heading home or enjoying the evening, there may be accompanying changes in clothing, accessories, make up, and other artifacts of female dress.

Olivia Plymouth, the young fashion consultant now living in Paris, also delighted in making these evening changes. On her way out of work, she visited a bench in the charming park nearby. Once there, she pulled her footwear for the evening -- plain brown ballet flats. To her it was no big deal. She felt at home wearing all types of shoes.

However, there was something pressing on her mind resulting in a heavy sigh as she headed back to her very small apartment. She just completed her final workday before heading to Japan tomorrow afternoon to meet up with FIT. Originally, she was going to leave a day or two after her call with Wink. However, Olivia quickly realized that she needed more time. She had extended her stay in Paris for an additional four days to say the needed goodbyes and complete the last few tasks before leaving. It would especially hard saying adieu to her family and friends because she needed to masquerade the truth on why she was taking time off.

The first conversation had taken place earlier that day with her past and present boss Sarah Pride. She let her know that she was taking an indefinite leave because she needed time to find herself. Sarah warmly hugged her and smiled. "I knew that I never could keep you for long but you always did some of your best work for me. Good luck finding yourself. "And Sarah winked. They both knew what this time off was really about.

That evening she met Geneviève (Gen) who hailed from Portland Maine and Luisia, her Brazilian friend who had relatives as cabdrivers throughout the world. Some of them had driven Olivia during her previous mysteries. Gen would also store her things until Olivia returned and recovered from being so stressed. They did not buy the stress story but accepted that Olivia had a good reason to shield them from the truth. It was a last comforting moment among good friends before a long and difficult goodbye. The next day, Olivia had a rare breakfast with Henri. He had taken precious time off preparing as one of the sixteen finalists to France's most prestigious competitions for pastry chefs – the Meilleur Ouvrier de France or MOF.

Then he said something that surprised her. "You know that there is something that I have been keeping from you. You may not realize it but we have met before a long time ago. We were both around eleven at the time and you were in Paris for some reason with your family. You were sitting in the park by where you were working and reading a large biography about someone in

the fashion field. Your mother was seated next to you. It looked like she was editing some document. Solidly deposited next to her the largest handbag that I have ever seen. You were so mesmerized by the big text that it endeared me to you. I did not want to interrupt your reading but wanted to make my presence known. With all of my courage, I said hello to you in French. You responded back with very understandable French and a charming accent. Then you returned to your book. I then resumed my location on a nearby bench watching you. I saw your mother look at her watch and realize it was time to leave the park. You were so entranced by the book at that point. In reaction, she just grabbed your hand and loudly said “OLIVIA PLYMOUTH, IT IS TIME TO GO.” Happily, I heard your charming name for the first time. Since then, I always wanted to meet again and become your friend. I thought kindly about you from time to time. So, it must have been destiny that we literally bumped into each other around Paris’s most famous church. You are as every bit as wonderful as I hoped. When you return, the MOF should be over. Look me up so we can become better friends. “

Olivia was surprised to hear this story and did not recall it ever taking place. She wondered why this was. Nevertheless, she knew her mother would remember the many details. It also made her re-think of Saerah’s words about old loves being lost and gained. Were Henri and Richard BOTH the old loves? It was something that she would have to think about.

That night, Olivia called her mother to explain her situation. Esmeralda said that her youngest daughter was overdue a good rest after such non-stop activity. Then Olivia asked about Henri’s story. And Esmeralda laughed, “Well Baby Jenkins. You must have smitten the young man hard for him to remember you for so long. Yes, it is true. It was our last day in Paris. I had a deadline to edit some children’s book and you were quiet reading this very large fashion book having what looked like a good time. You could get so lost in whatever you do. He did stop by and you briefly spoke to him. Then, you quickly returned to your book. So that’s why you don’t remember it. I do not recall the details but what he says sounds right. We probably did not stay that long after you spoke with him.” Olivia was stunned not to remember this at all. They spoke for a little bit and said goodbye. Olivia’s father was not available because he was doing some archaeological research into the late hours.

Olivia called her sister Rose to say farewell. However, Rose could see through her story. “I don’t believe one word that you are saying! You may fool others but I know you too well. Stressed out my hat. You are chasing FIT, right? Don’t deny it!” Olivia had to reveal reluctantly her plans. Then Rose surprised her and said, “I have time off. Someone needs to watch your back. I promise to stay out of the way. Send me the travel information and I will join you. And I won’t take no for an answer. “Both shocked and pleased, Olivia sent the information and how to contact her. Rose promised to be there in a few days.

Olivia tried to sleep her last night in Paris. It might be a long while before there would be another. But her desire to succumb to slumber was not an easy task since she had so much to mull over.

### **About the Author**

Hallett German is a fiction and technical subject author on various aspects of IT. His works of fiction cross multiple genres including children, young adult, dysfunctional corporate mysteries/fantasies, historical fiction, and steampunk. His books offer a unique and original ride into other worlds and lives. His books can be found at <http://hallettgermanfiction.ml> and <https://sites.google.com/site/hallettgermanfiction/>