

Christian FILOSTRAT. The Beggar's Pursuit

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(Excerpts. Chapter 12)

The Israeli ambassador stood next to Minister Cerusu, listening to her talk to the Rwanda ambassador. When she was about to hang up, he whispered, "Why don't you invite her over?"

Covering the mouthpiece, she answered, "It's your residence, Zvi."

"Ambassador, the Israeli ambassador would like to speak with you," the minister told the Rwandan.

"The Israeli ambassador?" she asked dumbfounded.

"Yes! He is an old friend. I came down from the General Assembly meeting to see him. He wants to say a few words."

"Does this have anything to do with what the Lyauteyville foreign minister-----"

"I'll let him tell you."

"Good evening, Madame Ambassador, this is Zvi Ben Nun."

"Good evening! Shalom!"

"Shalom Alakem! I could not help hearing Fatou's conversation with you. May I make a suggestion?"

"Mr. Ambassador, our bureau in New York issued a press release denouncing what was said about Israel this morning at the General Assembly."

"Thank you! But it's not about that."

"It is to talk to Molu Sakeseba, then. The answer is the same, no! As much as I would like to accommodate someone whose country's surgeons were of such great help to us and with whom I have much in common, it is no. We don't discuss genocide. We try to stop it."

"Of course! But that's not what I was going to suggest either. I wanted to invite you to my residence here."

"Tonight?"

"Yes, I'll send a car."

“What is the purpose of your invitation, Mr. Ambassador? I don’t understand.”

“I want to take the opportunity of Minister Cerusu’s visit to discuss my country’s position regarding the situation in the Great lakes region.”

After a long moment of what he assumed was hesitation, she said, “What is the address?”

The Israeli gave it to her.

“I’ll be over in my car. You will inform your protective service of my arrival? She asked.

“I’ll meet you at the gate personally.”

“Thank you.”

“I think we can do business with her, , Fatou,” the Israeli said, enthusiastic after hanging up.

“I think so too. But what are you going to tell her, when she gets here? This not going to be a discourse on genocide, is it?”

“And why not? Is there enough *Shoah* awareness in the world? Since when?”

“I’m sick of awareness Zvi! People talk about awareness only extermination has taken place. Or, haven’t you noticed? You should instead devise a way for people to identify with others, a way to put themselves in somebody else’s skin. How about that? Since man is not predisposed to suicide, that might work. Awareness hasn’t.”

“Man is prone to commit suicide and more, Fatou, and not always thorough ignorance. When that blood lust is on him, he kills all life. But I don’t envisage broaching the subject with the Rwandan ambassador unless she brings it up. I want to share with her my sense of Sakeseba. The fact that Rwanda can do business with him. Her country is too small to take on a giant like Kinshasa. They need someone there they can do business with. That’s Sakeseba.”

She came alone. The Israeli secret service officer at the gate checked her identification, searched her car, and then informed the residence that Rwandan ambassador had arrived. The Israeli ambassador, accompanied by two guards, hurried to meet his guest. He walked with her in silence to the residence and into the living room, where Minister Cerusu and his wife waited. The Israelis greeted their new guest formally. She insisted on an embrace on the Senegalese minister and sat down next to Mrs. Ben Nun opposite the Israeli ambassador and the Senegal minister, who sat on a sofa beneath an oil of a Jerusalem panorama.

Minister Cerusu noticed her friend staring at his new guest. She lowered her head and said for his ears only, "You are staring, Zvi."

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said when he heard, as if awakening from a dream. "Please excuse me. Looking at you, Madame Ambassador my mind digressed to the argument about what Pharaonic Egyptians looked like... you are in every museum in the world and on every tomb wall in Egypt. But I'm not telling you anything you have not heard before. Again I apologize for staring."

"His mind is prone to wander, and at the least opportune time" the ambassador's wife said gently. "I have had to apologize for him more than a few times."

The butler came in to take the new guest's order.

"I'm not offended at all. I saw the 1950 movie, *King Solomon's Mine*, in which there is also mention of Tutsi cattle painted on tomb walls in Egypt. And yes, I have heard of the Nefertiti look. Morphotypically, I suppose it's possible. Why not? So what if she was a Batutsi? Whatever ethnic group she belonged to, she was an African. As you well know, the people we call Egyptian called their land, Kemet, the Black Land. Only doctrinaires imagine that Egypt evolved in a regional and racial vacuum.

"And since I am a beth Israel, let me add that I have also read that Batutsi are descended from the Jewish tribes of Dan and Judah...."