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# Destiny's Daughter

Continued from page seven

"Whatever happens at the Palace, Madame is to obey the instructions of only one person."

"What are you talking about?" "Who knows? These are sad times. There was a putsch in St. Beloise at dawn —"

"In St. Beloise —" The woman nodded. "Remember, the person whose instructions you are to take will say to you the word 'chivalry.'"

Josephine stared at her. She saw again the darkness of the St. Beloise — Nauburg — Domm road, with John Fritz Ohe der Asche standing on her car with his machine pistol dangling from his hand. She heard his voice again — "because I believe in chivalry to ladies. I am not a mad dog."

"Then he got to Domm?" Josephine asked. The woman nodded. "He lives." Then she took Josephine's dress for pressing and went out.

Josephine was ready when Captain Batron came for her, at one. They drove together to the Preobregan Palace in a staff Daimler.

There was a quietness in the old streets of Domm — a hushed expectancy that hung in the noonday air like skeins of smoke from fires on the Dusselhorn.

The policemen of Domm, in their pale blue coats with the silver buttons — their black leather kapis, were gone from the streets, and in their place at every other street corner there was a rigid trooper of Party Militia, with short carbine and dagger. But they were not like the police with their benevolent civic casualness; they were like guards of honor at a catafalque, immobile, in the presence of eternity itself.

Then suddenly there was life in the whole picture — quick, pulsating American life. The staff Daimler turned slowly at the Tashno Gates to the Park of Prince Oscar, for the approach up the long drive to the Preobregan Palace. Coming out between the open gates was Lathrop MacAfee, walking quickly, without coat or hat. He heard the car, looked up and saw Josephine. He cupped his hands and yelled.

"Are you all right, Josephine?" She jerked at the handle of the window beside her and yelled "Yes!" before Batron could stop her — but not before two Party Militiamen stopped Lathrop; for they rushed him from their sentry boxes and got him.

"Go back!" Josephine turned fiercely to Batron.

"I cannot—I dare not," Batron said. "He's a friend of mine!" Josephine said. "You must."

"Sit quietly, Madame!" He grasped her wrists in both of his hands. "Sit quietly!" The car picked up speed in the Palace Drive. The last she saw of Lathrop through the back window was his furious, dirty face, yelling at the men who held him, tearing his press credentials from his pocket and waving them. The car went on up the approach and drew in under the east portico of the Palace.

Josephine was ushered at once into the Hall of the Princes. That is breathtaking in its massive grandeur. It is not the size of it that does it, it's the moving symmetry. It is alive. Its columns move in stately procession between the black and white Parian squares of its floor and Carriotti's golden ceiling.

The portraits are gone — one of them to Mark Wayne on a slick theft twenty years before, but the bannerets of the Knights of the Order of St. Geneve still hung above the carved ebony stalls, with the black crepe of death pendant from those at the left and the white of life from the stalls of the twenty living knights; for those bannerets are history from the time of the Second Crusade, and the State holds them as a fine tradition for posterity, even though the Party forbids the Knights to convocate.

As she and Batron came into the north end, there was nothing but moving emptiness in the great hall. Then as Captain Batron stopped and saluted, Josephine saw the Director, standing at the further end of the hall, tall and slender against the light of Latré's gorgeous rose window — waiting there — an integral part of the whole picture, aloof from it as he always was, but polite, waiting through an innate courtesy, not bored, not doing anything but waiting. She remembered from newspaper accounts that it was part of his ritual that you take three hundred steps down to him for official audiences.

Batron bowed to her and she started alone down the long pathway between the flanking columns, hearing her footfalls, feeling suddenly awkward, holding her chin high to fight off her inclination to stop and shriek at the ridiculousness of it. But suddenly it wasn't ridiculous. He was standing there, still far from her, his arm slung to his side in black silk — standing on his feet not quite eight hours after having fainted in the street from a compound fracture. The steel of the man was an actuality then, not a part of Party propaganda. He was watching her closely — every move of her walk down to him, but there was nothing of his personal thoughts in his eyes.

For one awful moment, panic caught her. She had no faint idea what she would do or say when she got to him. Then she was in front of him and before he could speak she smiled and said: "How is your arm?"

He said, "You are a very courageous woman." He was studying her carefully now, looking at her face as if he wished to catch all of the details of it on his memory so that there would be no chance of his not remembering it the next time he saw it.

"You are perhaps as courageous as I am," he continued, "and I pride myself on my courage, for I know fear and have to fight it to be courageous. Do you know fear?"

"Have you ever been sentenced to death," she asked him — for no reason?"

"I am sentenced to death," he said quietly, "for an excellent reason. I have allowed a man to become too strong. And that is why you were sentenced to death — to create an international incident that would kill me." He smiled. "But I didn't know you were to die when I sent for you," he said. "That was merely a coincidence — Batron's reaching you in time with my orders."

"Why did you send for me?" "I should have sent for you anyway," he said. "I wanted to see you again."

"Why?" "I don't know," he said slowly. "One meets so few people that one does want to meet again."

"That is true," she said. "Did you feel that you wanted to meet me again?" he asked her. She nodded. "Yes — I did."

"Why?" "I don't know," she said.

He stared at her intently for a moment; then almost with a visible effort he came back from his thoughts. He said: "Your entire sentence is, of course, revoked."

"Thank you. I didn't think it fit the crime."

"It did under normal conditions — for a National," he said. "We allow no middle course here. We eliminate any opposition. It is the only intelligent method."

"I suppose that is what gives Americans such a supreme contempt for Europe today."

"There is nothing contemptuous about first principles," he said. "Fight to win. Loot when you do win."

"There is something supremely contemptuous about absolutism."

He smiled. "How young America is," he said, "to believe the things it does believe."

"Such as what?" "That it is, for instance, a democracy."

"Why isn't it?" "Principally because democracies cannot exist and it was not founded as one because the men who founded it knew that. Your George Washington was a gentleman — your Alexander Hamilton — your Thomas Jefferson. They didn't write your Declaration of Independence to mean what it is construed to mean. They believed in family, inheritance, prestige. They owned slaves. How could they believe all men were created equal? They believed all English gentlemen were created equal at home or in English colonies. And that is all they believed."

"It's a little too late now to ask them!"

"Yes," he nodded gravely, "for the damage is done — as it was done here by a decadent monarchy. But we have found a remedy — quite by accident."

"Are you the remedy?" "I am," he said. "I am an absolute and a benevolent ruler."

"And yet you are sentenced to die?" He shrugged. "All rulers are born under sentence of death. If they have the strength, they relieve themselves. If they don't, they are better dead."

He was talking no theory, but his own deep-seated conviction of truth, and again, as she had that morning, she felt the magnetism of the man.

(Continued on page 15)

# Stranger than Man

by CARL KULBERG

WHITE elephants are not really white, but light gray in color. They are worshipped in Siam.

THE fish research department of the University of Michigan has found the common garter snake as serious a menace to fish, as the water snake.

NO ONE knows the final resting place

of a wild elephant. Where he roams in a wild state and dies a natural death, his remains have often been sought, but they have never been found.

HATCHETFISH, so named because of their ax-like appearance, have such muscular pectoral fins or "wings" that they can fly over water in astonishing eight-foot flights.