

CHAPTER 23 – PEACE, QUIET and REFLECTION for FRANK.

*10 05 2022 Tuesday. Frank departs for
Scotland. Shakespearean Road Rage.
Finally, tea and scones. Calls Jaquie.*

Frank drives from the Kensington Showroom to his apartment. He freshens up. Has a change of clothes. Coffee and toast. And sets off. He thought he would spend the next few days touring with absolutely no plans whatsoever. First things first, 50 miles out of London he stops at a nearby Digital / Mobile shop. Asks for a new phone, same brand, same design if possible, and tells the attendant to transfer all the data onto the new SIM.

He calls Jaquie but no answer.

Leaves an sms message:

“Hi J. On my way to Scotland. Changed the battery. C U Soon. MYVB. F”.

He continues to drive. Continuously searching for an old traditional English Tea Shop. Wants to have a coffee and a cake or even better, tea and scones. Just the simplest of dreams. Fuck Google he thought, he has not got time.

He drives past Starbucks, Macca, another Macca, Starbucks and then more Starbucks, KFC'S, ABC's, XYZ's. He started to get cranky and angry. Oops one of those moods again is well on its way.

“Fuck this country. What the fuck has happened to the traditional caff or tea shop.”

And now a string of Oriental and Asian Food Shops, cuisine of which he has never been fond of and certainly not a fan.

And weird Oriental signs. Chinese. Japanese. Vietnamese. Pekingese ... the latter selling dogs. Not that he knew the difference from one type of signage to the other. He reckoned reading Arabic would be easier.

By now he is feeling and acting like a raving lunatic. He started to take it out on the car. Not the best car to mess around with for such delicate maneuvers. And he was aware of it. He was not a Sterling Moss, a Verstappen and certainly not a Lewis Hamilton.

He found that such silly behaviour was worthy of a snotty sixteen year old, but away from the prying eyes of Jaquie, it was very satisfying and exhilarating albeit ridiculously dangerous. Hard braking, fast acceleration, taking fast corners, in three words reckless and definitely stupid. Calm should soon return. But then another row of weird signage.

At the top of his voice, but luckily with the windows still rolled up, it was time for some profanities.

“If I come across Shakespeare’s old house demolished or otherwise with another funny looking sign on it I swear I will ram this fucken Bugatti straight through it and do a fucken Othello on the spot. Somebody will then have to change the Epilogue.”

He could almost feel Shakespeare feeling somewhat uncomfortable in his grave.

Approaching Stratford-Upon-Avon he notices a quaint little Tea Shop. Big chalk board sign says **Home made scones. Fresh all day.**

“Finally at last.”

His anger subsides and dissipates. He stops and orders some. Enjoys a nice cuppa. He doesn’t get this treat normally in Modena. He gently wipes his mouth clean using the supplied serviette. He really liked the traditional serviettes. Not unlike fine toilet paper. Still with no advertising scribble.

He was still admiring this simplest of serviettes when his phone rings. It’s Jaquie.

His mind switches two steps up, from dark clouds to bright skies with a rainbow on the far distant horizon.

“Ah, my Desdemona how are you?”

"Shakespeare, Othello."

"Spot on. I told you You should have been on Stage."

"Okay Othello how are you?"

"Doing better, it will be a sin."

"Buddy Fox, Wall Street. Come on Frank. For heaven's sake, give me a new line."

"Well I am in heaven because I am talking to you after a long silence."

"Okay, okay, *but where are you?*"

"Stratford-Upon-Avon. Shakespeare's country. Very cold."

"Meaning?"

"My sciatica is playing up. I am at a Tea Shop enjoying tea and scones. Actually I have just finished."

"So you get out of the car okay without trouble?"

"Yes."

"I should be there to help you with your bastone."

"Naughty girl."

"I see you are getting rather cool. Short words, acronyms, icons. That's awesome Mr. Cool."

"I don't get some of the abbreviations though."

"Which ones."

"I can't figure out MYVM."

"Guess?"

"Let's see. My Young Virgin Maiden?"

"Naughty."

"Virgin Mary?"

"Noooooooooooooooooooo."

"Okay what?"

"Missing You Very Much."

"That is cute! I like that."

"You do?"

"Maybe we should stay apart more often so I can enjoy hearing it."

"So you like my words better than my actions."

"No the latter. Now listen. I will finish shooting and back in Modena late Friday 20th."

"Okay I will be there on the same day. We should meet at Cafe Discorso for breakfast the next morning."

"Done. It's a date."

"See you then."

“By the way the hotel room would have been vacant for few days.
Careful for any other bugs.”
“Got it.”
“Arrivederci.”

*12 05 2022 Thursday. Chapter 23
Section Break*

*Arrives at GlenFinnan. Calls Gino.
Posthumous Wishes. Makes 2nd call to
Gino.*

He thought by now he is well into the Lochs amongst all the serenity and peace. Looks at the map and sees Loch Linnhe. 30 miles up the road he turns right to the A830 and arrives at this magnificent establishment – GlenFinnan House Hotel.

Spacious, comfortable, warm. Good crowd. Mostly Europeans, Germans and French. Few English and even fewer Scottish. Nice for breakfast, lunch, dinner and a cosy chat in the evenings. A Scotsman with bagpipes in full Gordon Tartan attire serenaded them at dinner time. He found that very relaxing indeed. He chatted with the people during the day and evenings meeting almost half of the guests. Nice people enjoying themselves. Mostly in their late years. He found it too cold to go out but he managed to do a bit of walking in the grounds for about 20 minutes using his elegant stick.

He decided that on the way back to Modena he will bypass Kensington. He was on a tight schedule and did not want to miss his date with Jaquie at any cost. He called the reception desk and told them he would be leaving on Sunday 15th.

Something was troubling him though. He wanted to call Gino. He asked for a Hotel Line.

“Hi Gino, it’s dad.”

“Hi dad how are you. Been thinking about you a lot. Cold where you are?”

“Yes, I am missing the milder weather in Italy.”

“Gino, I decided to drive down, take it a bit easy but bypass Kensington. We will have to save lunch that I owe you for another day.”

“That’s fine. In a rush?”

“I need to get back. Okay?”

“Sure. Anything else on your mind. You seem to be hesitating a bit.”

“Yes I have been doing a bit of thinking.”

“Just one moment Dad, I have to close the door.”

He turns a machine to record this conversation.

“First Tonio. Tonio has not one cent in his name. Should anything happen to me I would like him to inherit the two houses in Perivale without delay. He was born in one of them.”

“That’s fine, why not shares in the company.”

“Only if he quits and decides he wants to join. Then you do what you think it’s fair. No fighting.”

“Jaquie’s sister. She needs help with her medical bills. She, Jaquie that is, is coping well. I think she must give a third of her salary to help her out. No contributions from me have been made. We never discussed this at all.”

“You’re my dad. You built the Dealerships. Your wishes will always be met. You set the course. I just have the tiller.”

“Now on a more sombre note. Should something happen to me, I would like you to make sure no harm comes to Jaquie. Call it sympathy, empathy, understanding, whatever. Make sure that she feels comfortable. You need to make sure she does not have any financial hardships. It’s a must. You will be the sole judge. I regard her as part of the family. And I like it to continue like that. If she is happy of course to still feel that. Completely up to you.”

“But of course papa. Your wish is my command. I seriously mean that. It’s not a cliché.”

“All I know, for sure she was caught in a weak moment, if it wasn’t her it would have been someone else.”

“I figured that out already.”

“But now she is going to save our bacon. She has brains. She is using them. I am sure she feels guilty she fell in this trap. She is trying to make amends the best way she can.”

“Okay dad. I got all that. In the meantime, life is one big dream. A dream is the future. Keep driving forwards. Drive on the road ahead but take the corners a bit easy never go over the limit.”

“Gino, you are not only a potential good “honest” politician, but also a philosopher. However, stay in business, it is less corrupt than politics. I have to go. Ciao.”

“Bye dad.”

Frank reflects for a while becoming very sad. His thoughts were becoming confused, intertwined and he felt he was caught in a spider’s web. He wanted to clear his mind and untangle himself. He poured himself some scotch to steady his nerves.

He mutters ‘This is the best scotch I had for a while. You pay for the best and you get the best!’ Hardly original he thought.

He asked the reception desk for another line. And called Gino again. Gino answers the phone.

“One moment Dad. He turns the recording back on again.”

“Hit me. You sound a bit more composed, more happy now.”

“Not really.”

And started sobbing. He could not stop. Gino let him sob and then decided to interrupt ...

“Dad, talk to me. What’s troubling you. Tell me.”

“Give me a minute. I pour myself another scotch.”

“I am fine but let me compose myself.”

“Son I am missing your mum.”

“Mum passed now. She is praying for us all. You should be happy.”

“It’s been almost 7 years. Italy has been therapeutic for me. Modena is a wonderful city.”

Pauses.

Gino decides to let him get everything off his chest with no interruptions.

"It helps you heal but sad irrespective. Being close to Tonio is comforting. I go to his church at times."

Pauses.

"I know I should go more often."

"I am listening dad. Keep talking. It's good for you and me."

"Then all this Bugatti business. And then a Mafia attempt on our survival. On our living."

He pauses. This time for a long time.

"I am still here Dad."

"And then Jaquie shows up from nowhere. I feel I am trapped inside. But nobody is keeping me down, there are no chains on me, no padlocks. So I can walk out any time."

And he continues, sobbing.

"When she told me about her getting trapped, I felt she must have been *a devil in disguise*. Like the movie. I was Steve McQueen. She was Faye Dunaway."

"Then her true nature revealed itself. She identified the good from the evil. And overnight, my thinking, my thoughts, indeed my feelings changed. Now she is my final therapy."

He stops for a while.

"So Dad tell me. Do you want to walk out? Or do you want to stay? I am happy for you."

"I want to hold on Gino. I would like to continue enjoying what I have now."

"I am 100% for you. I will tell Tonio. He will understand. He will be happy for you. He is a modern priest. Don't worry, he won't ask you to join him in the confession booth."

Frank chuckles.

"Bless you son. By the way, the wishes I expressed earlier on, stay exactly as they are, as I dictated them."

“Wow, I feel I have grown wings. So much weight off my shoulders. My head is clear and I am at peace again with myself. It’s almost all off my chest. I can breathe again.”

“What’s next dad?”

“Breakfasts, lunches, dinners and enjoying ourselves. You know once or twice a week. At my age it is not prudent to ask for any more. I don’t want her to tie herself to me. She loves her profession. She has a life ahead of her. So I suppose ***Che sara, sara***. This way I stay loved and respected by everybody. All those I care for.”

“Okay. Gino. Ciao.”

“Call me anytime. Ciao.”

*15 05 2022 Sunday. Chapter 23 Section
Break*

*Frank departs GlenFinnan. Heads to
Modena.*

He felt relieved and happy. Ready to tackle the world again. Makes a few stops on the way to rest and dine.

He stops on the way at the “Tea Shop” again. Orders scones. This time really enjoying them.
