

# The Prodigal Daughter

## Chapter I

"I want to run for President of the United States" she said

I can think of more rewarding ways of bankrupting myself, replied Abel as he removed the gold rimmed half moon spectacles from the end of his nose and peered at his daughter over the top of the sports section of the Chicago Tribune

Don't be hurlawtaw. Roosevelt proved to us there can be no greater calling than service. The only thing Roosevelt proved began Abel and then stopped realizing that his daughter would consider the remark he was about to make, flippant.

Florentina continued as if she was only to aware what was going on in her father's mind

I realize it would be pointless to embark on such a venture without your full support. ~~It~~

~~My sex is enough of a liability~~  
~~will be held enough being a woman without mentioning the~~  
~~the added disadvantage of my Polish background~~

Don't ever speak disloyally of the Poles said Abel. History has proved us to be an honorable race who never go back on our word. My father was a Baron....

Yes, I know, so was my grandfather, but he's not here now to help me become President.

More the pity said Abel sighing, as he was would have made a great leader of our people then why shouldn't his granddaughter?

No reason, no reason at all said Abel as he stared into the ~~steel grey~~ <sup>deep blue</sup> eyes of his

of his only child  
well then father will you support me <sup>in my endeavors</sup> as  
I cannot hope to achieve such an ambition  
without your financial backing.

slowly Abel hesitated before replying placing  
the glasses back on the end of his nose and  
folding his newspaper

I'll make a deal with you Florantyna, after  
all that's politics is about. If you make a  
good showing in the New Hampshire Primary  
I'll back you to the full. If not you must drop  
the whole idea.

What's your definition of a good showing  
came back the immediate reply from ~~the~~  
tense voice.

Once again Abel hesitated. If you top the  
ballot or obtain over thirty percent of the  
vote, I'll go the whole way to the convention  
floor with you even if it means that I end  
up destitute.

Thank you father I could ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ask for more  
No you certainly couldn't he replied now can  
I get back to finding out how the Chicago  
Bears can have possible lost to the New  
York Yankees.

They were undoubtedly the weaker side as  
the score clearly indicates.

Young lady you may think you know a  
thing or two about politics, but I can assure  
you that you know absolutely nothing about  
baseball he said as his wife entered the  
room.

Abel turned ~~his~~ <sup>towards</sup> her. Florentyna <sup>what</sup> wants to run  
for President of the United States, ~~how~~ <sup>what</sup> do you

think about that Zaphia

They both looked ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> her and waited for a reply

"I'll tell you what I think said Zaphia I think it's well past her bedtime and I blame you for keeping her up so late."

Yes I suppose you might scold Abel and turning back to their daughter ~~he~~ added "Off you go to bed little one"

Florastina came to her father's side <sup>and</sup> kissed him on the cheek and said "Goodnight Papa"

Abel's eyes followed his eleven year old daughter as she left the room and he noticed that her little fingers were clenched making a small tight fist, something she always did when she was angry or determined. Abel suspected she was both on this occasion, and he realized that it would be pointless to try and explain to Zaphia that her <sup>only</sup> daughter was no ordinary mortal, so he returned to the Chucjo Gear and suspected her judgement might also be right on that subject.

Florastina never referred to the conversation again for twenty seven years, but when she did she assumed her father would keep his end of the bargain, after all the Polish are an admirable race who never go back on their word

## Chapter 2

It had not been an easy birth, but then for Abel and Zaphia nothing had ever been easy and in their own ways they had become philosophical about that. He had wanted

a son, a son who would one day take over The Baron Group. He sat for hours in the corridor of the Chicago General Hospital waiting for his first cry. <sup>occasionally starting at the name on the silver band around his wrist</sup> Abel never soured even for a moment that it would be a boy. It was a girl. When the staff nurse gave him the news, he tried not to show his <sup>disappointment</sup> ~~displeasure~~ which lasted about thirty seconds, the thirty seconds it took to stare into those deep blue eyes. Her little fingers were making a tight fist. He had read somewhere that a child was not expected to do that for at least three weeks. He smiled.

Zaphia stayed in the Chicago General for another four days and Abel visited his wife and daughter <sup>every morning</sup> ~~the~~ office only after the last <sup>breakfast</sup> ~~service of breakfast~~ and ~~the~~ <sup>evening</sup> ~~evening~~ <sup>when guest had left the dining room.</sup> ~~of lunch.~~ On the fifth day, mother and unnamed child (Abel had considered six boys names) returned to their home at

~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> anniversary of the first week of ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> birth they named her Florentyna after Abel's sister. Once she was enclosed in the nursery Abel would spend hours just staring at her realizing he must work even harder to ensure her future. Abel was determined Florentyna would have a better start in America than he and Zaphia had had. Not for her would be the humiliation of arriving on the eastern seaboard as immigrants with only a few Polish relatives <sup>and no job</sup> waiting for ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup>. He would ensure that she

had the formal education he had lacked, not that he had a lot to complain about. Franklin Roosevelt was in the white House and Abel looked as if he was going to survive the depression. <sup>America had been good for him</sup> with his daughter in the room when he sat alone ~~in the upstairs~~ room he often thought about his future and his past.

Little upstairs

when he first arrived in the

Abel had quickly found a position at the Plaza Hotel in New York where he had become an ~~employee~~ <sup>commute</sup> waiter and after few years <sup>of working overtime</sup> had reached the exalted state of assistant head waiter in the oak room. During those years he had spent five evenings a week in ~~night school~~ at Columbia University ending up with a Bachelor's degree in Economics.

still only served

~~He knew what to do with his newly acquired qualification.~~ He was not sure how his newly acquired qualification would help him <sup>while</sup> ~~when~~ he still only served ~~waiter~~ <sup>of the Plaza Hotel</sup> in the Oak Room. That was answered when he served ~~waiter~~ <sup>of the Plaza Hotel</sup> for the owner of the Richmond Group of Hotels who proceeded to offer ~~Abel~~ the position of Deputy Manager at his flagship hotel "The Chicago Richmond" with the sole responsibility of running the restaurant. Abel bargained a little and ~~then~~ <sup>before jumping</sup> ~~jumped~~ at the opportunity.

Florentina turned over and stated washing the side of her cot. Abel extended a finger which his daughter grabbed at like some lifeline thrown from a sinking ship. She then stated to take it with what she imagined were teeth.

Abel found the Chicago Richmond

in a badly rundown state and it didn't take him long to realize why. The manager, Desmond Pacey had ~~been~~ milking the books for nearly twenty years. Abel spent several weeks gathering all the proof he needed to sink Pacey and then presented the facts to his employer, Davis Lenny. Davis couldn't believe it and immediately sacked Pacey replacing him with his protégé Abel. ~~Abel~~ They ~~supp~~ urged Abel to work even harder and he became so convinced that he could turn the fortunes of Richmond Group round that when Lenny <sup>agreed</sup> ~~sold~~ put ~~him~~ <sup>up</sup> ~~2 1/2~~ <sup>£</sup> ~~of shares~~ <sup>for sale</sup> Abel cashed everything <sup>that</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>owned</sup> and ~~borrowed~~ <sup>secured</sup> money from the bank to obtain <sup>sub</sup> a holding in the group. Davis Lenny was delighted by ~~his~~ <sup>Abel's</sup> young personal commitment and appointed <sup>him</sup> ~~him~~ Manager Direct of the group. Although Abel was aware there were Desmond Pacey in most of the hotels in the group he believed it would only be time before he weeded them out and turned the Richmond Group into a profitable enterprise. Such was his confidence that he even persuaded Davis Lenny ~~taught~~ <sup>praise</sup> but she showed no interest in <sup>the</sup> ~~company~~ <sup>firm</sup> ~~system~~ <sup>plan</sup>.

"Ow" said Abel as his thoughts rejoined his daughter who had made one of her teeth ~~draw~~ bleed as she obviously felt her father was not taking enough interest in her progress.

Typical of a woman said Abel. Fleurjane smiled and started pulling herself up the side of her cot. Abel held out his thumbs as she

protégé

grabbed at them again and again before collapsing and falling into a deep sleep.

Abel ~~realized~~ <sup>realized</sup> he must soon make another trip around the <sup>and</sup> nine hotels as there wasn't much he could do while they were rebuilding the hotel in Chicago. Now Dan's Leggs was dead ... Abel still couldn't believe it if only he had confided in him told him ~~about~~ the truth about the group ~~business~~ and financial trouble who weren't having problems during the depression. They could have worked it out to-gether. But the Texans are every bit as proud as the Poles and when at the age of 62 Dan realized he had lost every thing and couldn't convince the bank that they should extend their loan, he took the awful way out and jumped from the seventeenth floor of the hotel he called his flagship. Abel would never forget having to identify a body he only only recognized by the check jacket Dan had been wearing the previous night. The Lieutenant investigating had remarked that it had been the eleven & succeeded that day in Chicago. Dan had left a letter to Abel explaining that the bank would not <sup>continue to support</sup> ~~support~~ him, he also suggested the remaining 75% of the shares of the Richmond come to his managing director explaining that although they were worthless it might give him a chance to negotiate <sup>with the bank</sup> ~~with the bank~~. A gesture in Abel ability to pull things back to-gether again.

Flora's eyes opened, and she started to howl. Abel picked her up lovingly

Immediately regretting the decision as  
An action he regretted immediately he felt the  
damp <sup>clamp</sup> bottom. He quickly changed his nappy,  
on me he carefully <sup>before he leaves</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> wife would have  
~~nodded~~ <sup>nodded</sup> ~~appeared~~ <sup>appeared</sup> the deftness with which he carried out  
his task. She closed her eyes and fell back  
into a satisfied sleep. Ungrateful brat he  
said as he kissed her on the cheek.

Abel had visited the Richmond  
group bank as soon as he had had time to  
work out the full implication of Darilerry's  
death ~~that~~. He had pleaded with them not to  
put the hotels on the open market ~~as he was~~  
~~on~~ and tried to convince them that if they  
would only back him he could - given time -  
turn the position round. The bank showed  
no interest. The young director in charge of  
the account, William Kane pointed out that  
they had their own responsibilities to consider.  
Abel was convinced ~~that~~ Mr Kane did not see  
human beings on a balance sheet, only  
figures. He left the young bank director  
aware of why Darilerry had had such  
difficulties in remaining in the group. Abel  
returned that night to Chicago thinking  
nothing else could go wrong <sup>in his life</sup> only to find  
the Cayuga. Richmond burst to the ground  
and the police suspected him of arson.  
Arson it proved to be, but at the hands  
of Desmond Pacey who when arrested  
admitted himself to the crime as his  
only interest was in the total downfall of  
Abel Rosnovski. He would have succeeded if  
~~that~~ the insurance company had not come  
to ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> rescue, until that moment Abel had



wondered if he would have been better off in the Russian Prison of war camp he had escaped from before fleeing to America. But then his luck turned and ~~Sam~~ <sup>an</sup> announcement <sup>as manager</sup> purchase of the Richmond group offered him his old job <sup>as manager</sup> a chance to prove he could run the group at a profit. <sup>Two years had passed since</sup> then ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> Abel <sup>looked down at his sleeping daughter and remembered</sup> ~~reunited~~ <sup>with</sup> Zaphia who had <sup>met</sup> on the ship over to America ~~and started rebuilding the Richmond Group~~ <sup>His daughter was blowing little bubbles but continued to sleep soundly.</sup> Abel had renamed the ~~group~~ <sup>company</sup> The Baron Group after his father and would not allow any of the hotels to have a seventh floor in memory of his friend and mentor Dan Lemy. <sup>The progress of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Baron</sup> <sup>Chicago</sup> had <sup>been</sup> good and Abel had used the time to visit ~~with~~ the rest of the hotels in the group, sacking any staff who showed the same ~~tendency~~ <sup>as</sup> Desmond Pacey and replacing them with ~~with~~ <sup>the</sup> <sup>most</sup> <sup>honest</sup> staff from the old Chicago Richmond. <sup>Although</sup> the group failed to make a profit in 1933 they only lost \$23,000.

Zaphia did not enjoy Abel's continued sojourns from Chicago town to ~~Mobile~~ <sup>Mobile</sup> checking all his hotels in the south. But Abel realized that if he was to keep to the agreement with his ~~father~~ <sup>father</sup> there was no time for him to sit at home. <sup>He</sup> <sup>had</sup> <sup>been</sup> <sup>given</sup> <sup>ten</sup> <sup>years</sup> to repay the loan and if he succeeded he could ~~take~~ <sup>take</sup> the remaining share <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>company</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>company</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>nothing</sup> <sup>Zaphia</sup> <sup>said</sup> <sup>would</sup> <sup>have</sup> <sup>stopped</sup> <sup>him</sup> <sup>trying</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>achieve</sup> ~~it~~.

that aim

Your dinner's ready shouted Zaphiri  
at the top of his voice

Abel pretended he hadn't heard her  
and continued to stare at his sleeping daughter.  
He realised he was fast losing interest in his  
wife and his affections were being transferred  
to his beloved Florentina.

Did you hear me say Dinner was  
ready, the voice sounded strained

What, no deal, sorry, just coming  
Abel reluctantly left Florentina to join his  
wife for dinner, turning to watch her before  
leaving. She smiled in her sleep. Was she  
having her first dream. Abel wandered ~~and~~ <sup>as he</sup> turned  
out the light.