

Assiduity Eleven

by J. Mykell Collinz

Uzma accepts my invitation for dinner.

She's wearing an emerald green sleeveless dress, bringing out the green in her greenish blue eyes and, without a trace of makeup covering her fair, pinkish, slightly ruddy complected skin, her walnut blond hair is tied in a bun, reveling the attractive geometry of her oval face, tapered jaw, and forward sloping neck, which is trimmed at the base by a uniform strand of pearls reaching to her collarbone.

We're having drinks at a table while waiting for our food to be served.

"You're a wolf in sheep's clothing, John."

"No, Uzma, I am your best hope."

"In that case, hope is in short supply."

"Relative to what?"

"Relative to overthrowing greedy capitalism before it's too late, to uniting humanity, to achieving world peace."

"That doesn't even make sense."

"It makes perfect sense to me."

"Listen Uzma, you've been building your community on a shaky foundation, on land which is certain to be claimed by its legal owner, sooner or later. I just removed that possibility by purchasing most of the neighborhood. You won't need to worry about it anymore."

"Since you own all the land that makes you the king, I suppose?"

"No, that isn't it. I purchased the land with credit. I'll be making regular payments to service the debt. I'll need to move fast and I'll need to move smart. You might soon have an affordable housing and retail shopping area for a neighbor instead of that industrial graveyard you have there now. That's not a bad trade off. It would become a market for your produce."

"Affordable? Relative to what? If you have no job or other source of income, nothing is affordable. Nobody from our community will be able to live or shop there."

"I'll be creating jobs so people can afford to live and shop there."

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"You listen, John, we like the direction our cooperative community is going. We don't want you to come in and turn everything upside down. You're making all these sweeping decisions. You, one man. That's not the way we do things."

With her personal beauty and her obvious taste for clothes, jewelery, and other fine things, I would expect her to embrace the opportunity of becoming a famous and wealthy movie star. But she seems bound and determined to serve the principles and interests instilled in her as a child. Working among the poor has become a spiritual crusade to justify her parents' lifelong activities and, it seems to me, she's afraid of losing her victimhood status. I want to tell her that but I remain silent as servers arrive to set the table.

