



A Destiny of Fools

Ejner Fulsang

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"The future isn't what it used to be." — Yogi Berra

A condemned man John Wesley Nydegger has been convicted of fifty vicious murders of women. Sophie Zapata a broadcast journalist arrives at Sing Sing to witness his execution. Before the jolt a curtain drops to obscure facial convulsions and Sophie notices a three second discrepancy between clocks in the viewing room and on the image. When she finds out what happened to those ticks her life changes radically.

The world in *A Destiny of Fools* circa 2085 is quietly extinguishing through age attrition after a sterility epidemic spread throughout the population. The protagonist Sophie works in front of the camera for the New York Times network the only network still broadcasting. The reduced administrative unit which includes NYC and DC is styled the Consolidated State of America. Areas beyond this boundary have reverted to territory status sparsely populated and lawless.

The government soon considers Sophie an enemy of the state and a menacing concern known as the Apocalypse Foundation emerges as shadowy puppetmasters. Sophie on the dodge draws upon her wits to a degree but she also leans on the actions of other characters and the timely appearance of good luck. Knowing what she knows though the Apocalypse Foundation will never let her go.

Fulsang's previous book is fact-based fiction concerning a segment of the Vietnam War. *A Destiny of Fools* was a Finalist in the Florida First Coast Writers Festival. The author has worked in robotics and software development but the various technologies touched upon aren't mind-blowing advances for a setting eighty years ahead of the current era. Spy camera drones and RSS chips are already with us. Fulsang also missteps by nicknaming the nefarious agents DoRCs an acronym for Department of Reproduction cops. Creditable though is the symbolism written into Sophie Zapata's broken sentient computer. It is shown as a versatile tool a dangerous weapon and a stand-in for a desperately moribund society.

Fulsang communicates his vision of the dire situation effectively in early establishing sequences. New York is a city of cracked foundations.

.... Manhattan Island's flooded subways were undermining the streets above with the twice-daily ebb and flow of the tides. Years before Park Avenue had collapsed from Gramercy Park all the way to Harlem causing a mass migration from the East Side. Today crews from City Maintenance fought to keep the West Side afloat stoppering the remaining subway tunnels with injections of cement.

Current giants of the literary mainstream have ventured into the genre of speculative fiction to great effect. Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* have been well received by readers who were once put off by the label Science Fiction. Thinking people have an interest in humanity's fate How might the planet fall quiet? *A Destiny of Fools* poses questions of ethics and implies that a relatively humane extinction may not be so terrible.

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