

Assiduity Fifteen

by J. Mykell Collinz

I'm a subjective individual. I'm immersed in mystical thinking yet I've found a wee bit of logic necessary to navigate safely through the mind fields of everyday objectivity. I also rely on inspiration, of which there are two varieties, good and evil. I'm dealing with the proverbial midlife crisis, thinking about death and wondering how much time I have remaining but, otherwise, I'm doing okay. I'm in fairly good health, own property, have savings and investments, maintain a positive cash flow, and I have increasing amounts of free time.

I'm also in love with Uzma Goef, a beautiful young woman less than half my age.

Tonight we're having dinner together at a fancy restaurant, our usual dating pattern. She's wearing a black sleeveless mini dress with a plunging neckline. A single pearl pendant hangs from a thin gold chain around her neck. Her lustrous chestnut blond hair is parted on the left side, combed over the top of her head and downward to her shoulder, forming a cape of hair which repeatedly slides forward and shrouds her right eye, a la Veronica Lake.

"I'm worried about Rasheed," she says: "He's becoming too involved with a radical militant group advocating violence to overthrow the capitalist system."

"I'm pleased to learn it worries you," I say: "I respect Rasheed's worldview, his spirits. I've felt them myself when I'm in his presence. But when analogies become unquestioned and unexamined ingrained beliefs, like blind faith, they obscure the path to more practical solutions."

With an abrupt jerk of her head, she throws her hair back, greenish blue eyes widening, and says: "It's not that I don't agree with him. It's just that, there's no way they can stand up and confront the system. Look at the news, at what's happening to the workers. They're being tear gassed and clubbed over the head by police in riot gear. They'll be shooting the workers next if they resort

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to violence, like they shoot the miners protesting in Africa. Our strength is in numbers, in nonviolent action."

The sound of her voice is pure music. I follow the rhythmic movements of her luscious red lips. I glance at the smooth creamy white skin of her partially exposed breast, her extending nipples clearly visible beneath the flimsy fabric.

She pauses, waiting for me to make eye contact before resuming: "We're active politically. At election time we support any worthy candidate we can find, trying to bring our strength to the ballot box. But it hasn't actually worked out too well. Even when our candidates win it doesn't mean we get results. If they're a maverick, nothing gets done. If they're a team player, they get in line. Congressional leadership dictates the legislative agenda. Institutionalized bureaucracies result, regulatory agencies headed by industry lobbyists. How do we change all that?"

"Capitalism with individual property, democracy with individual rights, that's the only way to go. All we need to do is elect honest officials who will represent us and protect our interests, not the interests of an elite transnational cadre of wealthy investors. Your cooperative living and urban farming community can then succeed within the existing social order."

"You're a dreamer, John. But that's what I like about you."

She throws back her hair, holds her head high, and radiates me with an inquisitive, searching stare; which quickly morphs into a warm friendly smile. I match her smile, yearning for the flame to ignite, fearing its consequence.

