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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DEADLY DAUGHTERS ***

The *DEADLY* Daughters

By WINSTON K. MARKS

ILLUSTRATOR NOVICK

These gorgeous fanatics were equally at home with men, murder, or matrimony, and they used all three with amazing success.

DR. HUBERT LONG, 40, bachelor and assistant professor of political science at Mentioch University, thrust his rugged, unlovely face forward, sticking out his neck literally and figuratively.

"The Humanist Party," he shouted at the 800 odd students in the lecture hall, "is not a political party at all. It's an oligarchy, so firmly established in Washington that our electoral form of government is an empty ritual, a

ridiculous myth. Our elections are rigged to perpetuate a select group of feminists in absolute power."



Saving Dr. Long came in the line of duty.

The mixed group of seniors stirred in their seats with wide eyes, and many began taking notes.

"This may cost me my position at the university," he said grimly, "but the time has come for all responsible citizens to face the fact that the Government of the United States of America has degenerated into little better than an absolute dictatorship!"

This time a rustle of whispering grew to restless buzzing. A young man in a bowtie leaped to his feet breaking the no-questions rule in Long's over-size classes. "May the *Mentioch Bugle* quote you, Dr. Long?"

"You may headline those views, and I hope you do," Long declared belligerently, adding extra emphasis.

"Exactly what do you imply when you call the Humanist Party a group of feminists?" the young man asked, encouraged.

Long's gaze swept out, noting the mild amusement on the faces of the men students, the growing annoyance in the women. He fixed the reporter for the campus paper with a level stare. "I suppose you feel that because only 30 percent of our legislatures are women, that men still dominate Congress?"

"I think that is the popular conception," the reporter said in a patronizing tone.

"Then think again, young man. Analyze the composition of the Senate and House, and break down the key committee appointments by sexes. You will find three-fourths of these posts held by women, and the balance are held by men whose wives are members of the top-level Humanist Party movement. I say to you that our whole nation is dominated by a handful of female fanatics to whom intellectual integrity is unknown."

"What are your indictments? Please enumerate—"

"I will, I will," Long shouted, ignoring the microphone before him. "Without consideration of our national prestige the Humanist Party has emasculated our influence as a world power with its pacifistic actions. On the domestic front, the Party has initiated a program of so-called Internal Security, a cradle-to-the-grave pampering that amounts to the most vicious State-Socialism the world has seen since the fall of Soviet Russia. We are fast becoming slaves to the soft, gutless bureaucracy in Washington that feeds us, wipes our noses, encourages excessive breeding and enforces its fantastic policies by use of goon squads!"

"Goon squads?" The young reporter lost his smile. "You had better clarify that, Dr. Long. I wouldn't want to join you in a libel action."

"Keep quoting me," Long snarled. "I said goon squads, and I meant just that. Once I belonged to a scholarly fraternity of political scientists who were critical of our government. Of some eighteen members, I am the only one left in public life. The rest have all disappeared, and I have no doubt that my previous silence on these matters is all that has saved me. But the time for discretion is past. If we are to save our independence and democratic freedoms the time for action is now! I say to you—"

It made more than the headlines of the college campus at Mentioch. The news-wire services picked it up, and Dr. Long's radical views made pages two and three all over the nation.

Emily Bogarth, head of Internal Security, raged at her assistant, bald-headed Terman Donlup. "Must I read about these things in the papers to keep up on subversive activity?"

"But the man's record shows complete stability," Donlup defended. "He simply blew up without any warning at all. The Dean of Women at Mentioch tells me that Dr. Long has never had a word of criticism from his department head. I suppose we had better remove him from his position at once, eh?"

Madame Secretary Bogarth shook her head. "That's not enough. This calls for liquidation. I want a special squad on this one." She began writing names on a sheet of paper, names of some of the most effective unscrupulous yet faithful operators in the party's top echelon.

She handed it to Donlup. "This man is dangerous. He could force us into open control of the press and higher education. Get these people here not later than tomorrow. We can't waste time."

"Yes, Madame Secretary," Donlup saluted with a full bow and went to work.

The following afternoon Emily Bogarth faced the squad with its brilliant, green-eyed leader. She told them their mission and then dismissed all but one. "I'm sorry to hand this one to you. I know what a promising career you had before you. But this man is deadly to our purpose. Believe me, I am not wasting your special aptitudes."

"If it's for the good of the Party—"

"Dr. Hubert Long is a lighted fuse," Emily Bogarth said, her cold eyes hard on her operator, "that could blow the Humanist movement sky-high. I want you to snuff out that fuse." She squeezed a forefinger against her spatulate thumb.

The operator nodded and the green eyes flashed with the same fanatic spark that electrified American politics at the turn of the 21st century and launched the Humanist Party into its 30-year tenure of power.

At first only a shocked, embarrassed silence greeted Dr. Long on the campus of Mentioch University, but as the press notices of his utterances grew in volume so did his prestige.

He began to have a number of local visitors who evinced sharp interest in his views. At the end of the first week he was holding forth each evening to a sizable audience in his tiny bungalow on the edge of faculty row.

By nature a careful, practical man, Hubert Long now carried a small pistol in his coat pocket, but being also a fearless, independent individual, he admitted all callers and exposed himself daily to the public. It wasn't entirely personal bravado, however. He knew from his years of intense, discreet research that the goon squads rarely made their attacks in the public eye. When they liquidated him he fervently hoped they would make this mistake and prove his point concerning their operations.

Although he didn't seek martyrdom, Dr. Long was prepared for it, as he explained to the informal seminar that had accumulated at his home this Sunday afternoon. It was now late evening and the endless questions were beginning to grow wearying.

"How do you know," asked a skeptical businessman, "that I am not an assassin who will ambush you on the way to the bathroom tonight?"

There were several ladies present, and bachelor Long blushed with annoyance. "You might very well be," he retorted. "But probably I have some measure of temporary protection from the publicity I have received. My death, if it occurs, will doubtless appear to be from natural causes, or perhaps from a most ordinary but unfortunate accident."

He arose. "It's rather late and I have an early class. Will you excuse me? Thanks for coming, everyone of you." He nodded, trying to smile, but the chill thought from the businessman's remark persisted. Very possible it was that one or more members of a goon squad was among the twenty-some people now beginning to pick themselves off his worn carpet, footstool, coffee table and the meager furniture he could afford on his salary.

With a small start he realized that a youngish woman, in her early thirties, he guessed, was stalling as though she intended to remain behind. Sure enough, she closed the door behind the others and turned a very lovely face to him. "I think you are magnificent, Dr. Long," she said impulsively. "I hope you will spare me just a few minutes alone?"

Long slipped his right hand into his coat pocket casually. On her feet the woman displayed more than a beautiful face. Her figure was alarmingly feminine and rather aggressively displayed, feet akimbo, hips forward, shoulders back. Her hair was nearly platinum, but so expensively dressed it was impossible to determine whether it was artificially so.

She caught his hesitation. "Perhaps you would feel better out on the porch," she offered, smiling with such relaxed understanding that Long felt a little boorish.

"No. Sit down, please, I didn't catch your name earlier."

"Julie Stone," she introduced herself and held out a long, bare arm. Her hand squeezed his fingers warmly, more like a man's grip. "My brother is Senator Stone, and he asked me to stop by and meet you. Secretly he agrees with much of what you have said, but of course he is reluctant to expose himself until something of a formal movement is under way."

Long relaxed a little. This was good news, about the first he had had to date. Political figures were remaining eloquently silent in the press, and this was the first overture he had enjoyed from anyone more influential than the reporters.

She went on, "Specifically, my brother would like to know which of the other two political parties you favor, in the event you make an appeal through such channels."

"Either party," Long asserted with some emphasis. "In fact I would like to see a coalition of the Democratic and Republican Parties to overthrow this unholy Humanist gang."

Her forehead wrinkled. "Precisely Tom's idea. He's not at all certain it can be done, but he thinks that the press reaction you have had indicates there is a possibility if it is played right."

"Yes, the so-called free press," he said. "Some people have thrown that up to me. If the Humanists were dictators, they say, we wouldn't have this free press that has given my remarks currency. I read it differently. The Humanists have sold the press a bill of goods, and so they control the papers in the most effective way of all. You'll notice that they have printed my speeches strictly as news, you might say as oddities in the news. Editorial comment has been extremely noncommittal."

"I hope you are right," Long said. He made a pot of coffee, and they discussed the matter at some length. He liked this woman's direct, open approach, but she startled him as she was leaving.

"I have much to tell my brother," she said. "For my own curiosity, though, are you certain that some personal distrust or dislike for women hasn't influenced your attack against the government?"

It jarred him like an uppercut. Her detached manner had almost made him forget she was a woman herself. Now this.

"Why—why do you ask?"

She shrugged. "It was a natural thought. There aren't many confirmed bachelors these days."

"Oh, that!" He smiled. "You're quite right, there aren't many unattached men over twenty-one any more, what with the barrage of government propaganda and their special tax deduction incentives. I assure you that it's nothing personal, however. My tastes are simply too rich."

"Your tastes?" It was her turn to arch an eyebrow.

"That's right. A lovely woman is a work of art, but like any other masterpiece, she is a luxury I can't afford. Anyway, this mug of mine rather put me out of the running in the only leagues I've wanted to play in. Incidentally, you introduced yourself as *Miss Julie Stone*, didn't you?"

"No, but it happens to be correct."

"What's your excuse?"

"For being single? I'm a career girl. I have my own modeling agency. Too busy for one thing. And I guess a woman gets bored looking at beautiful men in my business. Not a brain in a barnful. Just beautiful brawn and wavy hair. Ugh! Animals! Everyone of them."

"Young woman, that's sedition. Don't you believe the government propaganda?"

"If I did do you think I'd be here? No. Dr. Long, I find your arguments quite valid. America is in the hands of the feminists, all right, and it's the fault of several generations of mama's boys. I just can't get—"

She broke off as a heavy truck rolled by out front, back-firing heavily. They were both silhouetted in the open door. She glanced out, and suddenly she threw herself upon him, pulling him to the floor. He caught her in his arms as they cascaded into a tangle of limbs and nylon.

The racket faded off down the street, but Dr. Long's mind was not on the noise. The touch of this beautiful woman's flesh under his hands dominated his whole being. How different, how soft, incredibly soft!

Now she was clinging to him, trembling slightly and breathing deeply. Even at this range her pale hair looked natural. "Are you all right?" she asked at last.

"Of course," he said sitting up reluctantly. "It was only a truck back-firing."

"Look!" She pointed behind him at the wall opposite the door. A wavery line of small, deep holes cut across about heart-high. "I saw the gun-barrel stick out as the truck came up," she explained, untangling herself. "It appears your temporary immunity is over. They're getting active."

Long stared half-unbelieving at the mean, business-like little holes. With the reactions of a trained semanticist he relaxed instead of tensing up with fear. He had made his decision days ago, and he knew full well the risks he incurred.

"Thanks for nothing!" he said coldly.

Julie Stone looked up from straightening her dress and studied his lined face. "So you really were expecting an attack?" She shook her head in disgust. "I finally meet a man with some semblance of guts, and the only way he can think of to win his point is to let a goon squad spill them in the headlines!"

She threw herself into an armchair and crossed her knees. Long stood in the middle of the floor staring down at the woman he had held in his arms minutes ago, and his temples began throbbing. "What—what else is there to do?" he asked hoarsely. "This was my best chance to draw attention to the reality of our police state. I have much more to die for than to live for. This has been my life's work—gathering the facts and contriving to present them dramatically enough to attract national attention. My only fear was that they wouldn't come after me, and I might be written off as a crackpot."

"I regret," she intoned, "that I have but one life to give to my country!" Then her lip curled. "Very well, brainy, if that's the best you can think up. Let's make it better yet. How about this for a headline: *Dr. Long and Lovely Model Murdered by Federal Hoods!*"

"Are you insane?"

She shook her head. "I'm dead serious. I'm sticking right in the line of fire until you figure out a way to stay alive at a profit."

He argued, pleaded and even lost his temper, pulling her to her feet and trying to force her out the door. He didn't make it. Somehow his arms slipped too far around her, and she clamped

herself to him in a defiant embrace. The soft warmth of her body, her sweet breath in his nostrils, the faint essence of her perfume enveloped him in a befuddling weakness.

Live at a profit? How could a man want to die with Julie Stone in his arms?

He knew it was supremely idiotic, but the thought of her fabulous form crumpled and riddled with bullets slashed at the tendons of his resolve, and he clutched her lips to his with the hunger of the condemned man he was.

"Julie, Julie! Why did you have to—"

"One bullet, a single bullet will do it now." Her lips peeled back from her white teeth. "Let's stay this way, darling. That's the way you want it."

Her low, black sedan nibbled at the 100-mile-per-hour limit on the Freeway as they crossed the state line. In the back seat, reclining out of sight, his head pillowed on his brief case full of his documented case against the Humanist Party, was a very thoughtful Dr. Hubert Long, recently of Mentioch University.

He had driven until dawn while Julie Stone slept, and now, after a brief nap, he was waking to some of the realities of the morning.

This flight was utterly absurd. When the federal people discovered he was not dead they would come after him again and again. All he had done was involve this lovely woman. Long since he had controlled fear for his own life, but now he knew the exquisite torment of fearing for the woman he loved.

The emotion was genuine and no less raging for its swift eruption in the space of a single evening. Dr. Hubert Long was hopelessly and deeply in love with Julie Stone.

"Quit worrying," she called back to him. "They couldn't have spotted my car. I parked it a block from your house, remember?"

"I hope you have a plan," Long muttered. "I certainly don't. Where are we heading?"

"Florida. To my brother's winter place. You know, I just had a thought. Tom and I are both on the board of regents of Toppinhout College down there, and there'll be an opening next quarter in the faculty. A professorship, in fact."

Long grunted. "No dice. They'll have every political scientist in the country under scrutiny for years."

"This is the chair of anthropology," she said. "We can change your name, and after this first excitement of your disappearance dies down—"

"But I don't want it to die down!" he objected.

"I thought we settled that. You've got to stay alive to talk to important people. Tom and I will round them up secretly, and you can present your case to them. My brother is the senior Senator, you know, and he's been itching to bolt the Humanist Party for the last two terms."

"What can I accomplish in secret conferences? The people are the ones who must be aroused."

"I know, I know, from a soapbox in Times Square, I suppose. Darling, you can't accomplish this alone. They've proved they are willing to take the chance of killing you, so they must be stronger than you think. Your facts must come to the attention of the right people. Over a period of time we can organize a truly effective underground."

"Toppinhout is a girls' college."

"So?"

"I've never taught anthropology before."

"You've never been married before, either," she pointed out, "but I predict you'll be a success at both."

"Married?" Long popped his head up.

She smiled at him in the rear-view mirror. "Get your head down before you get it blown off. Yes, I said married. I'm not trusting that pug-ugly, beautiful mug of yours out of my sight from now on. And I'm afraid Tom will shoot you himself if you don't make it conventional. Tom's old-fashioned."

"But—I couldn't support you on—"

"A full professor's salary? Don't be foolish. Besides, I'm retiring from my agency. Selling out. That'll set us up housekeeping."

That such a prosaic term as "set us up housekeeping" should send molten lava racing through his veins, did not seem strange to Dr. Hubert Long. How could a man successfully keep his mind on dying when at last a work of art like Julie seemed within his reach? He knew that his plans were irrevocably changed.

Emily Bogarth turned to the phone speaker as her assistant made the circuit and signalled to her.

"On the Hubert Long mission—" the speaker said. "Mission accomplished from this end. I trust you have a likely story for the press?"

"Never mind that. Did it come off as planned?"

"Precisely. Your marksmen were quite effective."

Emily Bogarth sighed. "Sorry to sacrifice you, honey, but the other way is just too messy."

"Don't mention it. This chap has a very interesting mind. He's a challenge—in more ways than one. By the way, get word to Senator Stone, will you? Have him fly down to his winter home at once. He'll be needed. Some Party members, too."

"Of course. That's all set up. Good luck!"

"Thanks, but you can put your mind at rest. Dr. Hubert Long is positively liquidated."

Julie stepped from the phone booth and paid the service attendant for the gasoline. He looked at her as he dropped the change into her hand and wondered who the lucky chap in the back seat might be. A man would sell his soul for the right kind of a look from those green eyes.

THE END

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