

CHAPTER 22 – INTIMATE TIME. SEPARATE TIMES. PEACEFUL TIME.

*07 05 2022 Saturday. Jaquie spends
more intimate time with Frank.*

Jaquie meets Frank for breakfast. It ceases to be a surprise. She slips a note. Let's go for a drive after breakfast. Frank smiles and nods full approval. Then she says rather loudly.

"I am going to Rome and Milan for the next few days. Maybe we can spend a bit of time touring, sipping coffees and the rest."
"I like the rest. He smiles. Okay let's drive. No plans. That is what I like."

They jump in the Bugatti and drive off north.

Ivan sms's 4 Fingers. "Bugatti is off. Alfa still parked. The audio pickup never worked well. In the car or on her phone."

And an sms reply. "Can't win them all. Won't be long now. Okay."

They stopped a couple of times sipping coffees and sharing a cake or two. And occasionally hugging and kissing, joking and laughing. Frank stops the car.

"Jaquie I have my seat belt on. Can you do the vampire trick?"
"Aharrggghhhh."
"Okay you're still surprise me. That could kill me."

Later that afternoon they arrive back at Cafe Discorso. Gets in her Alfa and follows Frank to the hotel. They order light dinner in their room and listen to music.

"Here's a little surprise."
"What is that ... "
"Bocelli. Caruso song."
"Ah, don't tell me."

He puts the CD on and both relax to the music. No Sorrento views this time. He goes in the bathroom and has a shower and pops one of the blue pills. He goes out and pours both of them a drink. Jaquie goes in the shower and comes back in one of his robes. Sips her drink on the balcony and goes back in the bedroom. Takes her clothes off with a smile and and it's business as usual. Frank looks happy and serene but pensive.

"What you thinking Frank?"

"How long is this dream going to last."

"It will go as long as the powers above want it to last."

"Are you religious Frank?"

"Not very but practising Catholic."

"I told you I don't have any hidden agenda. I am enjoying my time with you. I know of your stick, your sciatica and your blood pressure, so you shouldn't have any doubts. I like you the way you are. You treat me like a human being not an object."

"Jaquie your prose is so good."

"I try."

"How about ordering some dinner?"

"Nothing heavy."

"Okay."

Dinner was served. They ordered Japanese. Sushi, Sashimi, Tofu, Ramen - the lot. Frank was not familiar with Japanese food so Jaquie explained the intricacies of the Japanese cuisine. Frank enjoyed the food and happily listened to the cultural lesson.

"You know that I will be away in Milan and Rome over the next 10 days."

"What are you going to do without my company Frank?"

"Excellent question."

"Go see Gino and relax. He will keep an eye on you. Ha ha. Have a good drive. That Bugatti needs a good run."

"I will do just that. Great drive through Italy, France, the English countryside. That's about 1600 kilometres. Couple of days at least. 3 days if I take it easy."

"Take 3 days and enjoy not only driving but the scenery. And don't pick anybody on the way. Got that?"

“You know I won’t do that. I have to keep my sciatica top secret. A condition only known to 007. So this is the last day I see you for a while.”

“Yes unfortunately. I have to go straight to the office tomorrow. Flight to Rome in the afternoon. But I will keep you posted.”

“Frank it’s an idea to get a new mobile while you’re there. Gino will get it for you. A completely new one with a new number. You have the number of the new one we bought. You scribbled the number on a piece of paper.”

“Good thinking. Time to think. We have a lot to achieve together.”

They embraced, kissed and she left.

Ivan sms’s 4 Fingers. “Alfa leaving. Bugatti phone seems to be dead. Landline still okay.”

4 Fingers sms’s “Copy that.”

*08 05 2022 Sunday. Chapter 22 Section
Break*

*Frank and Jaquie depart on their separate
trips.*

Frank decides to leave at the crack of dawn. He packs his suitcase. He keys in his GPS route, Modena to London. And let the computer guide him all the way. He departs after having a light coffee and some toast. With no plans he just followed the GPS Route and stopped at a respectable hotel for the shortest of stays. He wanted to get to London by Monday.

Jaquie drives the Alfa to the Office. Meets Tommaso and organize their schedules.

Tommaso is curious but Jaquie is not having any of that.

*09 05 2022 Monday. Chapter 22
Section Break*

*Frank arrives in London from Modena
after a long drive. Office Party.*

He drives in the Kensington showroom. Everybody stops to look at the Bugatti. They all love Frank. Hey Frankie. Are you selling it? Do we have the franchise? Can I take my missus out for a ride in it? Frankie smiles and acknowledges every one of them.

“Hey Jimmy tell your boss it’s party time tonight. All upstairs in the conference room at six o’clock. All, I mean all, from the bottom up. Also, let the cleaners know.”

Gino hears the commotion and comes down. Looks at the Bugatti and can’t believe his eyes.

“Papa park it there in the corner. You don’t want another scratch on it.”

He puts his arm around him.”

“What’s happening Dad.”

“Nothing I am happy.”

The employees start snapping pictures of the car on their mobiles. Flash flash flash.

“Mrs. Baxter. Party tonight. Food and drinks for all. Light beer only and some nosh. That includes sausage rolls.”

The party kicks off at six. He stands up and makes a quick speech thanking them all for the wonderful service they gave him over the years. And they could see he meant it.

Mrs. Baxter, takes a quick trip to his apartment and stocks his fridge for his stay at least a couple of nights.

“Dad you’re tired let me take you home in my car and I will send my car for you in the morning.”

“Good idea. Can you get my suitcase from my car.”

He tosses him his keys. Gino sees him off in bed and saw him falling asleep like a baby. Then he heads off to his own apartment.

*10 05 2022 Tuesday. Chapter 22
Section Break*

Frank walks in Gino’s Office.

Frank walks to Mrs. Baxter the next morning and thanks her for her help at such short notice.

“Good Morning. Thank you Mrs. Baxter. Work at short notice. Very Good.”

He walks in Gino’s Office.

“Interrupting?”

“Coffee, tea, you had breakfast?”

“Yes, just coffee. Skim Milk please.”

“Wow wow wow. Young lady keeping you in shape heh? Okay what’s happening?”

“I was thinking of having a driving holiday in California. By myself that is.”

“I will have to get a doctor to check you out from the shoulders up.

Are you mad?”

“No why?”

“Look at a spaghetti plate. That’s Los Angeles, in the middle. The rest is California.”

“Good analogy.”

“They have more saints there than they have in Heaven.”

“Well I know them all.”

“In your local church maybe. What’s the problem dad?”

"Maybe I want to get away from it all?"

"What about Jaquie? I thought it's hot and heavy."

"That's the way it feels. That is when I am getting out of the car. Like a ton of bricks."

"Here, coffee with skimmed milk."

"Okay forget I mentioned California. You are right. Now about Tonio, listen."

"Tonio has nothing except the Monastery. And it's not his. He is not part of the business."

"Well make him a shareholder dad. He is my only brother."

"No. The church will have a big say."

"So what?"

"Should something happen to me the houses in Perivale go to him. My wish."

"You have my word."

"Set up a trust. Call it TC Trust. All rental goes there from now on. Up to him how to use it."

"I talk to Filippo to arrange the papers right away."

"The property still stays in the company's name until the time comes."

"What else?"

"Nothing. That's it."

"Papa, where is Jaquie?"

"She's shooting for Versace in Milan and Rome. So I thought I'll have a break."

"Are you happy?"

"Very happy. Cannot be happier. But happiness brings sadness."

"There you go. Now what's wrong?"

"Gino, dreams cannot last for ever."

"Dad, dreams are the future. So keep looking forward."

"Dad can I ask you a sensitive question. Do you trust her?"

"Absolutely. She never asked how big the company is, how much it's worth, where the assets are, who controls what, what property I have, never asked for jewellery, diamond rings, dresses, expensive holidays. Nothing."

"Unusual. But very possible."

"Indeed."

"Eh, papa, eh... Innamorata?"

"Gino, you still know all the good words in Italian. No. Not at all. No love mentioned. But I know she cares."

"Okay ... well ..."

"I see it in her eyes. I think she found a caring old daddy. Her dad passed when was she was five. Her mum 3 years later. Spent time in convents. Catholic education. To this day, she helps her sister who is not very well. I never asked the nature of the illness. She did say that young men treat women like objects in her industry and does not like it one bit. That's all I know. Certain subjects we just don't discuss."

"So where is all this leading to?"

"I don't have a map on this Gino."

"Just keep driving along. I don't know what to say. You make up your own mind on this kind of thing judging from the past."

"Okay. Talking about driving. Just made up my mind. I will take my favourite drive."

"Highlands? Scotland?"

"Outer Hebrides. All the way. Peace, quiet and reflection."

"Lunch first?"

"No thanks Gino. Plenty of time for that when I come back. My Bugatti keys please."

"Still crazy, dad. What if Jaquie calls."

"Tell her I will call her when I get my new mobile."

"Make sure you get to know how to use the buttons on it. They keep moving them, changing them, all the usual computer tricks."

"Don't start me Gino. Buttons, mobiles, digital, hacking, tapping, bitcoins, tik toks, or whatever. FTA. I say it slower F.... T.... A."

"God. Not again. I know the last two words Them and All."

"Figure out the first one. It should be easy. I use it often when I lose my temper."

"Oh. Can you give me the secretive mobile number. I made a note of it and lost the paper."

"Here you are."

"By the way what do you think of our retaliation plan?"

"Scary dad. Has to be done I guess. Otherwise we'll be on the streets begging."

"Absolutely. You're in good hands. Back to your work now son."

Gino nods. Frank leaves.
