

"Time! Sure time is of the essence," he hurled the words contemptuously. "A long time I have waited for an answer to the smears in Forrest's sheet, The Morning Light. All I get is ominous silence. Is the Eventide on its dignity?"

"We didn't think it necessary, Bob," Mr. Flahrel said calmly, "especially since Forrest called off the dogs."

"Perhaps you haven't observed the people's reaction to George's series, Bob," Jack said. "Sort of a new renaissance of spirit. The ravings of the Right will defeat themselves."

"So I thought," Bob snapped back, "but suddenly I realized that Forrest is gaining a rallying point—"

"Among the rabble?"

"Exactly. And you needn't sneer."

"Now, don't you think I know?" Jack was confident.

"You may be a good reporter, but as a sleuth...?"

"All right, what's you got up your sleeve that's so sharp-eyed?"

"Just that they plan to do away with the Emporium."

"Burn it, with a burning cross in the burning ruin?" Jack chuckled.

"Then you know?"

"Just a good guess. I know the company Forrest keeps. So much the worse for them if they do...."

CHAPTER II

The Forgings of the Stars in Their Orbits and Seasons.

Well, George, how are you biologically? The Fates that come of the seasons' ceaseless changings and revolvings of the stars and planets, how

did they affect you? Did the fate of your early affliction come with or because of those orbital magnetics? Those continual dancing of the heavenly bodies in the sameness of their circles and ellipses in untold repetitions for untold millions of years, had they finally forged the links of the chain that held you down like a caged animal, whilst at the same time generating the genes out of which were to develop the nerve impulses, creative thought, and habit, which were to lift you above the forest of darkness and confusion?

How are you biologically? To say one is biological covers a multitude of things - and sins: To kiss a cuddling young maiden, or to steal a loaf of bread. There is also the matter of morals and tenets - peculiar to a certain society, or century: For or against your biological urge - or its interpretation.

How are you biologically, George?

The harvest moon stood yellow over the trees in the The Oaks, and though the moon wasn't quite full the yellow was sufficient to blank out much of the silver of the stars. The denizens of the Park had long gone to sleep; there was the stillness of sleep and vacuity, except for a whisper from a passing breeze through the dried leaves, a mild soughing of the branches - the sound of silence of the night; the croaking frogs, and the answering whistling chirrup of the cicada.

A lonely white figure was approaching. George became aware of it first by the crunching of feet on the gravel path, by the vision of a white figure. She was still a good two hundred feet away, but

there was no mistaking the white coat with the shimmer of moonlight in it, the free swing of the arms, the forward thrust of her legs, rather deceptive; for it was not a manner, nor a show of determination. Cynthia had no iron-clad determination about anything - not even love. An angel of love with no preconceived ideas about love. A priestess ripe for the sacrifice — of herself, but not others.

George is confused. This triangle - Foster, Cynthia and himself! He should be with Blanca; and Foster, this night of all nights, should be with Cynthia. And yet he stands here in this charmed spot! Why? Where is the answer, O, mystery!

Affable and lovely, lips parted, she stands before him. A vision of enchantment, of endearment, of love. The past, the future, the present all wrapped up in the starry silver of her mantel. The all-in-all of everything, of yourself, of your yearning, of life's yearning, of countless generations before you. All culled in this one being. All the lustre of the ages, all the goodness of the ages, all the love of the ages! The moon, the stars - and God that created them all!

Come, my love, my undefiled:
Thou art as fair as the moon.
Come, come, O, Shulamith, that I may look upon thee,
How beautiful are thy steps in sandals, O prince's daughter!
The roundings of the thighs are like the links of a chain.
Thy navel is like a round goblet, wherein no mingled wine is wanting:
Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lillies.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a gazelle.....

Passion rears its head. The pale satiny thighs ~~are~~ ^e bedew'd with intoxicating wine, and Marguerite's charms -- but a dim brief distance from the perfumed bewilderment of her breasts. The cool luxury of her belly:

the secret reconnoissance of darkest Africa's most alluring spice in the dark forest on the mound of Venus! No Satanic laughter of Mephistophelian illusion! The silver-blue sky above, and the tufted brown-couch beneath, your only vestments: and the distant galaxies whence you came, your only witnesses to behold the act for the trillionth, aye, for the trillionth trillionth and more times! The act which gave birth to the Tower of Babel, and all the confusions thereafter. The act in which the suns find the illumined paths of their orbits. Which gave us a Confucius, a Moses, a King David. The act which destroys as it creates. The act inherent in each of the myriad of cells in the body. Any body. The ever silent, roaring, pulsating, snarling, pacifying, billowing, fornicating protoplasmic sea - swamping all, from the origin in birth to the end in death!

The fire within you is consuming you. Your limbs quiver, and your loins are taut with concupiscence and the life-fluid; the turbulence in your ears is not hot lead but lightning flashes in your brain: you feel her beating heart and the ripened firmness of her tumescent breasts against the tumultuous thumpings of your own heart. You are conscious of the torpor of the most base and the most sacred of acts overtaking you. But you pause! You glimpse the cool mockery of the round moon. You are the crown of creation (though biological), and you turn the tides. You stand up boldly. A free man under the night sky! A free man, and like a god you are master of your own destiny.

The Destiny in the forgings of the stars in their orbits and in their seasons!

The Destiny of a bewildered maiden left untouched in her allurements!