

Assiduity Four

by J. Mykell Collinz

Her clothing style varies from grunge to glamor and with greenish blue eyes, full reddish lips, smooth ruddy skin, symmetrically proportioned face, shoulder length walnut blond hair, strong shapely body, she always looks good. Yet she refuses to listen when I try to tell her how she can reap a fortune as an actress, beginning with the lead role in my new feature length film.

She's buzzed on wine, wanting to talk about her childhood.

"I hated my name, Uzma Gouf," she says: "Kids have taunted me with, 'you's my goof,' as long as I can remember."

"What is your ethnic background?" I interject.

She smiles ruefully and looks down at the empty wine glass in her left hand. I refill her glass from a newly uncorked bottle as she speaks:

"My family name is Nordic. It's unpronounceable in English. They cut it down to Gouf when we arrived in the States from Norway. I know little else of our family's history. My parents are what you would call dysfunctional. I'm not well educated, either. I didn't like school. Although I did learn to read. I like history books and historical novels. I think I'm an aborigine, a descendent of an earlier people coming back to claim the earth. At least, to try. Who knows what tomorrow brings? Or if there will even be a tomorrow?"

"What about tonight?" I inquire with a suggestive wink.

Her smile brightens, and she says: "You never give up, do you?"

"Yes, Uzma, I give up all too often. You know I'm only joking, don't you? I wouldn't know what to do anymore, it's been that long since I've been with a woman."

"I don't buy it, John. Count on my sympathy but don't play with my heart."

"I'm not playing you. It's just a fact."

"I need a man who will be there. Forget making movies. We're facing a disaster, a catastrophic change in our economy, our community, our environment, on a global scale. We need to get

ready, right now, not tomorrow. Food, water, shelter, guns, ammunition."

"Aren't you being a bit paranoid? You'll never outgun the police or the army."

"It's not the police or the army I'm worried about. Local, state, and federal security forces are being privatized by international corporations. As a result, in the near future, armed security services will exist only in selected areas, leaving us to defend ourselves in this crumbling inner city neighborhood against the lusty desperado and the hungry barbarians at the gate."

"With the money from a successful film, we could buy the whole neighborhood."

"We don't need to buy the neighborhood. We can just take it. It's almost empty now. The city doesn't do anything to maintain it. Basic city services are being privatized along with the police."

"What about electricity, gas, and water?"

"If we pay the bills, they'll keep it coming. What we need to do is, we need to populate this whole area with quality people and then formulate a neighborhood constitution based on the golden rule."

"That's a bit utopian, don't you think?"

"No, it's not utopian. It's imperative."

She wins, I give in, call Buzz, the producer, tell him he can have the screenplay and do whatever he wants with it. He's no longer interested.

