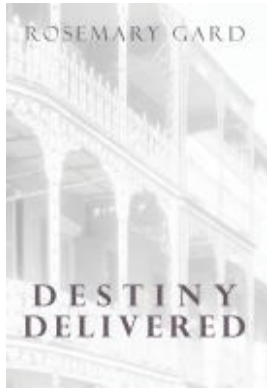




ROSEMARY GARD

**DESTINY  
DELIVERED**



*In 1913, immigrants from Yugoslavia are coming to Gary, Indiana. Stevo Markovich finds himself making room for relatives of his deceased wife who arrive unannounced. He is lonely and saddened by his wife's death, and becomes disinterested in his successful business. Dreams of his father and memories of his teenage years as an immigrant fisherman draw him back to New Orleans. Those he meets there change his life in ways he never could have imagined...*

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# **Destiny Delivered**

Rosemary Gard

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## CHAPTER 19

That evening, the wedding party concluded after much kissing from the girls and all the goodbyes, the Pavelich parents were driven to their home by Bobo.

The sleeping arrangements at the store were now Marjan and Mara in the loft above the kitchen, where Ignatz had slept, now available since he was at the house behind the tavern with Barbra and Josef. Julia and Tomo were in the room off to the side of the kitchen. Originally, that room had been Stevo's before he built the second floor above the store.

Stevo had so much on his mind. His nights were filled with dreams about his dead father. The dreams disturbed him, for it was only since Milan's death that Stevo's father came to him almost each night. More disturbing than the dreams were the times he awoke in the middle of the night thinking he heard his father's voice calling, "Aide, Stevo...Come, Stevo."

Stevo remembered how Katya would talk about the visitors in her dreams and she seemed to know what those visits meant. Strange, Stevo thought, he had not dreamt about Katya in what seemed like a long time.

In his dreams, Stevo and his father would go on the fishing boats just as they had when they lived in New Orleans. Several times during these dreams, Stevo would awaken, sit up in his bed, and be overwhelmed with the scents of the flowers in the courtyard where they had lived on Canal Street, not far from the Mississippi River.

Stevo felt as if he was intruding sitting in his own kitchen, hearing Marjan and Mara in the loft laughing, making sounds of lovemaking. However, there were no such sounds from Tomo and Julia's room, just off the kitchen.

Stevo went out onto the small sitting area outside the kitchen door. He sat in a chair looking up at the starlit night.

The sky was clear, the moon was shining brightly and the soft breeze was pleasant.

Before lighting a cigarette, Stevo took a deep breath of the fresh night air. Instead of smelling gardenias, oleanders, or magnolias, the smells of New Orleans, Stevo smelled only mint, which was planted in a pot next to the kitchen door.

Stevo heard movement in the kitchen. Through the open door, Stevo could make out Tomo, with a wine bottle and glass in his hand, sitting at the kitchen table. Before Stevo could call out to Tomo, he saw the figure of Julia wearing a long, cotton night gown, come to the table. Stevo could see her standing and looking at Tomo for a long while, not speaking.

Tomo filled the glass with wine and pushed it across the table towards Julia as he took a long drink from the bottle.

Stevo, sensing this was a very private moment, sat very still. He knew he should not be listening, but felt he couldn't let himself be known. Something serious was going on between Julia and Tomo.

Julia, her hair in one long braid hanging down the front of her nightgown, picked up the wine glass. She raised the glass in a toast, "To my husband." She said sarcastically.

Tomo took another drink from the wine bottle, saying nothing.

The shaft of moonlight illuminated the dark kitchen enough for Stevo to see Julia as she sat in a chair across from Tomo.

Tomo said nothing, but Julia continued to speak. "Don't take whatever anger you have out on me. Be angry at yourself for marrying me just so your baby brother could marry my baby sister." She took another sip of the wine. "It was your choice."

Tomo's head jerked up, facing Julia. "That's right." she said, "We both married for them. But," she went on, "at least you appealed to me. I saw how kind you were to my mother that day when you brought my brother home from the mill in the casket. And I thought you were polite to my father when you came with Marjan, agreeing to marry me so that he and Mara could marry."

Tomo still said nothing, he only looked at Julia. This was the first time he heard her speak in such a personal manner. Until now, they had only greeted each other politely at the meeting when Mato agreed to the marriage.

She went on, "When we were in the church, I looked at you and thought how lucky I was to have such a handsome husband."

Still not speaking, Tomo reached for her glass and filled it with more wine.

Drinking nearly half the wine, Julia, her eyes bright, perhaps from the beginning of tears or the wine, said, "My parents thought my brother was so special, because he was the first born and a male."

She put down her glass, rubbed her eyes with her fists. "All I was to my parents was someone to take care of the younger children. When we first came to America, we went to some relatives in Texas." She looked hard at Tomo saying, "Do you know what I was doing there from the time I was seven years old? I picked cotton until my little fingers bled. I had to look after Mara when she played on the porch. I was killing the snakes that made their way up between the boards onto the porch."

She picked up the glass and finished the wine. Putting the glass down, she gave Tomo a hard look saying, "I was nothing to my parents. My brother was everything. I went as far as the fourth grade and learned to read and write and do figures.

Look at me Tomo." she demanded. "I am not ugly. I am smart, I am a hard worker." Julia pointed to sounds coming from the loft, "If you don't want me for that...at least treat me with the respect a good wife deserves."

Now Tomo really looked at Julia. He was seeing a person, a person of worth.

Julia was not finished speaking. "I will never shame you. I will work at your side here at the store. Mara can do the cooking, that's all she is good for, except maybe what she is doing up there." Julia rolled her eyes upward. "Just show me what to do in the store and I can do it. And if you want other women, then, just don't shame me with it."

Tomo rose from his chair. He looked at the still seated Julia. There was fire in this 16-year-old. She was mature beyond her years. *This is a woman*, he thought.

Tomo went to where Julia was sitting. He took both her hands and pulled her to her feet. He took her in his arms and kissed her, gently at first. When he felt her respond, his kissing became passionate. Because of what those kisses were conveying and the fire they were building, Tomo picked up Julia and carried her into their room.

Stevo heard Tomo kick the bedroom door shut. He no longer felt guilty for having listened to their private conversation. Stevo was sure he liked Julia and he was also sure she would be a good wife for Tomo.

Stevo smoked his cigarette, looked again at the stars and the moon and wondered about his own future. There were so many details and obstacles to be taken care of and to overcome.

Finished with his cigarette, he ground the butt into the flower pot of growing mint. Quietly, he closed the kitchen door, walking softly, so as not to be heard. He gently opened



*Rosemary Gard*

the door leading into the store. As he climbed the stairs up to his room, he wondered if he would again dream of his father.

## CHAPTER 22

Tomo was heartsick driving Stevo in the carriage to the downtown train station. Most of the ride was without conversation, both men lost in their thoughts. When the train station was in sight, Tomo said, "Stevo...Stevo, I don't know how I will do it on my own. You have always been in charge."

He looked at Stevo seeing tenderness in his best friend's eyes. Stevo said, "Don't worry, Tomo. You will do just fine. I wouldn't be leaving you if I didn't think you could handle it. Just get your brother to learn English and learn more about the business." Both of Tomo's hands were holding the reins, so Stevo patted Tomo's knee. He said, "You have a good wife there. She will be a lot of help to you, if you let her."

With his luggage on the station platform, Stevo hugged Tomo, who had tears in his eyes. Stevo said, "I don't think I could love you more if you were my real son."

The train for Chicago was pulling into the station at Third & Broadway. Stevo had his ticket, watched the porters put his luggage on the train, and gave Tomo a last hug.

Tomo stood at the station until the train was out of sight.

From the Gary train station, Stevo went to Chicago to the passenger terminal with the entrance at West Madison St. It was a large and impressive building and considered to be a truly modern structure for the time.

Stevo had his steamer trunk, which stood upright with clothes hanging on one side and folded shirts and other small items in the four drawers on the other side, one leather suitcase, and the valise with money and important papers.

At the Chicago train station, he arrived in time to buy a ticket for the New York, Chicago, and St. Louis train. It was also known as the Nickel Plate. Stevo wanted to go to St.

Louis. There he would board the *Princess*, a paddle wheel steamboat that traveled down the Mississippi.

When he arrived at the St. Louis station, he caught a motorized taxi to the boat dock. Stevo boarded the *Princess* early and was given a sleeping room on the second deck.

The *Princess* was 150-feet long and burned wood. Leaving St. Louis it had a good stock of wood, but during the trip on the Mississippi, it would make several stops to get more and to drop off cargo from the north. The door to Stevo's private room opened out onto the second level deck. He leaned on the rail to see all the busy activity on the dock in the preparation of leaving.

Looking down he saw nicely dressed women with their parasols, some to board the ship and others just to say goodbye. Taxis, along with horse drawn carriages, crowded the dock, unloading people and luggage. The traffic sounds, shouts, laughter, and the clip clop of horse hooves all drifted up to the where Stevo stood.

Already Stevo could tell the difference in the smells of the St. Louis riverfront from those of Gary. There were smells of the water, burning wood, fish, and wild plants along the riverfront mixed with the aroma of frying chicken from a nearby restaurant.

St. Louis grew in construction, businesses, schools, and population after the Civil War. There were still some native trees, mainly oak, maple, hickory, and flowering dogwood, very similar to the Ozarks. Many trees would soon be gone due to the growing population.

An eagle lazily floated overhead before heading for the wooded area. There were some gulls circling above the boat, swooping into the water for fish. Somewhere Stevo heard the quacking of ducks, but didn't see any.

This was to be an eight-day river trip. Stevo had a young, black porter, perhaps no more than 16 years old, bring him a dinner of fried fish and vegetables to his room. Stevo didn't want to make pleasant conversation with fellow passengers. He left his cabin door open for the fresh air. He was starting a new venture in his life and wanted to think about it. Most of all, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do, or why there was this strong pull within him to return to New Orleans.

As he ate the fried bass, his thoughts drifted to the dreams he had been having. His wife Katya, when she was alive, always seemed to know what dreams meant. Now he wondered what the one dream of Katya and Milan, standing side-by-side, smiling at Stevo meant. Then there were the many dreams of Stevo with his father. Only recently had his father been coming to him in dreams. In some dreams, he, as a young boy, and his father were on fishing boats together. In other dreams, he and his father were walking home after a day of netting crabs. But lately, his dreams were of a now adult Stevo walking with his father, into the courtyard of what had been their home in New Orleans. This particular dream seemed to repeat itself often. But more disturbing than the dreams were the nights Stevo thought he heard his father calling to him.

Stevo passed the days on the boat mostly alone. Smiling and speaking when spoken to, but he avoided shipboard companions. He was enjoying the solitude. Most of his time was spent reading the local newspapers brought to him with each stopping of the boat. The young porter would bring whatever papers and magazines he could find. He even brought Stevo two books left by passengers from a previous voyage. Stevo couldn't have chosen two more different, yet still enjoyable books, had he tried. The first was *John Barleycorn: Alcoholic Memoirs* by Jack London and the

second was *The Return of Tarzan* by Edgar Rice Burroughs. He finished reading the two books within three days.

The various newspapers informed Stevo that Ghandi had left South Africa after leading a passive resistance. Another paper had a mention that the Boston Braves began their drive from last to first place in the National League.

It seemed to Stevo the world was going mad when he read: “*Irish Volunteers unload a shipment of 1,500 rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition. These arrived from Germany aboard Erskin Childers' yacht the Asgard. British troops fired on the jeering crowd on Batchelors Walk, Dublin, killing three citizens.*”

What caught Stevo's attention was a July 28 headline. It confirmed what Stevo had been thinking about; war in Europe. Austria had declared war on Serbia. He wondered how this would affect the Serbian men working in the mills in Gary. Stevo was sure that many of them would go home to fight the Austrians.

Stevo left Dalmacia as a 14-year-old boy with his father. He remembered so many Croatian and Serbian friends there. He couldn't help but wonder if the war would spread throughout Yugoslavia and perhaps further.

The news of the war on Serbia disturbed Stevo. Needing a change, for the first time in the five days aboard the *Princess*, he went to the lower deck. There he found a table with an empty chair and watched the entertainment. Sipping on a mint julep drink, he could only smile and think how tame this drink was compared to slivovitz.

Stevo found himself enjoying the music of several very young black boys making up the band. One was an accomplished cornet player and singer. The music was lively, jazzy, and had the people on deck tapping their feet and hands in time to the music. This was the music Stevo heard and

enjoyed in New Orleans. The music played in street parades and funerals. Back then, there were even times he joined in some of these parades, feeling the freedom and pleasure of dancing in the street.

He ordered another mint julep. He looked up at the bright moon and the sparkling stars. The music, the night, the moon all made Stevo feel different. He felt his life was changing more. He no longer felt like the Stevo Markovich of Gary, Indiana.

When the musicians were between songs, Stevo did what he did for the tamburashi at Milan's tavern. He walked up to the cornet player, a thin, young man with a huge white-toothed smile. "I like your music." he said, as he slipped money into the performer's shirt pocket. "What's your name?" Stevo asked.

"Louis." the man answered.

On the sixth and seventh day of the trip, Stevo did walk about both the upper and lower decks and spoke with several fellow passengers. He found himself smiling and not avoiding conversation. He would, however, move on when the conversation started to become personal. He couldn't say what his business was for he no longer was in business. When asked where he was going, he just replied, "To visit family."

He still ate alone in his cabin. On the seventh night he had frog legs, fried potatoes and some rhubarb pie for desert. After his meal he placed a chair outside the door to his cabin. He smoked a cigarette and enjoyed the pleasant night air. The sound of the boat paddles hitting the water and in the distance the eerie haunting call of a loon made the night seem unreal.

The music from the lower deck made its way to where he sat. The sound was softer, but still with a jazz beat to it. Stevo got up once to see who was singing. It was the man he tipped, Louis.

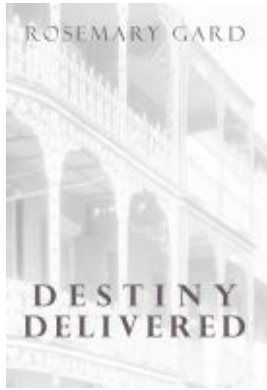
A young man and a woman walked past his chair, nodded, saying "Good evening", then moving on. He was aware that these people were from the south. Their words were soft and melodious as they spoke, not hard as in the North. Stevo saw the couple when they had moved further away from him for privacy, but the bright moon was a spotlight on them as they kissed.

Stevo closed his cabin door and walked around the boat. In the darkness, the lights from the shore glistened like signals. He saw small rowboats with men fishing with lanterns on the boats. In the distance he saw what looked like campfires dotting the shoreline.

The boat would reach New Orleans in the morning. Back in his cabin, Stevo laid out the clothes he would wear for the departure. He neatly stacked the newspapers and books he had read on a table. Under a glass, he left money for his young and efficient porter.

The music from below was not so jazzy or fast at this late hour. Now it was smooth and soft, lulling Stevo into sleep.

His father came to him again in his dreams.



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