

# Chapter 7

## Charles' Decision

Two days later Charles came home all smiles and bearing her two gifts, a beautiful gold necklace and matching earrings with garnets set in exquisitely roped settings. They looked lovely on her. He then told her of an orphanage in England who were anxious to start an adoption process for them. After he had left Louise two days earlier, he had started to call around the London area to research names of adoptions places. Although he had been telling Margarita that he had been looking all over for appropriate adoption agencies, he really hadn't done any such thing, as in his mind, he couldn't imagine adopting a child. While he hadn't called this English agency when he found their name, nor even really knew if they could adopt there, the fact that he had brought home a name of some place where they could potentially adopt would make it look to Margarita that he had been thinking of her while he had been away. He had always known how to keep her happy.

Charles had made several decisions while he had been away and after he had met the wonderfully captivating Lady Louise. The first decision was to follow through on his past history of showing two faces to the world, but now it meant continuing to show two faces to his wife. He had been good at that when he had first courted her, with her spending the year as Miss World, while he carried on as if he were a bachelor. He would make her believe that he could obtain a child, or children, for them and that he loved her as deeply as he had when he had first pursued her.

His second decision was to kill her.

Since he couldn't divorce her or annul the marriage, there was a way to get rid of her. He always got what he wanted, and he wanted Lady Louise. He no longer wanted his wife. She had become a huge disappointment to him. Even though she was still beautiful and loved him,

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she couldn't bear a child. His parents and society dictated that the family have an heir. He had promised his father that he would do something and do it quickly. It was almost like a deathbed request and promise which he had made, considering the physical and mental condition of his invalid father.

As to how to carry out this second decision became the focus of his next planning. He knew that he couldn't count on someone else to do the job. People talked. Sooner or later he would be found out as having planned the murder, whether he personally did it or not. Might as well be hanged as a horse instead of a mule - it was the same. He remembered his father's words, "If you want something done right, do it yourself." Of course, his father had meant doing something in business, but those words also applied to everything else. He then consulted with his old Mafia friends in Italy. He had always been able to obtain anything from anywhere when he used their connections. Having used their services before, he knew they were reliable - for a price. With this problem, price was no object. He told them that he wanted at least two passports, - no, four would be better. All the passports needed different names and photos of him in different disguises. He would also need associated credit cards and business cards so that wherever and whenever he would be stopped, he could back up the different identities. These passports were now in the process of being made, but he would have to make a trip to Italy to have the photos taken. He had described the kinds of disguises that he would require and they were also getting those for him. He hadn't lost his touch. Once he made up his mind, he could accomplish lots of things which other people later saw as miracles. A week later his friends called him from Italy saying that he could come and get his merchandise.

He had also decided that as soon as Margarita was eliminated, he would marry Lady Louise. In the meantime, every time he went to London, on business of course, he would spend some very productive hours with her in his London apartment or at her hotel. He would court her, just as ardently as he had courted Margarita. The result would be that he would have a beautiful and fertile wife; he could merge her business sense to his; he would have an "in" with the Prime Minister himself, who ultimately would be wrapped around his little finger as a

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relative; and he could count on becoming a Lord in the House of Lords on his own merit and not rely on his father's name and title. Life would be very good indeed.

He had thought long and hard. He needed a plan that would include a "fall person" who could be prosecuted for his crime. He had to plan carefully enough to provide a way to get into his home in Spain "without being there" and out and place himself with a foolproof alibi about where he had actually been during the murder. Again, he would attempt the impossible and would succeed. He knew that he was smart enough to do it. It was a matter of being two people at once; something he had done his entire life.

The last time he had been in Amsterdam he had gone into several art museums and had fallen in love with paintings of Van Eyck. He had especially liked the painting "The Arnolfini Marriage". The docent had told his tourist group about the symbolism in the painting. Each object was subtly hidden but held very significant meanings. A subterfuge. He liked that. It was like him - out in the open, but also hidden. That would be the way his murder of Margarita would be - transparent, but opaque. He started to develop his foolproof plan, because he would never be found out.

He decided that he would flatter Margarita by having an artist paint her portrait. While she knew that he and most other people thought of her as an especially beautiful woman, she herself didn't always seem to be conceited enough to think of herself as beautiful. Even with all the pageants that she had won. She would think that he was totally enthralled with, captivated by, and committed to her; and, that he wanted to express his love and devotion by celebrating her upcoming birthday. She would be tied up time-wise with sittings, thinking nothing of what he was doing otherwise than planning for a huge celebration. He had already led her to believe that his extra time from business was spent in finding a child to adopt.

Now, he had to find an artist whom he could commission to actually paint a portrait. It must be someone unknown; someone who would jump at the chance to paint somebody important; someone who needed

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money badly; someone who wouldn't question his motives or how he wanted the portrait done; someone who wouldn't wonder at the setting; and someone whom he could "sweet talk" into taking on a long-term project with the hope of future reward.

In the meantime, he started to plan how he would cover his tracks - leaving his parents' home, going to Spain, committing the murder, and getting back to England. By leaving from his parent's home, he would establish an airtight alibi. Not only his parents, but their live-in staff would be able to verify his whereabouts during the murder. He would have to be sure that his "stand in" murderer would not have an alibi. Maybe he could even point a finger at them in some way that there would be no doubt about them being the guilty person - capable of the crime. It would be ideal if his "murderer" were also the artist. That would kill two birds with one stone.

He couldn't be obtuse in his search for such an artist. He, no matter where he was, would be on the lookout for one. Unfortunately, he couldn't inquire from friends or acquaintances for such a person because he didn't want to leave any loose ends where people could start following his plans.

One morning he began to complain to Margarita that he had been too busy working to exercise frequently. In order to lose a few pounds, he decided to begin walking back and forth to the village. In reality he needed to know exactly how he could come and go unseen, where he could hide transportation, how much time he needed to get from one location to another, and precisely how he could quickly kill and vanish. The village was built on a hill above the train station and the river. His villa sat near the top of the hill and was only accessible via ancient streets that were little more than one-lane alleyways. A car was out of the question due to difficulty of use and lack of stealth. Parking was at a minimum and most of the villagers knew their neighbors' cars and would recognize a strange vehicle. He had to have a bicycle.

On his next trip into Madrid, he found what he was looking for - an old bicycle with scraped red paint, rusty, and bent, but it looked to be in good working order. It was in a thrift shop and he saw it only through

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the store window. He thought for a moment; then, realizing that the bicycle might later be found with questions asked about its purchase, he didn't go into the shop. It was too bad that he didn't have any of the disguises that he had ordered from his friends in Italy. He didn't want to be identified by the store's owner. He reviewed the different descriptions which he had sent to Italy for the various disguises. Picking the easiest one to duplicate, he went into a store for children's party costumes and came out having purchased a black wig, horned-rimmed glasses, fake mustache, and scissors. In a public restroom he trimmed the wig so that it was longer than his own hair, but still a respectable length. He then returned to the thrift store and purchased the bicycle. He paid cash so that a credit card and identification weren't necessary. He had parked his car about a mile from the store, and looking around and seeing no one, he quickly put the bike into the car's boot. On the way home he put the scissors, glasses, and black wig in his briefcase. Upon reaching home, he stored the bicycle in the garage under some old tarpaulins. He felt secure that his escape vehicle was ready now.

He studied the train schedules between London and Paris, Paris and Madrid, and Madrid and Toledo. Even though there were more direct routes which he could take, they were slow. The trains which he was considering were all rapid transit ones. The distances were greater, but the transit times were shorter in duration. He had to adhere to his timetable. He figured especially going under the English Channel on the train was much better than trying to take ferries over the channel to and from Bilbao. He couldn't risk airplanes with all their checking of passports, wait times, and regulations. With planes, one still had to find ground transportation once one arrived and that presented another set of problems. No, he was better sticking to going by train. He concluded with his schedule and discovered that he could leave London early evening and get to Toledo on the last train. It would be pitch black at night and he could walk to the village and up the hill to the alley behind the villa without being seen. By the time he had murdered Margarita, biked back to the village, ditched the bike in the river, continued walking to the train station in Toledo, and taken the very first train out of Toledo, he could be home in England sometime between nine and noon the next

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day. If he could think of some plausible reason, he might even be able to leave England earlier and give himself even more time. He was glad that he had ordered four different disguises because that would enable him to change disguises with each different train. No one would ever be able to trace him. With twenty-four hours, little sleep, and swift action, he would be free of Margarita and be able to marry Louise. Even if Louise never conceived again, he would adopt her child, and have an heir to please his parents.

The next step was to find a proper artist and finish his plans.