



PART  
ONE

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## A SECRET DESTINY



hen Weezie Putnam returned from Vienna in 1898 determined now to be known as Eleanor, she brought with her from her ordeal three items of inestimable worth: a manuscript, an exquisite piece of jewelry, and a handwritten journal. Each would change her life, she knew, and each would play a part in determining her destiny.

The manuscript had been written in a cathartic fury at the end of her Vienna time, the completion of the commitment she had made in going there in the first place, to write “something of significance,” as her former headmistress called it, to be delivered as promised to *The New York Times* immediately upon her return. She brought the manuscript to the *Times* office in New York City, and the editor Henry Moss, whom she had known from before Vienna, held it in his hand and measured its weightiness with a satisfied smile. “As promised,” he said, “a significant body of work.”

“That is my hope,” Eleanor said. “I am relieved to be done with it.” Then she concluded with “It is to be called *City of Music*.” The title she knew was meant to be.

Mr. Moss also cabled her in the week after her return home to Boston and insisted that she travel back to New York immediately, he and two other editors having just completed reading the manuscript. “We are deeply moved,” he said, “by the vibrancy we have seen in these pages.”

When she arrived in their offices, the other editors smiled at her as Henry Moss offered with enthusiasm, “You have launched yourself as a serious writer, Miss Putnam. Or, I should say, Mr. Jonathan Trumpf has.”

Her response was more sudden than she would have wished, had she not been caught by surprise. "Absolutely not," was what came out, in a burst. "I shall work with you to edit this project," she said, "as I wish it to be as thorough and accurate as it can be, but it will remain the sole long work of Jonathan Trumpp, and Mr. Trumpp has written his last." She said it with such conviction as to leave the *Times* editors speechless.

"That is not the response we expected," Mr. Moss said, disappointment obvious on his face.

"It will be a waste not to follow this up," a second editor said.

"So be it," she said. "It is what it is. I appreciate all that you have done for me, but there will be no more from Mr. Trumpp." She expressed her gratitude even further and then left the *New York Times* office, not seeing fit to mention at that time or later the painful events that had led to the catharsis of writing, nor its fateful inspiration, which could never be replicated.

The second item she brought with her from her Vienna experience was the piece of jewelry, a most extraordinary ring which had belonged to one of the most famous and most tragic figures in recent European history. The ring's value was, she hoped, easily recognizable, as she knew she was meant to set about selling it immediately. She knew nothing of the fine art of selling extraordinary pieces of jewelry, and she knew that for purely emotional reasons parting with this particular piece would be most difficult, but it had to be done.

And the third item, by far the most significant, was a remarkably detailed journal, a leather-bound handwritten volume that recorded in exactness all that had happened to and around her in Vienna. This volume also revealed forthcoming events well into the twentieth century, including events she knew she would have to make happen and others that would come about well beyond any of her doing. She had her own reasons for believing the journal's recordings to be true and for following its prescribed tasks religiously, knowing all the while that Sigmund Freud, back in Vienna, had participated intimately in the journal's origins and had thought it, with a certainty equal to her own, the product of a deranged mind. Because of the sensitive nature of the material in this extraordinary volume, she knew she was required to guard its many secrets with the utmost care, to show it to no one.

And so, because of this journal, whose provenance for the time being

shall remain unexplained, whose contents had become for Eleanor inseparable from her very sense of herself, she would know the role she needed to play to ensure the future she knew had to be. It was for her an indelible lifelong commitment made during an indelible time to the love of her life.

She knew of the great events coming in the years ahead. She knew she was to marry, for better or worse, Frank Burden, a man she didn't love; to raise with him three beautiful and talented children; to become a great social and cultural force in Boston; to count on the support of two extraordinary men, first William James and then Carl Gustav Jung; to watch helplessly the emergence of two horrific worldwide wars; to suffer great loss; and to die an old woman in the same house she had been born in, on Acorn Street on Boston's Beacon Hill. She even knew the date and time.

And from the pages of this Vienna journal, she foresaw from the time of her return from Vienna that her principal business associate was to be a man named T. Williams Honeycutt, and that this Mr. Honeycutt, whom she had never heard of, was to play a crucial role in coaxing Arnauld Esterhazy to come to Boston and to remain there for the rest of his life. She knew that Arnauld Esterhazy, in his position as revered teacher at St. Gregory's School, well into the twentieth century, was to shape and change the lives of many Bostonians, playing as he did so an indispensable role in the destiny of her family.

These developments concerning Arnauld Esterhazy are the main substance of this story.

## THE MAN FROM CHICAGO



As she contemplated the magnitude of what lay ahead, she realized she must abandon her girlish diminutive name Weezie and adopt permanently the adult persona implied by her given name, Eleanor. It was a momentous transition understood by no one but her. And she would set about performing the tasks, of which the most immediately challenging was dealing with the selling of the ring. For advice back then, she had begun with the director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Jackson Peard, a close friend of her family. It was Jackson Peard, this man who had spent a lifetime examining exquisite pieces of art, who gasped upon opening the fine linen handkerchief and recognizing at once the item's significance. "Rather takes one's breath away, doesn't it?" he said, looking at the ring, then at Eleanor. It was beautifully jeweled, white gold, with tiny diamonds and emeralds and a large sapphire in the center, an item of great craftsmanship and inestimable monetary worth. "How ever did you come upon something like this?" he said.

"Extraordinary circumstances," she said calmly.

"You know its history, I assume," he said.

Eleanor nodded. "I do, and I suppose that improves its worth."

"Most definitely. Everyone by now knows of the great tragedy and its mysteries." Then Jackson Peard, an authority on fin de siècle Europe, added, "Scandal increases value, no question. Tragedy increases value. It is a sad but intriguing story." He paused and shook his head, then looked back at the object in his hands. "But an enhancement of the value

of such a piece of jewelry as this remarkable one we have before us, no question.”

“And the handkerchief?” Eleanor asked.

“And this fine linen handkerchief with its embroidered seal,” the director said, “very good. It authenticates things.”

“That is my hope,” Eleanor said.

“It most certainly does,” the director said as he examined both the linen and the ring. “You could donate this item to us,” he said quickly, and then seeing from the look of consternation on Eleanor’s face the inappropriateness of his remark added quickly, “Or you could sell it at auction.” He held the ring up to the light, as if to ascertain if he was in fact holding what he thought he was holding. “Something of this value would merit an auction,” he repeated, “in London.”

“How does one do that?” she said.

“Oh, we can help. We do it often, discreetly, of course.”

Then the director looked at Eleanor seriously. “In order to sell this item,” he said slowly, “you must reveal how you came to possess it.”

Eleanor rose up in her chair, her back stiffening. “I will not be able to do that,” she said.

“Then it is questionable that there can be a sale.”

“Then,” she said, “I shall have to prepare myself for that eventuality.”

With Jackson Peard’s help, she went ahead with plans and made contact by cable with the famous auction house of Sotheby’s and decided to travel to London herself to accompany her precious acquisition, fully aware that at any time her refusal to provide background on the acquisition might bring an end to any deal.

Then, as she was beginning to make plans for the long and involved trip to London, she received another message from Jackson Peard, another discreet one. “This is not within our usual protocol,” he said, pausing respectfully.

“Because of my failure to disclose details?”

“In this case,” Mr. Peard said, “disclosure might not be as much of an issue. I am assured that you will treat our involvement with the strictest confidence, but we have someone in New York whom you should see.” He handed her a small business calling card. “There is interest in your object, but it cannot pass through the usual formal channels. It is on Maiden Lane. Are you familiar with it?”

"I am not," Eleanor said.

"Well, it is located in the Financial District. Most cities have such markets in out-of-the-way places, but New York's is right in the heart of things, where it has been for decades. There are booths on the street where you will find diamonds and jewels of all shapes and sizes, quite a show. You will find this office in the midst of it all." He pointed to the card. "I suggest you travel there immediately. You will want to go there yourself, but take a man with you, of course."

"I shall go alone," Eleanor said with conviction.

So, her prized possession in hand, Eleanor headed off to New York on the first train of the following morning, alone. As she sat by the train window, watching Massachusetts and then Connecticut roll by, she did her best to overcome the natural nervousness that such a monumental transaction brought with it. The whole business of this unique piece of jewelry brought back painful memories of the extraordinary circumstances in Vienna by which this treasured object had come to be in her possession. Keeping the ring was out of the question. Using its sale to raise monies to establish the fund she was required to begin was not only judicious, but her obligation. As with so many monumental transactions now and in her future, she hoped that what she was doing was right, in keeping with the journal's very general instructions.

Arriving in New York a little after noon, she found her way to the given Maiden Lane address, and did indeed find, as Jackson Peard had described, the small office of a jeweler named Constant Auger in the midst of what looked like hundreds of small booths, all dealers of stones and jewelry, which she, a woman alone, had hurried past to arrive at the prescribed door. The waiting room was decorated with a few large prints of European estates, and many glass cases, all filled with sparkling diamond jewelry. She sat for a time before a short and officious woman came out to greet her. "Mr. Auger will see you now," she said. "You will follow me." She ushered Eleanor into a small office where two men stood beside a table, obviously waiting for her. "This is Mr. Auger," the woman said, and an elegant European-looking gentleman took her hand, and the woman left the room.

"This is my client," the jeweler said. "He is from Chicago and has a keen interest in European objets d'art." Her eyes turned to the man from Chicago, who showed no interest in shaking hands. "He has been greatly



looking forward to this meeting," Mr. Auger continued, "and to seeing the object." From the two men's comfort with each other, Eleanor assumed that this was not their first business together.

Eleanor took the offered seat as the two men sat behind the table. She opened her purse and withdrew the handkerchief-wrapped object, handing it to the man from Chicago, who took it and eyed it reverentially for a moment before carefully lifting the folds. She watched his face with care as he pulled away the fine linen wrapping. "My, my," he said, examining it with care, then shifting his attention to the handkerchief, as if he knew exactly what he was looking for. He then handed both the ring and the linen to Mr. Auger beside him, who showed nothing in his face and began examining it with a magnifying eyepiece. He remained silent and passed the ring back with only the hint of a nod.

"The empress's seal," Mr. Auger said, examining the handkerchief again, and the other man nodded his satisfaction, again ever so slightly. "That is certain."

"Authenticated?" the man from Chicago said, clearly taking control. The jeweler nodded. "You know this item's significance, I assume," he said, looking directly at Eleanor.

Eleanor nodded. "I do," she said without hesitation. "Yes."

"Mayerling," he said. "Frightful business. Young Rudolf, the crown prince, and his wife struggled in marriage. He became irritable, drank too much, took opium, and sought consolation with Vienna's young women, even fathered an illegitimate son, they say. Add to that the dreaded affliction of venereal disease. Then the murder and suicide, all by his hand." Then he examined the ring for a moment. "All increasing the value of this ring, I imagine you have been told."

"Yes," Eleanor said. "I have been told."

"And people in Boston tell us that this object is very dear to you for emotional reasons also," the man from Chicago said without looking up.

Eleanor nodded again. "That is correct," she said.

"And it is our understanding that you have not revealed how you obtained such an object," the man from Chicago said.

"That is true," Eleanor said. "I have not."

"You understand that in such a matter, we must know."

Eleanor stood firm. "I understand."

"And?" the man from Chicago said.



"And circumstances forbid my telling."

"We hear that you are a very headstrong woman, Miss Putnam," the man said.

"That may be," she said, "but circumstances do forbid me."

Mr. Auger was about to speak, to explain perhaps the importance of full disclosure in negotiations such as these, and the man from Chicago held out his hand. "It is a personal matter, I gather," he said.

"It is, one of a most personal nature." Eleanor was looking him straight in the eye. "Yes."

The man from Chicago then looked over at the jeweler, who gave a slight nod. "It was obtained through legal means, we can assume?" he said. "Improbable, but legal."

Eleanor did not flinch. "Yes, you have my word on that. This ring came into my hands through completely legal circumstance." The man from Chicago was quite obviously taken by the directness of this woman's manner. "Improbable, but legal," she repeated, "a gift from a cherished friend, making it difficult to part with."

"But you would part with it?" the man said.

"I would," she said, "under the right conditions."

"Would the sum of five thousand dollars constitute the right conditions?" he said.

Eleanor tried her best to show no surprise; she simply nodded. "I think that would," she said.

"A deal-ending bid," Jackson Peard called such a move in preparation for this meeting. "Ready yourself. You will be doing business with a wealthy industrialist, a man who never wishes to be outdone or outbid. If he wishes to go forward, he will do what is necessary to take what he wants off the table."

"I would like then to take this very special item off your hands." He held the ring and its handkerchief out toward her.

"That would be possible," Eleanor said, again trying not to show any of her relieved surprise.

"We have an agreement, a most discreet one?"

"We have an agreement," she repeated with conviction, "and, yes, a most discreet one."

"That is good," the man said, and both men nodded their satisfaction.

"And may I hold it one last time?" Eleanor said, and she took the ring

into her hands and closed her eyes, allowing herself to be carried back for just a moment to the time at which she had acquired it, feeling the strong pull of complete love and gratification, afraid for just an instant that once back there she would not be able to return. Then she opened her eyes, snapped back to the present, felt her fingers tight on the ring for one last time, and reached out, giving it over to the man from Chicago, never to see it again.

So almost as soon as she had arrived in New York City, Eleanor Putnam the neophyte jewel seller was heading home with a five-thousand-dollar bank draft—a small fortune—for her fund, the Hyperion Fund, she knew she must call it. “Hyperion, one of the mythic Titans, lord of light,” a classics-professor friend of William James told her one night at a Harvard Club supper party. “He was one of the precursors of the Olympian gods and goddesses, from prehistory. One of the forebears of it all.”