



1915 - Count Stefan Vladeslav finds a painting of his former wife in a gallery at Marshall Fields department store in Chicago. Speaking with the artist, he learns she now lives in New Orleans and even learns on which street she lives. Stefan travels to New Orleans to find her in the hope of reconciling their marriage. Is that Stefan's Destiny?

STEFAN'S DESTINY

by Rosemary Babich Gard

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ROSEMARY GARD



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CHAPTER 1

Chicago, September, 1915

The slender, handsome man wandered about the Marshall Fields store in Chicago, waiting for his wife who was being fitted for a gown.

He was very fashionably dressed in a lightweight, brown suit. He wore a felt homburg hat which brought attention to his startling blue eyes. His mustache was nicely trimmed.

His gold watch chain held a gold pocket watch safely in his vest pocket.

A beautiful, gold-headed walking stick was held in a hand wearing a large, gold ring bearing his family crest.

As the man casually wandered through the beautiful store, he found himself in the store's art gallery. In front of the entry was a poster depicting a bearded man whose name was Michael DuKane. It read:

SEE THE BEAUTIFUL PAINTINGS OF NEW ORLEANS WOMEN

Still wearing his hat, the attractive man walked into the gallery. The walls were filled with portraits of various sizes, all of beautiful women.

The man stood in front of a long painting of a red-haired woman. He studied the face. It was as if someone from his past was looking at him. Of course, it couldn't be Katya. She had died before he came to America. The woman in this portrait was wearing a pale blue floor-length gown. His cousin would have been wearing a peasant skirt and blouse, he thought. Still...the resemblance was amazing. As he slowly walked though the gallery looking at the paintings, he was impressed with the

display and noticed that some of the paintings had a gold dot on the frames, indicating they had already been sold. He looked about to see if the artist was in the gallery, but he only saw a salesperson.

At the far end of the gallery was a painting featured on an easel. It stood apart from the other artworks. There, on the canvas, was a stunning portrait of another red-haired woman, her hair in the style of a Gibson girl. The sunlight caught her beauty, just as the artist had intended.

Staring at the painting, the man's jaw dropped. He swayed slightly as he recognized the woman. How could it be?

Count Vladeslav was staring at a painting of the wife he had left in Zagreb and then, had ignored at the Gary Hotel when she had followed him to America.



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