

Chapter 13

Now Frank was forced to leave the fair Missile-Tits and the old woman

At last, the plane landed in Iskenderun. Remembering the harrowing conclusion of his most recent flight, Frank thought of Les. He considered it a great pity that his faithful barkeep had been lynched back in Houston. He would have enjoyed Les's response to Eleanor's revelations. Frank even felt peevisish enough to include a dissenting rejoinder or two of his own.

As a captain, Frank found himself among those invited to an audience with the governor, Ahmed ibn Fahlan, ibn al-Abbas, ibn Rassid, ibn Hammad. This great personage had the pride befitting a man who bore so many names. He spoke to people with the noblest disdain; he carried his nose so high, raised his voice so mercilessly, adopted such an imposing tone, and affected such a haughty bearing that everyone who greeted him felt tempted to hit him. He had a furious lust for women.

The first thing he did was to look Missile-Tits up and down, and ask Frank whether she was his wife. Presented so baldly with this question, Frank's jaw fell open and his eyes widened. His mind replayed the recent handful of conversations between himself and Missile-Tits, understanding that she very well might not think of herself as his wife anymore. The prestigious governor read Frank's confused hesitation as good news for his purposes. He commanded the mercenaries to go and inspect their troops and gear, and polish everything for a big parade. He then offered the hospitality of his home to their companions.

While Frank was cleaning rifle barrels, governor Ahmed ibn Fahlan, ibn al-Abbas, ibn Rassid, ibn Hammad brought Missile-Tits in to his palace, and begged for her hand, offering her the fruits of his wealth and power. He brought her to a high balcony overlooking hills of fig trees and grape vines. Far below, a motorcade of blue Interpol trucks came up the winding roadway toward the governor's palace, and his brow furrowed as he noticed it. "What can this be?" he mused to himself.

Eleanor suddenly burst onto the high balcony, crying, "Lady, you must accept at once, and beg the governor's protection!" She turned to the governor, hospitality face locked in place. "Don't ever shave that handsome mustache, honey!" With that, the old woman fled. The governor seemed pleased enough by these developments, so Missile-Tits requested a moment to speak with her friend privately, and he acquiesced.

Heads together, the women spoke in whispers. "What was that about?"

Eleanor replied, "Our transgressions have caught up with us, dear. Your oil billionaire must have had some of your jewelry individually insured."

"So?"

"So, one of the pieces stolen by the gas station attendant must have appeared on the public market. As the crime involved is the violent double murder of a respected billionaire and a local holy man, the dominos will have fallen quickly. Can you imagine the look on that gas station attendant's face when half the Houston police department surrounded his dusty old pumps, sirens wailing?"

Missile-Tits giggled. "Or the look he must have worn when he learned what dangerous criminals he had robbed!" They laughed together, and Eleanor snorted, and they both came to feel better about things. "Still, the trail must have gotten thin from there."

"Oh, surely not. The gas station attendant knew we were headed to Corpus Christi. They must have been searching for my truck, and learned the rest of the story from the auto dealership where we met the mercenaries."

"But if what you say is true, and these police have come for us—"

"I already warned Frank, dear. He's on his way east with that Mahmud fella."

"What Mahmud fella?"

"The fuzzy little guide with the soft eyes who makes the bad jokes."

"Oh, for all the—"

"Hush, dear. It's for the best."