

CHAPTER 37 – LA VIE EN ROSE.

30 12 2022 Friday. Jaquie in London. On a romantic evening. Delicate decisions reached.

Jaquie landed at Heathrow at 10.15 in the morning on New Year's Eve. She was at the hotel by 11.45.

She and Gino agreed to have dinner just by themselves at 6.30 in a little private Guest Room. If time allowed they would call Tonio and Maria and join them at a later time.

As usual, nothing of the old Italian heavy pasta with Gino's special sauce. Instead a very light French Cuisine. An ornamental dish with cheese, wine and lots of Perrier and San Pellegrino Mineral Water. They have to stay in shape. But they started with Martinis.

In privacy the *Tonio* protocol did not apply to certain acts of affection. It was limited to eye contact and smiles in private moments. So they looked at each other with affection, smiled and sipped the drinks.

Gino placed his left hand on the table with fingers stretched out. And then he smacked it with his right. This is torturous thought Gino.

"Tonio, Tonio, Tonio you should have been a Pope. So sanctimonious."

"I am not trying to be awkward. But what exactly are you proposing?"

"I want to marry you. So I am proposing that you and I get married. Surely that was obvious.

"It was but it is always good to hear it loud and clear."

Jaqueline puts two fingers to her lips, gently kisses them, points her fingers towards Gino and blows the kiss towards him with a subtle touch of sexuality.

“Does that mean a Yes?”

“Si.”

“I am so happy. He sighs, sits back and relaxes. But When?”

“La vie en rose. Edith Piaf.” And she smiles.

“Beautiful song and beautiful singing. The lyrics. Out of this world. Would you believe me when I tell you this? That is music I have been humming under my breath since I met you. **(he hums)** Definitely for the last seven days. French and all that you know.”

“How romantic!” She stops.

“Roses. What colour Jaquie? Yellow, pink, white, red? Tell me.”

“No more white roses in my field. Just red remain.”

“I would like to walk through that field. Even right now as we speak.”

“You have already started Gino. The most beautiful flower is at the end of the rose alley. In full bloom with a fiery red colour. It’s like red hot lava from Mount Etna.”

“How far away is that final rose before I can reach it and pick for my own?”

“By my calculation, 24 rows.”

Gino looks at the calendar on his mobile.

“That would be Sunday the 22nd of this month. Quite a way to go still. Patience is a virtue.”

“La vie en rose is long and full of thorns all along the way.”

“Well, that’s all okay. I hope the weather holds and stays fine. I want that rose in perfect bloom as nature intended.”

Both stop. The romantic chat takes a sudden turn. It becomes a conversation focusing on the most important points.

“I called the Agency and I got granted a flexible contract ... within reason. Concetta, my friend will be filling in on certain shoots. I called Emile and Edith and discussed the possibility of this happening. They are very happy for me. And for you.”

“I said to Edith, if this happens, I will be surrounded by cars galore and maybe will drive one that is more suitable in London. One that Gino chooses for me. I mean not a flashy Alfa.”

“I agree with Tonio’s protocol, hence *La vie en rose*. I suggest that we both guard the things that we hold private. Until the time comes when we can share them. Am I being too unkind, inflexible or sanctimonious?”

Gino immediately replies: “I appreciate every word you are saying. When you speak I just want to listen, more and more.”

“If it works out I may have to cancel most of the modelling shoots or run them down gradually. Of course, subject to our mutual agreement and future happiness. So where, which church and where do we go for the honeymoon? I will leave that to you. Your decision completely. I prefer everything happens on the continent.”

“Well dad’s wishes are coming true. I think it’s an open-and-shut-case.”

He paused.

Jaquie waited.

“Scopello. Wedding in the local chapel – Sant’Agata Pescatore. Stay in a nice hotel. We skip the Sorrento Hotel along the way. And maybe Tonio and Maria could stay at the Scopello house if they choose to. Everybody will be happy then. Even Maria.”

Jaquie gave a little smile. And then, just as quick she looked pensive and engaged but still looking at Gino.

They called Tonio and Maria and gave them the news on the phone. Both were elated.
