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THE CELEBRATION HUSBAND

ONE

The fifth of August, 1914, was the day that Tanya Rungsted's husband, Baron Isak von Brantberg, avalanched into the drawing room with the heart-stopper that England and Germany were at war.

"Whatever for?" Tanya asked, once she regained her breath.

"You have me there," Isak shrugged.

Isak's response made Tanya wonder if she'd overreacted to the news of the war. "The colonies won't fight," she hazarded.

"Kenya is fighting," he corrected her. And without further discussion, he rumbled off to a meeting of the Swedish settlers, convened to decide whether they should volunteer their services to the leanly-staffed and ill-prepared British Army.

They did.

The Swedish settlers' farms, their families, their investments (both of finances and of passions) – all were embedded in British East Africa, which had welcomed European settlers of all nationalities under the auspices of the Empire. Now that its German neighbor to the south, Tanganyika, menaced Kenya, the Swedish settlers stoked their fighting instincts and rushed to her defense.

Isak joined an *ad hoc*, "irregular" military unit. His commander was Lord Delamere, the leading nobleman of the British colonists. The unit's mission was to defend the border. As the border was more than 750 kilometers long, and the unit had twenty-four men, Lord Delamere hoped to enlist the aid of native Masai warriors as scouts and guards.

About the eruption that, within thirty-six hours, took her newlywed husband from her and to a situation of deadly risk, Tanya knew nothing more.
