

...unique or eunuch?...

CHAPTER 1

Eyes streaming, she half stumbled as she fled down the damp and dingy alleyway. Distraught as she was, her nostrils were assailed by the succession of odours emitted, from the different, paint-chipped, shabby doors she hurriedly fled past. Her thoughts were very volatile, alternating between fear and anger.

She stumbled and almost fell. The jolt unleashed a sudden feeling of damp release between her legs and she could feel a wetness trickling down her leg. Still running, she wiped at her crotch through her petticoat, twisting her ankle in the process – this was the start – her anger turning rapidly into a seething white-hot hatred with an accompanying passion for revenge!.

The Reverend Phineas Hobbs stretched himself languorously, belched and took another sip of mulled wine. ‘Not too bad..’, he thought to himself, ‘...not a Bishop yet, but not bad at all for the son of a humble bone and rag merchant!...I’m respected, living comfortably and am virtually the ruler of my own little kingdom – lots of side benefits – especially the variety of tasty young flesh available when I want it!..... all anxious and honoured to please me!’

Thinking of Marie, he felt arousal again – he had really enjoyed her tonight. The feeling of power it gave him – especially when he hurt her! She was beginning to become a habit and this could lead to problems...he must find a way to get rid of her...after all, there were plenty more tasty little tit-bits for him to savour.....

Marie stood outside the Reverend’s study. What could he want with her at this time of day? - Finally plucking up her courage, she tremulously knocked on the door. The Voice bade her enter. “...Sit down girl...the Fates have smiled upon you today! - of course, only because of my kindly and Christian outlook!.....you are going to be given an opportunity to better your station in life – indeed your whole

future!...I have today confirmed on your behalf, your acceptance of an offer of marriage to a Gentleman Farmer residing in Her Majesty's Cape Colony in South Africa.....don't gawp at me girl... get down on your knees and thank the Good Lord for His infinite mercy bestowed upon such a lowly creature as yourself.....hmm, and while you're down there, you could show me a little gratitude as well.....”

Trembling with fear and humiliation, Marie sank to her knees as the Reverend strode towards her busily unbuttoning his flies...

After the disgusting encounter was over, Marie washed her face and rinsed her mouth at the water-pump in the courtyard. She would never forget the horror of it all – the rank unwashed smell of him and his filthy talk – the way he had struck her through her face when she had been unable to avoid throwing-up.

She had made a promise to herself that night, that never ever again, would a man bully and abuse her – she swore an oath that she would take revenge on the Reverend some day – he would be made to suffer the way she had!.....

CHAPTER 2

She gazed about her forlornly. People of different races were moving all around her busily attending to their own tasks, no one spared her a moment – she felt utterly and totally lost and rejected.

This was not at all what she expected. She had experienced a most terrible sea voyage, in cramped, foul, below the deck quarters with absolutely no privacy - the reek of unwashed bodies, excreta and urine fouling the little area that she had been unceremoniously dumped in. When the cry of “...Land Ahoy!...” finally came, she had sobbed with relief.

Now, here she stood on the busy dock, with her pitiful, string-bound sack that contained all of the belongings that she had to her name. Now

what?, she mused – the Reverend had told her that she would be met by her husband-to-be, but after waiting for almost four hours no one had as of yet appeared. She was desperately tired and hungry, but had at least had a drink of water, which she bought from one of the many water-sellers wandering around – this came from her hard-earned savings and was reluctantly spent... she would have preferred to have gone into one of the taverns, but was afraid of missing her new benefactor.

Her thoughts were interrupted, by a hand descending on her shoulder none too gently, while a hoarse, rasping voice enquired – “ ...you Marie?..” - she turned, to the sight of a huge unkempt , unshaven man who stared at her sardonically whilst scratching the back of his shaggy head.

“..y..yyy...Yessir!” she blurted, unconsciously recoiling and hugging her sack to her chest, her legs suddenly turning to water.

“.....mmm....not much of a bargain I’ll say.....still, I suppose what can one expect buying sight-unseen!.....well, like any mare, the proof is in the riding!....right,... bring yourself and your sack onto my cart and be snappy about it!...”

They seemed to have been travelling for hours, although the Table Mountain background had not diminished much. The landscape around her was incredibly beautiful, the greenery lush, the harsh squawking of the sea-gulls was replaced by the many different songs of birds she had never known existed. They had passed many other travellers, some of them dark-skinned and minimally clad, walking, riding on donkeys, others obviously wealthy, travelling in stylish coaches, even herds of cattle - in most cases driven by diminutive herdsmen who stared at them wide-eyed as they passed. He had for most of the time ignored her completely, except for the times that he passed her a Hessian-clad bottle, of flat-tasting water, which she gratefully sipped – at least she wouldn’t die of thirst, but what she wouldn’t give for a bite to eat! – Her stomach growled in protest, she had last eaten only a thick slice of home-made bread, given to her by a sympathetic matron on board the heaving boat, shortly before they docked in Cape Town – the first bit of food that she had managed to keep down since boarding. Her thoughts wandered back to the Reverend – the swine! – He had used her and abused her with a total lack of concern, and when he had tired of her,

unceremoniously ejected her – his time would come! – She swore that from now on, no man would ever get the better of her...

CHAPTER 3

Marie gazed down at her rapidly expanding middle – she wondered whether it would be a boy or a girl – poor sod, whoever it was. Life had not changed much for her, although she had to admit that the weather certainly made a great difference – beautiful blue skies most of the time, unlike London with its grey, cold, damp and gloomy atmosphere where the citizens seemed to be void of any interest in their surroundings or fellow denizens. Here in the Cape of Good Hope, the locals, mostly seemed, to be of a cheerful disposition, whether White, Black or Coloured – there was a feeling of companionship amongst the local farmers which made her feel welcome although she was a foreigner – her pregnancy an interest to be shared by the farming wives – here for the first time, she felt as if she was of some consequence.

HE of course was a lout, actually not much different from the Reverend – using her when it suited him and not caring a damn whether she liked or wanted it. Occasionally when *HE* had imbibed too much of the local ‘Kaapsche Witblits’ (a primitive, locally-brewed brandy of extreme potency) he would use her roughly, becoming more and more aroused by her cries of pain, battering down upon her with such fury that her pubis would be painful to the touch for days, fuelling her increasing hatred of men. Her only comforting thought, was the fact that at least she was legally married and that she would inherit everything should he die – at least her child would not grow up in a London slum, and would have a mother who cared.

The little girl was adorable, she gazed up tranquilly with her dark eyes at Marie, who felt that her heart would break with love for this little mite who had changed her whole life, arousing thoughts and instincts she did not

know she possessed, someone she could unreservedly love. *HE* showed absolutely no interest at all, only commenting sourly after the birth, “....I suppose I should have known, that you weren’t capable of giving me a son and heir – that’s what I get for buying ‘sight unseen’!.....”.

His attitude actually suited Marie, as she felt, the less *HE* had to do with her child, the better - and the only times that he did have contact, he always found fault.

Marie was busily sweeping her kitchen floor, when one of the farmhands banged noisily on the fly-screened door – “....Mem come quick, the Master he hev occident!quick!..”. , she set off after the farmhand who ran towards and entered the barn where the storing of hay bales was being done.

HE lay alongside the ladder, which gave access to the upper landing of the barn. His head was at a peculiar angle to his body, and it was apparent that his neck had been broken, his eyes stared vacantly, his mouth, a rictus of anger.

They buried him next to his parents, in the small cemetery on the one corner of the farm. The funeral party had consisted of Marie, two farmhands, the neighbour and his wife and the Minister. *HE* had never attended the Church services, so the Minister cut the sermon appropriately short , not even waiting for a cup of coffee afterwards.

The neighbours also departed as soon as was decently possible. *HE* was not a well-liked man....

CHAPTER 4

Life became more physically and mentally stressful for Marie, for now she had to run a small but busy farm herself, besides looking after the

home and her child. She had never had proper schooling, so the running of the home and farm had been a really desperate learning curve for her. Fortunately, Mr. Smit, the local, well-liked schoolmaster had been more than willing to coach her a few evenings a week – the book-keeping was her particular need and interest, and this helped her with the settling of her husband's estate with the bank. She was pleasantly surprised to find that she had become a lady of means, modest yes, but to her... totally unexpected.

For the first time in her life, she did not have to depend on someone else - she was the pilot of her own ship. She had a lot to learn about finance, but was absolutely determined to do so – and no man would ever, ever, tell her what to do again. Her daughter would never be subjected to the humiliations that she had endured, and she would teach her, how to use and outwit men!.

Marie had come to realize that she had a definite power over men – even Mr. Smit had started finding excuses to 'pop in', to see if there was 'anything' she needed – she knew what he 'needed'... very obviously, when he stood up, after one of their long study sessions – even though he tried to hide the bulge in his trousers, with his overcoat. Like dogs these men...would do anything to get a leg over!.

Mr. Schonvogel, the Bank Manager, had also started to try his luck, '..a ... little drinkie' at his club, where he would introduce her to friends who would be able to help in many business ways... He was prepared to be her mentor and sponsor her where necessary – they could have a 'mutually-beneficial understanding'.....

She had not given him a rejection, but had left him with the feeling that there would be a future for them – she would play him for all that he was worth – and that would cost him plenty!

CHAPTER 5

Rory Collett was sweat-soaked, when he entered the 'shower-room' in a corner of one of the outhouses which he had built since he had come to work for 'the missus' just over a year ago. He was not a big man, but as any employer would agree '...worth his weight in gold...' He had really given his all for the 'missus', working well after the normal hours to try to improve the running of the farm – and this had been successful – good crops, healthy cattle and a farm that had become almost a show-place in the district.

He cast off his sweat-stained clothes and standing under the oaken water tank, pulled at the rope which released a fairly firm spray of cold water – he shivered as the water hit his skin, then began relaxing as he soaped himself with the home-made carbolic soap – taking the stress out of his knotted muscles. Releasing the rope, he halted the downpour of water, and reaching into a recess in the rough wall of the 'shower', he brought forth a cutthroat razor and a small piece of mirror. He lathered his face with the carbolic soap and began shaving. He washed the lather from his face and stared at the result in the mirror – a pleasantly suntanned, thick-eye-browed Celtic-looking face stared back at him – he winked at himself, and then started with frighta woman was reflected in the mirror standing behind him!

Marie stared at Rory – she had never before noticed, that he was actually quite a good-looking fellow – her eyes dropped down to his waist....and...rather well-hung!....her tongue flicked momentarily across her lips, as she raised her eyes to his,... he, red-faced, tried to cover himself, dropping the mirror and soap, and reddened further as his member treacherously started to stiffen!

A gasp escaped her lips, as she stepped in to the shower and tremulously put her arms around Rory, bringing her lips hungrily against his.

Rory shuddered and almost came, but then hesitated no longer, and bringing his hands up to her bodice, ripped away stays and cloth and

circled her breasts with quivering fingers, and as she panted, he tore away her skirts, petticoats and drawers and drew her down to the wet floor of the shower!

There was no hesitation as he entered her summarily, groaning as he immediately came,... she gave a muted shriek and arched her back pressing against him, feeling him empty his fluid into her!. This was the first orgasm that Marie had ever had - she realized that this was indeed something very special – also very confusing, to feel this strange and tender comfort in the arms of a MAN?. They had not spoken at all during this passionate encounter - no words seemed to be necessary. She slipped out of his arms, stood up and then led him to her bedroom in the farmhouse.....

Rory was undoubtedly like no other man that she had ever known - he was courteous, kind and loving and always affectionate towards her and he ran the farm with extreme efficiency. Their “love-child” was now one year old, a dainty, delicate little thing that was the spitting image of Marie in miniature – the apple of her father’s eye. The two girls, were as different as could be in nature, and in looks, but had one thing in common - they loved one another - the elder, Margaret, being particularly protective towards her little sister, Amelia.

Rory and Marie had legalized their union - and had become persons of standing within the local community. Both were popular and well-liked by the farming element - and respected by the local Chamber of Commerce, the meetings of which they both attended.

Their finances continued to improve, Rory investing very carefully and always discussing whatever he intended doing, with her first. He had acquired the reputation of being an astute businessman and was respected by the bank. She was experiencing a happiness that she had never ever expected – her future, and that of her two girls, seemed secure – and all thanks to a wonderful man, who loved and adored her passionately – the only time that they were separated was when he saw service with the Government troops during the First World War!. Life was indeed good!.

CHAPTER 6

Nine prosperous years had passed smoothly for them, when Fate stepped in – the crops failed, the cattle sickened and the bulk of their investments collapsed. Rory after much thought, decided that they should sell, and salvage as much as they could and re-establish themselves, in the town of Kimberley, where he was told, opportunity in the diamond fields abounded.

Their arrival in Kimberley was fortuitous, as after finding an area where they could halt their heavily-laden ox-wagons and camp temporarily – they were told that they were just in time to join the latest site-claim race. Participants would line up and then, at the crack of a pistol, race over a predetermined area and stake claims where they wished, using marked pegs to determine the extent of their “site” or “dig”.

The excitement amongst the “would-be” prospectors was infectious, and both Marie and Rory although tired after their long journey, raced across the veldt towards the area they had chosen, staking-off their own “claim” with triumphant glee.

After the lodging of their “claim” at the deeds office, they went to the “Digger’s Supply Store” and began buying the shovels, panning trays, sieves, trestle tables, sorting trays etc., that they would need - all supplied to them by the beaming owner, duly impressed by the glowing letter of credit from their Bank Manager - soon the next stage would commence....”Hard Work!”....

About three miles from their “dig”, they found the ideal location for building a home, and after a bit of wrangling with the property owner reached a mutually satisfactory price.

Predictably, the Colletts flourished and soon became one of the leading families in Kimberley, owning many businesses, properties, stables, racing-horses etc.

CHAPTER 7

James Kane, sank tiredly, into the aisle seat, after storing his overnight case in the overhead recess. The legroom was quite good, as the three-seat row, had no seats in front of them, being directly next to the Emergency Door exit. He was pleased to note that the other two seats were unoccupied... his eyelids began to droop - he had not slept for hours, what with all the meetings he had attended, the flight delays caused by the Iceland volcano and the rigorous demands of the evening's delightful companion...

His musing was interrupted by a softly spoken, '..excuse me!..' -dazedly he opened his eyes, to be confronted by a twinkling pair of blue eyes staring down at him curiously. He focused on the owner, an attractive, smartly dressed blonde, who smilingly repeated her request.

'...Sorry!..' he said, clumsily lurching to his feet, almost tripping himself up, much to the quiet amusement of the newcomer, who lithely slipped past him, to claim the window seat. She smoothed her skirt down, settled herself more comfortably, smiled up at him, and said,...

'Hi!....I'm Ann, and you're...?' - '...Jaay...er...Jim ...' he said thickly, feeling utterly loutish, and compounded this by catching his buttocks on the arm-rest as he sat down. Damn!, that was bloody sore he thought to himself, not exactly a brilliant introduction, and she was quite a "looker" too!.....trust me to screw it up.....mind you, that look she just gave me is hopeful.... let's see what we can do....So thinking, he pressed the button for cabin service, ...a bit of South African champagne could hopefully dull the pain!

Three bottles of champs followed up by “Scottish Wine” doubles, and the arm-rests folded out of the way,- they clung to one another, revealing the fact that they were both married but not at all averse to a bit of comforting on the side. By this time - 2.30am SA time, all the cabin lights had been switched off, or dimmed, and no-one paid them any attention – not that this would have in any way affected their rising lust. They would be landing at the Oliver Tambo International Airport (formerly Jan Smuts International – Johannesburg) where she would be catching a connecting flight to Lesotho, joining her husband, a Geologist, who was finishing a two-year contractual obligation. In a fit of magnanimity, fuelled by lust and the urgency of the moment, he suggested that she break her journey for a day in Johannesburg, where he and his lover, would show her the sights – ‘..Yes!, yes!..’she said as his questing hand massaged her mound, causing her to dampen her panties which he ripped off, and cast down - to join his underpants and trousers which lay rumpled on the floor.

The relief and pleasure was tremendous as he plunged in to her, she locking her legs around his back. He felt his climax approaching, but then suddenly, pain! – terrible pain!... as his thigh muscle went into spasm! – He couldn’t move – ‘...aargh!..’ he groaned, - ‘....is it good my darling?’...she murmured throatily, - ‘...aaaaargh!...I’m cramping...dammit!..... call the stewardess!..’ he cried desperately, feeling for and finding, the cabin service button, which he savagely jabbed.

‘..Oooo - my Griet!...’ shouted the stewardess, as she saw the couple ‘in flagrante delicto’ – ‘...Ansie, kom help hier gou!..’ she called to the assistant stewardess for help, and between the two of them, they managed to lift James off his almost-hysterical partner, but as he flipped around they saw his huge erection, which was convulsively ejaculating semen!

The one stewardess let go of his legs in horror, and his backside hit the floor with a tremendous thump – the pain was so bad that he almost passed out – his member finally losing its rigidity, dangling flaccidly in total abjection!...

Limping perceptibly, he pushed the luggage trolley toward the cafeteria area, Ann walking alongside. His mind was thinking about Holly, his lover, and wondering whether he had not acted too hastily, and without thought, issuing this invitation to Ann. Holly was an extremely perspicacious and jealous woman and she might just...

His thoughts were abruptly terminated, as a hand clamped over his, on the trolley – the rings of the other hand biting into his knuckles painfully, as a voice hissed into his ear – ‘..what the hell is this!?!...’

The beautiful blue eyes that stared into his, were blazing with anger -

‘..Hi Doll, I’d like to introduce you to Ann, she is on her way to...’

‘ I don’t give a damn!!... you had better be on your way, bitch! – or I’ll help you...!’

Ann grabbed her case from the trolley and scuttled away as fast as her legs could carry her, turning only once to dart a tearful, accusatory glance at James. But now, his turn had come - he received a painful backhand from the enraged Holly, who said –‘..you bastard, can’t you ever keep your dick in your pants!.....I know you too well you son-of-a-bitch – you screwed her didn’t you – I hope you get the clap!’ – so saying, she burst into tears, and began running away, her shapely little figure drawing many an admiring glance.

‘...Wait Doll, please wait, I can explain everything ...wait!’ said James abandoning the trolley and dashing in pursuit....

CHAPTER 8

The forgiveness and the “re-union” were consummated lustily, but tenderly. They were in the comfortable “pied-a-terre” that James had rented in the city, conveniently near to his work-place.

James gazed down at her with love...she was tiny, but exquisite...

also, an extremely complex character. His mind went back to when he first met her, this had been through his friend Aaron Hershon...

Aaron, although not all that young, was always horny – so much so, that he had been given the nickname, “Dr. Zeig”, because of his eternal search and zest for “blowjobs”! – he was tallish and always well-groomed – his thick black hair was blow-dried and colour touched-up weekly. His great interest in life was Fashion – he owned four Mens-wear Shops and was always arranging fashion shows in co-operation with a lady-friend, who owned various high-couture boutiques.

So Aaron had an “in” with the many beautiful models that adorned the Fashion scene where he relentlessly pursued his “quest”. There was one model, who also owned her own boutique, that he had tried to date, to no avail.

‘...I don’t understand it...’ he told James,-‘...I’m Jewish, she’s Jewish, divorced and we’re both in the clothing business – you’d think that she would see that, to get together, could definitely be of mutual benefit – and I’m also quite good-looking!..- anyway, I can see she is just not interested.....say... why don’t I introduce you to her?...’

James was about to tell Aaron that he was not interested, when he thought about the row he had with his wife that morning, which was as usual, brought about through the interference of his grandmother-in-law – an extremely self-opinionated and spiteful woman, who always found fault with anything that he did or was concerned with. She was also jealous of any of his successes, which she seemed to feel should rightly belong to her son Rory, upon whom, she lavished affection and money (built up by her late husband).

The son who had been thoroughly spoilt, demanded and would settle for nothing but the best from his mother – although qualified as an accountant, he had bankrupted two of the businesses built up by his late father, Christopher Hamilton, through being irresponsible and uncaring – much to the dismay of the Collett family, reinforcing the decision to keep him out of the female-oriented family business.

This had the effect of making him review his “playboy” style of living, amend his ways immediately and set himself up as an independent

Accountant / Tax consultant utilising his true talent for IT Forensic Auditing and he was seriously beginning to make a name for himself in the business community.

CHAPTER 9

Although Amelia owed all her good living and security to men - she had never had to actually do a day's work in her life – her father had left her well off originally, and latterly, so had her late husband Christopher.... and on his passing, her bank manager looked after and advised on her inherited portfolio.... (her family regarded her as a late-blossoming but astute businesswoman!) - She had a pathological hatred of men - sometimes, even she could not understand why- it was as though there was something buried deep in her subconscious that she had forgotten about. In her latter years she had become agnostic, perhaps because the Lord Himself was MALE!....

...To Hell with it thought James, what harm can it do to have a bit of fun for a change! - I work my butt off – I need a break!....

‘ OK Aaron, why not? - organize it!...’

He had chatted to her on the phone and she had acquiesced to having a drink with him after work – he to pick her up at her boutique.

Being that time of the day, he was able to park directly outside the stylish little boutique. The door was not locked, so he pushed it open and entered the shop, which appeared at first glance to be deserted, but as he walked around a jutting out corner, he spied a mini-skirted figure arranging clothing on a display stand.

She turned around at his approach, smiling brightly – ‘ Hi, you must be James...’ he clasped the proffered hand, his heart beating wildly, she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, and her trim figure was out of this world - for him, it was love at first sight!

He drove through the gates of the restored Wanderers Club, parking in his usual spot. He swiftly alighted and hurried around to open the

passenger door for her. He noticed the looks of envy that followed him as they ascended the stairway to the lounge, alongside the restaurant. James was pleased to see that his favourite couch was unoccupied. The Lounge-Waiter, William, greeted James, who was one of his favourite members, enthusiastically, took their order and rushed off to return almost immediately with their drinks – as usual the service at Wanderers was superb. James sipped his Bell's contentedly, his eyes journeying all over her - he was totally fascinated, and he realized... stricken.... by a feeling of love and tenderness so intense, that he could hardly talk - anyway she did most of the talking. What an irrepressible, lively person she was!

She had been married three times before, and had two teenagers, a boy and girl from her first, very Orthodox marriage. The other two marriages, she conceded had been disastrous. He avoided asking her if she was involved with anyone at the present moment – he wanted to see her again - desperately! - no matter what conditions were imposed!...

After their next few dates, she finally confessed to him that she was “involved” with someone. James felt mortally stricken, but perked up, when she went on to say, that this, had been a long-standing, but tumultuous affair, and she was considering breaking it off. He told her that he would wait for as long as it took.... that he was in love with her.

CHAPTER 10

James was invited to a bird shoot on the farm of one of his old school chums, who had a cattle farm near Odendaalsrust in the Free State Province. There were several guest “rondavels” (round cottages) on the farm, so his friend suggested that he make it a long week-end and bring a friend with him.

He broached the subject with Holly, and much to his surprise, she readily agreed to accompany him – on condition that she also be allowed to take part in the shoot! - She was full of surprises!

They had thoroughly enjoyed the day, charging across the veldt on the back of a Nissan “bakkie” – she had even managed to pot a Wild Duck

in full flight!, and was extremely pleased with herself, although she confessed that her shoulder was a bit sore from the kick of the shotgun.

That evening, they sat around a campfire made with wood from the “Doringboom” (Thorn Tree) - which gave the meat its own special flavour. The sun was slowly setting behind the Free State “Kopjes” (Hills), and the veldt was bathed in an almost ethereal, reddish-orange glow, which added to the feeling of well-being, brought on by a delicious “braai”(barbeque) – and further supplemented by generous glasses of Bell’s Whisky. He felt her eyes upon him and looked up at her from where he was squatting, cleaning his shotgun. They rose with one accord, bade their host goodnight and hand in hand, went to their “rondavel”....

The mood, the setting, the time – everything combined perfectly for the first time that they made love, and she no longer held back her emotions, surprising James with the depth of her passion. He had the feeling that the “other man” would soon be past tense.

Their mutual love and commitment seemed to deepen, and they were spending more and more time together, in an apartment loaned to James, by a friend who was overseas. This idyllic time however was threatened by the friend’s approaching return. So James had to make a plan, and was fortunate to find a cosy apartment... again, through a friend, - within walking distance of his office.

Their trysts became more and more frequent, until one evening...she phoned to say that she could not make their meeting. He could hear from the way that she spoke, that someone was obviously listening in to their conversation – the “other man” – a subject that they had both been avoiding – as had they avoided, discussing his wife.

James scarcely slept that night, his mind kept plaguing him with visions of Holly with another man, and his jealousy tormented him relentlessly. In the morning, feeling like death warmed up, he paced back and forth in his office, snapping irritably at anyone who approached him – his secretary, who knew his moods very well, stayed well out of reach, only appearing every once in a while to refresh his cup of coffee.

Finally, his phone rang – he snatched it up anxiously – it was Holly! – before he could say anything, she tersely told him to meet her at one of their old rendezvous spots, the “Doll’s House Drive-In”, on Louis Botha Avenue in Orange Grove. He jumped into his car, revving and spinning the tyres, he drove like a madman, narrowly missed a pedestrian, who cursed at him, only slowing down when he turned into the driveway of the roadhouse. He spotted her car immediately and parked alongside, expecting her to step into his car. When this did not occur, he opened the front passenger-side door of her car and climbed in.

She was very pale, and strangely, for a dull overcast day, she was wearing dark glasses. Looking closely, he noticed that her cheeks were wet with tears. He leaned forward and gently removed the glasses – one of her eyes was blackened! - ‘...I’ll kill the bastard, just tell me who he is and where I can find him!...’

She said, voice breaking...‘James, there is something I must tell you... and then I’m sure you will tell me to go to Hell!’ His rage turned to bewilderment, and he waited for her to continue. ‘...You have assumedand I have encouraged you to believe, that my lover is a man – not so - it’s a woman, very beautiful, younger than I am, a professional dancer, a member of the “Lost City Follies” dancing-troupe!’

Tears streaming down her cheeks, she leaned forward and started the car – ‘...I guess I’d better get out of your sight now, I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to fall in love with you...’

He quickly leaned forward and switched the ignition off, clasping her to himself. She sobbed aloud, the sound being cut off by his lips.

‘My Darling, it alters nothing between us - and what we have, - I love you, and nothing will stand in the way or alter that fact! – Hush now, we’ll work it out!’...

CHAPTER 11

The sun was already setting when Marianne Collett-Kane staggered through the front door of their elegant home in Sandton. She had been

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