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## DJORFF PALACE THE NOVEL

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**The story of two women,  
two revolutions and one house.**

*Marina Hitchen*



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN



*July 20<sup>th</sup>*

*12.00pm*

I am to be married in two hours time and Simon is not here. He said he had a very important meeting that he absolutely could not miss. "More important than our wedding?" I asked him.

"I am so sorry Nancy but I really have to go" he apologised, "It's urgent. If you remember I told you that the Free Officers might stage a coup in August. Well we more or less have it confirmed now that they are going to try and do it. We have got hold of a list of names of who we think are the main dissenters and Farouk is planning to have them arrested. If we move quickly we might have a chance of putting a stop to their little games. If I am not back by one thirty get a cab to the Embassy and I'll meet you there."

I know he won't get back here. I just hope he gets to the Embassy on time and doesn't miss his own wedding!

*11.30pm*

So I am now Mrs. Nancy Paramour. The name itself is going to open so many doors for me. Nobody can snub me now. I will get invites to all the society parties and dinners and I will no longer be that 'poor little Nancy Blackwell girl' they used to drag along only as a stand in. I hope it's all going to be worth it. If today is anything to go by I have to wonder.

Simon turned up at the Embassy five minutes late still wearing the business suit he had worn to his meeting. There were no flowers; not even one in his lapel. The ceremony, if you can call it a ceremony lasted about ten minutes. We didn't say anything to each other and there was no exchanging of rings. We just signed a paper and then signed our names again in a big book. The two witnesses he produced were Lord and Lady Valentine. I had expected Lord Valentine to be there but Barbara? It seems she has been here in Cairo all along but was just 'too busy' to come and see me or to extend any invitation for me to go and meet her. How rude! There was a photographer there. He must have been an official

Embassy photographer because Simon hadn't asked him to come. In fact Simon practically snatched the camera out of the poor man's hands and very impolitely demanded the roll of film off him.

"We don't want anything turning up in the papers" he said by way of explanation. "I have some contacts working with the press and they promised me to stop any announcements getting out. My father must never find out that this wedding ever took place."

As soon as we left the Embassy Lord and Lady Valentine said their goodbyes, got into their car and drove off. I was left standing alone on the pavement waiting for Simon to come out. He had a few words to say to the Ambassador that apparently couldn't wait. I was there a good ten minutes and when he finally appeared he made no apology just simply suggested we go back to the Windsor for a drink. That was my wedding breakfast; two glasses of arak in an almost deserted bar. I spent the rest of the afternoon alone in my room while Simon stayed in the bar with the Ambassador and a few diplomats who had turned up again to continue their morning meeting.

We did meet up for dinner at around nine. Simon had promised to take me out somewhere special and he had booked us a table at the Greek Club, a private restaurant directly above Groppi's.

"They only opened their doors to non-Greeks two days ago" Simon announced proudly as he ushered me onto a very crowded and noisy rooftop. "We are the first British people to come here according to the manager so I expect we will get well looked after. Originally I thought of taking you to the Carlton Hotel but then I thought you must have been there hundreds of times and it would be much better to bring you somewhere different."

Actually I have never been to the Carlton and I think I would have preferred it there. They have a proper restaurant serving continental food whereas this Greek Club is more of a bar with mezzes and retsina. I had never drunk retsina before and it is a definite improvement on Omar Khayyam but it still has a bit of a rough edge to it. If it hadn't been my wedding night I would have probably

enjoyed myself. The Greek Club is a sociable place but it's not the kind of restaurant you would go to for a romantic dinner on your wedding day.

We got back an hour ago and Simon went straight to his own room and firmly bolting the adjoining door said he would meet me in the morning for breakfast.

"We have a lot to discuss" he said ominously.

So am I really married if I am still a virgin? I read somewhere that a marriage can be annulled if it's not consummated. I don't know if that's true or not but I would like to remedy this situation as soon as possible to be on the safe side. I have no idea why Simon didn't want sex with me tonight. I thought that was what all men wanted after they had just got married; well that's what my mother always told me.

*July 21<sup>st</sup>*

I am in a complete state of shock. After meeting Simon for breakfast where he elaborated on what he knew about my past and laid out all his demands for the future I have had to come and lie down. Simon it seems had everything all worked out from the very beginning and I thought I was the clever one.

"Look Nancy we need to get everything straight right from the start" he told me putting his newspaper to one side and handing me a cup of coffee. "Put our cards on the table so to speak. I need to be honest with you. Firstly I should explain that I know exactly who you are and I know all about your background. I am well aware that you have no money. Nothing at all; not a bean. Lily Johnson made all of that very clear before I even met you. She told me she only invited you to dinner that night to make up the numbers and so that you could entertain me for the evening. I could see she wasn't very pleased when you said you were coming to Egypt. She called me the next morning warning me that you were nothing but a dirty little gold digger, her words not mine, and that I should be careful. She said that under no circumstances should I be duped into marriage with a woman of your class and character. Naturally I told her to mind her own business and when I wanted her opinion I would ask for it. She stopped

speaking to me after that and I haven't heard from her since. Anyway that's by the by. You knew from the beginning that marriage doesn't interest me; I made no secret of it. It doesn't suit my lifestyle. I had no idea where I was going to find a woman willing to provide me with an heir and who would be happy to lead her own life without making any demands on mine; and then you came along. You were desperate to get me to the altar and what with all your plotting and scheming a blind man could see it. I am surprised you managed to hold out financially all this time though. I had to laugh. I could have given you some money weeks ago but to be honest I quite enjoyed watching you suffer. So many lies Nancy, so many lies. I knew exactly why you didn't want to be married in England. You thought all your dirty little secrets would come out and I might drop you before the wedding. Little did you know you never had any secrets from me Nancy. I only wanted to see how much you were willing to sacrifice your integrity to get what you wanted. There was no limit to that apparently. So where does all this leave us. Let's take one thing at a time. First the wedding. We will go to England in the New Year as planned and we will have the kind of society wedding I am sure you have always dreamed of. Your parents must be there of course but I don't want you inviting anyone else. I want you to leave the guest list to me. After the wedding I will give your mother back every penny that you borrowed from her and then I want you to cut her and your father out of your life completely. I'm not ashamed of them or anything like that. It's not about who they are or where they come from it's a question of money. I don't need people like them turning up on my doorstep every couple of weeks begging for handouts and believe me they will do it given half a chance. We won't give them that chance will we Nancy? Am I making myself clear?" he asked. I was speechless and only just managed to nod my head in shall I say submission rather than agreement.

"While we are on the subject of money I will explain to you how your own personal finances are going to work. You will have the usual accounts in Luxor as before and I will also give you a small allowance every month. You will need

money for clothes because I see you have only three decent outfits to your name. I cannot have my wife going out with my friends' wives always wondering if she has enough money to pay the bill so I have provided for that too. I will put your money into a separate account. In fact I am going to the bank today to set it up. I expect you to keep within that budget and to keep a record of everything you spend. It's not because I want to spy on you and nor do I have any desire to control what you spend your money on either. It is the way I do things; the way I run my affairs. I do exactly the same myself. More coffee?"

I shook my head.

"You can spend your time exactly as you please" he continued. "Come to Cairo whenever you want or go up to Alex, invite who you want to the house, hold dinner parties and anything of that sort that takes your fancy. I have only three conditions. Do not leave Egypt without my permission, do not get drunk in public and most importantly don't have any affairs. If you violate any one of these three rules I will divorce you immediately and you will be cut off without a penny. If you ever think of divorcing me by the way you will leave with nothing and any children we have will remain in my sole custody. Right, the last thing I want to say is quite delicate but I have to say it. I need an heir and for that we have to have sex. I want one son at least but two children would be the ideal. I will continue having sex with you until I have them. After that we will see. We will commence our sexual relations tonight. I didn't sleep with you yesterday because I thought you needed to know exactly where you stood first. That's it. Any questions?"

"Shouldn't you have said all this before we got married? I asked feeling more than a little affronted. "What if there is something I don't agree to?"

Simon burst out laughing.

"I am sure it wouldn't have made the slightest difference Mrs. Paramour. Like I said I was fully aware how much you were willing to sacrifice in order to marry me. You have to admit I am a much better catch than those two idiots you had lined up for yourself in England. Come on. It's not that bad. We have had some

good times together and still will have as long as we don't see too much of each other. When you are less emotional and can think rationally about what I have said you will see that you have got yourself a very good deal. I have to get off now. I will be staying in Cairo until the end of the month and then going up to Alex for a few days. I should be back in Luxor by the end of the first week in August. You can stay here with me or go back to Luxor earlier. It is entirely up to you. As I said you will be able to draw money from your account tomorrow. I'll give you the bank details tonight. I won't be back for dinner by the way. Barbara is letting Valentine out and we are going to sneak off to the Auberge tonight. I will see you when I get back. Have a good day."

He left me then and I looked round to see that breakfast was long over and I was the only person left in the restaurant. I hadn't eaten a thing. I could feel tears of frustration trickling down my cheeks and I saw one of the waiters looking at me. He offered me a tissue. Without even thanking him I snatched it from him and still dabbing my eyes I rushed off back to my room.

My mind is in a whirl and yet I don't really know what my problem is. In fact I don't have one; all my problems are solved. There need be no more lies, no more deceit and I am to have both money and my freedom. I had never wanted to keep up any communication with my parents and have written to my mother only once all the time I have been in Egypt. I certainly don't want an affair and I am not likely to get roaring drunk. I don't care much for foreign travel either. The only thing is I had wanted all this to be my choice, my decision, not my husband's. I hadn't liked the way he spoke to me either. All that stuff about my sacrificing my integrity wasn't really very fair. As for Lily Johnson I have never liked her and now I positively detest her. I will try to deter Simon from asking her to our wedding. Simon said I could have had money months ago. Why had he been so mean? And fancy saying he had 'enjoyed' watching me suffer.

I knew I was working myself up into frenzy and it had to stop. "I will think about it tomorrow" I told myself. "I'm just like Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*" I thought, laughing to myself. "After all tomorrow is another day"



I can still laugh so things can't be that bad.

*July 22<sup>nd</sup>*

*2.00 am*

Simon came to my room about forty minutes ago. It was horrible. Without saying a word he removed his trousers and underclothes to reveal his huge thick throbbing penis. He pushed me down onto the bed, lifted my nightdress and forced it inside me. The pain was excruciating and I could feel blood running down my legs. I felt the penis thrusting about inside of me and after what seemed like hours but was actually only a few minutes it was all over.

"Ah so you were a virgin then" Simon laughed as he moved his body away from me. "I had my doubts I must admit. You need to clean yourself up a bit. It won't be so messy next time. I'll get off to bed now. I have an early start. I won't be joining you for breakfast. The Ambassador thinks there might be a leak in the Cabinet and word might have got out that we have the list of names of those officers who are plotting against us. He's worried. Probably nothing but he wants to talk. Your bank account details are on this paper by the way. I'll leave it on the dressing table. You can go and draw some money out tomorrow; that should cheer you up. Don't spend it all at once. It has to last you a month remember."

So that was sex. My mother never told me much about it. Well she told me the basic biology but nothing about what actually having sex is really like. I just have to hope I get pregnant soon. I cannot bear the thought of having to put up with that every night.

*3.00pm*

I am feeling much happier. I went to the bank and Simon has put far more in there than I expected. He is being very generous with his money which is a lot to be thankful for. I went into town and bought myself a new evening jacket. It's one of those short rabbit furs that became popular a few years ago. I have

always wanted one. I then treated myself to a full afternoon tea in Groppi's. On the way back up Talaat Harb there is a small souvenir shop near to Café Riche and as I was passing it I spotted a tiny painting of a Sufi dancer in the window. I went inside and asked the shopkeeper how much he wanted for it. He said he would give it to me for a good price because he had had it in the shop for years and nobody wanted it. He was glad to get it off his hands he said. It was very affordable so I bought it. That's the second picture for my collection. I also bought a book in the same shop called the Interpretation of Dreams. I didn't really want it but the shopkeeper saw me flicking through it and pressed me to buy it. He had been so kind in selling me the painting so cheaply I couldn't really say no. I doubt if I will read it. It looks very technical.

*8.00 pm*

When I got back to the hotel I had nothing much to do so I did have a go at reading the book I had just bought. I gave up immediately. The writer, Freud, seems to think there is some scientific reasoning that can be applied to our dreams. What nonsense. I can interpret my own dreams better.

I have decided to return to Luxor. Probably not tomorrow but maybe the day after or the day after that. I can't wait to get home to see how the builder is getting on and to have some of Mamdouh's cooking. I want to be away from Simon for a while too. My insides are still aching after last night's ordeal and no doubt I will have to go through the same thing again tonight.