

CHAPTER 9 – JAQUELINE STEALS FRANK’S HEART.

*11 04 2022 Monday. Jaqueline dents
Frank’s Bugatti. They take it to Santino
Smash Repairs.*

Jaqueline drives by in her Alfa. She pulls by the parked Bugatti and admires it. She gets out and walks around the car showing full admiration. She stops in front of the car. Hands on hips, she continuously moves her head gently from side to side in admiration. She taps the bottom of her chin, then with her right forefinger gently pushing down her bottom lip as if she is performing a sexual innuendo.

She wondered what Faye Dunaway would think of her performance so far. She gets closer to her Alfa Romeo ready to go back behind the wheel.

All this, while Frank watches intensely every one of her moves from his table inside Cafe Discorso. He was lost in a world of fantasy. The car is mine. But will she be mine too? Giacomo was right. He finished a mouthful of toast watered down with a gulp of hot coffee. Ouch. It was like drinking the most enjoyable worst cup of coffee ever.

He was ready to walk out of the coffee shop to greet her. He grabbed a serviette and wiped his mouth off - drool and all. He lifted his rather overweight body slowly off the chair. Her hand now gently placed on the door handle of her Alfa. He sank back into his chair. His feelings as low.

Johnny with binoculars in hand and Giacomo watched from afar.

“What the fuck is she doing? She lost it!” says Johnny.

She got back in her car, buckles her seatbelt and started the motor. She puts the car in gear then paused, looked slowly to the right until her eyes locked firmly on Cafe Discorso. Just for 5 seconds.

Frank's hopes rise again. But then her gaze dissipated and wandered. Jaqueline knew exactly how to play on the emotions of this fading playboy. A little puppet on strings. Pull them up, pull them down. A roller-coaster ride. Maybe she should go into acting and forget about modelling. A stage or screen actor but not one on the streets.

All this was keeping Frank in suspense. This was unscripted though, even for Johnny and Giacomo.

She unbuckles her seat belt and suddenly pushes the door of her Alfa wide open hitting the Bugatti parked alongside. The bang on the Bugatti was loud and clear. Frank springs to his feet fast.

Jaqueline, with a high-pitched voice

"Oh no no. no. Not too loud though. That would make her appear like a panic merchant. That was not anywhere in the script."

Frank comes out flying.

"That is my brand new car not even 24 hours old. On a 4 million dollar car that is 30,000 dollars to fix and 2 weeks off the road. God, what happened here?"

Jaqueline tries to console him. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

"I am terribly terribly sorry. So, so sorry. Silly me, I got too excited and did not think."

She was blinking her eyes rapidly as if she was about to cry. Looking at her, past his Bugatti, Frank almost felt sorry for her.

Frank could not help noticing the scent of the expensive perfume she was wearing.

"I don't even know where to repair it quick and fast."

"Hold on. Hold on."

She turns to her car, opens her glove box and takes a business card out. Turns back and faces Frank.

“Santino Smash Repairs.”

Frank looks at her speechless not sure whether to cuddle her or strangle her. One thing for sure his rage had melted away.

“He is a Bugatti specialist. The car will be better than new and fixed fast. I had an accident filming in Rome. He fixed my Alfa, like new. I will contact my insurance *Assicurazioni Generali* in Rome. Fully insured. Only small Excess. I will pay it. Call me Jaqueline.”

“I’m Frank Costanzo.”

“Please get in your car and follow me. I will take you there.”

“Give me a moment, it is my second time.”

“Take your time Frank.”

She calls Santino to tell him they are on the way. They arrive at this huge garage. More like a factory full of expensive cars. The factory is a series of specialist garages run as separate businesses by individual craftsmen and artisans performing minor maintenance. Santino looks at the car. Indicates it is minor damage. They follow him to his office adorned with photos of owners of Bugattis and Lamborghinis. He proudly features in a few of them. Asks for insurance company name and owner’s details.

“Santino, when will it be ready?”

“I do not make miracles. Friday is best. All will be “perfetto”. Maybe Bugatti can give you a small car to drive.”

Frank nods and thanks him exchanging cards.

“You have a lift to your hotel?”

“I hope Jaqueline will drive me back.”

She politely nods.

“I will call you as soon as it’s ready for pick up.”

Frank gets in the Alfa with Jaqueline and drive off.

Giacomo traces the Alfa via Link supplied by Ivan the Hacker.

So he calls Frank on his phone.

“Hi Frank I take it you’re zipping on the Autostrada on your way to the Milano Fashion Show.”

“I wish. I’m on the way to my hotel from a smash repair shop in an Alfa Romeo.”

“What haaaaaappened Frank?”

“Just a scratch on my car and a little dent.”

“There is only one serious car repair specialist who knows and can fix Bugatti like new ... Santino.”

“That’s the guy.”

“Look Frank I am sorry to hear this. You take the Alfa back to Santino now. Wait in their VIP lounge. You are our most important customer only 24 hours old. I will organize a “loan Bugatti”, 10 years old, throttled down, slow, but still looks good and ...”

“Giacomo, Giacomo I can wait. The Alfa does not belong to Santino. It belongs to Jaqueline, the lady who dented my car. She is driving me back to my hotel.”

“Oh, don’t know what to say. Well, I will let you go. You have my number. Tell her to drive carefully.”

“Okay thanks. Will be in touch.”

Giacomo looks at Johnny and gives Thumbs Up. Giacomo calls Santino.

“Santino remember the GPS tracker.”

“Already on. We’re testing it. This car is like the CIA. Make sure nothing goes wrong with the signal.”

“Okay. Grazie Mille.”

Frank arrives outside his hotel. He is not sure what to do or what to say. Jaqueline gets out of the car. Inevitably, he notices her agility. He himself struggles slowly out of the Alfa. He noticed Jaqueline avoided looking directly at him in case inadvertently hurting his ego by doing so. And he certainly thought highly of that move. Well appreciated.

“Again I am very sorry about the troubles I caused. Here’s my personal card. Call me and I’ll take you down to Santino Friday.”

Jaqueline puts two fingers to her lips, head slightly pointing to the ground, then moves the fingers and touches Frank’s cheek. Looks at

him and promptly walks away back to her car, gets in and puts her safety belt on.

Frank waves slowly and gently like a five year old. He was absolutely spellbound. He did not know if he was coming or going. He looks at the card. For sure her name must be French. He mutters ... “The boys.”

He knew the pronunciation was wrong. Looks straight ahead.

“Okay, what a woman!”

Giacomo’s phone rings. He picks it up.

“The man is mine. I know it.”

“Fantastico. Call Johnny. He has a nice surprise for you.”

She dials Johnny.

“Jaqueline this is one-off. Angelo put in 5000 Euros with Versace in your name. Go buy a nice outfit. Our Intel tells us he loves Versace. For the next time you see him.”

“Wow, I’m on my way now.”

*12 04 2022 Tuesday. Chapter 9 Section
Break*

*Giacomo loans a second-hand Bugatti to
Frank – Veyron Model.*

Giacomo arrives outside Frank’s hotel at 9.45 in the morning and calls Frank.

“Bongiorno Frank. I’m here in a loan Bugatti. I will drive you down to Cafe Discorso for breakfast. No rush, when you are ready.”

“Oh Giacomo you are a great friend. Two Bugattis in two days. IN.. CRE.. DI.. BI.. LE. I learned that word from Google yesterday. I start to fall in love with Italy. Please wait.”

Frank walks out at 10.15 and gets in the Bugatti. They shake hands.

“Now, this machine can only do maximum 320 kilometres an hour. Slower than your Bugatti. But as fast as Lewis Hamilton’s. And No fridge.”

“Massage?”

“Sfor...tu..na..ta..men..te.”

“Google meaning?”

“Unfortunately No.”

“Got it. No massage. I have to wait.”

“Patience is a virtue Frank.”

“True.”

They reach Cafe Discorso and park.

“Join me for breakfast.”

“Ah ... in a hurry. But okay, you are V.I.P.”

They sit down. The waiter comes to the table bowing, bending and smiling.

“Bongiorno signor Costanzo. The usual?”

“Si.”

“And the gentleman?”

“Same please.”

“Giacomo this woman opens the door on her Alfa and dents my car.”

“Frank, in Europe, also before Brexit, many people call us *male chauviniste pig*. We, Italians, think older women forget how to drive. Always crashing. And parking. Bad, bad, bad.

“Giacomo, this is a beautiful young lady, not even 30, I think.”

“Oh sorry sorry. No offence.”

Frank leans towards Giacomo and says in a very low voice.

“This is a secret. I think I am already falling in love. I have not even given her one kiss as yet. I am a widower for a few years. You could be at my wedding Giacomo.”

Giacomo raises his eyebrows in surprise.

“Oh Frank your emotions are going faster than 2 Bugattis together. Slow down. Enjoy life at 150 an hour not at 320. You have the car. But remember you are not a Lewis Hamilton.”

“You should be happy to win one race. But the championship? You could be pushed in the wall. No escape road.”

They finish off their breakfast. Frank looks at him pensively.

“You know Giacomo. You are right. Maybe I don’t need the Massager in the Bugatti, the eco-friendly-fridge, the loan Bugatti could do just fine. He he he he he he.”

“You can always buy a cheaper model Bugatti. But nothing better than Jaqueline. But do things in moderation.”

Giacomo stands up ready to leave. Frank grabs his hand firmly holding it for 2 seconds. He looks at Giacomo intensely. And with a painful look in his eyes. He has never been in such a predicament before. Especially when it means seeking the advice of a much younger person. He nods goodbye and walks away.

“Oh Giacomooooo.”

He turns towards Frank.

“Would you be my best man?”

“Always ready to please Frank. Your wish is my command.”

Giacomo mutters to himself but with mixed feelings

“This guy is well and truly fucked. He’s toast.”

Giacomo calls 4 Fingers.

“Johnny, Frank’s caught in a honey pot.”

“Almost Brown Bread heh.”

“What?”

“I mean he’s almost dead. Completely hooked.”

Frank gets in his Loan Bugatti and drives straight to his hotel car park. He goes straight to his room. Takes off his clothes and neatly puts them away. A quick visit to the bathroom then straight on the couch with a scotch in one hand and the TV remote in the other.

With the third scotch almost knocked back he realises he needs to get up to get his medicine. The doctor told him not to mix medicine and alcohol. And he felt too lethargic to move his weary body. The thought was killing him. How is he going to handle such a masterpiece like Jaqueline in his physical condition. If so, how long for? Will his dream ever start?

The TV is still on while he is on his sixth scotch. He grabs the whiskey bottle and pours some more. He nods off again snoring like a train when he gets a cold sensation around his private parts. It's the scotch and the glass is empty. He gets up slowly, walks to the bed and drops on the mattress with a heavy thud. It's 4.30 in the morning.

*13 04 2022 Wednesday. Chapter 9
Section Break*

*Frank takes a day off from Cafe Discorso.
He sees Dr Rossi.*

It is now Wednesday. Frank surfaces again at 10.30.

"Jesus it's breakfast time. I'll have to skip. I suppose they will be looking at an empty parking spot."

He nods off again. Jaqueline drives by and sees an empty parking space. No Bugatti. She gets a little concerned. Frank wakes up with a headache. But now it is one thirty in the afternoon. He decides to call his doctor. Frank keeps him on a special retainer. Frank calls Doctor Rossi.

“Si Pronto.”

“This is Frank Costanzo. Can I speak with Dr. Rossi please?”

“Di Certo. One moment please. I will tell him.”

“Frank are you well? Is it urgent? Do you want me there?”

“I am fine. Just woke up. Something is giving me trouble. A little medical, a little mental. I like to talk to you in a more relaxed atmosphere.”

“Get some late breakfast. Makes you feel better. I will come to see you at five.”

“Good idea.”

Frank calls room service and orders a late breakfast which is promptly served by Carmela. In the meantime, Jaqueline drives past spying again and still no sign of Frank. Jaqueline calls Johnny.

“I drove past Cafe Discorso at 11.00. No Bugatti. And again an hour ago. Still no Bugatti.”

“Don’t worry. Our GPS tracker indicates he is still parked at the hotel. No emergency reported at the hotel. Carmela our maid called Giacomo. She took breakfast to him at four o’clock ... this afternoon.”

“Okay well I am off to the modelling studios. Ciao.”

Dr. Rossi knocks on Frank’s door.

“Come in doctor. Take a seat.”

Dr. Rossi opens his medical bag and proceeds to check his blood pressure. Dr Rossi frowns with a concerned look on his face.

“High?”

“Un poco. A little.”

“I make a long story short. Got a new Bugatti. Got dented by this female beauty. I think she is a model. But I am falling for her. I have a new Bugatti. But I need a new heart.”

“Frank, Frank don’t panic. Take it easy. Everything in moderation. Or just stay only with the Bugatti.”

“Doctor seriously, nobody buys a Bugatti and chose to spend his time in a monastery.”

“What you want me to say Frank? Live and die in a Bugatti or live and die in a monastery. In a Bugatti, you are already in heaven. (Smiles). Monastery, you have to wait longer. But guaranteed. No new medicine needed.”

Both smile.

“That Viagra, the low dose one. Can I still use it?”

“Not more than one in one day. 2 days in between. Better 3.”

“You used it lately?”

“Never since you prescribed it. I haven’t scored in 4 months.”

“Frank, then you’re ready to go.”

They shake hands. Frank walks him to the door. And closes it gently as soon as Dr. Rossi exits.

“Shit shit shit shit.”

He decides to take one Viagra to check out the effects. He certainly felt more perked up in 45 minutes. His heart was pumping a bit faster. He decided to go to bed at 10 and hoped that tomorrow will be a better day.
