

CHAPTER 12 – FRANK OFF TO LONDON TO RE-DISCOVER HIS SOUL.

18 04 2022 Monday. Frank flies to his Kensington apartment. Sms's Gino. Visits Umberto's Restaurant

Frank arrives in London on Sunday afternoon. Takes a cab straight to his London Apartment. Coat off and straight into bed.

He gets up at 6.30 in the evening. Has a shower and walks to his favourite restaurant at UMBERTO. The owner is a fellow Sicilian – same vintage.

As soon as he walks in he takes a seat and orders a Peroni.

“Ah Mr Costanzo welcome. What else would we expect but a Peroni for Frank? ... too long in Italy!”

Frank nods and smiles. Umberto comes out and greets him warmly. They give each other a kiss on the cheek. He speaks in broken English.

“How are you and how is business?”

“I am okay. But Coronavirus is ruining our business. 70% down.”

“Ah No Good.”

“Frankie how are you anyway? Long time. 3 months no seeing each other. Something good must be cooking in Italy. What you been up to eh?”

“Just the usual. Looking at the scenery, museums, visiting Florence.”

“Some nice pieces of art in Italy. Ha Ha. What about Scopello? Been there of late?”

“No, but would like to visit soon.”

“Maybe it takes two days to drive in the Maserati.”

“Less than than that. I have a Bugatti now.”

“No kidding.”

Umberto looks at him with a mischievous look.

“You won't be travelling alone, that's for sure eh.”

“Don’t worry Frankie, I won’t tell anybody in Scopello. I will let you give them a surprise. Don’t forget to put something small for the local Sant’Agata Pescatore Chapel. Padre Giovanni will love that. Family relations have to be kept smooth.”

Frank smiles again.

“What can I get you Frankie, the usual. I know, Tuna alla Siciliana. Coming Up. And your favourite Chianti. All on the house.”

“Thank you Umberto. You shouldn’t.”

“What are friends for?”

“Umberto, have you seen my son Gino of late?”

“He was here about 4 days ago.”(Pauses)

“Well?”

“He looked rather concerned. I asked him what the matter is. He said he is always thinking of Papa. That’s all I know.”

“Thank you Umberto.”

Frank finishes his dinner. Drinks half the wine. Leaves a 100 euros tip. Gets up goes to Umberto and hands him a folded cheque.

“Umberto. I love you as a brother. Here is a contribution to your favourite local chapel on London of Sant’Agata Pescatore.”

Umberto looks at the amount.

“Mamma Mia 1500 Euros. That’s too much Frankie. But thank you. May the Lord be with you. I will say a prayer for you.”

Frank looks at Umberto. Then looks down towards himself for 3 seconds.

“Yes, I hope he hears you. Ha Ha Ha.”

“Oh Frankie you haven’t changed. Take care. And as they say these days. Stay Safe.”

Frank walks home. He needed the exercise, so he was told.

19 04 2022 Tuesday. Chapter 12
Section Break

Frank visits the showroom in Kensington.
Talks to Gino.

Frank drives to Kensington in his Mercedes. He walks straight to his office.

“Good Morning Mr. Costanzo.”

“Good Morning Mrs. Baxter. Thank for making my apartment comfortable. And stocking my fridge. By the way is that an eco-friendly fridge?”

“I wouldn’t have a clue.”

“Just a joke. I will be in my office for a while. I have a few phone calls to make.”

“Can you please get me a coffee. Not too strong. Skim milk.”

“Very well.”

Mrs. Baxter walks in with the coffee. He gulps it down.

“Is Gino in?”

“Yes he is with Filippo Fallone.”

“Okay. How is Filippo and family?”

“All okay.”

“Good. I go and see Gino.”

Knocks on the door.

“Hey Papa.”

All stand to greet each other.

“How is Filippo?”

“Very good Frank.”

“The family.”

“Really good. I will leave you with Gino.”

“Thank you.”

“Papa we miss you so much here.”

“What happened, the business is collapsing? You’re doing an excellent job. Much better than me. You are becoming the father figure Gino. The longer I stay away the more respect you will get.”

“It’s not that Papa. I worry about your well-being.”

“So I bought a Bugatti. Every now and then a nice girlfriend comes with me for a ride. I still like to show off a little. These girls don’t mind a ride with a gelding so nothing happens.”

“Yeah but they can still kill you, and the Bugatti is as dangerous.”

“Okay I will soon sell the Bugatti again. To be honest I can’t get in and out of the car without suffering a massive doze of sciatica. Call it a stiff in the wrong place.”

“And if I carry a stick, I will be the laughing stock of the whole of Modena. So I see how it goes.”

“See how what goes?”

“I have met this very intelligent girl. Very understanding. Jaquie is her name. A model. So I am not pretending to be a stallion. My strategy is to show her who I am without any pretence.”

“What’s the matter with you Papa? Are you losing it?”

“Why?”

“You are telling her I am a sitting duck with the money, please come and get it.”

“She is not like that Gino. But I take your point. Let me think about it more clearly.”

Frank sits down.

“So how is business?”

“The Coronavirus has slowed the business for everybody.”

“Including the luxury brands?”

“Especially.”

“That’s not good.”

“Funny the second tier in the luxury class is up on last year.”

“Overall the cash flow is good so we’re only 3% down on sales from last year.”

“That’s not bad.”

“Are we being patriotic? All supplies sourced locally as much as possible?”

“Yes, only locally and Europe. Everything cost a bit more but you’re wise papa. We have to stand up and feed ourselves before we feed others.”

“Next time you go to Umberto, put 500 euros for Sant’Agata Pescatore Chapel. He’ll love that.”

“I was there the other day.”

“He told me and he said you looked a little sad. Umberto is a nice man. He is one of us. A true Sicilian. With a big heart. I will be in London for a couple of days. Then back to Modena. Then I will visit Antonio.”

“Very well. Bye Papa.”

“Take care Gino.”

Frank walks up to Mrs. Baxter.

“Gino treating your well.”

“Like his father.”

“Very well. Good bye then.”

He gets in his Mercedes and drives back to his apartment.

*20 04 2022 Wednesday. Chapter 12
Section Break*

*Frank cancels Modena. More time in
London. Sms’s Jaqueline. Calls 4 Fingers.
Jaqueline WTFIGO*

The next morning he feels refreshed. It is a beautiful day. He walks to Kensington Gardens. He stops and sits on a bench and looks at the common folk walking around. They all look very happy. Some flowers are in bloom and the fragrance was awesome.

He wondered which fragrance comes close to Jaquie’s Perfume. He wanted to call Jaquie on his mobile. Surely, this must be a case of Puppy Love. He must resist.

He called the Travel Agency. He cancelled his trip back to Modena planned for tomorrow and changed it to Saturday 23rd April.

The next day he sms's Jaquie: 'Hello Jaquie. Unfortunately I am held up in London. Back in Modena on Saturday 23rd. Regards Frank.'

Then he sms's Mrs. Baxter. 'Hello Mrs. Baxter. I will be in London till Saturday. Will fly to Modena about 10.30. Contact me only if some emergency, the Lord forbids. Have somebody pick up the Merc Saturday afternoon. Thank you. Regards. Frank.'

Sms's Gino. "I am staying in Kensington till Saturday morning. TIME for REFLECTION. I would like to be alone. Will be going to Modena Saturday Morning at 10.30. Love you. Dad."

The next morning, Thursday he went again to Kensington Gardens and sat on the same bench enjoying the moderate crowd of passers-by. Back at the apartment. Coffee, toast and marmalade for dinner. Not good but will do. And a fruit.

On Friday he decided to go for a drive in the Mercedes. Up to High Wycombe. He loved the countryside there. Stopped for lunch in a small restaurant. It was little historic place. He had a local beer and a home made cheese and tomato sandwich and relaxed outside on a bench enjoying the peaceful countryside.

He receives a message from Jaquie 'Hi Frank, got your message. I hope you're okay. Take care. Call me if you feel you need to chat. Jaquie. See you soon.'

He sms's back. 'Thank you Jaquie. I am okay. Relaxed and by myself. All is fine. But time for reflection. I will call you when I get back.'

She felt relieved when she received that message.

And then another message followed. 'I look forward to a second Vampire attack.'

And she smiled and answered back. 'This time I will sharpen my claws too. Jaquie.'

'Okay. I will be prepared. Good Bye. Stay Safe. Frank.'

Frank felt better. Jaquie was wondering what he was reflecting on. Not just curiosity. But a genuine concern for his well-being.

Jaquie sms's Johnny. 'Frank will be in Saturday. Jaqueline.'

Completely in the dark of the final outcome of this project with Johnny and Giacomo, she suspected some major foul play was in store. She remembered Frank's advice: *Keep away from the Mafia*. She had to keep those fees rolling in though.

However, Frank seemed a far more genuine person than 4 Fingers implied. Giacomo with his underhanded behaviour and Johnny with one finger missing started to scare her. But she was enjoying her time with Frank.

She decides to call Johnny.

"Hi Jaquie."

"Johnny, I was wondering why are we doing all this."

"You are not supposed to know all the details. But I will tell you."

"Is Frank going to get wasted?"

"No No No. Frank owes Angelo, my boss, about 3,000,000 dollars from a deal that went wrong in New York about 2 years ago."

"He has not paid?"

"That's right. Angelo decided he will get the money from Frank the hard way if needs be. It is a simple plan. Nobody gets hurt. He just wants his money. He decided Frank is a bad lemon. He just wants a gentle squeeze."

"Do not let anybody know, not Frank, not Giacomo."

"But especially Frank. Otherwise I may lose another finger. This time not with a deckchair. And you won't come out of it clean either. Sorry about that Jaqueline. Understand?"

"My God. Yes I understand. Is Angelo a Mafioso?"

"No. Just a tough businessman. Don't worry."

"You're sure."

"Sure I'm sure. Just do the right thing."

"Okay."

She ponders. Fast cars, denting a Bugatti, tracking devices, missing fingers, continuous spying, monitoring every move I make. The whole thing does not add up. She is perplexed. She has to think ahead of the game. Somehow. Yes, somehow she has to get Gino's number in case she needs to call him. She also started to fear for her life. What the 'F' is going on?
