



A Journey in Time

Leo

eo Bruno boarded the Currus Aquilae and took off for Lecce, flying away on his golden chariot towards Lazio, over open prairies, olive groves and deserts. He was travelling very fast when the vehicle suddenly stopped and recoiled; the Camerlingo looked below and saw a powerful car, yet old fashion designed, on an ancient route still in its original pavement. The car looked antique, just restored probably, and shone bright red; two-seat and convertible, its engine fuelled by hydrogen and equipped with autopilot and sat Nav. A very popular type of car among Natural Men, who seemed to be quite traditional in this sort of things, yet hard to find even in towns, and then again especially in that forsaken countryside inhabited by dangerous savages. Standing at the side of the vehicle, as if checking some damage, was a girl in a very elegant and tight white dress and wearing a red scarf on her neck; her high-heeled shoes made her look awkward yet sexy on that stony ground. She was having problems with the engine, maybe; the Camerlingo couldn't leave that vulnerable creature alone in such an isolated place, and so he flew by.

"You aviator, will you help me?" the girl spoke, taking off her sunglasses. Looking at her, the Camerlingo felt like he was travelling back in time; her ways and her clothes made her look so unusually familiar to him. Leo had moved from Greenland to the court in Rome, dressed up as a professor he had held philosophy seminars at La Sapienza University, and he felt more and more attracted by the Natural Men's lifestyle, especially that of the rich Roman families who prospered and lived in a luxurious and sophisticated way. His social position was near to the Bio-aristocracy, like a linking ring between the two species. The girl belonged to that ancient and wealthy city environment; her old fashioned elegance, which Leo regarded as the most modern and attractive he had ever seen, was the living sign of her provenience.

"My name is Eleonora Benson; despite my last name, my family has been living in Rome for a long time. I've had a problem with my car...these roads have so many holes, they ought to do something about it!"

Leo couldn't stop smelling her lovely fragrance.

"Do you like it? – the girl asked, a bit puzzled – it's an old French perfume; they stopped selling it a long ago, more or less when you were born, Sir Camerlingo."

"Ah, you know who I am."

"Well, you hardly look like a Natural Man, and then you show the distinctive signs of your status, just like a plate on a car."

Leo ignored the lack of respect in the girl's words and kept on smelling her and staring at her in ecstasy.

"If you like, I can let you have a sample from Paris...it's homemade, according to an old recipe based on dry roses."

"I would be glad to get such a present – said he, his heart held captive by a blindfolded child – ...but now let me see what's wrong with your car...I'm afraid it's the engine..."

"Is it bad?"

"The thing is...it's just not possible to find a mechanic here."

"I see...anyway I must confess it's you I was looking for...that's why I was travelling to Lecce. Actually I wanted to be there when you signed the Treaty with the Catholic Church, in Ostuni, but I couldn't make it in time. However, I've been lucky to find you, in the end."

"So you're here in Apulia just to meet me?"

"That's right...didn't I tell you I'm a journalist? Thank you for being so kind not to read my mind, but really I have nothing to hide to you. I work for the National Holo-TV and I wanted to interview you."

"I think by now you will have to come back to Rome with me, this can be a bad place for a vulnerable young woman whose car has just broken down on this old route."

"Oh, I'm carrying an electric pistol and a microwave gun, and savages are afraid of car noises, anyway...but yes, I'll come with you. Will you send someone to fetch my car, however?"

"Of course, you will get it repaired in Rome, no problem."

The girl did her lovely brown hair and put on her head a very elegant and large white hat. Once again, Leo suddenly recalled a world faraway in time. That girl had impressed him so deeply. He couldn't believe he got so raptured by a natural woman, by her smell and her beautiful dress. Leo Bruno had a very sensitive and excitable spirit, after all.

“I thought you were able to fly without a machine.”

“Actually, Miss Benson, it’s my own mind flying the chariot.”

“Amazing...but please, Sir Camerlingo, slow down. Will you let me interview you, then?”

“Miss Benson, I do find you’re very nice, yet I don’t think it’s a good idea to be interviewed.”

“But it’s so important...you’re going to become the Pontiff worldwide, not only of the local and by now tribal Roman Bio-aristocracy.”

“Tribal?! Oh, you mean the clans. Are you telling me the people in your caste would feel relieved by this interview?”

“Natural Men still believe in democracy and self-government; if your authority respects liberty, both at the private and the public and national level, you will enjoy a massive popularity. Your attitude towards the Prime Catholic Bishop is so important, as well as your commitment to make the savages learn the human culture.”

“I want the world to be united against any segregating beliefs, and I want love and justice for all!”

“Let me interview you, then!”

“Ok, I’ll think about it.”

That ride in the sky was fast and Leo enjoyed it so much. Everything seemed wonderful and more poetic in the company of that beautiful girl.

They flew through clouds and sunbeams over multicolored fields, woods, deserts and towns, and soon got near the walls of Rome. In the distance they could see Saint Peter’s and the colossal statues of Gabriel and Michael, the two archangels warding the Caput Mundi.

Eleonora Benson lived in a villa on the Aventino hill, a sort of small neo-gothic castle surrounded by trees and plants. Leo flew past away from there, so that the people in her family couldn’t see the chariot, then he headed for the Old Vatican, flew in there through the secret entrance to the Museums and landed by his apartments.

“So long! – Osvaldo Mezzi was inside a large room decorated with newly-made tapestries – Look at these wonderful works!”

“They completed them, then...great job.”

“Now that your Grail is bleeding these tapestries represent a massive political propaganda. They show all about its finding...here, for instance, you can see Cocine, your beloved parrot; there you can see the cosmic egg where the grail was found,

while that tapestry on the left shows the egg again like a *vescica piscis* and within it your squirrel Orfiel twisting around the Grail. But the main work, the most precious piece, is this one before me, showing the goblet bleeding.”

“I see...a remarkable work...”

“You look absent-minded, as if you’ve got your head in the clouds...uhm...are you in love with someone you’ve just met?”

“Don’t read my mind, it’s just not polite, though you’re my foster father. I’m tired, I’ll go to the lethargic crypt.”

“I expected some greater enthusiasm for the tapestries.”

“They look so fine, father Osvaldo.”

“Wait, Leo, there are some problems: the Italian Parliament is not going to allow the attack against the Aracnos which the President had planned. After all it’s a democracy we mean to preserve! Montecitorio Palace will no more support the Quirinale, and an unprecedented fight for the power is breaking out in the capital city. However, the President is stronger within the Senate.”

“He’s in charge of the executive power, and he’s the Commander in Chief of the Army as well.”

“But according to the Constitution he needs be to supported by the Parliament. If Quang Lee were forced to a military putsch, he should overrule the Parliament, and so, trying to solve a problem, we would cause a bigger one indeed.”

“Quang would become Dux Italicus with the support of the Universal Church, but not for long, that’s for sure. I promised him a Bio-aristocratic knighthood to keep him out of politics, surely not to make him the King of Italy! After the conquest of the Aracnos he will have to allow the people to vote democratically and appoint new ministers, and by then he will be obliged to give up politics for good!”

“So that from being the Prime Natural Man he will end up by being the Least Roman God!”

“I’ve let him become one of us because of his grandmother and his son. Moreover, he’s too ambitious and might prejudice the political freedom of the Natural Men in Italy. He’ll lead the attack against the Aracnos, anyway, so that Natural Men will have the honor to support the Universal Church with their army. Everybody will benefit from the arrest of the Pope, not only our clans! I’ll be at Montecitorio Palace in an hour, get Cyborg Garaluk ready: I have to ride a fine aircraft throne. Humans appreciate these ostentation things, you know!...”

