



Dubai

CHARLES COIRO

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Dubai

Akeem Abdel el Qadir, ultra rich Dubai business man, aged 47, never married.

Bryce Withward, retired British investigator with Scotland Yard, age 46, divorced.

Andreena Withward, recently graduated from Scotland Yard majoring in Criminal Investigation, and who wished to follow her father's career as an investigator for the Yard. Age 21, single. Andreena is an exceptionally beautiful young woman with flaming red hair, the whitest of skins and eyes an emerald green.

It was a beautiful, warm Saturday morning and Bryce Withward, a retired British investigator had made plans with his two similarly aged friends to spend the next three days in the woods fishing, drinking some good ale and relaxing before they returned home doing nothing until the notion came to go to the woods again. After all, once retired, the idea is to make plans so that there is always something to take the boredom out of life. On that Saturday morning, the Post came to hand deliver an envelope with the Scotland Yard return address. Bryce's first reaction was a jolt of fear. Had something come up that was faulty with his work before he retired? He knew it was not a solicitation for any kind of funds for former agents who might be in need or ill. With what they pensioned him, they could hardly expect that he would have enough to donate to some cause. Holding the letter, he definitely felt a discomfort and so going into his kitchen, he poured himself a large cup of strong, black tea and opened his missive.

To his surprise, the letter began in a most cordial way and that lessened any fear of what was to follow. He was greeted with their hopes that he was enjoying his most deserved rest and then the letter came right to the point. The Yard, in recalling his special investigative expertise and was requesting that he avail himself of his experience. The matter was one of importance and of considerable concern for the Royal Family. The letter went on to say that in all probability, he would be required to travel to Dubai and Hong Kong. It could mention no more since the investigation was considered "Hush-Hush" as they termed their sensitive matters during World War II. Would he consider the matter very seriously since the work was so sensitive. He was asked to "Please refrain from discussing the subject with anyone". He was told, that he could have someone to work with. The time of the meeting would be in one week and that he come to see the Head Inspector in his office. At Scotland Yard A cordial ending and that was that. Well, that gave him a 4 day period to think about the assignment. The most difficult part was not being able to discuss the matter with his friends to ask their

opinions or advice. However, he was used to keeping information secret. What could be so sensitive and to the Crown as well. His old investigative juices were rapidly filling his mind. Besides, vacation and retirement sounds great; swinging in a hammock with a nice cup of tea and watching the clouds roll by. But he thought, it's not so. Throughout his entire life, he had been active and looked at the challenges that were presented as just that, a way of gauging himself when the pressure was raised.

He loaded his car and sat down to wait for Andreena, his daughter to come since she was going to house sit for him and feed Maggie, his female bloodhound who was just as intractable as Margaret Thatcher. Bryce had named his bloodhound after Margaret Thatcher. Actually, he was a great admirer of the former Prime Minister and thought she had more guts than many of the males who succeeded her and some who preceded her.

I shall have to ask Andreena whether she can take Maggie to her house since I don't know how long this assignment will be but the letter did say Dubai and Hong Kong. Hong Kong I know something about but Dubai, I only know that it is one of the wealthiest countries that make up the U.A.E.

If Andreena can't take Maggie, I guess I will have to put her in a dog kennel and I am going to demand that the Government pay for her stay. I wish I had someone to talk this over with. But I had better just keep calm until I know what this is all about. Andreena came by shortly and gave him a send off and told him to relax and enjoy his time with his friends. You can have some porter or ale but no women, understand, she joked. In her own mind she wondered what would happen with her father. He was only 46 years old and if he had not worked for the Government, he would have had to work until his mid sixties. At 46, he still had time to marry and raise another family. "I am sure he would be happier having someone at his side. And who knows, I might find someone and want to get married but if I am honest with myself, I would rather wait until I am 30 so that I might have opportunity to practice my career and at the same time, be young enough to have a child."

"I don't know, but somehow I expected Dad would have more of a twinkle in his eyes being that he will be with his friends but instead, he looks a little worried. Then again, I may be projecting my own uncertainties on Dad."

Having a few days to herself, Andreena decided to take care of her father's laundry. "What a lot of unwashed clothes", she thought. I will wash and iron them for him and save him the trouble; I know he hates ironing. Andreena spent the morning washing and ironing. She carried his clean clothes up to his room and as she was putting his shirts away noticed the

envelope on his dresser. Ordinarily, she would have simply dismissed the envelope but her eye caught the return address of Scotland Yard and her curiosity was piqued. “Scotland Yard”, she said aloud, “Now what does he have to do with the Yard, after all, he is retired?”

Unable to resist the temptation, she finally opened the envelope and read the contents with great interest. Her eyes were riveted on the sentence that said that ‘he could have someone to work with him.’ “Why couldn’t that someone be me? I have always admired Dad and his quick mind and his attention to detail. I could learn a great deal being with him and I would certainly feel safer being with him. The idea of travelling to Dubai and Hong Kong. Both places sound exciting. I wonder what the assignment is that necessitates going to both those countries?”

As soon as she was able to put her father’s clothes away, she picked up her laptop and decided to research both countries as to government, religion, climate and terrain, culture; what each produced and where did they export and what were their foods and dress and languages? She did the same with Dubai and thought both were exciting places that she would probably never have a chance to visit.

Then she thought, “will the Yard permit me to travel with him? Are either of the places dangerous and what is the assignment. Then, what if Dad says I can’t go with him. I will just have to be patient and wait, since Dad has no idea what the assignment is either.”

Bryce Withward could not stop thinking about his meeting with Scotland Yard and what the assignment was that was so “Hush-Hush.” Did it have to do with some intrigue with one of the members of the Royal family or some occurrence that was not what you might call “transparent?” So many things ran through his mind that he thought less about his time with the “Boys” and was actually anxious about getting back. Anticipation, they say is much more satisfying than the actual event that will be taking place but this was a doubly loaded anticipation in that he did not know what he was going to be asked to do. Bryce and his friends stayed up late with tales of “I remember the time when)” reminiscences that all had heard before but were delighted to hear again. All realized that in retirement, there would be no more new stories and so they would have to retell the old stories all over again.

So they stayed up until 2 or 3 in the morning and woke up at 5 or 5:30 when the lake trout were feeding. It brought back memories of their boyhood days when you could burn the candle at both ends and still feel fresh as a pup in the morning. Then at about 10:00 AM, the eyes started closing and the relief of a short siesta; after that short rest, then he could complete the new day.

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The day for the interview finally came and Bryce looked forward to finding out what this was all about. Dressing with his newest suit and favorite tie, he also wore his green Irish walking hat of Donegal tweed. With his ever present short stemmed clay pipes thrust into the breast pocket of his jacket adding the affect of the savoir retiree who was enjoying his retirement to the fullest. In his own words, he praised his Irish ancestor who he considered the greatest investigator in Ireland by saying “My Irish forefather always wore his Donegal and smoked his clay pipes and that was what gave him the brilliance in his investigations.” No sense in having them discover that he was really bored most of the time. Not having been the most diligent reader (how many books can you read, he often asked) he still wanted the Yard chiefs to think his was a life of complete contentment.

He sat and waited for what seemed an eternity until he was invited to come into the Scotland Yard chief’s office. He was offered a cigar which he refused saying that he was a pipe man but did consent to a small brandy. “Might be a little too early in the day for most folks but to me, it stimulates my senses.”

The chief started by opening his collar button so that he could breathe better and said, “Bryce, we are having a little problem and we thought that with your experience in general plus your experiences and contacts in Hong Kong you might help in resolving a sensitive problem. First though, what do you know about raspberries?”

“Well, I know that raspberries are good to eat and that many people eat them. I also know that they are sweet with a little astringent aftertaste, I love raspberry jam and ice cream. After that, I know nothing.”

“Well, a certain diamond originally called the raspberry diamond, was mined in Guinea, Africa. The diamond was one of the biggest ever found with the raspberry color. Being so large, it would have been sacrilege to cut into smaller stones. Because it was so unique, the stone was presented to the Royal family as an inheritance for the British people.

Now holding that bit of information in your mind, we turn to the world of today; its weakening economies holding back the growth and power of nations and the entire world in a state of slow growth and the weakening of world order as we know it. This weakening does not affect only the man on the street but big business and governments and even world institutions. Well, one of England’s proudest institutions, The Royal Family, is also being affected. I am telling you this little story only to impress upon you what a terrible blow it would be to our nation if our proudest institution was the cause an embarrassment to its

subjects. Now I am not talking about anything criminal but rather, a necessity to keep that institution on a solid base.

Let me return to the “raspberry”. As mentioned, this large diamond, weighing 59.6 carats was found and presented to The Royal Family. However, the pressures and the economy placed such a weight on Royalty that they were forced to consider selling the diamond but without letting the people know that it was planning to do so.

A buyer was interested who agreed to keep the stone as his private treasure and not announce to the world that the diamond was sold. It had to be a man wealthy enough not to be concerned with money but to a position of where that person knew that he was the possessor of this enormous diamond and that satisfaction would be enough for him; sort of like owning the Mona Lisa.

In order to make this sale, some six billionaires were invited to personally bid on the diamond and in order to make it different from the gift of the stone to the Royalty, they decided to change the name of the stone to the Pink Star.”

“But how do I fit in, there seems to be no crimes committed?”

“You now fit in because the man from Hong Kong, has been hounded by another very rich man in Dubai to sell the diamond to him. The man from Hong Kong has refused his offer to sell and through our “sources” we discovered that the man from Dubai is making plans to steal the gem. It appears that the money value of the diamond is second to the need of being the only person in the world who is the possessor of such a treasure.

Our “sources” were able to find the identities of the two men and we now need you to prevent not only the stealing of this stone but to silence the knowledge of The Royal Family’s being implicated in the sale. Can you understand what discovery would mean to our enemies and even to those of our country who want to do away with our tradition of Royalty?”

“If I am in agreement, what terms were you thinking of; how much time were you thinking of and about the assistant, I would want to choose someone that I can trust and who will not be looking to sell the story to the raunchiest newspaper. I would also have to be paid for keeping my dog in a kennel or better still, I might want to bring her with me. You know, no detective works with a dog, it would keep any suspicions from me.”

“Sounds like a little vacation trip, really cozy, but the idea sounds solid enough. Anyway, it will keep you from wanting to use expensive hotels since most won’t allow dogs. What are your thoughts on your partner? Have you someone in mind?”

“Why yes, I want to travel with my daughter, Andreena.

“Your daughter Andreena? This is an important investigation. It’s out of the question,”

Bryce replied, “Why don’t you try to use your skills instead of just spouting out, “It’s out of the question.” Think Chief, if we have “sources”, so do they. Who would suspect a man travelling with his daughter and a dog to be investigating anything?”

“But she has no experience, Bryce, we can’t use anyone so green on something so important.”

“Did you know that Andreena is graduating with highest honors from your own academy, or don’t you believe your academy has anything to teach? For my way of thinking, she would be perfect. She would have access to places where no man could ever enter and as you know, women like to talk, it gives them a sense of power.”

“That could go both ways you know, after all your daughter is a woman.”

“I will vouch for her professionalism and not only because she is my daughter but because she is aware of how important the values are. I have raised her with those ideas and she would never betray my trust in her.

The chief said, “I will have to take this up with someone higher up before I can give you an answer.”

“You are the chief, there is no one higher up; you decide and let me know. As you are aware, I am retired and I plan lots of fishing and hunting trips so let’s say I hear from you in two weeks, which is when I am planning to live in a cabin on the lake fishing and drinking porter and eating my freshly caught trout. If not, find someone else to do your work.”

Bryce left the chief’s office feeling a trickle a perspiration sliding down his back. “I don’t think I was too rash but I was positive on my side, wasn’t I? Now let’s see who was the better actor.”

It took Bryce a long time to temper his excitement. What a job, expenses paid and if I am a judge, we won’t be staying at 3rd class hotels. And if they accept Andreena, what a chance for her to learn from a pro. I wasn’t cited for just being a humdrum inspector. And how satisfying to be working with my own daughter and teaching her what took years for me to learn. And after being on such an important case, she would be chosen for other great cases and not have to start giving parking summonses as her work.”

Early in the afternoon, Bryce received a phone call from Andreena telling him that she wanted to invite him for some fish and chips.

“Great”, he almost shouted, “I haven’t had a good meal of fish and chips in so long that I have almost forgotten how good they taste. If you let me add a pint of porter, you’re on.” He so needed to be out of the house and in company of others. If he had to spend the night alone, he knew he would be climbing the walls.

When Andreena came to pick him up, Bryce had no knowledge that Andreena knew of his meeting with the Chief Inspector. He hoped that Andreena would be excited to go out with him on her first case and he was sure she would be thrilled. Who ever thought of investigating a case so important and so exciting while still a young hatchling. He would have given his front teeth to have been offered such a prize when he was starting out.

That first glass of porter was just what he needed and it was exactly the way he liked it, not too cold and yet not warm. The first glass went down in almost one swallow. After the second glass, he started losing the tension he had been feeling and was really anxious to discuss his meeting with the Chief Inspector since he was also anxious to know her feelings in the matter: but he knew he could not.

Andreena, seeing her father uneasy and nervous said, “Dad, I did a terrible thing and I want to confess and apologize to you. When I had finished washing and ironing your shirts, I brought them to your room and on top of the dresser, was a letter. Ordinarily I would have just ignored what was yours, personally but then I saw the return address was from the Yard and for some reason I thought it had to do with my studies at the police academy and that perhaps I did something wrong. Well, to get right to the point, I soon saw it was about having a meeting about a new investigation that involved both Hong Kong and Dubai. Then I saw that you were going to be able to choose someone as your assistant. Can I be that assistant? I realize that I would probably be more of a hindrance than a help but I would be able to learn so much from you. Please consider what I am asking.

What is the assignment they are asking you to investigate and when do you start? If you do take me with you, I can say I am practically finished with the Academy and my marks have been very good. I told you that if all goes well, I shall be graduating with highest honors.”

“First of all” Bryce said, “ I am proud of you for telling me that you peeked into my private affairs. If you had liked, I would have never found out. As to the assignment, if I get it, would be a feather in both our caps if we were able to resolve the problem. And for your

information, I asked that you be my assistant and that I also wanted Maggie with us. We could appear as a nice little family with father showing his daughter something of the world. But, until I get the official approval, I cannot discuss the case with you or with anyone else for that matter. You might think it mean and untrusting but when you are also in a position to know something that must not be known by anyone else, it will be your sacred duty to not betray that trust, no matter who that person might be, whether family a husband or whoever. I will be hearing from the Chief in a week or two and until that time, my lips shall be sealed and you are to erase the assignment from your mind - understood!"

Both Bryce and Andreena passed the week without thinking of anything else except whether the Chief would give them the assignment. Each night Andreena called her father but never even hinted as to whether he had heard anything about the assignment. In a similar way, Bryce spoke of everything else except the assignment, as though he was not caring one way or the other but to Bryce, the assignment would mean getting back into harness for a while and in the meantime giving Andreena a chance to work on a really important case.

Finally, the chief called and wanted Bryce to know that there would be conditions under which Bryce would have to agree. Saying that, Bryce kept the "yes" to himself when Andreena called and only after a full exchange of pleasantries did he say, "Oh, I don't know whether I mentioned it or not but I received a call from Scotland Yard and they are willing to accept my terms on the new assignment."

After a silence of a few seconds, Andreena shrieked "you mean that I am included in your assignment? I'll be over to talk to you in about one hour, O.K.?"

"I'll tell you what" Bryce, said "Let's celebrate by having a great steak at that famous steak house. Say, I meet you there in an hour."

Andreena arrived first and sat at table for two with a glass of red wine. As soon as Bryce arrived, Andreena, spotted him at the entrance and waved her arm to direct him. Finally seated, Bryce called for single malt scotch and started telling Andreena what he knew of the assignment up to that point and said that we will need a little time getting our official papers ready such as birth certificate, passport, visas and driver's license etc. "Now," he said, "I will tell you as much as I know. A few months ago, diggers unearthed a raspberry

colored diamond that weighted in at 59.6 carats. The owner could have had it cut up and made into many smaller diamonds but felt it would make a beautiful gift to the Royal Family and would be part of the Royal heritage and the British nation. However, the diamond was first offered in a small bidding between 6 billionaire companies. The winner of that bid was an Hasidic Jew named Isaac Wolf who had the resources of several large companies behind him paid \$83,000,000 and the idea was accepted that the jewel be either given to a well known museum or the Royal Family. However two of the six bidders wanted the diamond personally rather than have it a part of a museum or the Jewels of the Royal family. It took between 2 to 3 years to cut and polish the diamond and in that period of time the offer was made to pay \$199.5 million dollars. The offer was too good to not consider and so it was resold to a man in Hong Kong.

Now as you know, Hong Kong has had strong ties with Britain and the list of influential sources has never been diminished even though China is involved. In any case, we were able to identify the man in Hong Kong who bought the stone. Even before we spoke this evening, a glass diamond is being cut and polished so that the original diamond can be switched or substituted to gain control and ownership so that the diamond could be part of the Royal and therefore British treasury.”

Listening to what she just heard, with open mouthed disbelief “But, if Scotland Yard is planning to steal the diamond, that is theft on a really grand scale. You have always taught me that honesty and transparency were the keys to a successful investigation.”

“I also swore to do my duty as was given to me without knowing the final results. It is my understanding that with the economic depression, forces are trying to destroy our historic traditions by having the British people vote against a Royal tradition. So you see, we must factor in all possibilities.” Just then, the waiter brought the steaks and the talk stopped between them. After they were again alone, Bryce took both of Andreena’s hands in his own and said, “I know you must be very disillusioned but you must also understand that when we offer to work for our country , we vow to do as it asks. Can a loyal soldier fighting for his country simply say, “No, I don’t want to fight another nation. No, we fight and hate when we are told to so that our homes are not sacked or burned down and so that we can again live the life we are used to living. Perhaps, this is the best lesson of all, learning to live with our sworn duties and sometimes to the extent of giving your own life for an ideal.”

“Does a fireman or a policeman say, “Yes the job is a steady one but I would rather have it safe as well.” No, if there is a fire or a dangerous situation, you do your duty as you had sworn to do it when you first accepted the job. Andreena listened in silence and finally said,

your right Dad, I suppose I was just thinking in altruistic terms. That is why I so need to understand your way of reasoning and the wisdom that you have achieved after your years of service. It is just that it would be beautiful if we lived the way we thought were the rules. You see, I have already learned but now I have to absorb my naïve beliefs into beliefs of reality. Bryce then said, take your time and see whether you can live in a world of stated or written truths but also see if you can live with the idea that truth is sometimes interpreted according to the end results of those whom we have voted to govern and lead us.”

“And, as far as the diamond, let me try to explain our position. I may be stretching the point somewhat but we, the British government accepted the offer of the gift so that it would always remain a British trust; no, a world trust. Only the top levels of government and the Royal family knew of the dire fiscal situation that exists and how the need if that money was paramount if the Royal traditions were to continue. There could be no appeal to the people for a great many people feel that maintaining the Monarchy is too much of a drain on the economy as it is. So, the plan is to locate the diamond and try to switch the real diamond with a glass copy. As I mentioned before, we knew who cut and polished the diamond and we therefore went to him to give the task of making the glass duplicate.

I was selected to head the task because of my long time involvement in Hong Kong and also because of my fluency in Cantonese. Along with that, were the many agents or sources I did work with and to whom favors are still owed. The man, an enormously wealthy business man obviously does not need the money. For him, as well as some few others in the world, possession of some single object that only he can possess is the major reason. The money is only a means to getting what he feels is rightfully his because of his tremendous wealth.

Our first step then is to appear as a man showing his daughter Hong Kong. Once we are there, we will plan our next move. As I said, we already know who the man is and so as an old member of Hong Kong society, we shall make a social call with a prominent citizen of Hong Kong as our host to recall the old days of Hong Kong society.”

After an exhausting, dull trip to Hong Kong, Bryce and Andreena and Maggie disembarked into a busy, teeming airport where they were met by the Police Chief – a man feared and respected by all who knew or heard of him, They settled into an expensive room at a decent hotel (no rooms in Hong Kong are cheap) and planned their strategy. An old friend of Bryce who was known in Hong Kong society for his family ties also joined the group. It was decided to arrange for a visit to a Hsio Zhang We, the possessor of the diamond the next day and so at about 11:00 AM the small group arrived at the home of Hsio Zhang We. Fortunately, they were in good luck for Hsio was away on a business trip for some three days.

When they knocked on the door, they were greeted by the housekeeper, an elderly woman in her seventies named Lixiu Ying. The housekeeper, was nervous seeing four strangers and upon recognizing the Police Chief was left in a state of fright. She had heard of the ruthlessness of the Police Chief and how cruel he could be if some one was guilty of some crime.

When the Police Chief asked for Hsio Zhang We, the housekeeper became alarmed thinking that perhaps some crime had been committed.

“Master she pleaded, Hsio Zhang We is a good man and has committed no crime.”

“Easy, little mother” the police chief said, “we are only here to present some foreign friends to your master. But tell me, aren’t you a little too old to be working so hard? What province were you born in and don’t you still have family.? You should be living with your family where they can take care of you.”

“I know sir” she said, “my master will be hiring a younger woman to take care of things since I cannot work as well as before. My only trouble is that I will be bringing additional hardship to my family since I have no money to bring them.”

“But surely, you must have saved some money in all the years you have worked? Doesn’t your master pay you?”

“Well sir, I have asked that he give me some money for my family but he tells me, “Lixiu Ying, How long have you been working for me?”

I said, “I have been working for you for forty years.”

“And so for forty years, I have given you a job. And in that forty years, have you ever slept out in the rain or the snow or the cold?”

“No sir, I have slept in your home.”

“And my home is fine home, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. And during these forty years, have you ever felt hunger or thirst? And have I ever denied you a small glass of baijiu (common liquor consumed in China) when your arthritis troubled you?”

“No sir, I have never felt hunger of thirst.”

“And have you ever needed clothing?”

“No sir, I have never needed clothing.”

“And when you were sick or needed medicine, who provided you with the doctor or the medicine?”

“You provided me with the doctor and the medicine, Sir.”

“So, I have given you work for forty years; given you shelter and food and clothing and have paid for medicines and doctors to keep you healthy. There are many, many people who had no work or food and clothing and health care. I think you have had a fortunate life and when you return to your family, you can rest and be taken care of and enjoy each other.”

“But sir, I wanted to be able to bring them some presents and I have no money to do that.”

“Presents” he answered, “Why didn’t you mention that. I have many things that I no longer use. They are just like new. I will give you some of them so that you can provide presents. And, I will even hire someone to take you and your belongings to your village.”

Bryce and the Police Chief looked at one another. Here was a man who had spent a fortune on obtaining a diamond and he could not see that paying the housekeeper was his obligation.

“But”, the housekeeper then said. “I don’t feel too badly because I received one thousand dollars Hong Kong from some men. All I had to do was show them the glass stone. At first I told them no because my master would have been angry with me, but they only wanted to see it. They said, it will never be out of your sight and then they said they would give me the thousand Hong Kong dollars just to see the glass stone.”

“Damn” said Bryce, “they made the switch under our very noses. Bloody Arabs, but you have to give them credit. All our long years in Hong Kong is not the same as money when you need information,”

The Police Chief then showed the photograph of the diamond and asked if this was the stone they wanted to see.

“Yes” said the housekeeper, that’s the glass stone.”

“What did the men look like” the Chief asked?”

“They were men with dark skins.” she answered.

“Were they black men, Negroes?”

“No, they looked like they had been in the sun too long.”

“Where is the glass stone now?”

“It’s still wrapped in a sock in his old shoe.”

In a menacing and threatening look he told the housekeeper to bring the stone so that they could compare the stone and the photograph. When the housekeeper stalled, the Police chief said, “Do you know who I am? I am the one who keeps law and order and if anyone stands in my way I will be very severe with that person.” The housekeeper brought the glass stone and Bryce said, “Make the switch.”

After they switched the glass stone again, Andreena asked, “But if the original diamond was already switched, what was the purpose of switching again since you know it is glass?”

Bryce said, “we want to know who did the cutting and polishing for the Arabs. Each cutter has a signature and so maybe we can pressure the cutter into giving us information. I can safely say that our time here is over. By the way Chief” Bryce said, “Isn’t there any way of getting Hsio Zhang We to pay that woman her wages for forty years service plus any benefits she deserved?”

“Yes, you can be sure the housekeeper will return to her village a pretty rich woman.”

The airplane trip from Hong Kong was long, wearing and frustrating.

“We will have to plan some strategy to get to visit Akeem Abdel el Qadir. Not only is he the wealthiest man in Dubai but he is the most difficult to meet. We shall have to rely on our sources as to how to meet him. Without our sources, we would be unable to do anything. It is the most powerful weapon in our arsenal. From what has been told me, our man Akeem surrounds himself only with the most prestigious people. He lives in the Burj al Arab, the most expensive hotel in the world where he has the entire top floor. Most of that floor is for his own personal use and a part is separated into separate quarters for his guests.

We have been given temporary noble backgrounds by our government and we are now, the Duke of Dnaughi and his daughter from Scotland; royalty since the 16th century. We are

travelling to Dubai to visit the Middle East Countries as part of an extended tour to visit most of the important countries of the world and those that are having an important affect on the world today. I have been notified that our plans to meet Akeem Abdel el Qadir are already in the works. A high U.N. official is due to visit Dubai and a reception is being held for him at which Akeem will be present. What and what happens at our meeting will be the next step forward for tying ourselves to Akeem.”

“But what if we are simply ignored?, asked Andreena.

“That is where it will take experience and luck if we are to succeed, “ answered Bryce.

The night of the reception finally arrived. It would be necessary for Andreena to have a suitable evening dress. Buying one in Dubai would have be prohibitive in cost and so the Yard had a dress sent from England along with some paste jewelry; not too ostentatious but hopefully in good taste. Most of the ladies were dressed in beautiful gowns imported from Paris and the gentlemen in their finest dinner jackets. Bryce wore a kilt with the Scotch plaid design from where he was supposed to be born. The Arab gentlemen were dressed in immaculate, white robes with their heads covered in the traditional head coverings. All was elegant and grand.

Upon arrival, Bryce was introduced to the host, Sheik Mamoud who in turn introduced them to the other dignitaries.

As they moved along to meet, it was noticed that Akeem seemed to be looking at Andreena. Her red, thick hair and white skin and especially the green eyes were very attractive to him; so much so that he was distracted in his meeting the other guests. There were present many very beautiful Arab women but as happens many times, the difference between Andreena’s red hair and white skin were irresistible to him. Looking fixedly at her he bent over to ask an aide, who is the woman with the red hair?”

He was told that she was of a Scottish royal family and that she was visiting the Middle East to learn about people and the culture since the Middle East had become so important in today’s politics.

“Who is she with, a continuing Akeem asked?”

“She is with her father, the Duke of Dnaughi, in Scotland; he is the gentleman in the short skirt.”

Akeem then said, “Make arrangements so that we may be introduced.”

When the arrangements were made, the aide introduced himself to Bryce and said that Akeem Abdel el Qadir wished to make the acquaintance of himself and his daughter. He said that Akeem professed an interest in Scotland and that he was anxious to learn about the country. When they met, Akeem was accompanied by his two beautiful charges, one an African princess from Ethiopia and the other a great beauty from Sweden. As they were introduced, Akeem looked fixedly at Andreena and held her hand perhaps a few seconds longer than necessary. Those green eyes both mystified him and entranced him. Not wishing to look too long, he introduced Bryce to his two beautiful charges and then asked that Andreena accompany them so that he could talk to Bryce.

It was not for naught that Andreena, her woman's antennae felt the interest being showed her by Akeem and she instantly thought, "Maybe, I'm the answer as to how we get closer to Akeem. I know when a man shows interest and he showed a great deal of interest." Andreena went off with Akeem's beautiful companions and was almost immediately told, "I think you have caught Akeem Aabdekl el Qadir's attention, you are very fortunate."

"Why would that be so fortunate", she asked?

"Well, for one thing, you would soon be spoiled by his lavish gifts and his gentle treatment. Look at our gowns, made especially for us in the atelier of the famous French designers, Gelida's is a Christian Lacroix, and mine is a Versace. These diamond earrings are from Tiffany and the gorgeous brooch is by Cartier. And our shoes, they are from Manolo Blahnik. And the greatest thing is that for each new reception or ball, Akeem always buys us new things."

Andreena then asked, "Can I ask a very bold question, what do you have to do for all these gifts you receive?"

"That's the greatest part of all" answered Beloli, the Ethiopian princess, Akeem demands nothing of us except to look beautiful. He calls us his little jewels. He has never once made any gesture that was intimate and Gelida and I have discussed this between us. The only advance he has ever made toward me was to pat my arm. We think that perhaps he has a psychological problem. But he is always a gentleman and always considerate. We live in a separate part of this floor and so our life is very beautiful and everything is the best; the best restaurants, the finest wines; even our cars are Ferrari's, everything is the best and the most expensive. You would be very lucky if he chooses to make you his third jewel." And maybe best of all, there is no need for jealousy since he treats us all alike."

"Of course", said Gelida, it would mean you would have to live here in Dubai."

“But what do you do when he is doing his business? You can’t be with him all the time.”

“Oh, we shop, go to restaurants, play golf, swim, go for long drives, anything. We can have as many women friends as we like but no men other than Akeem. He wants us pure and wants us to remain pure.”

“What does ‘pure’ mean?”

“It means, unblemished. He assures himself of our ‘purity’ by suggesting that before we become his charges, we must undergo a complete physical examination to be sure we are not carrying any diseases. The examination also included an examination by a gynecologist to ascertain that we are free from disease and also to verify that we are still intact.” Both women nodded in ascent that the physical examination was to really be sure we were still virgins.”

Beloli then said, “Akeem wants everything and everyone he is involved with to be untouched by any other man.”

The reception finally ended and a dazed Andreena thought, “I am in a position to be able to pull off our scheme to switch the diamond for the glass replica. But, how do I present this to father without him forbidding any such idea. For myself, I feel that I am in the best position to complete our mission but men, especially fathers, will not even consider that.”

On the way back to their hotel, Bryce said, “Akeem seems to have taken a liking to you, did you notice? And by the way, what did you and his two wards talk about?”

“I’m afraid that we are going to have a very long talk about duty and success on our mission and you will have to be more than professional in your thinking. After all, it was you who told me that we take on responsibilities that sometimes could lead into strange circumstances.”

“Akeem’s two wards are a woman from Sweden, the blonde one and she is called Gellida. The other ward is Beloli, a princess from Ethiopia.”

“And what exactly do the wards do?”

Andreena then said, “That’s the mystery of it all. He does absolutely nothing that even remotely appears to be intimate. Beloli told me in the year she has been his ward, he touched her only once which was pat on the arm. The girls had discussed that aspect with each other and neither can recall either a look, or a gesture that made them feel uncomfortable.”

“And if I might ask, why did Akeem’s wards decide to discuss those very personal subjects with you.”

“Well, you won’t believe this but Akeem asked the girls to talk to me. Both Beloli and Gelida said that they believe that Akeem wants me to be his third ward.”

Bryce, who was smoking one of his clay pipes, completely bit off the stem of his pipe which made the hot, glowing grains of tobacco spill all over his plaid kilt. He finally sputtered “What!, you can’t believe I would ever agree to that. So before you ask, the answer is a flat, resounding no; period; discussion ended.”

“But look at it from the point of view of our assignment. You will have to admit that being on such close terms with Akeem, the diamond would certainly be either within reach or at least we might know where he keeps the jewel.”

“I am not convinced with your reasoning. Besides, he probably keeps the jewel in some bank vault.”

Andreena then said with a note of sarcasm in her voice. “OK, then we will have to play by the rules you gave me when I said we were stealing the diamond like any common thief. Oh no, not stealing, you said, then we were working for country and Monarchy, and what we were doing was not thievery. We were only trying to save our country and its traditions. Which was the malarkey? Doing something when it really didn’t concern you personally or taking an action to achieve our goals? So now, we have new rules, which say, do your duty only if it doesn’t interfere with your being a parent. I have always respected your judgments as being sound and true and now I find that my duty and possible solution to solving our tasks as being nothing more than your trying to be a protective father, and not the professional you claimed to be. I am now 21 years of age and attempting to start my career and trying to be a success. I am your assistant and have to follow your advice as to what our next steps should be. But if I am to be treated like a child, then I want to be sent home so that I can work on issuing parking summonses. I will work my way upward the way every other new beginner starts. And one last thing before you make up your mind to send me back or not, I am the one who is making the sacrifice. If I sacrifice my virginity for my job, it is my doing and not anyone else’s concern, so stop acting like a protective father trying to save his daughter from ruin or like a parent whose only concern is to keep his daughter’s reputation in tact until she marries.”

Bryce was quiet and an inner rage had to be quelled before he could answer responsibly. Taking another clay pipe, he filled the bowl tamping down the pungent tobacco. He tried to

act blasé but he was only bluffing his way before he had to admit that Andreena was right. There was no better means of being in such a position as the way Andreena pointed out and he realized that her argument was a professional solution rather than his still to be made plans as to how they could retrieve the real diamond. It was a difficult balance and a sticky decision to make. After all, Andreena was of an age in which she should be able to make decisions. And he had to swallow the bitter truth that he might be being over protective. Besides, the other two wards of Akeem both admitted that they were never touched or molested in any sexual way.

After taking a few quiet puffs on his pipe, he faced Andreena and said. “Perhaps it is difficult for a parent to admit that his or her logic is distorted by trying to save the fledgling from harm but it is with great pride to be convinced by your understanding of our duty to our country. You are right and I have been entirely wrong. One can only perform one’s duty when the goal is understood and that any deviation from that goal brings failure.” He opened his arms and embraced a very happy woman who was happy not only because any possible cleavage could or would damage their sense of family unity but also because her thinking and decisions were respected by a very respected ex-agent of Scotland Yard.

“I would ask you to go out to dinner but until I am formally established as one Akeem’s wards, I can only afford to eat shish-kabob on the meager salary you give me. But when I am established, the girls tell me that only the best restaurants are available – all on Akeem’s credit. So, when I am not on duty with Akeem, only the best resorts, golf courses, beaches will be there for you to enjoy as well. Besides, I will not feel badly having to wear top couture dresses and jewelry. That green dress London sent for me to wear at the reception looked like it had been some costume from a very old opera.”

“Don’t become too fond of any gifts you receive, remember any and all gifts revert to the Crown. What they do with them, I can’t say but you shall return to London (if all goes well) as poor as you were when you left.”

Just as had been expected, Akeem recruited Andreena as his “third jewel”. After a short period of indoctrination and medical exams, Andreena was officially part of retinue. After settling in with Gelida and Beloli, Andreena complained about her meager wardrobe. Fortunately, Akeem was to be away for about two weeks and the girls would have all that free time to do what they loved doing most- shop for clothes, shoes, small jewels; anything their hearts desired.

Beloli was the one to suggest that they do some serious shopping and so the girls, led by Beloli and Gelida did the rounds of the most expensive boutiques. At first, Andreena was reluctant to buy anything that seemed too expensive and overpriced but Gelida said, “we have never been questioned as to what to buy or at any price. Besides, if you want to remain with Akeem, you are going to have to look very au courant and up to date. For instance, look at your wristwatch, it looks like some holdover from the fifties. You can buy an elegant Cartier watch with diamonds for the numerals. And you can give your old Casio to one of the maids. She will love it. Andreena recalled Bryce’s saying that any gifts go to the Royal treasury and that she would be returning as poor as when she arrived. So the shopping was non stop and Andreena was sure that there would be hell to pay when Akeem received all the bills. On one of the occasions, Andreena wanted Beloli and Gelida to meet her father. They were delighted at the clay pipe smoking man dressed in a short skirt. He was a favorite with them since he had many, many delightful tales and stories to tell them. When he awkwardly attempted to pay for one of the expensive lunches, he perspired profusely wondering how he was going to justify that expense with the Yard. Fortunately, it was Beloli who insisted that Bryce be their guest. “It would offend Akeem to think that his hospitality was being refused” she said.

So for the next two weeks, Bryce enjoyed himself in the deluxe spas Dubai provided. Would he have something to tell the boys over their porter and chips but of course, even that joy was being denied him as this assignment was “hush-hush”.

Most of the time, Bryce and Andreena talked of how to get any information. Mentioning the diamond would be too dangerous and who knew which of the maids or even the girls were spies. This was to be the tough part of their assignment; information as to where the jewel was kept. Did Akeem just want to be the owner of the unique gem and feel great in his own mind or did he have to show it to special friends to prove to them that he had it. Wasn’t it the same with the three wards, he had to show them off to his friends to convince them that he could surround himself with the most beautiful women or “things” that were available to men. It was this aspect of the man that Bryce and Andreena focused on. The man was anxious or needed to show his superiority in acquiring things that most men could only dream about.

Meanwhile, Bryce and Andreena could only listen and watch very closely to catch that slip of the tongue which so often broke a case. There was no way that they could act and so they spent their time analyzing every scrap of information.

Andreena and Bryce spoke every day and they eventually learned that Akeem was visiting the Sheikha Aisha, Sheik Mohammad’s daughter. The Sheikha was a descendent from

the Al Maktoum dynasty. With this information, they were able to deduce that Akeem's insistence that his wards be of royal families was one of his weak points. He was a fabulously wealthy man but his background was that of the common man. It was a situation that Akeem was desperately trying to overcome by his insistence on the one of a kind, unique objects that he possessed. Then came the piece of information that was certain to be the key to the visit. Somewhere along the line, Akeem said that he wanted to show the Sheikha his four jewels. Andreena said, "Akeem mentioned that he would be showing the Sheikha his four jewels. Well, he refers to us as his three jewels. The fourth must be the diamond."

You are probably right in your deduction. Now I will have to teach you how to make the switch if the chance comes to switch the two stones. It was not much to go on but it was at least something with which to profile the man. When they learned that Akeem was visiting the Sheikha Aisha, sources and operatives tried to fathom the reason for the visit. They came up with one possibly rational answer; Akeem was trying to propose a visit from the Sheikha and the possible lure would be to show her the diamond; the only one of its kind in the world and that he, Akeem was the possessor of such a wonder. If Akeem was not of royal blood, then he was at least the possessor of royal treasures.

This, of course was all conjecture but as they tried to put the pieces of the puzzle together, this line of thinking seemed to define the man and his goals as well as any other.

Their thinking was correct. Akeem had managed to convince the Sheikha Aisha to visit him in Dubai to show her this fabulous diamond that was unique in the world. The Sheikha was an avid collector of rare gems and her curiosity was piqued so that she accepted Akeem's invitation. Her visit was not to be until the following month.

Akeem in an effort to please, made discreet inquiries as to the Sheikha's favorite colors, favorite dishes and any other information as to her likes and dislikes. He hurriedly hired the top interior designers to redo the guest complex where the Sheikha would be staying. His excitement was noticed by his wards who wondered why this special guest was so important.

For her reception, he had the foods catered from the most exclusive restaurants and the most sought after wines were chosen. The Sheikha had agreed to spend one week visiting since she had never visited Dubai and was curious and anxious to see the now famous Burj al Arab, the tallest building in the world. Akeem invited the most respected and acknowledged people to be at the reception to welcome the Sheikha. For Akeem, this was indeed a great honor to have a member of the Al Maktoum dynasty as his guest. In his fantasies, he imagined that he would present the diamond to the Sheikha as a gift with the end of having

himself considered more than just a family friend. After all, the gift would do more for his prestige than anything else and of course, the gem cost him nothing. Who knew, he might even have the opportunity of being offered one of the young princesses in marriage. With his immense wealth, that would complete his dreams; being part of a dynasty through marriage. His fantasies of being a common man brought to acceptance in the royal lines almost convinced him that he should offer the diamond to the Sheikha but he would wait first to see how much she desired to be the owner of the stone.

After a successful reception, Akeem personally guided the Sheikha on a tour of Dubai. He showed her architectural models of what was being planned for the future and how it was anticipated that Dubai would become a world wonder that had used technology to reclaim the deserts. The Sheikha, was duly impressed with what had taken place and what was to take place in the future. While she visited the numerous sites, she showed no emotion. It would have been a comedown for royalty to be too impressed.

On the third day, he asked the Sheikha if he could show her his treasured diamond. There would only be the Sheikha, Akeem and his wards and if she wanted, her personal gem cutter. That afternoon, after a lunch of her favored foods, he gathered the group together to unveil his treasure. In a bright, small room, Akeem proudly opened a jeweled case which held the jewel. The Sheikha, her hand slightly trembling held the stone in her hand and then pointed to Beloli and asked her to hold the gem against her gown so that the Sheikha could see what it looked like if it were worn. Then she said, “the beautiful woman with the red hair, place it near your throat so that your very white skin and red hair makes a contrast.”

Beloli, handing the stone to Andreena gave Andreena just enough time to extract the fake diamond from her bra and make the switch. It was accomplished and if her luck held out, she would be able to walk out and give the stone to her father. Finally the Sheikha asked her gem cutter Abdel Meguid to give his opinion of the quality of the stone. Were there any unwanted shadings or shadows? Was it a perfect stone?”

Abdel Meguid, the gem cutter adjusted his magnifying loup and looked at the stone. After a few minutes, he looked up in a rather confused way, smiled as though he was the object of a joke and said, “The cutter of this object is indeed a master but the stone is only glass.”

The silence in the room was almost explosive. Akeem, with a forced smile on his face trying to figure out whether this was some game that the Sheikha was playing on him by having her gem cutter say that the gem was glass. Another aspect of him knowing that saying

the gem was glass was too undignified for so important a woman as the Sheikha, made him feel exceedingly embarrassed and small. Upon questioning the gem cutter Akeem asked, “You are saying that in jest, hopefully.”

“No sir, the object is a magnificently cut piece of glass, cut by a master.”

“White faced with shame, he said, “Please forgive me, I had no idea the stone was glass.”

The Sheikha, who already knew that Akeem had pilfered the stone from the owner said, “I am afraid your operatives outfoxed you this time although I can’t believe that they thought they would go unpunished.”

“I shall get to the bottom of this and shall leave no stone unturned and when I recover the original gem, I shall be pleased to deliver it as a gift to make up for my shame.”

“Don’t worry”, she said, “the matter is completely forgotten nor shall the issue leave this room” she said eyeing the three girls. “But now, I have many pressing matters to take care of in my own country and so I shall thank you for your efforts in showing me Dubai.” With that, she prepared for her journey home.

Akeem immediately called on the people who made the switch. After determining that they were innocent of any misconduct, he thought, “Someone else got to the diamond and made the switch before I did. Who could or would have an interest in the gem. Certainly no collector or thief would dare involve himself. He could never have sold the gem, it was too well known.” Suddenly, like a flash of lightening he said, “It was the British! I had heard that the stone was going to be offered to the British Crown until the price paid for the gem couldn’t be matched. Of course, the British. Who has better connections in Hong Kong? I shall send the original team to question the elderly maid and to discover exactly who it was that outfoxed me.”

Akeem’s original shame gave over to the predator’s fierce search for the perpetrators, the ones who stole his diamond. Akeem called in his advisors and asked that they investigate every move made by anyone who was British and had any business or social relations with him. He thought that perhaps there would be link and a place to start.

About one week later, a genealogist employed by Akeem who was always interested in family lineage reported that he found something interesting to report. “In going over the genealogy of the man in the short skirt, he discovered that indeed there was a Duke of

Dnaughi but that the line stopped in 1838 when the last Duke died of a fever. He left no heirs.”

“So, our mini-skirted Duke is not a Duke at all and his daughter is not Lady Andreena but Ms Andreena a commoner. I want you to trace the man in the skirt and his daughter. Use whatever resources you can but I must know more about the man.”

It didn't take long to trace Bryce Withward and his daughter Andreena. When the report came back to Akeem, noting that Bryce Withward was a retired agent from Scotland Yard who was known to be a top agent in his time of duty and his daughter Andreena Withward was a recently graduated detective, Akeem wondered, “Why Scotland Yard? They would have no jurisdiction over a theft made in Hong Kong, what is the connection?” And why was Withward granted a temporary title of Duke? Only the Crown could bestow any type of title; or was that the reason the title was conferred upon him since he must have made some outstanding contribution that was in the interest of the Crown? But of course, he repeated, the diamond had been promised to the Crown. But again, if the British replaced the original, why would they be looking here for the diamond? Perhaps, the original was never stolen and is still somewhere else?

“And again, why come to Dubai? I was the one who wanted to meet Withward and his daughter. Of course they might have been told that I had a propensity towards beautiful women but the hope that I would ask for his daughter to become my third ward is highly unlikely. So if the original gem was replaced by my glass copy and if my gem is a copy, how many copies are there and who has the original?”

Akeem was truly puzzled. He thought, “Perhaps I will do nothing to see if any valid reason comes about although the Withward woman certainly knew the diamond was a fake, she was there when the gem cutter announced that my gem was glass. Puzzled and without anywhere to turn, he said, “At least I didn't lose any money since I paid nothing for it but also, I received nothing either.”

In the meantime, Bryce brought the gem to the British Embassy from where it was delivered by diplomatic pouch to Scotland Yard. A note from Bryce indicated that before the gem be turned over to the Royal Treasury, a reputable expert be hired to ascertain that the diamond was real; there had been too many mix ups already. Bryce also thought it best that he and his daughter be secretly flown back to England just in case there might be some retaliatory operation to harm them. He realized, of course, that any retaliation would most likely be a remote action on the part of Akeem since his role would be highly suspect. But, just

as a precaution, he was flown back to England where he was warmly congratulated and told he was to be sworn to secrecy about the case, his involvement with Akeem or Hong Kong. The same would be true for Andreena.

Shortly after the gem was delivered to the Royal Treasury, Bryce was given a royal invitation by the Queen who bestowed upon him, the position as the Duke of Dnaughi together with its small castle and the lands surrounding the castle. Proud, bewildered and somewhat frightened by being made a part of the governing royalty, he rushed home to deliver this amazing news to Andreena.

Her only question was, “What am I to do as Lady Dnaughi?” I was not made for cutting ribbons on some new road or feeling completely worthless as a human being. What about all the years I spent studying to be a detective? Besides, I would cringe at someone curtsying and calling me Lady Andreena. I was hoping for an exciting promotion to solving some cases for the Yard.”

Bryce responded, “You can’t turn down or ignore a Royal Appointment from the Queen?”

“Well, you can be the Duke with the wayward daughter who wants to serve the country by catching the thieves who are trying to destroy the rules which we all agreed to uphold. Besides, I will never be able to stomach haggis, neeps and tatties, I prefer my fish and chips.”

Bryce could not muster the courage to tell his friends about his succeeding to a Dukedom. They would have laughed in his face seeing that some of them were against supporting Royalty. “It’s a waste of money and the pageantry is from another age. Supporting a royal family and its heirs is obscene when we have so much need to support the working men and women of this country.”

Bryce said nothing, in his retiring and more contemplative years, he felt that royalty was a tradition; something that had its roots in the foundation of the country and sometimes, you have to pay to keep those traditions which are the soul of a people and a country. He bid his old friends goodbye telling them that he was going to live where his ancestors lived hundreds of years ago. He was proud of his being a member of his family that had distinguished itself and that that distinction made his family a part of that tradition. After all, everyone who was knighted was once just a simple man who did honor and brought glory to his country. Their reward was to be made noblemen.

He settled in Scotland, became a leader in developing their major attraction which was tourism and he and Maggie, his bloodhound led a life made more for storybooks than for real life. He was never much of a reader but he spent most of his free time reading about the history of his clan and the deeds they performed. One day, he thought, maybe I will be able to write what I have learned as the continuing Duke of Dinaughi.

Andreena returned to Scotland Yard and upon her return was congratulated on the splendid work she and her father did for their country. However, she was told, we at the Yard work in traditional ways, you start from the bottom and you work your way up. But, because of your brilliant success on your last assignment, I am happy to say that you will not start by giving parking and transit summonses, we are giving you instead the role as head of that department. Congratulations!

The End

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