

CHAPTER 32 – WAR IS THE PAST. PEACE IS THE FUTURE.

19 07 2022 Tuesday. 4 Fingers visits Angelo Da Vinci. Angelo makes peace with Frank Costanzo.

4 Fingers arrives at Angelo's house with the the loot still in the car.

"Come in Johnny."

They hug and kiss.

"Coffee?"

"No thanks."

Angelo takes Johnny's hands in his.

"You're lucky you still got nine."

"So how are you?" asks Johnny.

"Lonely. Antonia is gone. Left me for some young priest. She is looking for blessings. I am sure she gets plenty for a while anyway."

"Sorry to hear that."

"Tommy is still running the business. The girls are no longer in the picture. Best for all of us. We let them off the hook. Can't keep slaves forever."

"I am off to Montana. I bought myself a little ranch. Small herd of bison. Twelve."

"No kidding. What you know about bisons?"

"Nothing. I know they survive."

"Angelo I have about \$360,000 in cash from the Paneladros."

"Keep it Johnny. Go back to London. Go see your family. Get married. Raise a family. Away from this gutter we live in."

"Sonnerfeld will help you transfer all that cash to London. The money I promised you is in your account already."

"I like to call Costanzo. Make peace and apologise for the past. Set up a call with Frank for me. Jaqueline will help you do that."

"I don't have the number any more. I lost my mobile. One of Nicola's boys took it from me."

"I have it here."

4 Fingers calls Jaqueline.

"Hi Jaquie. It's 4 Fingers. How are you?"

"Good thanks. You're not supposed to call you fool. Nicola will kill you."

"Only if you tell him. Look, I am calling in peace. I am with Angelo. He wants to apologise personally, say sorry to Frank for all the problems he caused. Is Frank there?"

"We are having breakfast. Hold on."

"Frank it's Angelo on the line. He wants to say sorry to you." Frank is surprised.

Frank takes the phone.

"Hello Angelo. It's Frank. How are you?"

"I am okay. Listen I know I should not be calling you. So don't get me killed."

"One Sicilian to another. Never. Not in my books."

"I just want to say sorry to you, to Gino and to Jaqueline. Deeply sorry and forgive me."

"All is forgiven. We both suffered."

"I am out of this business. I bought myself a ranch in Montana. So it will be just me, a couple of horses and 12 bisons."

"What about your missus? You're married are you Angelo?"

"She left me. She's happy. I am paying for my sins now."

"So sorry to hear that. I will have to come and visit you one day. Peace and quiet. A ride on a horse or a Bison. Heh Heh."

"Anytime. The ride won't be as smooth as a ride in a Bugatti."

"That's for sure. Okay Angelo, take care."

"Tell Tonio to say a prayer for me. I told Sonnerfeld to make a contribution to his monastery."

"He'll love that Angelo. God bless you."

"Ciao."

21 07 2022 Thursday. Chapter 32
Section Break

Antonia makes peace with Angelo.

Two days after the visit from Johnny “4 Fingers”, Angelo gets a call from Antonia.

“This is Angelo.”

“It’s Antonia.”

“I still recognise your voice.”

“I want to say I’m sorry. Will you have me back?”

“Depends how long you will be. I was preparing to disappear in Montana. I bought a ranch. 12 Bison. 2 horses. I intend to live there. I left the house intact here, should you decide to return. We can still keep it if you absolutely desire. I would like a clean break however.”

“Montana sounds more peaceful and quiet than Newark. Wait for me please I will be there in 2 days’ time.”

“Okay honey, you got a deal.”

“Love you.”

“Me too.”

“Ciao.”

Four days later they were on the ranch in Montana.

01 08 2022 Monday. Chapter 32
Section Break

The romance deepens it but shows strain.

It has been a few weeks now since the Angelo-Frank saga was settled. Life is back to normal for Jaquie and Frank. Breakfasts once or twice a week, dinners as well, occasional run in the car, a couple of long trips. However, Jaquie is finding it difficult to fit all this in her busy schedule

which has involved short trips to Rome, Venice and a short trip to South Sicily as well. She needed more work, more income.

All this while Frank needs time and attention too, albeit after normal hours. She is not sure if she is just attracted to him, too attracted, falling love, in love or if she indeed loves him. There are some subtle differences. So she did some research herself. But she decided to take a dose of reality.

Her understanding of all this made her come to one conclusion. She is not in love. But she loves him. Put it simply, she does not feel all butterflies, however, she feels affection, care, understanding and wanting to support him ... in other words all the indications that she loves him but not in love.

So, her mind was made up to never leave him as long as he is around. She has never asked him for a single dime, dollar or pound so her conscience was clear.

She pulls at Cafe Discorso

“Good morning Frank.”

They greet with a kiss.

“How is the week ahead?”

“Busy. I have to shoot a few commercials in the next few days.”

Frank seemed happy for her but somewhat surprised.

“Agrigento. Mafia country.”

“Mafia everywhere. Over there they are called the Cuntrera-Caruana mob.”

“That’s funny. We have a girl in our office with the same name. Josephine Caruana. She comes from Malta. She says it is nice but a very small island. Not big enough for a Bugatti.”

“Yeah been there once. I was twenty and touring. I remember I went on a Maltese fishing boat. The locals call it “zuzzu, ruzzu, I can’t remember. I got it, Luzzu”. Good boats. Fish is as fresh as that in

Scopello. The place looks like miniature Sicily. Maybe we should fly there for a little holiday in a few weeks' time."

"So, back to Sicily, it's Alfa Romeos for the banditos."

"How long and when?"

"Tomorrow. Back on the 8th. You got to keep your powder dry till then."

"Not a problem these days" Frank says with a smile.

"Tonio said he wants to see me. Something important. Happy if you are present too."

"Is it okay by you?"

"Sure"

"Wednesday next week is okay?"

She nods.

Frank sends a message to Tonio confirming "Tonio, Wednesday 11.30 am 17th. Jaquie and Dad."

Jaquie thinks this may not be her place to be in and will feel uncomfortable. They finish breakfast. They kiss and she leaves to get to her office by midday.

Frank orders another coffee and gazes outside. He gets in the Bugatti and goes for a long drive.

*01 08 2022 Monday. Chapter 32
Section Break*

Jaquie wrestles the demons in her head.

No more extra money from Angelo. It's been a few weeks. That has now stopped completely. She owned the Alfa and she was happy it was over.

Her sister noticed the drop in assistance but did not raise the question. Jaquie had mentioned it already. Jaquie wanted as many shoots as possible to make up the shortfall.

She was thinking her prime years are now. A few more years. Once the looks start to dim, the top companies will drop you like a brick. Then you are on second tier overnight. Four years after that and you will be chasing food commercials. Your face will move from the glossy Vogue pages to some cheap local rag dealing with some sleazy agents along the way. You end up in a unit in some obscure part of town in a block of flats badly in need of update and maintenance. Your Alfa would be parked on the street outside or even worse half a block away, maybe further away next to an army of bubble cars and 100,000 Vespas and Lambrettas leaning on their side.

She wrestled with these thoughts.

Realistically Frank will be 73 on his next birthday. By the time of her demise he would be 83. She will still be 38. He would have become a distant relic. She was struggling seeing herself pushing him in an expensive wheelchair in some private gardens belonging to a monasterial care home in Modena feeding him breakfast and wiping his lips and dribble. She felt rather selfish. Indeed a macabre and morbid scenario but equally realistic, looming and approaching. Maybe sooner rather than later. She wanted these thoughts to disappear yet another one flashed through her mind.

It was Frank's epitaph gracing a polished elegant piece of Italian White Carrara marble in some distinguished grave in Kensal Green near Kensington. Maybe it could be in a nearby local cemetery in his beloved Modena.

If she had any say it would be a true "Capolavoro" insisting the design and workmanship would be carried out in Italy by Italian artisans and not some cheap *Johnny Come Lately Imports* from Asia.

She woke up gasping for breath and sitting at the edge of her bed. After recovering her composure she walked to the window, had a look at the outside and went back to bed.

It was two o'clock. Her thoughts were going on and on non-stop. Indeed, faster than driving a Bugatti with pedal to the metal with no brakes. She got out of bed breathing heavily. She could really feel how Frank felt when he had some moments like this recovering his breath. For the first time in months she took a couple of sleeping tablets with some water. She put the TV on and finally dropped off to sleep in the couch. She woke up at 6.30 with the local morning news blaring. She turned the set off and went straight in shower and out again still feeling sleepy.

She had to catch a flight to Frank's beloved Sicily at 11.30.

*15 08 2022 Monday. Chapter 32
Section Break*

*Tommy and Anastasia visit Angelo and
Antonia in Montana.*

Surprise, Surprise. Angelo opens the door and standing in the doorway were Tommy and Anastasia.

"Wow, wow, wow what a surprise. What brings you here."

"Just a quick visit. Haven't seen Mama for a long time."

"We came to tell you that we will be getting married."

They all hug, kiss and then settle down.

"Eh Antonia, what do you know? He knows where the money is."

"Oh shut up Angelo. Don't start again. You can't keep your mouth shut for a minute. It will be a great occasion seeing Tommy, finally, finally settling down."

"Just joking."

"Let him be Angelo mum and you will be forever very happy."

"That's the first sensible thing I heard you saying for a long time" says Angelo.

"There he goes again. Jesus he never learns."

They all sit on the porch outside. The two horses approach as if greeting the visitors.

Angelo reaches for a crate nearby full of carrots and chucks them a couple each. The bisons kept their distance but were constantly admired nevertheless.

“Beautiful animals. So peaceful here dad.”

“Do you like it here Anastasia?”

“It’s my dream place. Newark is too fast, crowded and dangerous.”

“That’s a point. A very important point.”

“So dad do you have a breeding program for these creatures?”

“I have a vet working on one.”

“Can you get milk from them?”

“I suppose so, but it’s not in my plan.”

“Maybe we can set up a local Tavola Calda. Special Menu. Different. It would be a hit Dad.”

And he fixed his eyes on a couple of curious bisons that approached the building. Angelo looked at Tommy.

“No No No. I know what you’re thinking. Bison Burgers. No way.”

“The best thing you will get.”

Pauses.

“Pick their shit and sell it as fertilizer. It goes at a premium here.”

“Angelo, when are you going to learn?”

“Maybe I should have stayed in California.”

“Come on, it is getting cold here. We have a nice fire going. Let’s get inside and talk about your wedding.”

A smile came to Anastasia’s face. They all followed Antonia.

“So tell us your plans. You’re not going to Russia for honeymoon are you?”

“What do you know? Heh. Did you hear what she just said. And then she keeps busting my balls.”

“Shut up Angelo.”

“I was hoping she would come back a saint from sunny California. I see your reverend did not do much of a good job.”

“Now I will seriously think of going back if you don’t shut up.”

“Easy honey. You know I love you. The best flower I could pick from all of Naples. Even better than Sophia Loren.”

“Yeah keep it nice like that. Bit withered now.”

“You or her?”

“Tommy, take him back with you. He will make good hamburger meat.”
