

## CHAPTER 34 – A FALL. A PASSING. A FUNERAL and A WAKE.

*25 10 2022 Tuesday. Frank Costanzo has  
a nasty fall.*

On Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> November, Gino gets a call from the hotel.

“This is Gino Costanzo.”

“This is Hotel Capriccio. We have some bad news.”

“What happened?”

“Your father is in hospital. We think it’s a very bad concussion. He slipped on the bathroom floor and hit his head on the side of the shower frame and then the floor.”

“Oh God how bad is it.”

“We are not sure. He is at the Santa Lucia Hospital in Modena. He is in good hands. But unfortunately still unconscious. This is the hospital number.”

Gino writes the number down.

He makes two calls. First to Tonio. Then to Jaquie.

Tonio told him he will take the first plane to Modena.

Jaquie must have been on a shoot somewhere so she missed the call. He sent her an SMS Message.

“Jaquie, Papa is in hospital. Concussion. Slipped in bathroom. He is in Santa Lucia Hospital. Call me. Gino”

Jaquie notices the message one hour later. She calls Gino in a panic.

“Bad news.”

“Oh God. What’s the latest?”

“We have no update but bad.”

“I am 50 miles north of Modena on a shoot. I am cancelling it right now and will go directly to the hospital. Does Tonio know?”

“Yes he is getting on a plane straight to Modena now. I will be there later today or first thing in the morning.”

“Thanks Jaquie.”

“Take care. Ciao.”

Jaquie calls Gino from the hospital.

“Doesn’t look good. Still unconscious. No comforting smile on the doctor’s face. He is going in for further surgery.”

“I am leaving in the next hour so I will be there soon.”

“Third Floor. Private Room 30. I will stay here.”

“Thank you. Ciao.”

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*03 11 2022 Thursday. Chapter 34  
Section Break*

*Frank passes away. Funeral discussed.  
Jaquie left in Limbo.*

Gino booked himself in the Hotel Capriccio.

Tonio booked a suite at the same hotel with Maria by his side.

Jaquie kept a busy schedule driving to and fro from the hospital and her apartment and spending time at Frank’s side.

The gravity of the situation meant she had to cancel her shoots for the next few days.

Frank’s condition did not improve at all. Seven days later Frank succumbed to his injuries without ever regaining consciousness let alone wave a final goodbye.

They were all devastated, Gino in particular. And of course Jaquie.

They all discussed what the next step should be. The obvious one was to lay him to rest next to their mother, Emma, who was buried in a private graveyard in Kensington. They decided to have the “cadaver” flown to England as soon as practical using the same funeral service as

the one for their mother's. They even discussed the headstone. They looked at each other and Jaquie took the lead on this topic.

"I suppose, the Epitaph would be your task to write. Use the best White Carrara Marble from Italy. It should be designed, cut, engraved and polished by local Italian artisans from the province of Massa-Carrara. No cheap Asian imitations."

They all agreed on this point. Tonio said he knew the company and will organize. All Frank's belongings were to be packed and shipped home. They called the Funeral Service in London and briefed them.

Gino looked at Jaquie.

"Jaquie do you want to use dad's car?"

"No No No No. My car is fine. Gino, I suggest the resting place for the car, for a while, should be your showroom. Frank loved that car. Don't get rid of it until things have settled if ever."

"Point taken. Indeed, Frank would like that."

"Well okay, I will get my Sales Manager to fly to Modena, and drive the Bugatti to the Kensington showroom, probably in the garage at first. I am too distressed to do that myself."

Tonio excused himself feeling that Gino wanted to talk to Jaquie about some matters in private. Tonio got up, hugged and kissed his brother and then hugged Jaquie.

"Jaquie, dad did think of various scenarios that could happen. He wanted a clear path if they ever eventuated and then with no misunderstandings what needed to be done."

"He was very thoughtful like that."

"I did tape his conversation. He did call me from Scotland. He seemed a bit rattled. At that stage I started recording. I never told him though. The purpose of me doing that is to make sure all of us are on the same page when the subject matter comes up for discussion, which would be soon."

Pause. Long pause indeed.

“Your sister who is not well, will be taken care of. He regarded you as part of the family too, very much so. So I will let you hear the tape at the earliest opportunity.”

“Thank you Gino. I don’t want to be in any way responsible for any further discomfort. I better go. Call me if you need anything. I hope I will be resuming my schedule in the next 5 days.”

“I have to get in the right state of mind first. I hope I was not a strain on your dad’s lifestyle. He was always happy and so was I.”

“Remember what I said. You are part of the family.”

“I heard you. I heard you well.”

She approached Gino, gave him a hug and left with tears streaming down her face. She arrived home. Fixed herself a drink. And thought to herself. Frank may be in heaven or purgatory but I’m in Limbo.

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*15 11 2022 Tuesday. Chapter 34  
Section Break*

*Gino mentions inheritance to Tonio.*

Arrangements for the arrival of the Cadaver and burial were still being taken care of and attended by the funeral service company.

The Bugatti had arrived but Gino asked for it to be parked in a far corner of the garage. It was not appropriate to do anything with it until dad’s burial. So he thought.

Jaquie was being informed of the ongoing situation. She was not sure how much of an active role she should play in case she may be seen as if she had ulterior motives.

Tonio’s marriage to Maria was fresh and they seemed to be coping well. They both flew to London to be there to assist in any way possible, while Gino concentrated on minimizing interruptions to the day-to-day business operations.

Gino called Tonio as soon as he had a quiet moment.

“Dad called me when he was on holiday by himself in Scotland. It was a sombre moment. It came out of the blue. He paused.

“What happened?”

“His wishes were that you immediately take ownership of the family’s houses in Perivale. And since you left the priesthood you can be part of running the company with share ownership as a senior director.

Tonio I can’t be any happier. I would like you in.”

“I don’t have any experience in finance or business.”

“You will learn on the job. Myself and Filippo will be your guide. Maria will decide if she wants to be part of it, a housewife or whatever her wishes are.”

“Papa also asked for us to look after some expenses for Emile’s medical bills. We will listen to the tape I made when Papa made his wishes clear. Soon. He mentioned us two and Jaquie.”

“He did not know of your intentions to leave the priesthood at the time of the recording. So we all have to listen but the decision will be mine. Maria should be present too. I am sure we all smart enough to handle this.”

“Okay, let me know.”

“I will.”

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*15 11 2022 Tuesday. Chapter 34  
Section Break*

*Gino asked by an agency for permission  
to use the Bugatti for commercials.*

A call comes to Gino. Mrs. Baxter answers the phone

“Good morning. Costanzo New Cars.”

“Good morning, my name is John Riddle from Riddle and Johnson. We are an advertising agency.”

“Yes I have seen your name in the press and television.”

“That’s right. That’s where you find us.”

“May I speak with Gino Costanzo?”

Gino picks up the phone.

“Gino Costanzo.”

“Hi, this is John Riddle. Director at Riddle and Johnson. We handle commercials. Concept, design and shooting production for top motor brands and high-end fashion houses.”

“Yes?”

“The word is out that you have a Bugatti, almost brand new as I understand, parked in the garage. We would like to use it as a prop for a fashion house if that is agreeable.”

“Which fashion line is that? Versace? Yves Saint Laurent? Prada?”

“YSL.”

“Okay. I may be interested. It’s a very inappropriate moment. That car belonged to dad. He passed a few days ago. We are still in mourning. If you care to call me early December I will listen.”

“Apologies. I fully understand and I will make that call at a more appropriate time.”

“Okay, bye for now.”

That got Gino thinking. YSL? Not Versace?

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*17 11 2022 Thursday. Chapter 34  
Section Break*

*Frank’s Burial and Wake.*

The funeral service was set for Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November. It was dull and drizzling. Not unusual weather in England at this time of the year.

It was intended to be a simple service with only few in attendance. The priest who performed the ceremony and prayers was from the local church. A friend of the family. He conducted the ceremony for Emma's funeral a few years back.

Present were Gino, Tonio, his wife Maria, uncles and aunts and their spouses. Also, Filippo Fallone and Mrs. Baxter both confidantes of Frank for many years.

Ten persons in all including the priest and of course Jaqueline who looked absolutely stunning in black, her head was prudently covered with a black "designer" veil. Yet, in true traditional Catholic attire required on such solemn and sombre occasions.

Gino kept stealing looks at her ensuring no other eyes were prying on him. Was she graced with a Versace, YSL or some other famous Italian Line? Certainly high-end fashion wear you won't easily find in London's High Streets. Anyway, it was dad's service and Gino felt immediate guilt and discomfort to let his mind wander aimlessly on such materialistic things.

The service was soon over. They all stared at each other looking at the recently disturbed ground admiring the beautiful and distinct Marble Head Stone. Gino looked at Jaquie. A little smile crept on his face and said to Jaquie.

*"A Capolavoro. A true work of art. Dad always said you had class."*

Jaquie acknowledged the subtle compliment but with a lot of reservation.

Gino turned to the modest crowd, got their attention.

*"Why don't you all join me for the wake at my apartment. You can follow my car pointing to his dark gray Range Rover."*

He motioned to Tonio and Maria to take a seat at the back. Gino let Jaquie sit at the front and gently closed the door, but not before making some adjustments to the height of the seat exchanging glances in the process.

Then he took to the wheel and drove off in a five car line driving respectfully slow while within the cemetery grounds.

Half an hour later they made it to his apartment. Jaquie looked around assessing the decor and Gino's lifestyle. Nothing flamboyant but adequate for his position and status.

Few of Frank's family introduced themselves and chatted with Jaquie. After an hour or so Jaquie decided she should leave. She knew she could get a flight to Milan within the next 90 minutes. A connection to Modena should be easy; if not she would have to stop overnight in Milan or Rome.

She approached Gino.

"I was very moved all day. But now I must go. I will get a plane out of Heathrow with no problem. Please allow me to get a cab. It is my wish. Not appropriate that I should stay longer. You have people here."

She said that in the nicest way possible yet in a very firm tone.

"Well, I was going to drive you. However, if that's your wish then I am happy. Are you sure?"

She nodded.

Gino looked at Filippo.

"Filippo can you order a cab please. Jaquie will be going to Heathrow. She has a flight to catch."

"Right away Gino."

Gino continued talking to Jaquie in a warm tone.

"Well thank you for attending. You have been extremely helpful. It was a delight to have you here even on such a sad day."

Tonio and Maria joined in the conversation.

"Rome or Milan?"

“Well the first available. Then a connection to Modena. And then a drink and a sleep. It must have been very painful for you all. And of course, me.”

“By the way, that headstone was a stunning masterpiece. Your presence is well appreciated here. Maybe we can see you at Christmas. Few days before. What do you think?”

“Excellent idea. Take that as a family invite Jaquie. Also we will have a chit chat to discuss some of Dad’s ideas. All the four of us. Dad was determined to make sure that you and Maria will be and feel part of the future. Family harmony first.”

“I have to say Yes to the invitation.”

Filippo got an SMS. The cab had arrived. All the three followed Jaquie to the door, shook hands and then a gentle wave of the hands. They followed her to the cab and then a final wave from Gino once inside the cab. It was still raining. Jaquie felt relieved that this was over.

Tonio looked at Gino.

Now you know what Papa was all about. He still had class.”

Gino smiled. They went upstairs and joined the others. A few more of Frank’s old friends arrived. Mourning dissipated into giggles and slightly louder conversation. Distinctly more boisterous than an hour ago. After all, this was the exact purpose of a wake.

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