

The early adult life of Henry James

The First Book Of The Trilogy

James H Bragg



Henry James

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This book is dedicated to my family I love you all very much
and I do know I am not the easiest person in the world to live with.

I hope everyone will enjoy this entirely fictitious story, please
forgive me for taking liberties with names and places, also for
any mistakes and omissions I have made.

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Abbreviations

FSK	Forsvarets Spesialkommando “Norwegian Special Forces”
Mamma	Mother in Swedish
Ören	Swedish coin
SMA	Spinal Muscular Atrophy

Chapter One

T he Perfect Property

Henry James is a very well respected investment banker working for a small investment bank in the city of London, he has worked for them since he left Oxford University at the age of twenty three. Over the next six years he made several companies a lot of money, some of them, obscenely so, and his personal portfolio is worth many millions, as most people would expect it to be. He also has a few very nice properties around the world, added to this he also loves Sultan, his beautiful Black Arabian Stallion, Good Quality Cars and his Malö Yacht's. Everybody that thinks they know him all agree he is the perfect catch, and many have tried to make dates with him for their best friends. To date he has not fallen for any of them and he never will, because they all seem to be, gold diggers, and that is not what Henry is looking for.

Henry James was born on the 17th of May 1977 into an Upper Class English family, his father, Lord David James owns Queensberry Manor just outside the village of Wantage in central Oxfordshire, England. He is an investment banker and has always wanted Henry to follow in his footsteps, at eleven years of age Henry was on course to do that. He passed to go to Magdalen College School in Oxford, from there he got into Oxford University and he did really well. He was a serious student who did not play around like some, and was always in the top two of his class. While at Magdalen College Henry became the captain of the cricket team and also excelled at cross country running. He always felt that he had an unfair advantage over his school chums because Queensberry Manor sits on 1500 acres which meant that Henry had his own private cross country course and he practised regularly. His father has owned this property since it was handed down to him when his father died. Henry like his father before him was born in this house and he has always felt it was the perfect home to grow up in.

An 18th century 38 bedroomed Manor House standing on 1500 acres of land with, it's own golf course. Queensberry Castle was given to the James family by the Earl of Banbury, William Knolly, just before his death in 1632. The Georgian Manor House was built in 1725, 350 yards in front of Queensberry Castle. Henry's father has been looking to renovate the old castle and he has decided this will be his project once he retires.

This is where Henry learnt to ride and still keeps Sultan stabled there, he also learnt to shoot and is particularly very good at that. He started playing golf at the age of four and now he plays off a two handicap, he always felt that if he had more time to play he could get it down to scratch but two is pretty good so he is relatively happy with that. Henry feels he is a better shooter than a golfer and people that have shot against him would all agree, he is very, very good. His parents were very proud of him especially when he graduated with honours. In June 2000 at the age of

twenty three, Henry left Oxford University and his father arranged for him to have an interview with Sir John at a small private investment bank in London.

At Henry's interview Sir John Buxton told Henry, we are prepared to employ you as a token of respect for your father. Henry's father is a very well respected man within the House of Lords and the financial centres of London, New York and Tokyo. Sir John told Henry he will be on a three months trial period, he will start at the bottom and we trust that you have intentions of working your way up the corporate ladder as quickly as possible. We will start you on £250k per year and all your expenses will be covered. Thank you Sir John. By the end of December we expect that you would have brought in business to the value of £10/12m. If you have reached that amount then you will receive a salary increase of 50% along with a 1% bonus. I will not let you down Sir John.

The amount needed to receive the increase and bonus did not take Henry that long to achieve. Henry learns very quickly and he also started at the company with a lot of knowledge he had gained over the years from his father. At the end of September Henry had signed contracts to the value of £11.8m, Sir John was over the moon. He realised that Henry was indeed, the man that David had claimed he was. By the end of December Henry had turned the value of his signed contracts into £22.8m. Sir John called Henry into his office and told him that they are making him a Junior Partner which was totally unheard of, especially since he was not yet twenty three years of age. Instead of the 50% they had promised, his salary jumped to £500k per year and his first bonus of 1% will be £228k. The company's year runs from January to December and bonuses are paid out in December each year. Sir John told Henry that they are extremely pleased with his first six months, so for the year 2001 you will receive a 1.5% bonus of the value of your signed contracts.

Before Henry left Sir John's office he said, I would like to make some changes to the way I work Sir John, certainly Henry what do you wish to change. Just a couple of things, firstly I need to have my own personal assistant. Some little fox no doubt Henry. Not at all Sir John, if you are giving me a choice I would ask for Lydia, she is a very efficient lady and that is what I need. The three partners looked at each other and all nodded, anything else Henry. Yes Sir John, I am looking at purchasing a property in London and when I have done so I feel it would be better for me to work from home as it would save a lot of time travelling to and fro. You are very different to most young men Henry, you are looking at a property, most young men would be looking at a Porsche. I feel a property will increase in value, the Porsche will only decrease, and I have plenty of time to look for a car. At present I am not in London long enough to drive one. Also, because of the amount of time I am spending flying around the world I know I would feel a lot better at the end of my journey if I could fly first class where possible. I am guessing you would also wish to only stay in 5 star hotels. Absolutely Sir John, if I did not have to get over the jet lag I could work far more efficiently. Do you have any other requests Henry, not at this time Sir John, the partners looked at each other and

again nodded. We are prepared to agree to all your requests on the condition that the contracts keep coming in. Henry stood up and shook the hands of all three men, he thanked them and assured them that he would not let them down. He headed for the door, turned and wished them a very happy Christmas, and he was gone.

Sir John buzzed his secretary and asked her to please send Lydia in. A few minutes later Lydia knocked on the door, come in Lydia and please sit down. You will be starting a new job in the New Year, Lydia just looked and wondered what was coming next. Henry James has made several requests and the first one concerns you Lydia, Henry wants you to become his personal assistant, this would take you out of the pool and you would then only work for Henry. So Lydia, do you accept just working for Henry, yes I do, I very much like working for Henry because firstly, he is a gentleman and he never shouts or complains. He is very respectful, helpful and appreciates all I do for him. That is very good to hear Lydia. All future airline bookings you make for Henry should be in the first class cabin where possible, and his hotels should be 5 star, again, if possible. Henry is planning to purchase a property in London and as soon as he does that, he wishes to work from home, would you have a problem working out of Henry's home when he is in London, not at all Sir John.

When we return in the New Year you should move your things into the office that Henry uses, and of course, if there is anything you need, just ask. Do you have any questions Lydia, not that I can think of Sir John, then you make sure you have a good Christmas and we will see you next year, thank you Sir John, and the same to you. Just before Lydia got to the door Sir John said, I almost forgot, you will receive a 15% increase in your salary starting January. Thank you very much Sir John, she turned and left the office. When she got back to the main office Henry was waiting for her. Oh Henry, thank you so much, you are more than welcome Lydia. We get on very well and it will make both our lives a little easier. I did like the first class touch you asked for, and you do need that. Did he tell you I wish to work from home, that is once I find one, yes he did, I hope you are happy to do that, more than happy Henry. He gave her a hug and said, Happy Christmas Lydia, see you next year, happy Christmas to you Henry. Henry then took an envelope out of his jacket pocket and gave it to Lydia, written on the envelope was, to be opened Christmas morning, bye, bye Lydia, she smiled and just said, thank you Henry.

Henry's envelope was the last present that Lydia opened on Christmas morning, inside was a beautiful Christmas card, and inside the card was a hand written letter and as she read it she said, oh Henry, what is the matter her husband asked. It's just that he has given me what he terms as, a small bonus, what's he given you, £100.00. That would be more than he needed to Ian. He has set up an investment account in my name and deposited £20,000 into this account, he tells me he will talk to me about it next year. From that first Christmas Henry always gives Lydia a Christmas bonus every year which is now up to £250,000. He invests her money just like he does his own. By Christmas 2004 her account is now worth £750k, she loves her job, her boss and her life, she thinks of herself as a very happy

and lucky lady.

Henry always spends the two week Christmas holiday at the family home, his mother Alexandra really looks forward to that time of the year, she always manages to spoil Henry and they have a very nice Christmas. David and Alexandra's close friends, Sir Randolph and Lady Martha also spend Christmas with David, Alexandra and Henry. If the weather is acceptable the five of them usually play golf on Boxing day, it seems to be a James family tradition. Over the holidays Henry spoke to Sir Randolph and told him that he is looking for a decent property in London and would he be kind enough to make some enquiries for him, certainly my-boy. What are you looking for and what areas are you interested in. An apartment with at least three bedrooms, somewhere near Hyde Park, so you do not want a house Henry, not really Sir Randolph, I do not need a garden to keep clean. Randolph told Henry to leave it with him and he would put out some feelers, thank you Sir Randolph.

Henry returned to the office on the 4th of January 2001, he received a phone call at 10:30 from Sir Randolph, I think I have found the perfect property for you my boy. It is a five bedroomed Penthouse in Hyde Park Gardens, which is one road north of Hyde Park, are you interested to go and view it right away, most certainly Sir Randolph. It is not on the market as yet so you will be the first person to see it, I know the barrister that owns it, however, he needs a very quick sale so if you like it we could get it at a very good price. Can you meet me there in thirty minutes, I will leave straight away Sir Randolph. Walk to Bank underground station and take the Central line to Lancaster Gate, you will then be about 200 yards from Hyde Park Gardens, I will see you there my boy. Just as Henry was walking into Hyde Park Gardens Sir Randolph got out of a cab with a man Henry had never seen before.

Sir Randolph introduced Henry as his Godson to Sir Malford, pleased to meet you young man, likewise Sir. Randolph tells me your father is Lord David James, that is correct Sir. So you are looking for a property in London, that is also correct Sir, right, lets go in and you can take a look around. As they walked up the steps the door was opened and Sir Malford introduced them to Benson, I will have to vouch for these two gentlemen Benson, that will be fine Sir, he asked their names and picked up a ledger and wrote in it, he then asked Sir Malford to sign.

This property is manned twenty four seven and everybody must show proof of identity the first time they arrive. I do like that Henry said. Sir Malford turned back to Benson and told him, young Henry James here is interested in purchasing, you will not be disappointed Mr James, it is a beautiful property.

When they got inside Henry understood why Sir Malford had told Benson he was interested in purchasing, it was because the Penthouse had been completely emptied of all the furniture and Benson must know what is going on. Henry walked from room to room and fell in love with the property, it was perfect and right across from Hyde Park which meant that he could go running when he was at home. Sir Malford stayed in the lounge looking out of the window across the park, leaving Henry and

Randolph to wonder around.

When they got to the main bedroom Sir Randolph asked, what do you think my boy, I think it is perfect, however, you have not told me how much he wants for it. You do not talk about that with Sir Malford, just leave that to me, so do you want it Henry, I would love to own it Sir Randolph, okay you have just purchased your first property, do not say anything at all just leave the rest to me. They walked back into the lounge and Sir Malford asked what do you think Henry, before he could reply Randolph said, we have some negotiating to do George. When they stepped out of the lift Benson was waiting and Sir Malford shook his hand and wished him well and said, I trust you will get on with this new owner Benson, I am sure I will Sir. I am very pleased for you Mr James.

Henry shook Sir Malford's hand and thanked him, he thanked Sir Randolph and then shook his hand, you are more than welcome my boy, I will contact you later today. Henry walked back to Lancaster Gate underground station and caught the tube back to Bank underground station, he walked back to his office with a very big smile on his face. He smiled at Lydia and asked her what have you got for me, you need to go through these files before you fly out on Monday. Ten minutes later Sir Randolph phoned Henry and told him, I have made a deal with Sir Malford for you.

That is very quick Sir Randolph, you will learn in life my boy, you need to strike while the iron is hot. What price did you manage to knock him down to, well, the equivalent properties in and around Hyde Park Gardens are fetching anything up to £4.7m. That's a lot of money Sir Randolph, it is indeed Henry, however, you have paid less than half of that, £2.3m to be exact. Payment has already been made and you will reimburse your private bankers as soon as you can.

You are not expected to make yourself short but we feel you will receive very good bonuses each year and you could pay over that amount. So in five years you will have paid your loan off. No doubt you have a couple of questions for me.

Just two, who are my private bankers and what interest rate are they charging me. Lets start with the interest rate, it is zero percent my boy. If it's zero percent then you or my father are my private bankers. We are your private bankers Henry, David and I have put up 50% each, thank you very much Sir Randolph, you are very welcome. Without taking a serious look at my figures, I will pay you back as quickly as I can, however, it will not be any longer than two years. Do not make yourself short Henry. I will not make myself short, however, I will take a very long hard look and see what is the best way for me to go. We will leave that to you, whenever you are ready to pay any amount to us I will give you the bank details. Thank you again Sir Randolph, the pleasure is all mine my boy.

Henry then phoned his father, hello my boy how are you, if that is my private banker then I am very well thank you father. I did not know you had asked Randolph to find a property for you, I asked him over Christmas, yes he told me. It sounds like he has got a bargain for you. Compared with the prices around it is a very good deal father. I am so

pleased for you my boy, will I be seeing it tonight or must I wait until your mother arrives, that is entirely up to you father. We will talk tonight, thank you for helping me with a loan father, any time Henry. Sir Randolph has told me he believes you will pay the loan back in five years just as long as you feel you can do it in that time. If not then just make it longer, as Randolph and I will not have a problem however long you take. I have told Sir Randolph I will be taking a long hard look at my figures before committing myself, however, I hope it will not take me more than two years. Do not make yourself short my boy, that is exactly what my other banker said. They both laughed and ended the call with, see you tonight.

Henry asked Lydia to please come to his office, she walked in and asked how he was getting on with the files. Not as well as I would have hoped, only finished nine, I still have six to look at. Do you have a problem Henry because this is not like you, sorry Lydia I have been distracted. I must tell you we have a new office, she just looked at him and did not understand what he was talking about. I had to slip out and could not find you that is why I have only finished nine files. The good news is, I have purchased a house in Hyde Park Gardens, would you like to go and see it.

Oh Henry, that is fantastic, that is very quick, when can you get the keys, tonight so we can take a look tomorrow, just make sure you bring your passport. She frowned at him, he smiled and explained that the property is manned 24/7 and the first time you enter you have to show some form of identity. That's all very up-market Henry, it is all of that Lydia, I will get on with these files and I will show you your new office tomorrow morning. They finished all the files by 18:30 and decided that was enough for the first day back in 2001.

That night Henry and David went to The Capital Hotel for a celebration meal, as arranged, Sir Randolph joined them, he handed Henry the keys. He then removed his wallet and gave Henry a piece of paper with three rows of eight numbers, what is this Sir Randolph, Henry asked. These numbers are the codes for each safe, there's three safes, no my boy, there are two safes. The top number is for the safe in the first bedroom, which you will find inside the second cupboard. The middle row of numbers are for the safe in the main bedroom, you get access from the second draw down on the right side of the walk in dressing room. I am told if you run your hand along the underside of the top draw about eight inches back you will feel a button in a recess. Press it and a panel will slide away revealing the safe. The safe is on the left side of the of the dressing room wall.

Henry just said, wow, this is very secret service Sir Randolph. He smiled and told them, Sir Malford was a very rich man that has fallen on hard times, I am sure the safe in the main bedroom has held a lot of cash over the years. The bottom number is the phone number, I would suggest you have it changed.

They sat in silence for several seconds before Henry said, I have taken a long hard look at my finances gentlemen, and because of salary and bonus I have received for last year. Together with the increases I am going to receive this year, I am confident that I will be able to pay my loan off

at the end of this year. Both David and Randolph were speechless, I am lost for words my boy, I bet that does not happen very often Sir Randolph, he smiled, you are quite right Henry. David then said, I cannot even begin to imagine how you would think you could do that my boy.

Let me explain father, please do. When Sir John interviewed me he told me out of respect for your father, we are offering you the position of Investment Banker to cover agreed countries outside of the UK. They started me on £250k per year, with a bonus of 1% of the value of contracts signed, the bonus would only be paid if I reach a minimum value of £10 million by the end of December. Randolph and David looked shocked, again that was out of respect for you father. To reach the bonus I had to sign contracts to the value of £10/12m by the end of December, that's a tall order for a new boy with no contacts, how close did you get my boy. By Christmas I had signed contracts worth £22.8m father, my god, I should have employed you myself and not asked John for a favour.

Sir John is over the moon and he has made me a Junior Partner along with doubling my salary for this year. He has also increased my bonus to 1.5% of the value of any new signed contracts. However, if I bring in contracts over £45m by this December I will receive my bonus based on my total contracts since I started. This will be carried forward to all future years. I still do not understand why you would think you will be able to pay back this loan by the end of this year. If the value of your contracts reach £45m that will only give you just over £1m for your bonus, and you must still allow for 50% tax. I think £45m is a little out of your reach Henry.

You are a person of little faith father, I can already pay you £300k, again, how is that possible Henry. What do you think I spend my salary on father, I never really thought about it my boy. I live on an expense account, the only time I need to spend my money is for food when I am at home and also if I need new clothes. You do not charge me to stay in your apartment, so I can add £72k from the last six months salary to my bonus of £228k that I received in December. You are not remembering your tax obligation Henry.

Oh father, I never thought I would need to explain what I earn to anybody let alone how I get paid. However, you two are my private bankers so it is only right that I explain how I am employed and how salaries and bonus are paid. I do not pay any tax in the UK because I do not work for a company that is registered in the UK. They just looked at him, I work for a company that is registered in Belize and my main bank account is also at the same bank in Belize, I would only have to pay tax in Belize if I signed any contracts with companies that are registered there. Randolph turned to David and said, you and I are falling behind these young people.

I have set myself a target for this year father, okay Henry, surprise me. My target is £85m, that is an average of just over £7m per month, I consider that is achievable. I wish you well Henry, thank you father, if you make your target I might want you to come and teach my team how you did it. Henry and Randolph just smiled. So to explain how I will be able to pay off my loan this year. My bonus of £1.6m, plus £300k from my

salary. This leaves me £200k to live on for the year which I think I will not have a problem to do. I think you are a better negotiator than your father, Randolph said, and I can safely say that we all wish you very well Henry. Thank you, Sir Randolph.

David then told Henry that it would be better if he waits for his mother to arrive tomorrow, you can then show us together. Do you have a reason for not wanting to go tonight father, most definitely my boy, if I went tonight your mother would be on the phone all night long wanting to know this or that about each room. Right now I cannot answer any questions she may have because I have not seen your property. When you speak to her, please ask her to bring both your passports so Benson can write down your details in their ledger. Because this will be the first time you visit, there after they will know you. Can you also do that Sir Randolph, certainly my boy. What are you going to do about furniture Randolph asked. I will start looking tomorrow and I will naturally ask mother if she has some pieces I can use until I find what I will be happy with. I will ask Martha if we have anything she would be happy to give you, that's very kind of you Sir Randolph. Randolph and Martha look on Henry as the son they never had, Martha gave birth to a daughter with, Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) who died two months after her second birthday. Martha would never have another child, because she felt that firstly, it is not fair on the child and she never wants to go through that again. She would not take the chance that the same disease would not affect the second baby.

Henry said, I wish to move in as soon as possible so I will start looking for furniture for the master bedroom tomorrow, Lydia will be looking for office furniture, we have discussed what we need to start within the office, so I am sure she will have that sorted by the time I get back at the end of next week. Just one more thing, you told me Sir Randolph that when I wished to pay any amount to you, you would give me the details, I wish to make my first deposit of £300k, I will see you have that information next week. Thank you both for taking care of me. It is our pleasure my boy

On Friday, Henry and Lydia worked until 10:30 and she said, I cannot do this any more, I have to see your house, okay, lets go. They took the underground to Lancaster Gate and walked along Hyde Park Gardens, Lydia commented that this is a very nice area Henry, it really is Lydia and because it is just over the road from Hyde Park I hope I will do a little more jogging. As they got to the property Benson opened the door and they climbed the three steps. Good morning Mr James, good morning Benson, I would like to welcome you to your property and let you know that Parker or myself are here should you need anything at all.

Thank you Benson, firstly I would like to introduce Lydia Bishop to you, Lydia is my personal assistant and will, like myself, be working out of the Penthouse when I am in London. Henry gave his passport to Benson, Lydia took hers out of her hand bag and handed it over.

Please let me show you what happens when somebody arrives and asks for you. If we have never seen them before, we ask for photographic identification, this must happen before I can allow anybody to enter, this is company policy Mr James. If the person does not have photographic

proof then you must come down and sign for them in this ledger, just like Sir Malford did yesterday with you and Sir Randolph.

If somebody arrives that we know and their details are on our records, then we buzz you on the internal phone. All phones are mounted on the kitchen wall just inside the door. We tell you who has just arrived to see you, it is then up to you if you allow them to enter. If you do not wish to see them they are asked to leave.

Can I have two lists Benson, why would you need two Mr James. On the first list will be everybody you are going to get my permission before allowing them to enter, on list two there will just be a few names, these people are allowed to enter. My mother and father, you will meet them tonight, Sir Randolph and Lady Martha, and Lydia. That is all the people I would like on list two at present. This is a good idea Mr James, however, I would still need to buzz you, but while you are answering your phone they could be allowed to enter the lift and proceed to your Penthouse.

I can live with that Benson and they shook hands, he returned their passports and told Lydia that she would not need identification again. Lets go and take a look around Lydia, they entered the lift and she asked, have you really purchased the Penthouse Henry, he just pointed to the button with a P on it.

He opened the door and they walked in, this is very big Henry, you most definitely need a wife to share such a beautiful property with. They walked into the first bedroom and Henry looked in the second cupboard and said, this one will be the office. I see all bedrooms are en-suite Henry, yes and there is a toilet just inside the entrance door. Oh Henry this is magnificent, yes Lydia I do believe I will be very happy here. I have to start looking for furniture, can you help me and look for desks, along with anything else we need to set up an office Lydia. Certainly Henry, they must be of good quality, we will also need a table, something that we can lay the files out on while going through them, decent chairs for us and maybe two more in case we ever have a visitor. I will get the phone lines sorted out and new computers. I think the first thing is to get the carpets steam cleaned, any ideas Lydia. My husband's brother has his own cleaning business, please phone him and get him to come round and give us a quote. Lydia phoned her bother in-law, okay see you then. Henry was looking out across the park from the lounge window, he will be here in twenty minutes as he is in the area.

Just thinking about chairs, I was in somebody's office a few weeks ago and I sat in the most comfortable office chair I have ever sat in, I think it was called the Aeron chair, see if you can find them and get us one each. I will start looking just as soon as we get back to the office. The internal phone buzzed and Henry said, we have been here for ten minutes and already somebody has found us, I am hoping it is Joseph. Benson said I have a Mr Joseph Bishop for you Mr James, he does have identification sir, please send him up.

Henry opened the door and shook hands with Joseph he stepped inside and Lydia gave him a kiss on his cheek. First of all Joseph when can you do this job because it would be a lot easier for you to do it before the

furniture arrives. If you agree to my price then I could do it on Sunday morning, take a look around and come up with a deal. What time do I fly out on Sunday Lydia, 21:35.

Joseph came back and told Henry he would do this on Sunday morning for £250 cash in hand. What time do you wish to start and how long will it take you, well it is not dirty it just needs freshening up, I am sure it will not take me any longer than three hours, Henry put out his hand and said, we have a deal Joseph. See you here at 08:00 Sunday morning. Oh Joseph, before you go, do you have somebody that you can bring with you to clean the windows and put a duster around, I am sure my wife would be happy to do that.

Do you need to see the office again Lydia, I do not think so Henry, how big is it, each of the four bedrooms are 5m x 5m with the master bedroom being 6m x 7m not counting the recess or the dressing room. Lets get back to the office and we can start looking for furniture. When they got down to the lobby, Benson said, I forgot to mention the post sir, we have pigeon holes behind our desk and all mail is stored there for you to collect, thank you Benson. I will be back tonight to show my mother and father and on Sunday morning I will meet Joseph here and possibly his wife, he his going to steam clean the carpets before I start moving in, very good Mr James. I will see you on Sunday morning and you will meet Parker tonight. Benson then gave Henry a piece of paper and told him, this is the gas and electric readings so you have them before you move in, I have also taken an image showing the reading of each meter, thank you very much Benson.

Back at the office Lydia told Henry she would start looking for office furniture, we will also need at least one filling cabinet, do you want metal of wood, I would like wood if you can find one, I may have to go really up market to find a decent filling cabinet in wood. Then please do that, if you have to do that, then it may be better to get two matching ones straight away. Because the carpets are cream I am going to make a ruling that nobody goes past the kitchen and laundry without removing their shoes, that's a good idea Henry, I will bring a pair of slippers to leave here. Would you prefer brown chairs instead of black Henry, I will leave that to you Lydia, however, you might have to accept whatever colour you can find.

When Henry and his father walked into the apartment Alexandra was waiting for them, she hugged and kissed them both, coffee before we go. Henry looked at his father and they both smiled and replied, yes please. She brought in the coffee and they sat down and she looked at Henry and said, this is very exciting Henry, starting off in your first home. It's a shame you are doing it on your own, it seems that you and Lydia are both on the same page mother. Never mind mother, I am sure I can count on you to help me, indeed you can. I will phone for a taxi David, that would be nice Alexandra, just as soon as they had finished their coffees she stood up and told Henry I am so excited to see your Penthouse.

The taxi arrived and whisked them away, fifteen minutes later they arrived in Hyde Park Gardens. As they walked up the steps the door opened and Henry said, you must be Parker, I am indeed Mr James, they

shook hands, welcome sir, thank you Parker. Let me introduce my mother and father, Lord and Lady James, pleased to meet you both, I am sorry to ask but I need proof of identity. David handed their passports over and Parker entered the information in the ledger, he handed them back and told them, you will never be asked to produce your identity again. Benson explained that your mother and father go on list two Mr James, that is correct. They headed to the lift and everyone had a smile on their face, on the way up Alexandra asked, what is list two Henry.

Ah, the people that are on list two are the ones that cannot be let in more than twice in any seven day period and never on consecrative days. Oh Henry, you are getting more like your father each day. He opened the door and stood back for his mother and father to enter. The kitchen was the first door on the left and Alexandra walked in, this is very nice Henry, plenty of room and I see Sir Malford has left several appliances for you. The laundry was off the kitchen and again washing machine and tumble drier had not been removed. I think you will like this mother, he pressed a button on the wall and a concealed ironing board slid out from under the worktop and came up to the right height, that's fantastic Henry. In this cupboard I will place a pair of slippers for you both, I would ask that you remove your shoes and wear the slippers from the next time you visit me. I am having the carpets steamed cleaned Sunday morning, as it will be a lot easier before any furniture arrives.

They moved into the lounge which was a decent size, 10m x 8m, they walked over to the windows and Henry said you have a nice view of Hyde Park during daylight. This is really very nice Henry, they moved into the dining room, this is a good size, the next along the passage on the left was the first of the bedrooms, this one will be turned into my office. Opposite that was the TV room, Alexandra just kept saying very nice Henry. Further along brought them to two more bedrooms, they look about the same size as the one you are turning into an office, that is right mother, four of the bedrooms are the same size with the master bedroom being a lot bigger.

She fell in love with that room, this dressing room is fantastic Henry and your en-suite is through this dressing room. I am very impressed with your first home Henry. What do you think father, I feel that Randolph has done you proud my boy, he has indeed father. Lets try the safe father, Henry pulled out the second draw and reached inside moving his hand along the underside of the top draw, he felt the recess and pushed the button. On the other side of the dressing room a panel slid to the right to reveal a safe.

Henry entered the eight numbers and the door opened, it was empty except for a letter, Henry picked it up and opened it. It was from Sir Malford, he welcomed Henry to his new home and hoped that he would be very happy and thanked him for a speedy sale. He went on to explain how to change the code on the safe, David said, this is quite a large safe for a family home my boy, it looked about 20 inches square and about the same deep. It had two removable shelves. Henry closed it and put his hand under the draw and pressed the button and the panel slid back, I am very

impressed with that my boy, me too father. I love your Penthouse Henry and I love you mother, I know.

Lets go and celebrate David, I like the Mandarin something or other in Kensington, the name you are looking for dear is, Oriental. Yes, that's the one David, is that alright with you Henry, that's fine father. David made a booking and they headed down to the lobby. During the meal, Alexandra asked Henry if he would like her to see what furniture she could find for him, yes please mother, I was going to ask you, even if it is just on loan until I find some really nice pieces. Would you look for modern Henry, not at all mother I do prefer older looking pieces, having said that, I do not like stand alone wardrobes. That is not a problem because all your bedrooms have fitted cupboards, I am pleased about that. So you are not expecting to get furniture for all rooms right away, no mother, I will be shopping for a bed for the master bedroom but thinking about it I may get a better deal if I was to place an order for four beds, as I would not want second-hand beds.

Lave your dinning room to me as I think I know of something you may like. Lydia will be looking for office furniture so I would expect that to be sorted by the time I return next weekend. Once I am able to move in I will be working from home and that will make life a little easier. I do know I will have to go to the office from time to time but not every time I am here.

When they returned to the apartment Henry asked his father if he could use his computer, certainly my boy, I take it you are starting your search for furniture, that's my plan father. Henry looked for good quality beds, he finished up looking at, The Baronial Tudor four poster bed. He fell in love with this bed, the carving was superb, and he just loved the carved Lord and Lady figurines which could be placed in either side of the special opening in the bottom posts. He also noticed that you can have them in the American sizes, they are bigger beds and as Henry is 6ft 4in tall and the American King Size is 76in x 80in this would be better for him.

He wrote their phone number down and he then looked for mattresses. He found a company by the name of, Get Laid Beds, he smiled and thought, I must use these guys. He picked out the top of the range mattress with 9000 pocket springs, they where only open Monday to Friday so he would have to phone them from New York.

On Saturday morning Henry phoned BT and arranged to change the phone number as Sir Randolph had suggested. He then phoned the Wood Carvers Guild and spoke to them about the Baronial Tudor four poster bed, he made arrangements to visit their factory at Bridgwater the following Saturday. He then phoned Lydia to ask if she would be willing to accept deliveries during next week, that's not a problem Henry, just let me know which day, I will give Roger the keys for you.

A fter that he took a taxi to John Lewis and finished up purchasing three, Willis & Gambier Lille Low End Sleigh Super King Size Beds. With the order he added one duvet, 13.5 tog along with pillows, linen and towels and arranged for delivery on Thursday. He only ordered the one set of linen and towels because he wanted to order from, Get Laid Beds, just

because the name cracked him up. He then decided he would look around some antique shops to see what paintings he could find.

The first one he bought was, *The Love Letter*, from the mid 19th century, it was only a small painting and like the others he bought that day he had no idea where he would put them. He spotted *Figurers in a Tavern*, the next he saw he had to have it, the portrait on canvas is an excellent version of one of Van Dyck's finest portraits of Charles 1st and depicts him wearing the Order of the Garter on a blue silk ribbon with a gold locket attached.

He then found a 5ft x 4ft, 16th century of Tudor King Henry V11. A large painting 7 ft x 6 ft of Saint George slaying the dragon, the last one was, *The São João Baptista* (Saint John the Baptist) commonly known as the *Botafogo*, which was a Portuguese Galleon Warship, built in the 16th century, around 1534, considered the biggest and most powerful warship in the world at the time. He decided he must stop as he had spent far more than he intended to and he realised that he would have to change his contract value to £95m He arranged for all the paintings to be delivered on Wednesday afternoon.

On Sunday morning he met Joseph and his wife and while he steamed cleaned the carpets she cleaned the kitchen and laundry all the windows and put a duster around. After they had finished Henry jogged twice around Hyde Park before eating a light pasta lunch. He watched a movie from late afternoon and then wrote a note to Lydia telling her about the furniture and paintings that will be delivered. All paintings can be lent against the wall in the lounge as I have no idea what rooms they will end up in apart from St George, he will stay in the lounge and the Portuguese Galleon will go in the office. Roger picked him up at 21:35 for his overnight flight to New York.

Henry was greeted and shown to his new place on the aircraft and he found the first class cabins on his BA flight to be all he had hoped for, he just knew that from now on this is the only way to travel. When he landed he was refreshed as he had slept like a baby, he spotted his name being held up on a board and introduced himself. He was shown to a private Mercedes-Benz, no more yellow cabs for him. He was driven to the Ritz Carlton which he noted was right opposite Central Park, this means his jogging gear will be travelling with him from now on. Everybody was so friendly and Henry said to himself, a very good choice Lydia, from then on whenever Henry goes to New York he always stays at the Ritz Carlton.

Lydia found desks, chairs, a table and a pair of very nice oak filling cabinets. She arranged for delivery on Wednesday and paid with one of Henry's credit cards that he had given her before he left on Friday.

After breakfast Henry had an hour to kill before his first appointment so he walked across the road and into Central Park, he sat on a bench by the pond for thirty minutes before making his way back to the Ritz. He then headed out to his first appointment and within three hours he had a signed contract, the appointment in the afternoon went very much the same way. By Friday evening he had signed all ten companies to a total value of £19m. He was very pleased with his first weeks work and as he

settled down to sleep on the overnight to Heathrow he wondered what Lydia had got for him next week.

Lydia arrived at 10:00 on Wednesday morning and had to wait until noon for the first part of the office furniture to arrive. When she opened the passage door to show the men where to place the items she noticed that Henry must have put plastic sheets along the passage and into the office. Smart thinking Henry, she asked the men to please follow her, they placed the items in the office and offered to unpack for her, she explained that as she has several before the next delivery she will unpack herself, thank you. She showed them out and headed back to the office, she had the first chair ready to use when the phone rang. She picked it up and answered, Mr James residence, a male voice asked for Mr James, so Lydia told him he was not here but she is Mr James private secretary can she take a message for him. The man told her he is calling from BT and he is just checking to make sure the phone is working, he then gave her the new phone number.

She unpacked the three remaining chairs and placed them along one of the walls so that when the desk, table and filing cabinets arrived they would not be in the way. The next to arrive was the paintings, the men removed their shoes without being asked, Lydia thought, that's a good company. All the paintings were boxed up so they could not get damaged, again she thought, these must be antique painting to be boxed so securely. It was not long and the rest of the office furniture arrived, the deliverers unpacked and asked where would you like us to place it. Lydia told them she did not know where Henry wanted to place them, so one man suggested that they leave a large piece of cardboard under each of the desks and a small piece under each cabinet. That way it would be easier for Mr James to move each item, he could just slide it on the carpet.

On Thursday the beds arrived, Lydia asked the men to please remove their shoes as the carpets had just been cleaned. She showed them to each of the bedrooms and they unpacked and set up the beds, when leaving they removed all of the packaging. She opened one of the packets that the men had told her was the linen, and she found a pair of sheets and pillow cases together with pillow protectors, there was also a duvet cover to match. In the other packet she found a duvet and two pillows. She made up the bed in the nearest bedroom to the master bedroom, because she thought Henry would place his clothes in his bedroom and not in the room he will be sleeping in until his bed arrives.

Henry came out of customs early on Saturday and found Roger waiting for him, they greeted each other and Roger asked his usual question, trust you had a good trip sir, very good start to the new year, thank you Roger. As they came out of Heathrow Roger asked, to your fathers apartment or your Penthouse Mr James. I think from now on Roger, it will be the Penthouse, very good sir. As Roger started to unload the boot Benson opened the door, Henry introduced them and told Roger to please show Benson your driving licence, then you will be able to help me with the luggage.

They shook hands and Henry said, I guess I will see you next week. He

removed his shoes and jacket and headed for the office, he found a note from Lydia explaining that she did not know how he wanted the office laid out so the men have left cardboard under the legs so it will be easier to slide over the carpet. If you need any help, Ian and I will come and give you a hand. I have left you a couple of washing tablets and a bottle of fabric conditioner in the laundry just in case you need to wash your clothes. I trust have put you in the right bedroom, this is your new phone number.

Henry packed his clothes away in their new home and put yesterdays washing in the laundry, made a mental note to get a laundry basket. Henry headed to the office and found he could slide the desks over the carpet on his own, he placed the table first and then the desks in a position that they could both have easy access to the table. The filing cabinets he put on Lydia's side of the office. Just as he had finished the computers arrived so he removed them from their boxes and set them up. He put the computer boxes in one of the top cupboards in the laundry, just in case he had a problem and they needed to be returned. All other packaging he removed to the communal waste containers down in the parking garage.

He then went into the lounge to unpack his paintings, it was at this point he realised that he did not own any tools and if he was going to do this then he needed at least an electric drill. So he had to get somebody in to drill the walls and fit the correct fittings to hang these paintings. St George was quite heavy so he needed a solid hook, these paintings all needed good strong fittings, because they cost far too much to fall off the wall and get damage. He phoned around a couple of stores that sold trade items and told them what he wanted and asked if they could recommend anybody. The second guy he spoke to, told Henry he deals with a one man show that he has done business with for eight years now. I have never had him do anything for me so I cannot recommend his work, all I can say to you is, he is not like a lot of tradesmen, he is a very pleasant man. Henry took his number and called him, he told him what he needed and Simon said he would come round between 19:00 and 20:00 today. He duly arrived and Henry showed him the paintings, he said he would go and get the fittings and do it Sunday at 08:00 . When he had gone Henry thought I should go from room to room and mark the walls where I want the paintings to hang.

He then phoned Lydia and thanked her for all she had done for him, it's a pleasure Henry. You do not fly out until late on Monday evening, you will be going to Singapore for three days. I will go into the office and collect all sorts of stationary we will need, Roger can bring me on Monday morning, did you get a printer Henry, sorry Lydia I forgot that. It is not a problem Henry, Sir John will provide one, leave that for me to organise. I will leave a key with Benson as I am going to a company by the name of, Get Laid Beds, the name just cracks me up Lydia. I hope it works for you Henry, he smiled and said, I will see you when I return.

He set up an account for online shopping at M&S, he then ordered frozen vegetables and fresh meat that he could put in the freezer on Sunday morning when they arrived. He thought just in case I need something in. As it turned out these things lasted many months. He took

a shower and decided to go and get something to eat, he found the Island Grill and Bar just around the corner from Lancaster Gate underground station, a ten minute walk. The food and service were very good.

On Sunday morning Simon came and fitted some decent fittings to hang all the paintings on, he did a very neat and clean job, Henry took his card and told him he will call him when he gets more paintings that need hanging. He then phoned the Private Jet Charter company at Biggin Hill in Kent, this is the company that his parents have used for many years. Henry told them that he needs to get to, Crypton Business Park, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, next Saturday at 09:30 . Please be at Battersea Heliport at 07:15 Henry, can you also arrange for a taxi to pick me up and take me to the Wood Carvers Guild. I will do that Henry. How long are you going to be there, I would think no more than three hours, then we will wait for you.

At 08:30 on Monday morning Henry walked to Lancaster Gate underground station and caught the tube to Chancery Lane, he then got a taxi to Greville Street and walked into, Get Laid Beds, after looking round he ordered their 8ft Pocket 9000 mattress. He told them that he was going to the Wood Carvers Guild on Saturday to order one of their four posters, I will get them to phone your guys to make sure they build the bed so that your mattress fits perfectly. He also ordered two sets of ivory bed linen to fit this mattress, a 13.5 tog duvet of Hungarian Goose Down. I also want sixteen pillows of Hungarian Goose Down together with pillow protectors. I am a little reluctant to order bed linen to fit three king size beds as you only have white or ivory and that means all four bedrooms would be the same colour, not terribly exciting. Still you can add three king size 13.5 tog duvets of Hungarian Goose Down. The girl said, I think it is better that you let your wife pick out the colours for the three other bedrooms. I would if I could, unfortunately I do not have a wife, she looked at Henry and replied, I am available. They both burst out laughing, he paid and asked when they could deliver. It will take up to fourteen days to make the mattress so any time after that. Do you need to take anything today, no, that is not necessary thank you. I will get Lydia to phone you in sixteen days time to make arrangements for the delivery.

Henry got back to the Penthouse just after 12:00 noon, Lydia was busy in the office sorting out everything she had brought from the company offices. Hello Lydia, she smiled and looked up and replied, hello Henry. We need some form of cupboard that we can put the printer on and paper and spare cartridges inside, do you want me to see what I can find next week, that would be great Lydia. Should I keep your credit card, I think you should keep it until you have finished getting everything you need.

I also think you should keep the door key, I will give it back when the office is set up, better for you to keep it until I get married. You might find it easier to work out of this office rather than the company offices. I would prefer to work out of this office if Sir John would let me, I do not think he would have any objections to you making that change. Lets face it Lydia, he is only interested in receiving signed contracts, how we achieve that should not be important to him. It would also cut my travelling time down

by at least thirty minutes per day. I will speak to him tomorrow and let you know what he has to say Henry.

I will set up the printer on the work top in the laundry as it is wireless it should not be a problem. Is there any reason it cannot stay there Henry, well, other than you would have to keep walking into the laundry to get what you have on the printer. Lets leave it there until you find an acceptable cupboard for the office. When Lydia had finished setting up the office the way she wanted it to work, she asked Henry does he want to go through his appointments while she is here. It has been working the way we have done it for six months, lets not change just yet.

Have you looked at my paintings Lydia, only this one Henry, I would never go into another room without you inviting me. Please let me show you, I do like this galleon Henry, me too, they walked into the dinning room where he had two paintings. The largest was Henry V11 and the smaller Charles the 1st. These are really beautiful Henry, I did fall in love with them. The other two are very different, the Love Letter, I have hung in the master bedroom, lets take a look. It looks a little lost in here Henry. It does indeed Lydia, I know I have to get a lot more paintings having so many bare walls. In the lounge, St George looked magnificent. I think this room is large enough for a grand piano, do you play Henry, I do Lydia. Apart from school work my mother insisted I learn two things when I was eleven years of age. Piano lessons and ballroom dancing.

I was not terrible excited about either at that age, however, now I am older I am very pleased she made me take the lessons. I do not get much chance to play since I left Oxford but my mother and father have a grand piano at home and I occasionally play theirs. Sadly I have not danced since I started this job, I do like dancing so I know I must make a plan. Once you find a girl friend you will be able to start dancing again, that would be very nice on both accounts Lydia, they just smiled at each other.

Henry's flight was an overnight on Singapore Airlines, he liked this airline very much now that he was in first class he knew that this is by far the best airline I have flown with. He spotted his name as he came out of customs and was whisked away to Raffles Hotel, he had read about Raffles Hotel many years ago and it was exactly as the book said. He saw several shops around the Courtyard of the Hotel. He had a total of five appointments over the three days and managed to turn all five into signed contracts with a value of £9.4 million.

He returned to London on Friday with a very large smile on his face. When Lydia arrived he gave her a hug and said, thank you very much, what have I done, I really like Singapore Airlines and Raffles is a beautiful hotel, you have picked out the best. You have also turned this room into a very nice office, I do like the little cupboard for the printer, it is quite cute, she just replied with, thank you Henry, however, I think we need more paintings or tapestries, even large framed photos.

What did sir John have to say about changing your office. He was very agreeable, he could see how it would make my life a lot easier and just said to me, whatever you want to do Lydia, you and Henry are my top team, so if this will make your life easier I am in total agreement for the change.

That's fantastic, now you can start at whatever time you want to, and when you have finished for the day, just go home. What have you got for me next week Lydia, it's back to New York for three days Henry, then we have a new country for you to explore. Two days in Mexico City then on to Acapulco for four days. That sounds very interesting Lydia, you might even get to do a little dancing Henry, that would be nice Lydia. So you will be away for twelve days in total Henry.

The helicopter landed in a field and a taxi was waiting, Henry was driven to the Wood Carvers and arrived at 09:20 . He was shown around and in the end he stayed with the choice he had made on line, The Baronial Tudor four poster. They discussed the various sizes they made, however, it was decided they would build the bed so that the 8ft Caesar mattress built by, Get Laid Beds, would be a perfect fit.

Which mattress have you ordered Mr James, I ordered their 8ft Pocket 9000 mattress. I have seen one of their 9000's in a 6ft and it looks and feels very good, I will contact them to get the exact measurements of their 8ft. Henry then asked, where do I sign, they produced a standard contract and just wrote in the sizes and then asked for one third of the price as a deposit. Henry said, I am happy to pay you 50% as long as I can take the Lord and Lady figurines with me, the deal was done. When he returned to the helicopter he asked the pilot if it was possible to fly him straight to the family home. Rex contacted his office and they gave him the go-ahead.

Henry landed at Queensberry and his mother, father and Jessie were waiting for him to clear the helicopter. Oh Henry why did you not tell us you were coming home, hello mother, he gave her a hug shook his fathers hand, turned and gave Jessie a big hug. Have you missed me Jessie, I have indeed Henry, who's the present for, David asked, it's not a present father, it's for me. Have you got any coffee and a little cake Jessie, I will see what I can do. Henry together with his mother and father walked around the side of the house and sat down at one of the area's that Alexandra had changed. The area held a beautiful hand made wooden table and eight chairs, they waited for their coffee. So what did you buy yourself Henry, his mother asked. A four poster bed, you will never fit in it, and they all burst out laughing.

I flew down to Bridgwater this morning to look around their factory, they have some fantastic furniture and it is all hand made. So are we getting to see what's in the box, sure mother, he opened the box and removed the Lord and Lady figurines. They stand inside the special opening in the bottom posts. They are loose so that you can place them on whichever side of the bed you wish to. His mother and father each picked one up, they are beautiful Henry. Jessie arrived with the coffee and cake and said to Henry, your mother tells me you have bought a very nice and rather large Penthouse, I have indeed Jessie. I hope you will be very happy Henry, thank you Jessie. Will you be returning with me Henry, I have to fly out tomorrow evening father so Rex will pick me up just after lunch. I do not know when I will get here again as I seem to be getting busier this year and as I am missing the family home I thought it was a good chance to drop in, no pun intended.

Over dinner Henry looked at his father and said, I thought I should report to you on my progress for the first three weeks of this year, you have never done that before Henry, his mother said. That is because I now have two private bankers and one of them is a man of little faith. I take it this means you have had a good start to the New Year Henry. A very good start father, I have seen fifteen clients and I have fifteen signed contracts to the value of £29.2 million. Good god Henry, how do you do it. It's my boyish charm father, I do not think boyish charm makes people part with millions of pounds. I told you to employ Henry when he left Oxford, I am glad you did not employ me father for several reasons. Do enlighten us Henry, working for sir John I have a lot of freedom which I am sure you would not have given me.

Lydia sorts out the appointments for me and books all flights and hotels. If I need to do something during the week we work around the clients together. I go to my appointments and do things my way. If I worked for you father I would have been micro managed because I am your son. You would have made sure the rest of your staff did not think you give me special treatment. I certainly would not have received anything like the remuneration package I get from sir John.

You are 100% correct on all counts my boy, apart from that father, I feel it would have created a possible family disagreement. You, like Sir John, would want as many signed contracts as possible, mother would have been on to you on a weekly bases to reduce my travelling so that I would spend more time at home.

I do think you spend far too much time away Henry, I am sure you do mother, and most weeks you are probably right. However, it could never work out if father employed me. The way it is now, I get Lydia complaining to me that I spend far too much time travelling. Sir John never interferes with the way I work, or where or how I find my clients. I decide what investments we make for my clients and everyone of them made money last year.

Are you going anywhere exciting next week my boy, I have two appointments in New York, then I have a new challenge because it's a country I have never been to before. I have one appointment in Mexico City and three in Acapulco, that is exciting Henry. Lydia and I were talking yesterday and I was telling her that when I was eleven you made me learn to play the piano and also take ballroom dancing lessons, you are pleased about that Henry.

I did say that at eleven I was not excited about it at all, however, I am now very pleased you made me take the lessons. I will try and go to a dance whilst I am in Acapulco, as I have not danced since I left Oxford and I do like dancing. On Sunday morning Henry played the piano for a couple of hours, Jessie told him he had not lost his touch, you should come home more often Henry. They had an early lunch and at 16:30 Rex arrived to fly him back to Battersea Heliport in time for him to change and pack his suit cases for his twelve day trip to North and Central America.

Henry signed both clients in New York to a combined value of £4.9 million. He flew to Mexico City, he found a couple of nice parks and

although there are a lot of people and traffic he liked the city, he only had one appointment and in the end just managed to get the contract signed, this was the most difficult man he had ever dealt with since he started this job. Pedro Mendoza is an astute businessman, he is hard but fair and if he likes you he will help you. He agreed to invest the equivalent of £4.1 million, he asked Henry how many other companies in the City do you invest for. You are my first Henry replied, so you will come back to do more business, I hope so Henry replied, I like this city, they shook hands and when Henry got to the door Pedro Mendoza said. Please send me a statement after the end of April and if you have increased my money by 2.5% I will double what I have given you today, I will also introduce you to several of my colleagues. Henry said, I will contact you the first week of May, they smiled at each other and Henry left.

That evening he flew to Acapulco and checked into the Fairmont Acapulco Princess, a very nice hotel and superb gardens, Henry sat out in the garden drinking a coffee after dinner and thought, another great choice Lydia. The next day he had two appointments but only managed to get one signed contract of £850,000.

The second company told him they will not invest with him today. However, if he is prepared to come back in six months and show them what he would of achieved. The next day he met five wonderful people and they signed a contract for the value of £2.3 million. They then asked him if he would like to join them this evening, that would be very nice, what did you have in mind.

We are going dancing Henry, that's fantastic I was going to ask you where I could find a dance hall because I have not danced in the last nine months. We can promise you, you are going to make up for that tonight. I only have this type of suit and shoes with me, that's fine Henry, do not worry.

The meal was very good, however, the dancing was out of this world. The three ladies kept Henry on the floor dancing for two hours none stop. They kept changing places and Henry danced every Latin dance that was played. He said, I have to stop and rest for a little while ladies, and I need a bottle of water. The three of them agreed and escorted him back to the table. The men were laughing and they told Henry that they are so pleased he came tonight. As you can see we both have wives that are twenty years younger than we are, and the truth is, we cannot keep up with them.

Henry smiled and told them, this has been the best night since I left university. Where did you learn to dance like that Henry, when I was eleven my mother made me take dancing lessons, you are the best none Mexican dancer we have ever danced with. That does not mean I am any good though, they laughed and told Henry he is quite a good dancer. Next time you are in Acapulco we will come again, only if it is my treat ladies. Everybody agreed and Henry was escorted back onto the dance floor for another one and a half hours.

When the night was over Henry was exhausted, it was hugs and kisses all round, when he got back to the hotel he collapsed into bed and only

woke up at 09:00. By the time he got ready he only just made breakfast, he walked around the grounds until lunch time and felt very relaxed and realised that he needed to do this more often, maybe not four and a half hours on the dance floor, but he knew he did need to relax a lot more.

He arrived at Heathrow on an overnight flight from Mexico City, Roger was waiting for him and within forty five minutes they were pulling into Hyde Park Gardens. Roger took Henry's cases up for him while he was checking for post. Parker told him that Mrs Bishop collected the post yesterday. Henry unpacked his case and put the washing on, shaved and showered and made something to eat. He was on his second coffee when Lydia arrived, she congratulated him on January's contracts, a total value of £31.35 million, a very nice start to the year Henry. Sir John will give you anything you ask for from now on, I got what I asked for Lydia, I am very happy and I hope you are as well, very happy Henry, thank you.

How many days do you want off Henry, I am asking because I have not made any appointments as yet. I do have several potential clients just waiting for me to get back to them. It seems your name is getting around and I would expect that by June this year I will not have to look for new potential clients, they will be phoning me and begging for an appointment. You are that confident Lydia, yes, I am Henry, now back to my question, how many days off.

I had such a great time in Acapulco, I was taken out for the evening. We went dancing and the three ladies almost danced me to death. Lydia just looked at him. For the first two hours I did not come off the dance floor, every two or three dances these ladies changed so I had to dance with the next one. I had to have a break and drink a bottle of water before I could go back. When I did manage to get back on the floor the same thing happened, they passed me back and forth between each other. This time, I was on the dance floor for two and a half hours. Their husbands were very happy because they are both twenty years older than their wives and admitted they can no longer keep up with them. It was great but very tiring, the next day I only woke up at 09:00, however, I felt so relaxed. They made me promise that next time I am in Acapulco we will go dancing again. I am very pleased for you Henry and I am sure you feel a lot better for a night out on the town. He smiled at her and then said, to answer your question, just a couple. I will start phoning to make your appointments, while you do that I will jog around the Park.

When Henry returned Lydia told him on Sunday he would fly overnight to Singapore for two nights and then onto Australia for four nights, returning on Monday. I will leave your brief on your desk, please do not forget because it will not be Roger that gives it to you from now on. I will try to remember Lydia. Now, is it okay with you if I leave early today as Ian and I are going away for the weekend. You do not need to ask me Lydia, if there is nothing that has to be done before Monday, all you need to say is, I will see you when you get back. I guess I am still thinking I needed to ask permission, Henry just shook his head. Lydia put on her coat, picked up her bag and said, I am going home now and I will

Henry James

see you when you return. Henry said, I hope you have a great weekend

C

Chapter Two

H

Henry meets Olivia

You do not need all your fingers on one hand to count Henry's male friends, he met John Ackerman at Magdalen College School where they both played in the cricket team, they became good friends at school and John also got into Oxford University, when John graduated from Oxford he joined the RAF and went on to become a Squadron Leader flying C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft. After Henry and John had been at Oxford for two months they met Theodore Anderson the 2nd, who was also studying at Oxford, Theodore is from Washington DC and his father had planned Theodore's life out for him. His father is a Vice Admiral in the US Navy and he expected his son to follow in his footsteps.

So far, Theodore's father is very pleased with his progress in the US Navy, he has become the youngest (XO) on the USS Jimmy Carter, a Seawolf Class nuclear powered submarine. Henry, John and Theodore became very good friends and three months later they met Takahiro Yoshino from Tokyo. Henry and John are the same age, Theodore is two years older and Takahiro is the oldest of the four friends being three years older than Henry. Takahiro like John, was also a pilot and he joined the Japanese Air Self-Defence Force after graduating from Oxford, flying F-15 Eagle's and later he became a Major General in charge of the Japanese side of the Misawa Air Base. The four of them got on so well they shared a house until they graduated from Oxford. These four have stayed good friends over the years and would do almost anything to help each other.

During their university days all four of them would spend most weekends at Henry's family home, they either played golf, went shooting pheasants or rode horses. Several times they went sailing with Alexandra in the North Sea, she owned a Beneteau Oceanis 390 yacht, and it was obvious to her that Theodore came from a sailing family as he was very proficient in everything he did on board. David was not a sailor and only went a few times when Alexandra persuaded him that he needed to make it a family sport. Golf, riding or shooting was his sports, sailing was the only thing that they did not do together. Over the years they have had some great games of golf, Takahiro plays off a ten handicap, John off a nine and Henry and Theodore play off a two. Henry and Theodore are both very competitive and they took their games very seriously, John and Takahiro played for fun and it did not matter too much which one of them beat the other, they had a great time. Some times Henry's parents would join them, so it became Henry's team against Theodore's team, it was Henry's father and Takahiro that played on Theodore's team, with Henry's mother and John playing on Henry's team. They all had great fun and at the end of each year whichever team had won the most games became the champions for that year. After the four years at Oxford, Theodore's team became the overhaul champions for the four years they had been playing,

by winning the final game on the eighteenth hole, by one shot. David suggested that they play at least one game per year and they all agreed. They have not made it every year, because of their individual commitments, however, they have made it far more than David thought they would.

Henry met Abigail in 1996 his first year at Oxford University and they dated on and off during the four years they were at Oxford, he never told her anything about his family and she never visited his home. After they left Oxford they drifted apart, he moved to London she went back to Nottingham and their lives became very busy. He went into investment banking and she went into law. Over the next five years Abigail became a very successful lawyer and got married to another successful lawyer, it lasted one year until she came home early one day and caught him in bed with her best friend. Her marriage and her best friend are no longer.

Over the years at Oxford both Theodore's and Takahiro's parents have stayed at Queensberry Manor and Henry has visited both their homes, he has also been to Theodore's home a couple of times for Thanks Giving where the vice Admiral always took them sailing.

Henry thought that Thank's Giving was a great celebration and felt that every family wherever they came from should celebrate this holiday. He really got on with Theodore's mother and father and whenever possible they went sailing while Henry was visiting them. Henry found it easier to communicate with Theodore's parents than he did with Takahiro's, and he thought that this was because of the difference in culture.

After the summer break of the first year at Oxford, on Takahiro return from Japan, he told his friends that he had got engaged to his long time sweetheart, Miyu, they planned to get married once they had both finished university. Next time he was at Henry's home Alexandra invited Takahiro and his fiancée for Christmas, he accepted and she arrived on the 20th December. Everybody fell in love with Miyu, she helped Jessie to make some dishes for Christmas, exchanging some Japanese recipes, and taking away some English ones.

David and Alexandra were very happy to share their home for Christmas with this Japanese couple, they just seemed so special. Miyu was studying criminal law at the University of Tokyo and was at the top of her class, the day after she arrived during a meal she asked David if he knew any criminal barristers and if he did could he ask them if she could spend a day at their offices to observe the differences. David, Alexandra and Henry burst out laughing and the poor girl did not understand what she had done wrong. They quickly realised and apologised for making her feel uncomfortable, David explained that his best friend is one of the best criminal barrister's in London and he always stays over the Christmas holidays, I am sure Sir Randolph would be more than happy to let you look around his offices.

Sir Randolph arrived two days later and he and Martha were introduced to Takahiro and Miyu, she told him what she was studying and asked him if she could spend a day at his offices to observe. Sir Randolph told her he could do better than that, he will take her to the Old Bailey and if she

can spare three days there, she would be able to see a criminal trial in progress, she jumped at his offer and Martha told Miyu she could stay with Randolph and I in their apartment in London. After Miyu had spent the three days at the Old Bailey she thought this is so much better than the Japanese system, because in Japan not many women make it into a criminal court, she was blown away and Sir Randolph told her, if she ever needed a job she must come to him first, because he was very happy with the things he had asked her to do while she was in court with his team.

After Christmas they all went back to university and Miyu could not stop thanking them for all they had done for her. Between the summer holidays and the following Christmas Miyu's parents committed suicide, because their business had collapsed and they would have to go insolvent. They felt that they had brought shame on their families and could not bring themselves to face another day.

Because Miyu is an only child she did not have a sibling to turn to for support, and it also meant that she would have to leave university at the end of that term because she would not be able to pay her fees for her last year. She was devastated and did not know how she would cope without her parents to support her. She told Takahiro and he said to her, that he would leave university and return to Japan and together they would work through this. She told him that she did not want him to do that, she would find a job and later she could finish her studies.

On the Friday night Takahiro told his three friends what had happened and they were all a little shocked and did not know what to say to him. Takahiro then told Henry that he would not be going with him to his parents home as he would not be any fun, he would be staying in the dormitory that weekend. Henry told his parents when he got home and asked them if they had any suggestions for Takahiro, they told him that they would sleep on it and let him know if they come up with an idea by Sunday. After Theodore and Henry had gone riding, David immediately phoned his friend Randolph, and told him what had happened to Miyu's parents, and could he please find out what her university fees would be for the following year, Sir Randolph said he would get onto it straight away.

At 09:30 Saturday, Sir Randolph phoned David and told him what he had found out, he had told the university that her fees would be paid for from his chambers as she is a very bright student and he did not want her to drop out of university just because of her parents suicide. The university thanked him and said, they would send her invoice directly to him, David and Randolph split her fees paying half each.

On Sunday evening Henry explained to Takahiro what had taken place after he had told his parents. Takahiro immediately phoned Henry's parents to thank them, he also said, he would pay them back once he started work, they told him not to worry about that as they plan to make it their wedding present.

Once the university told Miyu she phoned and spoke to Alexandra and thanked her, she then phoned Sir Randolph to thank him, she told him that she would not let him down and she would try and make him and Lord James proud of her, Sir Randolph said, I am sure you will my dear.

Henry James has never made any other male friends since, however, he finds it very easy to make friends with young ladies. As any man would, Henry does have needs, so to stop the gold diggers, Henry has arranged with two ladies in two different countries that when he is in their country he phones them and if they are free, Henry meets up with them. It is far from the life that Henry is looking for, however, it serves his needs until he can find that special lady.

Jo lives just outside of the town of Epping which is the last underground station on the Central Line, she is a divorced mother of a five year old little girl. Henry met Jo in January 2002, he had just visited a colleague in Old Broad Street Private Hospital and was walking back towards his office. It was late afternoon and it was cold and raining and he noticed a young lady about 15 yards in front of him. A car sped past driving through a large puddle in the road which splashed water all over her, soaking all her clothes, she jumped back and fell over.

Henry quickly went to her assistance, and asked if he could help her, she said, I am soaked, why are people so inconsiderate, I can not answer that question, but please let me help you. That is kind of you but I must go back home now as I cannot continue as I look like a drowned rat, do you have far to go Henry asked her, I live in Epping so I will take the tube. Henry said, we will do better than that and he made a phone call to a taxi service the company uses, within two minutes a taxi had arrived and Henry said to the driver, please take this young lady to Epping, He then paid him and opened the door and said, your carriage awaits you my lady, she looked at him for several seconds before saying, I do not know you, who are you, nobody has ever been this kind to me, what do you want from me.

Henry gave her one of his business cards and said to her, the next time you are in this area give me a call and you can buy me a cup of coffee. She called him a week later and he met her in a little café and she paid for the coffees. Henry usually goes to Epping once a month for three to four hours, the financial agreement suits them both. He also has an arrangement with another young lady.

Grace lives in Sydney and he met her in April 2002 while waiting for his client in the reception of an office building, she was selling sandwiches to the office workers and asked Henry if he wanted one. He smiled and replied, not looking for a sandwich thank you. She realised what she had said and laughed, then asked if he wanted a drink later tonight, very much so, I will be in The Tree House from 19:30 tonight, I will be there Henry said.

He walked in at 20:00 and found her sitting at the bar and she was just finishing her first beer, may I get you another, Castle, thank you. They talked a little and when they had finished their drinks Henry asked if she would like to get a bite to eat, that would be nice, they walked into the restaurant and after looking at the menu they both ordered the Pork Cutlets. After the meal Grace asked if he would like to have his coffee at her place, he smiled and they left, it was a short walk to her flat and when they got inside they tore each others clothes off and spent the rest of the night making love.

Henry was never sure how they got round to the conversation about him coming to see her whenever he is in Sydney, but they must have because he always contacts Grace and naturally leaves her an envelope. This arrangement works for both Jo and Grace, they receive much needed money and he gets a very good time, he calls them and if they are free they meet up. Henry does not have a financial arrangement with anybody else.

Henry also has two lady friends in New Zealand and always tries to see them when he is in that country, they are mother and daughter and they are both good friends. Alexa and Olivia were born and raised in New Zealand and both still live on the North Island. They have known Henry since October 2001 on the day Olivia was in a fatal car accident with her sister Zara.

Henry crawled under their car to try to free them from the wreckage. He found that Zara was already dead and Olivia was trapped and could not move, he called an ambulance and the fire department and promised to stay with her until the fire truck arrived. This was a decision that could have gone very wrong for him, with the car being upside-down and the petrol pouring out of the tank and it was running under the car soaking his trousers, leaving him in a pool of petrol. Olivia was very frightened and was clinging to Henry's hand begging him not to leave her, so he naturally told her he would stay with her until she was cut free.

The ambulance and fire engine arrived at the same time and quickly surveyed the situation, the Fire Chief ordered Henry out from under the car to which Henry explained to the chief as nicely as possible, that was not going to happen. The chief started explaining why Henry had to move so Henry asked him if they needed the space where he was lying to work, the chief said no, they would go through the side as the top of the vehicle was too badly crushed.

Henry told them to carry on and cut Olivia free. For some strange reason that seemed to work and they started bringing in the jacks to open up the side of the car. Henry smiled at Olivia and squeezed her hand and asked her name, she told him, and asked his. He explained to her that the driver had unfortunately died, Olivia bust into tears and told Henry that Zara is her sister, I am so sorry Olivia, but right now we must concentrate on getting you free. The operation to free Olivia took the best part of forty five minutes and apart from words of reassurance Henry and Olivia did not talk about anything else at all.

Olivia was lifted free and carried to the ambulance, Henry crawled out from under the car and got five paces away when the car exploded. He was blasted through the air in a ball of flame with all his clothes on fire. If it was not for a quick thinking fireman Henry would have been very badly burnt or dead. The fireman sprayed him with foam before he hit the ground which put out the fire, he was then helped to the ambulance.

The ambulance rushed Henry and Olivia to the Lakes District Hospital where Olivia went straight into surgery and Henry to the burns unit. He had second degree burns on his legs and back and he also had a few cuts and scratches but otherwise he felt he was alright. Olivia on the other hand

had a broken right leg, a broken left shoulder blade, three broken ribs which one of them had punctured her lung and her lung was slowly filling up with blood. When they arrived at hospital she went into cardiac arrest and it took the team several minutes to bring her back and stabilise her, she was then rushed into surgery which lasted seven and a half hours, she was then transferred to a recovery room.

By that time Henry was waiting and the ward sister told him he could stay if he wanted to but it was likely she would not wake up for at least a couple of hours. Just then a nurse handed Olivia's handbag to him, he took it and sat down in the chair next to Olivia's bed. He opened the handbag and found what he expected to find in a young ladies handbag, a make-up bag, a small packet of tissues, a diary and a mobile phone. He felt that unless he had to, he would not open her diary, so he picked up her mobile and searched for home.

During the forty five minutes trapped under the car Olivia had told him that Zara was her only sister and she did not have a brother. He pressed home on the mobile not knowing if she lived by herself or not, no reply so he searched for mother and father, he found mum, so he pressed the call button and waited.

It rang and rang and rang and just when he started to say to himself, please, please be there, her mother answered saying, sorry I took so long to answer honey, I was outside in the garden and forgot to take my phone. This was the first time in Henry's life that he was a little hesitant to answer but he knew he had to take control of the situation because the hospital thought he and Olivia were an item.

He said, I wish to speak to Olivia's mother, her reply was, who are you and why have you got Olivia's phone? He said my name is Henry James and I am sorry to tell you Olivia has been in a car accident and is now in Lakes District Hospital Queenstown. Her mother replied, "Oh My God" is she alright. Henry explained that she has some broken bones and has just undergone a seven and a half hour operation for a punctured lung, she is now in a recovery room sleeping.

He then went on to ask her where she was and she explained that she was on holiday at her friends house in Sydney, she sounded very upset and a little unsure what to do. Henry said, I am sure you wish to come to the hospital and see Olivia for yourself, yes, I do want to do that but not sure how I go about it. Henry said the first thing you should do is not to worry as everything is going according to plan, so please let me take care of all the arrangement for you.

She started to ask some questions and Henry knew he must stop her because it was not the right time to tell her about Zara. He said, all I need to know is your full name and I will arrange everything for you, she was a little lost for words but said my name is Alexa Johnson, Henry quickly asked if he may call her Alexa, certainly she replied. Henry then asked if Olivia's father was with her, she said no, he died two years ago, I am so sorry Henry replied. I will also need your passport number Alexa, and then I will phone you from my mobile once I have made the arrangements. How long will it take you to get to Sydney International Airport from your

friends home, about forty minutes. Henry told her it should not take him very long to make the arrangements so please be ready to leave at short notice. they then said their goodbyes and he put Olivia's mobile down.

Henry was used to making urgent arrangements so this was easy for him, he phoned the Private Jet Charter company at Biggin Hill in Kent. He told them he needed a private jet from Sydney International to Queenstown South Island New Zealand for one maybe two passengers as quickly as possible. Because they knew Henry they would arrange this for him and he would pay them later. Ted said please give me twenty minutes and I will get back to you with the details Mr James.

Fifteen minutes later Henry's mobile rang and Ted said all sorted Mr James, so please give me the passengers name and passport number, Henry told Ted that it will only be one passenger and gave him her name and passport number. He then phoned Alexa back and she answered immediately and Henry told her to leave straight away as the private jet was waiting for her and explained where she should go once she got to the airport.

Please make sure you store my mobile number in your phone so you can get me at any time, if my mobile is engaged please phone Olivia's. She thanked him and said she did not know how she was going to pay him back but would make a plan once she got home, he told her not to worry about anything and please phone me once you are in the air, he then rang off. One hour after he last spoke to Alexa, Henry's phone rang Alexa said we have just taken off and the pilot told me we will be on the ground in Queenstown in three hours. Henry said that sounds about right, there will be a driver waiting for you, he then told her that Olivia is doing well so please do not worry unnecessarily.

Now Henry had made the arrangements for Olivia's mother to see her daughter he thought he should go back to the burns unit and get a nurse to pour a bottle of Colloidal Silver over his burns because his legs were hurting like hell. After she had done that she put Aloe Vera gel which helps with scarring. Henry uses Colloidal Silver and Aloe Vera gel for many things and knows just how good it is and expects his legs and back to be well on the way to recovery in a few days. He also feels he should postpone the business appointment he has for tomorrow as he will not be able to make it.

Three and a half hours later Alexa walked into the Lakes District Hospital in Queenstown and asked the nurse behind the reception desk where she could find Olivia Johnson, she was directed to the recovery room. She entered and found Henry sitting next to the bed holding Olivia's hand, she said hello would you be Henry. Yes, I am, he stood up and held out his hand to shake Alexa's hand, while saying, you must be Alexa. She smiled and said we are past the hand shaking stage, please give me a hug. Alexa then went and kissed Olivia on her forehead, Olivia had still not woken up. She said she looks so peaceful. She then turned and looked at Henry and said why are you in a hospital gown, Henry said, nothing serious just a few cuts they are treating, I am in another area of the hospital but I have been sitting here waiting for you just in case she

came round and there was nobody with her.

Now that you have arrived I can go back to my own bed and I will leave a message for the surgeon so she can come and see you as soon as she is free. Alexa said thank you Henry, we will talk later, he smiled and turned to leave and she asked, do you know if she met her sister Zara, because I have been calling her mobile but I have not had a reply.

Henry turned back and said, please sit down as I have something to tell you, Alexa looked very worried but sat down and looked up at Henry. I do not know the right way to say this, so I think I must just say what I know. I was sitting outside a little café waiting for my coffee to arrive when fifty yards away there was a car accident, a truck had run a stop light and smashed into a car. I ran to see if I could be of any help and being the first on the scene I found two women trapped in their car that was upside down, I crawled inside to see if I could help get them out. The driver was Zara and I am so sorry but she suffered serious head injuries and she was pronounced dead when the paramedics arrived.

Alexa burst into tears, she jumped up and fell into Henry's arms, he hugged her and kissed her on the top of her head. They just stood there holding each other with Alexa sobbing, when she half stopped sobbing she looked up at Henry and said to him, I am pleased you told me and not some police or hospital official, thank you very much for that and also getting me here. When you are ready and you feel you wish to know anything else just ask me, he then gave her another kiss on her head and said I will leave you with Olivia now, and he returned to his room in the burns unit.

Three hours later there was a knock and Alexa poked her head around his door, please come in Henry said, she almost ran to him and threw her arms around him, Oh Henry she cried, why did you not tell me that you suffered second degree burns, he smiled and said, for two reasons, firstly, you have enough to cope with and my condition is not serious, so I did not need to bother you. She squeezed his hand and said please let me see your burns, he turned around and lifted his gown up and Alexa said "Oh My God" in a raised voice, he let the gown go and turned back to face her. Do not worry yourself about that it will be a lot better in a couple of days, now tell me if Olivia has woken up. Yes, and she wants to see you.

They walked along the corridor and into the elevator to go down to Olivia's room, when they walked in Olivia started to cry saying she was very sorry for getting him burned, Henry told her she had absolutely nothing to be sorry about so please stop crying. How do you feel he asked, a lot better for seeing you, I need to kiss you and thank you for being there for me when I desperately needed a friend. If you ever feel that you need a friend to talk to in the future, you can always give me a call, Alexa has my mobile number. I am very sorry you got burnt and mum says you have been burnt quite badly, well, that is because your mother knows absolutely nothing about burns and I can assure you I will be out of here in two or three days at the most, I cannot afford to stay any longer as I have far too much work on.

I have got to be back in London by the end of next week at the latest

and one week later I will be in New York. I think I will call the guys I had an appointment with and see if they will be happy having our first meeting here in the hospital as it would save a lot of time. Mother and daughter just looked at him and shook their heads, how can you think about work at a time like this, Henry smiled and said, life goes on ladies.

Now you are awake and you are looking much better I will leave you as I have some calls to make, if either of you need anything just give me a shout and I will do my best to help you. Henry got back to his room and phoned George Doncaster, George said I am more than happy to do whatever is the easiest for you, so Henry suggested 10.30 tomorrow in the waiting room and quickly said, it will only be a preliminary first meeting so that I can put some figures together.

They agreed and he put the phone down and smiled to himself, who would believe I am planning to tie up a multi million pound deal in my hospital gown. Henry dropped in to see Olivia before retiring for the evening, he asked if they are both okay and said you seem to be having a mother and daughter talk, so I will see you tomorrow.

He returned to his room and got the nurse to pour another bottle of Colloidal Silver over his legs and back and then cover the burns with Aloe Vera gel. The nurse noted that the burns did not look so angry. At seven the next day Henry went to see Olivia and gave her a hug and a peck on her cheek and asked how she was feeling today, I feel a lot better thank you, how are you, positively good he replied. Once I have had my meeting I will come back to see how you are, he turned and left.

He asked the ward nurse if he could hold a meeting in his room as it would be private, she smiled and said that would be alright. At 10:30 a nurse brought George Doncaster into Henry's room, Henry thanked the nurse and shook hands with George. They both smiled and George sat down asking Henry how he is feeling, I am alright thank you George, and sorry I could not make it to your offices, not a problem George said, and then he told Henry that he has been all over the news channels and he is now a hero. They got straight down to business and Henry came up with a plan that George was happy with, he said, this looks very good to me but it has to be approved by the board so we will have a meeting tomorrow to go over your plan and I will get back to you after we have decided. They shook hands and George left saying I will call you tomorrow, thank you and I hope you get better soon.

Henry went to see Olivia and Alexa and on the way called in to the ward nurse to see if Olivia could have a take out from a local restaurant, she said I think that would be a nice gesture and gave him a number of one she could recommend. When he got to her room mother and daughter where sitting smiling and talking, the picture looked a nice one.

He said may I come in ladies, they both said, of course you can. Well, as I cannot take you to lunch may I order something in, and before you ask I have cleared it with the ward nurse and she even gave me a number of a restaurant she recommends. Henry phoned and they went through the menu and all three ordered a pasta dish and a large bowl of salad for the three of them. While they waited they had some small talk and then

Alexa asked Henry if he could give her the amount she owes him, he said I told you not to worry about that and I meant it, now let me make a deal with you about the cost. Alexa took a deep breath and said okay.

Henry said, do not look so worried I am not going to suggest you sleep with me, Alexa looked at him and burst out laughing, he then said, this is the deal I wish to offer you, if I can get an agreement on the deal I have put together today then there is no charge for you at all, as I will cover all of it. Alexa opened her mouth to speak but Henry took her in his arms and gave her a big hug and said, all you need to say is, thank you Henry, and let it go, she did just that and then the food arrived.

He made the sale the next day and went to tell Alexa that her debt was paid in full and he will still be making a profit so he is happy. She hugged him and he gave her a kiss on her cheek and said I really like you two and I would like to see you when I return to New Zealand, if you are both happy with that. I do not know if you have a boyfriend or a live in lover Olivia, but I would very much like to see you both again. Mother and daughter laughed and Olivia said, nobody.

They smiled at each other, and said we would also like to see you again. So, when Henry travels to Australia or New Zealand he nearly always sees Alexa or Olivia, and occasionally they both arrive together. They have become good friends over the years and the three of them look forward to the next time they see each other. Henry travelled to New Zealand several times over the last six months and managed to see Alexa and Olivia every time he was in New Zealand.

C

Chapter 3

Henry looks back over his life

Today Henry is in Singapore and he will be signing a new deal with one of the largest pension company's in South East Asia. When he is in Singapore he always stays at the Raffles Hotel on Beach Road. All his bookings are made by Lydia his private secretary/ investment manager, and at the end of his second year she also books anybody that travels with him, in first class. Lydia thinks it is a nice little perk that he has worked many hours for. His life is mainly spent working, a minimum of sixty to eighty hours per week, he travels to the America's, South East Asia and the Scandinavian countries on a regular basis. He spends an awful lot of time flying around the globe, and sometimes he thinks this might not be very good for him, it just seems like one hell of a way to make a living, a very nice living, but, one hell of a way. He sometimes thinks he should have played more golf so that he could have got down to scratch and turned professional, like Christine.

The Boeing 777 lifted off the runway at Changi International Airport heading for Heathrow, Henry James sat in the first class cabin in seat A12, he settled down knowing that this was going to be a long flight. He closed his eyes and started thinking back over his life, all the things that he had done. He felt unhappy about some decisions he had made, not always the right ones.

On looking back at some of his decisions, he felt he must have made some of them with his little head and not the big one on his shoulders. However, the one thing that he is very proud of is the fact that every decision he has ever taken regarding investments for any of his clients, have always been the right ones. He had only made money for them and he had never lost one penny of his clients money, and in this business, that must also be a record.

Henry learnt about gold diggers at an early age, when he was thirteen he used to play in all Junior events and his handicap was coming down the more he played and he was very happy about that. Leeba Berkovich asked him if he would be her partner in the mixed pairs that year, she was three months older than Henry and they got on okay, even though he thought she did not play golf very well, because she seemed to be more interested in boys, than playing golf, and he did not understand why she would come to a golf club if she was not interested in golf. With Henry it was a passion, just like everything he did. However, one day he overheard Leeba talking to one of her friends, and she was saying that she only plays golf with Henry because her mother insisted that she asked him. Her friend asked if she would rather play with John. In more ways than golf, was her reply, and they both laughed. Henry was shocked and did not understand why Mrs Berkovich insisted Leeba played with him. Then he heard Leeba say, my mother tells me it is very important to select the right man at an early

age, and Henry is the best catch at this club. He then understood what he had heard his mother say to his father more than two years before.

Most of them are gold diggers David. Even from an early age, Henry was not backwards in coming forwards, he walked straight up to Leeba and said to her, I do not think we are suited, you should rather ask John to play golf with you, I will withdraw our names from the mixed pairs and he turned and walked away, Leeba and her friend just stood and stared after him.

One day Henry was sitting at the club with his father and some of his fathers golf partners, they were having a snack before playing the back nine. Bill Jordan asked Henry why he does not have his name down in the Junior mixed pairs this year, I do not have a partner Henry replied. There are many girls in this club that would play with you young man, do you mean the gold diggers daughters Mr Jordan, and the table erupted in laughter.

The following year Henry was on the practise range with his bucket of balls and he noticed a red head arrive with a bucket of balls and she started hitting the balls a lot like Henry hits his balls, not trying to smash the cover off the ball but hitting to different flags on the range. She was changing clubs and changing distances every four or five balls, Henry thought this girl is serious about golf. He waited until she had finished and he then walked up to her and introduced himself, she said pleased to meet you Henry, my name is Christine.

They talked and Henry told her he thought her swing was very good, he then asked her if she would like a round of golf with him tomorrow. I would love to play on this course but I am not a member here, Henry said, I do not understand, because I have seen you around the clubhouse. Christine explained that she is a caddy for a few of the ladies and the only time she has played here was last year when the caddies played against the members. Henry told her, it is not a problem for you to play with me, I will check you in as my guest, he did this and they played the next four weekends. Henry was very impressed with Christine's game and asked her if she would like to become a member, that is my dream Henry but I cannot afford the fees. Henry told her he would speak with his mother and father and get back to her.

When he got home his mother and father were sitting in the garden enjoying a glass of wine, he shook his fathers hand and kissed his mother. They asked if he had a good game with his red head, yes thank you, I did, and I am glad you are both here because I wish to talk to you about Christine. They looked at him and his father said, this must be serious my boy, yes father, it is. Then you have the floor Henry, Christine, my red head as you call her, is a very good player, she has a fantastic swing and I would like her to partner me in the mixed pairs this year.

I do not see a problem my boy and you do not need our permission to pick a partner, I know that father, however, Christine is not a member and she cannot afford to become one. She is very serious about playing golf, she caddies for a few of the ladies and with the money they pay her she

goes to the municipal course to play. So you want us to pay for her membership Henry, no father, I am asking you to loan me the money and I will pay you back over the next nine months, well, that depends on how much interest you charge me.

Do not be silly Henry, we would not charge you interest, that is very kind of you mother, I am interested in knowing how you can pay back the loan in nine months, David asked. I have looked at my allowance and I can see places that I can save, I can cut out all entertainment outside of the golf club, also the bus ride I take at school most days, I could walk, together, this would make up most of Christine's fees.

That is very admirable my boy, just a couple more questions Henry, what is it about this red head that makes you want to do this, she is a very dedicated golf player father, and this would be my way of helping her, I can assure you she is very serious about golf. Have you met her family Henry, no father, her father died two years ago and she tells me her mother just about keeps the roof over their heads. Have you got something to do for ten minutes Henry, as I would like to talk to your mother, certainly father, I will go and find Jessie, she may have some cake for me, I am sure she has Alexandra said.

When Henry returned his mother and father explained to him what they plan to do, his mother said, the club needs more junior players especially young ladies. His father then explained to him, that his mother will start a programme for underprivileged juniors and his red head will be the first. That is fantastic, thank you both so much, now I suggest you go and phone her and find out if she and her mother can come to the club and join us for lunch tomorrow.

Henry got up and kissed his mother and then went inside the house to phone Christine, David looked at Alexandra and said, I think our boy is growing up. Christine's mother answered the phone and Henry said, good afternoon Mrs Davidson, Henry James speaking, good afternoon Henry, I am afraid Christine is not at home right now. I am not looking for Christine, I wish to talk to you, this sounds serious Henry. Not at all, my father asked me to phone you to ask if you and Christine would be able to join us for lunch at the golf club around 13:00 tomorrow. I am sure that we can Henry, that is very kind of your father, and I look forward to meeting your family, thank you Mrs Davidson, we will see you both tomorrow. Henry went back outside to tell his father that Mrs Davidson will be there, that's good my boy.

At 12:45 on Sunday Henry was sitting in the golf club with his mother and father and they were all having a drink. His father looked up and said, your red head has just walked in, please be a gentleman and escort her over. Henry got up and walked over and said hello Christine, she replied, hello Henry. She then introduced him to her mother, they shook hands and Henry said, please come and meet my mother and father, and he lead the way.

This is Mrs Davidson and her daughter Christine, please meet my mother and father, Lord and Lady James. They got up and all shook hands,

please be seated David said, now what would you like to drink, Christine had an orange juice and her mother asked for a glass of red wine. When the waiter had left David looked at Christine's mother and said, Lord and Lady is far to formal, we are David and Alexandra, Christine's mother said, I am Jennifer and they all smiled. We have asked you here for lunch because we wish to ask you something.

David addressed Christine and said, Henry tells us that you are very serious about playing golf Christine, yes Lord James, David smiled and said, Mr and Mrs James will do for you Christine, when you are older that may change, but for now, Mr and Mrs is fine, how serious are you.

My father started me playing when I was six and it seems that golf is all I think about, one day I want to turn professional. That will take a lot of dedication, and what is your handicap at present Alexandra asked, I play off twelve and feel I could get it down if I could play more, Christine answered. That is very good David said, are you the same age as Henry, I am six months younger than Henry, that's okay, now. Alexandra and I have had a talk about juniors in general and you in particular Christine.

We have decided to set up a programme for juniors that cannot afford the membership fees, but are very interested in playing golf. Alexandra said, the club needs more juniors that wish to play golf and if it is only the fees that are stopping them, then it is our duty to make a plan. David continued, the programme would be set up with rules and regulations, and at the end of each year we would need to know that you could still not afford the membership fees and your golf is improving.

So young lady, if you are interested, we are offering you the first place in this programme. Christine was shocked and the look on her face said it all, everybody was smiling and Christine then said, thank you very much Mr James, I would love this opportunity to become a member and play at this club, and I can assure you I will not let you down.

The programme apart from you becoming a member, you will also have time with Jasper Conway, our club professional, we want to see our juniors become top rate golfers. Alexandra will sort all that out in the next couple of weeks. However, from today you can play here as often as you want to, you do not need to wait for your membership card. That is, providing your mother is happy for you to be the first in this programme.

Christine looked at her mother and Jennifer smiled and said, I do not know how to thank you David, I feel honoured that you are asking. David replied, we take it that your mother is happy for you to accept Christine, now, is everybody ready to eat, they all got up and David lead the way to the restaurant.

When they were all seated the waiter asked if they all wanted the Sunday roast, everybody said, yes please, and to drink, David, Alexandra and Jennifer had red wine, Christine and Henry had water. Alexandra asked Jennifer, do you work locally, yes, since I lost my job I clean offices, because I cannot find other work, what did you do before you lost your job? I am a qualified pastry chef and when Browns was sold two years ago I was paid off.

Alexandra said, do not disappear after lunch I would like to talk to you. During lunch, it was just small talk and while they were drinking their coffee David asked if you two are playing this afternoon? Henry replied, not this afternoon father, as I am planning to introduce Christine to Jasper, I wish to suggest an idea to him for his consideration. No doubt this idea will cost him some money my boy, the short answer is, yes father.

However, you have always told me that you have to speculate to accumulate. That is perfectly true my boy. When they had all finished Alexandra turned to Jennifer and asked her if she would come to her office with her, they got up and excused themselves and Jennifer thanked David for lunch and they headed towards the offices. Henry turned to Christine and asked if she was ready to meet Jasper, Henry excused himself and Christine, and she thanked David for her lunch, you are more than welcome young lady, now go and see what Henry has in mind for you, they turned and headed towards the Pro shop.

Alexandra showed Jennifer into her office and pointed to a chair in front of her desk, Alexandra sat in her chair behind her desk. Alexandra looked at Jennifer and told her, right now this club is looking for a pastry chef, so if you are interested I will give our chef a call right now. Jennifer gulped and said, most definitely. Alexandra picked up the phone and called the kitchen, the phone was answered and she asked for Claude, when Claude answered she thanked him for the meal and asked him if he had found a pastry chef yet, ah non, Claude replied.

I have a qualified pastry chef in my office right now, before Alexandra could say another word Claude said, do not let him leave, I am on my way, she put the phone down and said to Jennifer, because I am the manager of the estate I can get you this interview with our head chef, however, he is the one that appoints his staff, so it will be up to you to impress Claude.

In no time at all there was a knock on the door and Claude entered, Alexandra introduced them and Jennifer said, Bonjour Monsieur, oh là là Claude replied, she speaks French, come with me my dear, let us go to the kitchen and talk about pastry. Alexandra said, I will be in the clubhouse with David when you have finished.

Henry and Christine walked into the Pro shop and a voice said good afternoon Henry, I will be out in a couple of minutes. Jasper came from his workshop and shook Henry's hand and asked why he had not seen him for about three weeks, would this young lady be the reason. Henry introduced Christine and told Jasper that his mother is setting up a new programme for Juniors, and Christine is the first one to join the programme.

Jasper said, that's great Christine, I trust we will see you around here pretty often. Not being one to waste time Henry said to Jasper, I have an idea that will attract more business for you, and I would like to spend a few minutes explaining my idea to you. I have time right now so give it your best shot, because I know your ideas always cost me money,

I would like you to build a full set of clubs for Christine, Jasper just looked at Henry and raised his eyebrows. Henry took no notice and just

continued, I believe Christine's clubs are about one inch too long for her, she plays very well with them, however, she would play a lot better if she had a made to measure set, I totally agree with you Henry. My problem is, understanding how that would attract more business for me.

That is because you are not seeing the bigger picture Jasper, Christine plays off a 12 handicap, in my opinion, her clubs do not fit her, she also does not play as often as she would like too, however, now that she is a member she will be playing at every opportunity she gets.

When Christine gets down to scratch she will be turning professional, and with the right equipment that will happen in a few years time. Now, consider this, your name will be on her clubs and every young lady will want to emulate her. My Henry, you do have a way about you, I am sure you will go far in life, I bet you could sell ice to Eskimos. Jasper turned to Christine and said, did Henry tell you about this before you came here, no, not at all, I had no idea what he wanted to talk to you about, let's go into my workshop and do some checking.

He gave Christine a driver and asked her to stand on the mat and hit ten balls into the net, she did that and he said, it looks like you are about right Henry so lets take some measurements. After he had finished he said, you need your clubs to be, one and one quarter inch shorter. So you want to be a professional Christine? more than anything else. He then said, I will build you a set of made to measure clubs, however, I will want to see a lowering of your handicap over a short time scale.

I am thinking one in the first four months and four over the first year, if you do that I will not be asking Henry to pay. They all laughed, now, what day can you come back so I can take full measurement, I can come after school tomorrow afternoon if that is alright with you, that will be perfect, I will also ask Alexandra to confirm your handicap so we have a starting point. They shook hands and thanked Jasper, once outside Christine said, thank you very much Henry, and gave him a peck on his cheek.

Henry and Christine walked back to the clubhouse where they found Henry's mother and father drinking coffee, they sat down and David said, how did you get on with Jasper my boy, very well thank you father, he has agreed to build Christine a full set of made to measure clubs. Christine said, I must agree with Jasper, Henry does have a way with words, If I did not hear him myself I would not have believed what happened.

Henry explained what he wanted Jasper to do and Jasper agreed, it was unbelievable, however, I am very pleased and excited, I am going to see Jasper again tomorrow to have formal measurements taken. That is fantastic Christine, Alexandra then asked, did he say your clubs were too long or too short, Henry said, he felt my clubs are 1 inch too long, after Jasper had taken a couple of measurements he said, I needed clubs 1 and a 1/4 inch shorter. Jasper also said, that he will ask you to play a round of golf with me to establish my handicap.

This is because he wishes my handicap to come down by one stroke in the first four months and four strokes within the year. Do you feel

confident to make that happen Christine, if I can play better with the clubs he is making for me, then I feel I will not have a problem to achieve that. What about Tuesday afternoon when you have finished school, that would be perfect, I can get here about 15:30, Alexandra said, I will make a tea time for 16:00.

Jennifer and Claude walked into the clubhouse and came straight over to David and Alexandra, Claude looked at Alexandra and said, she is a fantastic pastry chef and I have employed her with immediate effect. Jennifer will naturally be on a one-month trial, but I do not think there will be a problem Claude said, I must go and finish up and he shook David's hand and gave Alexandra a peck on the cheek, he then turned to Jennifer shook her hand and Alexandra welcomed her on board and said, I will see you on Sunday. Claude turned and headed for the kitchen, David congratulated Jennifer on her new job, she said, thank you for the opportunity Alexandra and they stood up and hugged each other. Christine said, this has been such a fantastic day and things can only get better.

Jennifer started the following Sunday and Claude asked her to make all sorts of fancy pastries, she was in her element and after two weeks Claude said, your probation period is over and your salary will be raised by 25%, I am so impressed with you.

On Monday afternoon Christine returned to the pro shop to see Jasper, he greeted her and they went to his workshop where he made some more measurements and gave her different clubs so she could hit 5 balls with each club, when he had finished he said to Christine, I now have everything I need to make you a made-to-measure set of clubs. They will be ready for next weekend, Christine said, thank you very much Jasper.

I have arranged a game with Mrs James for tomorrow. Jasper said, I have one condition regarding your new clubs, you give me your old clubs and the bag as you will receive your clubs in a new bag, Christine said, that would be a pleasure, thank you Jasper. On Tuesday afternoon Alexandra and Christine played 18 holes and Alexandra confirmed Christine plays off a twelve handicap. On the Saturday morning Jasper gave Christine her made to measure clubs, each club has a label on it which states, made to measure by Jasper Conway.

Christine's new bag is purple, and she thinks it looks beautiful, in white lettering it gives Jaspers name and contact information. Henry and Christine played for the next two weekends and she told Jasper she had already dropped her handicap by one shot, he smiled and said, I am very pleased with you and I have already had one enquiry for made-to-measure clubs. Within the next nine months Christine's handicap was down to seven and by the end of the year she had dropped a further shot.

Henry and Christine won the Junior mixed pairs that year by four shots, the following year they went on to win it by six shots. The third year was the last year Henry could play in the juniors competition's because he will be 18 on his next birthday and had to play as an adult from then on. From the first time that Christine had her new clubs she won junior ladies singles

until she turned eighteen, she then played as an adult and won the ladies singles for the next four years. At the age of twenty two she reached for her dream and turned professional, playing on the Ladies European Tour, not quite winning a major in the first five years, however, she made a very good living. From time to time Henry and Christine managed to play a game together, however, it was not very often they found themselves at the club at the same time.

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enry visits the family home

On a cold Saturday morning in February 2001 Henry climbed out of the helicopter in front of the family home, he always feels very happy when he returns to Queensberry Manor as it is such a beautiful house and the setting is spectacular. He was greeted by Philip the butler, good morning Mr Henry and welcome home, it's good to be here Philip and you are looking very well indeed, thank you sir, and so are you, are my parents at home? Your father is out riding and your mother was in the lounge the last time I saw her, thank you Philip, I will go and find her, and I will take your case to your room sir.

He found his mother standing looking out of the large windows in the dinning room. He said, good morning mother, she spun round and almost ran to him, throwing her arms around him and scolding him for not letting her know he was coming home. Alexandra James is a very attractive woman, she still has a near perfect figure and with high cheek bones which gives her face a stunning look, at 46 she still looks the perfect lady of the manor. They walked around the garden arm in arm talking about things in general, well, Alexandra was doing most of the talking.

After lunch Henry said I am going to change and then take a ride, would you like me to accompany you or are you like your father today and want to go on your own. Mother, you are welcome to join me if you wish to ride, but do not use me because you and father had a disagreement earlier today, why is it you always know, because you make it so bloody obvious and I have told you before, it is not nice, you should sort out any problems you have with one another straight away.

As usual you are correct, but please bear in mind you are not married yet, just wait until you are and then we will see if you are still, Mr Perfect, his father said to him. When he returned his mother was waiting for him and they went out to the stables and their horses had already been saddled up, they said thank you to Georgia the stable girl and Henry asked her how has Sultan been? he is looking and riding very well, Henry said, thank you for looking after him while I am away, it is my pleasure as he is a beautiful stallion, Henry shook her hand and said, thank you Georgia.

After dinner the three of them sat having a drink and talking about things in general and the open fire was making a very pleasant atmosphere, David started to nod off so Henry thought it is about time to go to bed. On his past his father he asked him if he would like to join mother and I for a game of golf in the morning. That would be very nice my boy, what time do you want to tee off. 08:00 would be good if we can get a tee time, leave that with me. I still have a little pull around here, thank you father, I am going to turn in now and I will see you two in the morning, he kissed his mother and squeezed his father's shoulder as he walked passed his

chair, they both said, goodnight Henry and he walked out of the room.

Henry walked into the kitchen at 07:00 and put his arms around Jessie and said good morning, it is so good to see you in the morning Henry, you should consider moving back home. He burst out laughing and just kept hugging her, and how do you think that would work out Jessie? Well, I do know your mother would be very happy indeed. I am sure you are right, but we both know that it would not work in the long run, they smiled at each other and he asked her what she was going to give him for breakfast.

If you join your mother and father in the breakfast room I will give you what I think you will enjoy, thank you Jessie, I do miss having you make food for me, is that all you miss Henry, not really Jessie, I miss everything about living here. After breakfast they set off for the golf course, and as normal when Henry played with his mother he always gave her two shots. It was a beautiful morning, cold and crisp and the ball seemed to fly a lot further, after they had finished the game they looked at their score cards, David won.

Henry seemed to be spending more and more time in America and South East Asia and was very lucky to spend six days in London each month, Lydia kept telling him he must slow down, and take some time off. Henry just smiled at her and told her he loved his job and I get a lot of excitement signing so many new contracts, and because of all the referrals we keep getting it is so much easier than when he first started.

I understand that Henry, but I feel you are burning yourself out and you are far too young to develop a serious health problem, you know you spend so much time flying from country to country I just fear for your health. Slow down, go and spend some time with your friends, I do not have many friends Lydia, then go and make some new ones. I am really touched that you consider my health Lydia. However, you and I need to make money while we can. You are impossible Henry James, and I love you Lydia Bishop.

The first three months of 2001 seemed to be flying by, at the beginning of April Lydia received a call from Acapulco asking to make an appointment with Henry. My name is Diego Mendez and we would like to see Henry as soon as possible, please tell him we have decided to increase the amount of our investment. Also our wives have told my partner and I that Henry needs to come back to Acapulco for another night of dancing. Lydia smiled and said, I am sure he will want to make this appointment as soon as possible as he did enjoy that evening. Please let me check out his diary and I will phone you back within the hour. Lydia called back and told Diego Mendez the earliest she could give him an appointment was Friday 13th April, I cannot get Henry to Acapulco before the 12th. Yes please we will take that appointment, and my wife will book a table for the evening of the 14th.

By the time Henry returned to Acapulco he had passed Sir John's target by £4m. At the appointment Diego told Henry that they wished to increase their investment by the equivalent of £3m, Henry thanked him and then said, please tell the ladies, this time I have brought my dancing

shoes so I am ready for another night of Latin dancing. My wife will be thrilled Henry. This time Henry was ready to dance Latin, he had purchased a pair of dance trousers together with a shirt and the correct dance shoes. When the ladies saw him they threw their arms around his neck, hugging and kissing him, he really did look the part.

All three ladies looked absolutely stunning and very sexy with their dresses that had splits up one side to at least the thigh, one was red another black and the third was mainly dark blue with a white flash down one side. Henry made sure he drank two glasses of water before his first dance, he felt more the part in his new clothes and was assured of his actions. All three ladies told him his Latino Dancing has improved. They kept him on the floor for three hours none stop, before he made them return to the table. By the end of the night Henry knew if he had only just met these ladies at the dance hall tonight, and they were not clients wives, they would all be heading back to his room. This was the hottest dance night he had ever had, he loved it and wanted this on a regular bases.

While Henry was in Acapulco Lydia received a call on Monday 16th from the Wood Carvers, they told her that the Baronial Tudor four poster bed was ready for delivery. Can you deliver this week, we can deliver on Friday 20th around 13:00 if that is alright for you. That would work for me, we will see you on Friday. Parker buzzed Lydia at 12:45 telling her Mr James has a delivery. All three men have identities and one man would like to come up to see inside the property before bringing several parcels up, that's fine Parker. When he got out of the lift Lydia was standing at the door, please come this way, he removed his shoes and put on a pair of slippers and asked, which bedroom are we putting the four poster in. This way, she showed him through to the master bedroom, am I correct, it must go against that wall, that is correct. He then placed a dust cover over the carpet away from where the bed was going, he told Lydia this is for us to unpack on and to assemble.

When they got back to the door the other two men were standing with two bed posts. While they returned to their delivery van the first guy carried the posts into the bedroom, and unpacked, by the time they returned with two more posts he was waiting. Both the posts and the base only just managed to fit in the lift, when they had all the pieces of the bed unpacked they started to assemble. When they had finished assembling the four poster they unpacked the mattress and placed it on the base, the foreman went to find Lydia and asked her to please come and inspect.

She looked around the bed and told them, it looks perfect to me, she was then asked if she knew where the figurines were. I will go and fetch them for you, she came back and gave them to the foreman, he asked which side of the bed Mr James sleeps on. I have absolutely no idea, not to worry, they are made to go either side. I will place the Lord on the right side and if Mr James feels he would like them the other way round I am sure he will change them over.

When they had left Lydia removed the linen from the cupboard and she made up the bed so that it would be ready for Henry when he returned.

Before she returned to the office she stood back and looked at this marvellous four poster bed, You most definitely need a wife to share this bed with Henry. Lydia returned to the office and decided she would have an early weekend.

Henry returned early on Saturday morning and found his brief on his desk with a note from Lydia, Roger will pick you up at 21:30 for an overnight to New York returning Friday morning. I will see you next Friday. I trust you will enjoy tonight alone, you need a wife more than ever now. He smiled and thought, the four posters arrived, he headed to his bedroom, he walked around the bed and said to himself, this looks better than I thought it would. He phoned Lydia, good morning Henry, good morning Lydia, thank you for making the bed up for me, you are so kind, it's a pleasure Henry. I do agree with your note Lydia, I thought you would, I will see you next week Henry.

The first week in May Henry phoned Pedro Mendoza and told him he had increased his investment by 3%. That is fantastic news Henry, when can you come to see me, as I promised I would double my investment, I will ask Lydia to check my schedule and she will get back to you with a date. Ask her to give me at least one weeks notice then I will be able to arrange some of my colleagues to meet with you. Lydia phoned Señor Mendoza and arranged for the last week of May.

Henry was in London on the 15th May and took the train to the family home so that he could spend his birthday there, he told Lydia please remember for future years I would prefer not to work on my birthday. I do like that idea Henry and I will make a note. The last week of May he spent in Mexico City, Pedro increased his investment and he had arranged for six of his friends to meet Henry. The bottom line was, all six invested with Henry.

At the end of June Henry felt he was on track to pass his own target before September, as it turned out he did that the first week in August. December came and Henry sorted out all the Christmas envelopes that he gave out. Lydia's present went up to £50,000, he gave Roger £10,000 and Benson and Parker £5,000 each. They all respected Henry and would help him wherever they could. He left for the Christmas holidays and over Christmas lunch he thanked his private bankers for the loan they had given him and told them he could make his final payment.

How the hell did you manage to sign so many contracts Henry? Henry just smiled at his father and said, boyish charm father, David just sat and looked at Henry in disbelief. Randolph said, I take it you made your target Henry, and some Sir Randolph. Are you going to keep us in suspense Henry or are you going to tell us what you achieved.

My total value of contracts this year was £125.2m, overall I received my bonus on this year and last year together, total of £148m. Bonus paid £2.22m Congratulations my boy, thank you Sir Randolph, well done Henry, thank you father and let me say this my boy. I will never doubt you again. Oh Henry, you are the best son a mother could have, I second that, Martha said, and she gave him a kiss.

This is a good time for me to point something out to you all. As my private bankers I felt you had the absolute right to know how much I earn and I guess how I get paid. However, now I have repaid my loan to you gentlemen you have no automatic right to that information again. You are quite right to point that out my boy and we agree, certain things that a man does, owns, receives or purchases during his lifetime, are absolutely nothing to do with anybody else. That is providing his acquisitions are legally obtained.

Henry and Lydia started work on Monday 7th January 2002, he wished Lydia a happy New Year and asked if she and Ian had a good Christmas, very nice thank you Henry, I trust you also enjoyed your break with your family. I did indeed Lydia, thank you for asking, I have a question for you that you may not wish to answer and I would understand if you told me to mind my own business. Oh Henry, what could you possibly ask me that would make me tell you to mind your own business. Well it is of a private nature, just try me Henry and let's see. If you are prepared to tell me I would like to know what Sir John pays you and from where are you paid. Henry, all you need to do is ask the company accountant and I am sure he will tell you. Having said that, because I work for you and nobody else I assumed you knew what I get paid. I feel I should know, however, because of the way I was brought up I never considered before now that I should know, however, you are quite right, I am sorry I asked you, please forgive me for my error, and as they say in the movies, we never had this conversation.

When do I fly out Lydia, 21:45 overnight to Singapore for three days, then a one day in Brisbane then three days in New Zealand. I may have a stop over on your return in Hong Kong, I will let you know. Roger will pick you up at 18:45. I have to go out for a while Lydia, I will see you when I return, unless you have gone home, if I have then your brief will be on your desk.

Henry walked to Lancaster Gate underground station and jumped on a tube to Bank, he came out of the station and walked the ten minutes to the companies offices. Because Henry was casually dressed the first person that he saw asked him if he was still on holiday, the junior partner did not get an answer. Henry walked to the accountants office and asked his secretary if he is free, he is not in yet Mr James I do not expect him for another half an hour. Is it alright if I wait, certainly, would you like a coffee, that would be nice thank you.

About ten minutes after Henry had finished his coffee Greg Watson arrived, good morning Henry are you waiting for me, I am Greg, come in and take a seat. We do not have the pleasure of seeing you any more Henry, what can I do for you. I want to know the breakdown of Lydia's salary and does she work for the same company that I do. May I ask why you wish to know Henry. That's simple Greg, she works for me, which means I should have some input in determining what her remuneration package should be. That's fair enough Henry, let me get her folder.

Henry looked through Lydia's file and noted she had received £50,000

for 2001, she also received a bonus of £5,000. When he asked for her to become his private secretary she was then given a 15% increase putting her salary up to £57,000 for 2002. At the end of 2002 she received an increase of 10% making her salary £62,700, her bonus for 2002 went up to £10,000. Henry asked Greg, which company employs Lydia, this one in London. Henry sat back in his chair, looked at Greg and said, this is outrageous. It is in fact quite generous Henry, how did you come to that Greg. All other secretary's are on £52,000 and the maximum bonus that is paid is £12,000.

This company needs a good shake up, may I have a copy of this page please Greg, why would you need a copy Henry. If you do not wish to give me a copy then I will be taking this file, because the next office I will be entering will be Sir John's. Do you only want this page Henry, yes please Greg, he opened the door and asked his secretary to please copy this page, he gave the copy to Henry and asked, is there anything else, no thank you Greg.

Henry headed for Sir John's office and found out he would only be in after 13:00, Henry asked his secretary if he could see Sir John as soon as he arrives, it is very important I see him this afternoon as I fly out tonight for maybe two weeks. I will make sure he sees you just as soon as he arrives, while I am waiting I will take a walk to St Paul's, if he should arrive before please give me a call and I will return straight away. I will do that Henry, thank you. Henry had been at St Paul's about thirty minutes when Josephine phoned she told him Sir John had arrived and will see him just as soon as you get here, I am on my way. He got in a taxi and was there in five minutes, go straight in Henry, thank you Josephine.

This is a nice surprise Henry, we do not see you very often, what can I do for you. I am not very happy Sir John, what in the world is making you unhappy. The way that you are treating Lydia, it is diabolical and it needs to change right away. I am sorry Henry but I have no idea what you are talking about, Henry placed the copy that Greg had given him in front of Sir John. He looked at it and eventually looked back up at Henry and asked, what is the problem with this Henry. Lydia and I are a team, I now function a lot better than I did before you made Lydia my private secretary. Lydia and I bring millions in contracts and you still only pay her this miserable salary and you do not even give her a decent bonus. The bonus I give her is a lot more than what is on this sheet.

What you give her is up to you Henry, I pay her according to her position in the company, she is still a secretary. You know Sir John that she is far more than a secretary, without Lydia I would not be signing up anything like the number of contracts I do. That's my point Henry, you get the contracts signed not Lydia, she is your secretary and nothing else. What are you expecting me to do Henry, firstly let me say I did not come here to threaten you Sir John. I do not think you are being fair with Lydia, so I will give you a list of what I think is the minimum she should be receiving, for a fair and decent payment for what she does.

1. 12. In my opinion from this year onwards she should be

employed from the same company that I have been employed by since I started.

3. A 4. decent salary of £75,000 per annum with an increase of the same percentage that you give me.

5. A 6. decent bonus of 0.25% of the value of our signed contracts If she ever has to travel on behalf of the company she should travel the same as I do, first class and all expenses paid. After all, we are a team, it is not just me.

I am staggered that you think this way Henry, I do not see why Sir John, both Lydia and I are trying our very best for this company. I am being compensated very fairly, all I am asking is that my team partner is treated the same way. So you are laying down an ultimatum Henry, not at all Sir John, I am laying down what I think is a fair and proper way to treat Lydia. I am not giving you an ultimatum or threatening you, I am asking you to reconsider Lydia's employment contract, that is all. Before I leave for Heathrow would you like me to tell Lydia to call in tomorrow morning or not.

I will say absolutely not, because I feel you are pressuring me. If I wish to speak with Lydia I will phone her thank you Henry. Henry stood up and said, thank you for seeing me at such short notice Sir John, he turned and left.

When he walked in the Penthouse Lydia was just tidying her desk, she told Henry his briefs were on his desk, thank you Lydia, you are welcome Henry. After she had left Henry went for a run around the park to clear his head. He knew that if Sir John decides not to improve Lydia's remuneration package he would have to take a stand, he must speak with Sir Randolph before making any decision.

Henry decided he would eat on the plane before settling down for the night as the food was normally better in first class. He only managed to sign up two clients in Singapore this trip, still they did invest £3.5m each. While he was waiting for his flight to Brisbane he phoned Alexa and told her he would be arriving in New Zealand in two days time and he hoped he would be able to see them, I will speak to Olivia and see if she can make it. Whatever she decides I will meet you at the airport, see you then.

On Wednesday afternoon Josephine phoned Lydia and told her that Sir John would like to see her at 10:30 tomorrow, I will be there Josephine. Lydia walked into Josephine's office at 10:15, I will tell him you are here.

You can go straight in, good morning Sir John, good morning to you Lydia, please sit down. I have a couple of question to ask you, and to tell you a couple of changes we are going to make. Firstly how are you getting on working from Henry's home, very well Sir John, it is so much easier for me to get there than to come here, I also save a good forty minutes per day travelling. Because I am there on my own most of the time I never get interrupted, which means I can get far more work done than if I had to work from here. I understand Lydia, so can I say you are happy to maintain the status quo, I am very happy thank you Sir John, all round I find it much better and easier for me. Sir John just nodded.

Henry came in to see me on Monday, did you know he was coming or what he wanted to talk about? no to both question. I know he went out but he did not say where he was going and when he returned I was just leaving and he did not say anything to me.

What exactly do you do for Henry, Lydia. I make all his appointments, book all his flights and hotels, prepare the contracts and sort out the signed contracts. Is that everything Lydia, not at all Sir John, I manage all the investments that Henry has made on behalf of each company and watch the markets, if Henry has advised me to make a change I do that. So you do a lot more than a secretary would do? very much so Sir John. Henry keeps telling me we work as a very good team and I really do think he is right about that. I could not do his job and neither would I want too. Some parts of my job, well lets just say, he would find it a little difficult.

He came here to tell me he was very unhappy and I do mean very unhappy. I do not understand Sir John I cannot imagine what I have done to upset Henry. It is not you he is unhappy with Lydia. it is me, Lydia's eyes got very large and she just waited to see what was coming next. He wants me to fire you, if Henry is not happy with you Sir John, why does he want you to fire me. He feels we are not paying you fairly, so we have looked at your contract and talked about the list that Henry gave us, he gave you a list, he did indeed Lydia.

As Sir John gave Lydia a copy of the list, he told her that is why I asked you exactly what you do for Henry, this is yours to keep young lady. You will see the first thing on Henry's list tells me I need to fire you and for the first time he smiled. Lydia said, I do not understand this sir John.

Surely we both work for this company. Henry does not work for this company, I am afraid I am a little lost, I am sure you are, so let me explain how it works. Henry works for a company that is registered in Belize, so from today you will be leaving this company and you will start work at the same company that Henry works for tomorrow. There are some very good reasons that are an advantage to you by not being employed in this country.

You will no longer have to pay tax, the one downside if you can call it that is, because you no longer pay tax, when you retire you will not receive as much pension as you would if you worked here all your life.

We three senior partners are probably thought of by most members of the staff as dinosaurs, I am the youngest by at least ten years and I am 76. Anyway, we look at life a little different from you young people, to us, a secretary gets paid what secretary's get paid to do, in your case you should not have been called a secretary. So we are changing that. From tomorrow you will be starting a new position in a new company, we accept that you and Henry are a team, therefore your new position will be, Investment Manager. This title allows me to make a serious change to your remuneration package.

We agree to start you with a salary of £75k per annum and also agree to Henry's recommendation that whatever percentage we put his salary up by, yours will also be put up by the same percentage. Your bonus, you will receive a bonus of 0.25% of the value of signed contracts, this will be

carried forward to each new year. Bonuses are paid out as I am sure you know just prior to breaking up for the Christmas holidays.

I have arranged for a bank account to be opened in your name at the bank in Belize. You should receive a letter and a debit card in the post within one week, I am sure the bank will also want to manage your money for you. That will be up to you, however, I am sure Henry will give you some advice. I am sure he will Sir John. When you receive the information from the bank you will see we have given you the bonus of 0.25% for last years contracts, this is given as a good will gesture for all you have done for this company in the time you have worked here. The amount that was deposited in your account was £370k. Lydia was speechless and just sat and looked at Sir John.

Do you have any questions about the way you will be employed from now on Lydia? Also, are you happy with the changes we have made for you. Very happy Sir John and thank you very much, you are welcome Lydia. I suppose I should ask you where Henry is today, Singapore sir.

That is pretty much all I wanted to talk to you about Lydia, thank you for coming to see me. So unless you need anything I guess I will only see you just before Christmas to discuss increases. They both stood up and shook hands, one moment Lydia, Sir John called Josephine and asked if Roger is here, yes sir he has just returned, that's good, please tell him to drive Lydia back to Henry's Penthouse. That's kind of you Sir John, the weather is foul so it will be better for you to let Roger drive you.

When Lydia got back she made herself a coffee and sat at her desk and started to laugh, you are something else Henry James. She looked at the time and worked out that Henry should be finished for the day and maybe eating so she picked up the phone and called him. He answered by asking, how are you Lydia, I am very excited, in fact I am sure I have never been so happy in my life, thanks to you Henry. I have not done anything, oh yes you have, you went to see Sir John on Monday and you gave him a list of things you thought were fair.

I take it he called you in, he did indeed. He was very nice and asked me how I was getting on working from here. She then explained everything that Sir John had told her. As I was leaving he said, I guess the next time I see you will be just before Christmas to discuss increases. He then told me from tomorrow my position in my new company will be, Investment Manager. That is fantastic Lydia, congratulations on your new position, thank you Henry.

Because right now I am unemployed I am going to phone Ian and get him to come home straight away as we have some celebrating to do, just enjoy yourself whatever you plan to do today. I plan to Henry and thank you for everything you have done for me. I can only apologise for the length of time it took me to wake up, you are forgiven. Lydia phoned Ian and suggested to him that he gets home straight away as she wishes to do things to him, he told her he would leave as soon as he puts the phone down.

Henry was flying to New York, Australia and New Zealand on a regular

bases, he either saw clients in Singapore on his way to Australia or on his return to London. He was spending four or five days per month in Mexico, and if he only had appointments in Mexico City he would fly to Acapulco just to practice his Latin dancing. That is what he told Lydia, she just laughed and encouraged him to enjoy himself. Lydia and Ian were getting on far better since he learnt what Henry had done to make sure Lydia got a better deal, he always thought Henry was the same as all bankers, just a bunch of money grabbing pen pushers, who had never done a days work in their life. At the end of February, Lydia sat her husband down and told him to please not say a word until I have finished. I am now going to show you how the hours you and Henry work each month compare.

Since the 1st of this month you have worked 21 days because you never work at the weekends, Henry on the other hand has worked 26 days, he only managed to get home for two days this month and will not be back before the 4th March. You never work more than eight a day, Henry's days are never less than twelve hours and can be eighteen if his appointments takes longer than he expected them to be. He then has to fly straight on to the next one. This is because I make his appointments at least one week in advance and he has never let anybody down.

So you have worked a maximum of 168 hours this month, Henry on the other hand has worked a minimum of 312 hours. I need you to stop keep trying to put Henry down. Henry is a good, honest, kind and considerate man, who, I believe like you, would do anything for the two of us. Now, I have laid this out for you, I hope you can see that Henry is a worker and not a scrounger who is just living off his family's money. I would like it very much if you can respect Henry for the man he is.

I have now finished what I had to say to you Ian. Ian took a little while to reply as he was just sitting and rocking very slowly with small forward and backward movements. I did not realise how many hours he works Lydia, I now understand that the odd times he phones you over the weekend, it is not because he can, it's probably because he is on the other side of the world and needs a question answered.

I see you are very happy working for Henry and more so now you are working out of his home. You come home with a big smile on your face and you are always ready to do whatever I ask you to do, we have a great marriage which just seems to be getting better as the month go by. I now see that is because of Henry James and not as I previously thought, Ian Bishop. I can assure you that from now on I will respect your boss. Thank you Ian, now Ian, what plans have you made for this weekend, still working on it.

By the end of March Lydia told Henry we have signed contracts to the value of £52m, this alone will give me a bonus of £130k. I am sorry to point out to you that you are wrong. You put a figure of 0.25% and Sir John said he agrees to that, so I do not think I have made a mistake Henry, well I think you have Lydia. Providing we do not loose any clients or they do not reduce the value of their investment with us, I have arranged that we receive our bonuses on the total amount we hold of our investors

Henry James

money. This means as of today you would receive a bonus of £500k. My god Henry, nobody gets paid like that, wrong again Lydia, we do. I love you Henry James and I love you to Lydia Bishop.

Chapter 5

Wedding invitations

In April 2002, Henry's mother was opening the post and found one with a Tokyo postmark, she thought, I know who this one is from. She found two wedding invitations inside from Takahiro and Miyu, they will be getting married in June, the service and reception will be in Tokyo, Sir Randolph and his wife Martha had also been invited. With the invitation, Takahiro asked if Henry would do him the honour of being his best man. Along with the invitation that Lord and Lady James received, Miyu had included a letter asking Lord James if he would stand in as her father, it would be a great honour for me if you will walk me down the isle and give me away to Takahiro.

Miyu also asked Lady James if she would be one of her Bridesmaids? and told her she will be asking Lady Martha to be the other Bridesmaid. Alexandra phoned Martha and asked if they had received their wedding invitation, Martha replied, yes, it has just arrived in the post, I take it you will be going Alexandra, most definitely. They are a lovely couple and as we do not have a daughter it would give me a perfect chance to spoil Miyu, that's great as I want to go as well, so even if Randolph claims to have a case on and not able to leave, I will still be able to go with you and David.

Alexandra said, I will phone her and make arrangement for us to take care of her needs, I will start by advising her that we are, Matron of Honour and not Bridesmaids, I will just send an acceptance to her invitation Martha said, and leave the rest to you. When David arrived on Friday evening Alexandra told him he will be walking Miyu down the isle in June, and she has asked Martha and I to be her Matron of Honour.

Takahiro has asked Henry to be his Best Man. David said that is fantastic, no doubt you will be taking care of all her needs at her wedding, you did not need to ask about that, and because you have the pleasure of walking her down the isle and giving her away, you will be paying for the wedding reception. I will phone her first thing in the morning and make arrangements with her.

At 07:00 Alexandra phoned Miyu, Takahiro's voice said, good morning Lord James, you can call me Alexandra but never call me Lord James. Please accept my apologies Lady James. Apologies accepted Takahiro and congratulations, we are very happy for you, now please give the phone to the bride to be.

Before I do that I need to speak with Lord James, she gave the phone to David and told him that Takahiro needs to speak to you. Good morning Takahiro and congratulations, thank you Lord James, however, I was just about to phone you and Sir Randolph and explain what has happened within the last few minutes .

I need to explain because you as an English Lord may not understand

the Japanese way with family honour, I do understand you look at life a little different to us English Takahiro. So whatever you wish to explain to me I will listen with respect. My father has forbid me to marry Miyu, this is because her parents committed suicide and brought disgrace on her family, which means she comes from a family with no honour.

My father is a very traditional Japanese man, and he believes if your family has no honour then you have no honour. I have done something that I have never done in my life before, I stood and argued with my father and after several minutes he said to me, I forbid you to marry Miyu. My reply to him was, you cannot stop me marrying Miyu, he then said to me, if you marry this girl then I will have no option but to disown you as my. If I disown you that will bring shame on all your family and that means, we as a family will have no honour. Do you really want to do that Takahiro.

Lord James, I cannot be the one that causes my family to have no honour, So Miyu and I have decided that we will not get married.

That makes me very sad Takahiro, however, I believe I may have a solution that will allow all of you to save face. Please let me speak with Miyu first, he handed the phone to Miyu. Good morning Lord James, Good morning to you Miyu, Takahiro has explained the major problem he has with his father and the Japanese tradition, I believe I have a solution that will allow all of you to save face. That would be the best day of my life Lord James.

This is my solution, would you do me the honour of becoming our daughter, there was silence from the phone, David asked, do you have a problem with becoming our daughter Miyu, I do not see how I can become your daughter Lord James, it would be very easy Miyu. I have no honour so I could not join your family as that would mean that you and your family have no honour, why in the world would you think that Miyu. Because I am Japanese and I was told by a professor at university when my mother and father committed suicide, although you and Sir Randolph paid for my tuition, the honour would come back to bite me later in life. David said, please do me the honour, of listening to all I have to say before turning me down, certainly Lord James.

Alexandra and I wish to adopt you legally, this way you would become the daughter of an honourable English family, not even Takahiro's father could object to that. This would solve your problem because it would reinstate your honour. So just say yes, and Sir Randolph will sort all the legal paper work. Are you sure Lady James is happy to do this, and what about Henry. I can assure you Alexandra would love to have a daughter that she can spoil, and as for Henry, well I believe he would be happy having you as his sister. However, you will understand this statement I will make, it is my decision to adopt you, I do not have to ask Henry for his permission, I now need your decision young lady. I would love to be your daughter Lord James, thank you Miyu.

I will phone Sir Randolph and get the legal process started, I am sure he will phone you to ask you whatever he may need to know. Now you are going to have to make a change, once this legal document has been signed

and registered you can no longer call Alexandra and I, Lord and Lady James, David heard her catch her breath. You must call us the same as Henry does, mother and father. I know, I will find it difficult, however, I do know it would be the right thing to do. Alexandra will phone you back after I have spoken to Sir Randolph, they said goodbye. He immediately phoned his friend Randolph and told him everything that Takahiro and Miyu had spoken about, you cannot adopt her David because she is not a minor. There must be a way Randolph, there may be David.

You would have to adopt her in Japan, where they allow you to adopt an adult, once it has been made legal in Japan, we should be able to then make it legal in England. The only reason you would need to make it legal in England would be in case of a challenge on your will. I do not believe Henry would make a challenge against Miyu, he may not David, however, God forbid, but if Henry died before you died, somebody could make a challenge.

She must legally change her name to James, and also her passport once we have the registered adoption papers along with the passport, this should stand up in a court of law. I have a colleague in Tokyo that I can call and explain what we need, I am sure he will help out, I will get back to you once I have spoken to him.

In under one hour Randolph phoned David back and told him that he had spoken to his colleague in Tokyo and he was going to start the process for the adoption of Miyu. Once he had made up the document he would send it by special messenger directly to you, once you have signed this document send it to myself. I will take care of the rest, thank you Randolph, I will tell Miyu what is happening.

David phoned Miyu back, she just answered the phone by saying hello, as she was not sure who would be phoning, David then explained what was going to happen. He told her that Sir Randolph had been in touch with a colleague in Tokyo and this colleague was starting the adoption process. We cannot adopt you in England because you are not a minor. So we need to adopt you in Japan, once Sir Randolph's colleague has made up the paperwork. He will send it to me for my signature, I will then return this document to Sir Randolph and he will send it directly to his colleague. Once this man has it back he will telephone you so that you can go into his office, as you must also sign the document.

He will then register the document, and once the document becomes legal. You must then change your name legally to James along with your passport, by changing your name, Randolph believes we will be able to make it legal in England, however, if you do not change your name, then we may not be able to make you our daughter legally in England. I will be happy to change my name on my passport whether I can legally be your daughter in England or not, Lord David. Thank you Miyu, I am now going to pass the phone to Alexandra because she wishes to talk to you.

Hello Miyu, do not worry my dear, Sir Randolph will get this sorted and David and I will then have a beautiful daughter. I am so much looking forward to coming to see you, because once you are mine I can then spoil

you. You and I are going to have a fantastic time planning your wedding, just as soon as the documents are legal, I will be coming to see you. David wants to speak to Takahiro, please pass the phone to him, I am afraid Takahiro has already left, please hold on Miyu. I will give the phone to David, I have just had a thought Miyu, I feel it would be better if Takahiro did not say anything to his father at this time, in fact, it would be better once you have your official documents, if I went to speak to Takahiro's father personally. I will explain to Takahiro when he comes home, they then said goodbye to each other.

David phoned Henry and asked him if he will be in London on Wednesday because he needs to speak with him, sounds serious father, it is not serious my boy, however, I need to explain something to you, I will make a point of being in our little restaurant by 13:00 on Wednesday, I look forward to seeing you my boy. When David arrived at the little restaurant Henry was already sitting at the table, on seeing his father he stood up and they hugged, how are you father? I am very well Henry and you look a picture of health my boy. I am keeping well enough father, how is mother, your mother has never been happier my boy, that is great news father, please give her my love, I certainly will. Now lets order and then I have something to tell you. They placed their order and Henry asked what news do you have father.

These came in the post last week, and he handed Henry his wedding invitation they had received from Takahiro, Henry read them and said, that is fantastic father I am so pleased for them. David looked at Henry for about twenty seconds before telling him that Takahiro had to call it off. Are you serious father, yes my boy I am, his father forbid him to marry Miyu, why father? because of the Japanese tradition. Which one father, they have a few, the one that says if you commit suicide then you have no honour and that means your family have no honour either. He would not let Takahiro marry a girl with no honour, they must be devastated, especially Miyu.

They were Henry, however, I came up with a solution, and what is your solution father? You will be getting a sister, not sure I understand your solution father, because for me to get a sister, mother has to give birth or you adopt a child, and we both know that Miyu is not a child, she is an adult and you cannot adopt an adult in England father. That is very true Henry, however, I can adopt her in Japan, really father, yes, you can adopt an adult in Japan. Wow, that is awesome, so I really am going to have a sister, yes my boy, I am so happy to have Miyu as my sister, if you had given me the choice I would not have come up with anybody else, Miyu is so special. I bet mother is in her element, she will be once the documentation has been registered and becomes law.

How are Takahiro and Miyu, not sure about Takahiro as I have not spoken to him after my plan was started. Miyu on the other hand has embraced this and is looking forward to joining our family. Sir Randolph has a colleague in Tokyo and he is drawing up the papers and they should arrive in the next couple of days, I will need to sign them and then Miyu

will sign and then they are sent away for registration. Once everything is legal Miyu will then change her name to James and at the same time change her passport. After all of that your mother and I will fly to Japan to welcome our daughter into our family, I will then take my copy of the adoption papers along with Miyu's passport and go and see Takahiro's father, I will point out to him that this is a way for him to save face, as nobody can say that our family has no honour. Once that is taken care of, I will need to return to work because I am guessing my costs are going to start climbing very quickly, I am sure you are correct father, mother will be in her element arranging Miyu's wedding. Please tell me when you are flying to Tokyo because I would also very much like to welcome my sister. It will be in the next couple of weeks my boy, we would love you to come with us, I had better tell Lydia because she will have to make changes to my schedule. They finished their meal and left there separate ways.

Henry headed home just in time to meet Lydia getting out of the car, he kissed her on her cheek and said I have some exciting news to tell you, she smiled at him, he turned and shook Roger's hand, how are you Mr James, very well thank you Roger. Once inside the Penthouse Henry asked, would you like a coffee Lydia, yes please Henry, I will make them and bring them into the office. Do not keep me in suspense any longer Henry, he smiled and told her he is getting a sister, she looked a little shocked and then asked, is your mother pregnant Henry, good God no. My mother and father are adopting one of my Japanese friends, I guess I should explain a little to you and then you will understand.

When he had finished she said, I see I do not have to ask if you are happy to be getting a sister, I am over the moon and I could not have chosen a nicer sister. Just as soon as all the papers are in order I will be going with my mother and father to welcome Miyu into our family, you said she lives in Tokyo Henry, that's correct, then please give me as much notice as possible to make changes. I am sure it would be better if you were in Singapore as I am sure that is closer to Tokyo than any other country you visit in south east Asia.

Henry was off to New York later that day and would be there for ten days so he hoped that Singapore would work out about right. He had about four hours before Roger came to pick him up, so he phoned his mother and congratulated her on getting a wedding to plan one for your very own daughter, I am so excited Henry, are you happy you are going to have a sister, I think I may have been happier if you had done this, years before, then I would not have grown up as an only child, Alexandra laughed and then said, you may not have been spoiled so much. Your father has told me you also wish to go and welcome Miyu into our family, I would not miss this, she is a fantastic young lady and she has suffered enough in her life, however, father and I agree you are now going to spoil her rotten, starting with the planning of her wedding.

That should be something to see, the daughter of Lord and Lady James getting married. When am I going to see you Henry, probably only in Tokyo mother, I am flying to New York tonight and will be there for ten

days and I will hopefully spend a couple of days here in London and then off to Singapore. I love you Henry, I love you too mother. The ten days Henry was in New York he signed another eight clients and was leaving on a high. Since Henry started with the firm almost two and a half years ago, he now has a portfolio of three hundred and eight clients, his company was over the moon with him and they knew that they will be giving him a fantastic bonus at the end of the year and a substantial salary increase. They were going to make sure he could not be poached by another company.

Two days later the postman delivered a package from Tokyo, inside the package was the document that David and Miyu must sign, it had arrived thirty minutes before by helicopter, Alexandra picked it up and placed it in her hand luggage before walking onto the main lawn to the helicopter that had just landed. Good afternoon, Lady James, good afternoon John. John had flown Alexandra to and from London on many occasions and she always thought he was a very pleasant young man and a good pilot. He carried her bags and placed them in the luggage hold and he then helped her to climb aboard.

Once they were airborne. John told Lady James that it should be about 45 minutes to Bigging Hill, thank you John, I will arrange with my driver, Alexandra phoned David's firm and told Gladys she would be at Bigging Hill in forty-five minutes, I will send Stephen lady James. He will be waiting when you land, thank you Gladys. Sure enough, Stephen was waiting when the helicopter touched down, he moved forward and opened the door for her, welcome back lady James, thank you, Stephen. He picked up her cases and placed them in the boot and ask her, straight to your apartment ma'am, yes please Stephen, once they got there she handed Stephen the package and asked him to please give this to Lord James, and tell him once he has signed the document he must send it straight to Sir Randolph, certainly ma'am, thank you Stephen.

David signed the document and gave it to the motorcycle driver to take to Sir Randolph's Chambers. Sir Randolph phoned his colleague in Tokyo, telling him he would return the document straight away by courier, I have been promised a one day delivery, so it should arrive tomorrow. I will let you know once Miyu has signed it and it has been registered, I will then send it back to you. You do not need to send it back because David will be flying to Tokyo and he can collect it from you and settle the account, thank you my friend, you are welcome Sir Randolph.

Miyu got a phone call asking her to come in and sign the adoption papers, she said, I will be there in twenty minutes, she signed the document and thanked him very much. Then asked him if changing her name along with her passport could be done quickly, he said that once the documentation came back after it had been registered, he would call her and they can deal with her name change and passport very quickly. She thanked him and drove back home. When Takahiro got home she told him she had signed the document and the lawyer told her that it would take a maximum of two weeks for registration. Ten days later he called

saying he had received the document back, can you come back in and we will deal with your name change and passport, I can come at 09:00 tomorrow if that is alright with you, that would be perfect Miyu. The next day she was in the lawyers office just before 09:00 and he told her he would get this back in one week. True to his word her passport arrived back within seven days.

Alexandra's phone rang and Miyu said, good morning mother, good morning Miyu has the document been registered, it has been registered, my name is now James and my passport also shows my family name as James and my given name as Miyu. When I marry Takahiro I will not take his family name, I will keep my family name, so as you would say, I am now yours. I am so happy Miyu I am crying, me too mother. David and I will fly out just as soon as we can get a flight because he wishes to give you a big hug and sort this problem out with Takahiro's father. I will phone again and let you know when to collect us at the airport, I will be waiting whatever time you arrive. Alexandra phoned Lydia and asked, can you please tell me where Henry is today, he will be landing in Singapore in about three hours time, before Alexandra could say another word Lydia said, congratulation on becoming a mother of a daughter, I am so excited Lydia.

Now if you tell me when you will arrive in Tokyo I will see what I can do to get Henry there around the same time, thank you Lydia, just before you go may I make a suggestion, certainly Lydia. If you would allow me to make your flight booking I can arrange it so that Henry boards your flight in Singapore, that would be fantastic Lydia, just let me know what we will owe the company and I will sort out the payment. The easiest way would be for me to sort it out with Henry when he returns, whatever is the best for you Lydia, please tell me when you wish to leave and how long you will be there. We wish to leave in a maximum of two days staying for one week, I will phone you just as soon as I have made the bookings, thank you Lydia.

Forty five minutes later Lydia phoned Lady James, I have you booked on an overnight with Singapore Airlines leaving Thursday at 19:30, arriving Friday morning 09:45. You have a two hour layover in Singapore leaving at 11:50 for Tokyo, arriving at 18:35. Henry will join that flight in Singapore and even if you do not see him before boarding I have you all booked together, I have sent you an email with the details. Thank you so much for everything Lydia, you are welcome Lady James.

Lydia then sent Henry a text telling him his flight number and departure time and told him his mother and father will be on the same flight. Now I need to know how long you wish to stay in Tokyo to see which appointments need changing. Henry came back and said, three days will be fine, thank you Henry, I will sort out the changes and let you know.

Henry met his mother and father at 11:05 in the first class lounge at Singapore airport, he hugged and kissed his mother and hugged his father, he congratulated them, and told them he was over the moon about having a sister. How long will you be staying in Tokyo Henry, just three days

father, I have only come to see my sister and I will be returning to Singapore as I have a couple of potential clients that I need to urgently make a quotation for. How's business going my boy, very well thank you father, I am so pleased for you and I do know the senior partners think extremely well of you, they have never had an employee like you my boy, they all smiled.

After they boarded Henry took out a file and started to read, can you not relax Henry, this is what I do when I fly mother, I read the files that Lydia makes up for me and then I settle down and sleep for the rest of the flight. You must remember mother, I fly an awful lot of hours each month and sleeping stops me from going insane. Henry, do not say things like that, it's true mother. When he finished reading he settled down and went to sleep, waking up thirty minutes before landing.

After landing they collected their cases and headed for the customs, they were not stopped and carried through to the main hall. Henry spotted Miyu first and pointed her out to his parents, she saw them and ran forward to greet them. They all hugged and kissed and David asked, where is Takahiro, he is on a night flying exercise and will only be back around midday tomorrow. I asked Lydia to book us in the Hilton father, I trust that is okay for you, you use hotels far more than I do my boy, so if Lydia thinks you will be happy with the Hilton then I am sure your mother and I will be fine. I am sorry you cannot stay with Takahiro and I, our apartment is just so small. Do not worry, please drive us to the Hilton and let's get checked in and then we can talk, well I am guessing that Alexandra will do most of the talking. They got in Miyu's car and she drove away. After they had checked in and sent their cases to their rooms, they found four chairs in the lounge and ordered some drinks and sat down.

They all looked excited and all wanted to talk at the same time, Henry said, we cannot all talk together so let's just start with a few words each and then we should be okay. Alexandra said, the three of us just want to welcome you into our family, they all stood up and after Alexandra had hugged Miyu again David hugged her and said, thank you for doing us the honour of becoming our daughter. We will always take great care of you and nothing will be too much trouble. She hugged and kissed him and said thank you for wanting to adopt me, I love you very much. She moved to Henry and almost flew into his arms, he said, I have always wanted a sister to spoil, so welcome my little sister to the James family, I love you and will always look after you. Henry asked if he should arrange a table before you start with marriage arrangements mother, that's a good idea Henry. He went off and found the maître d and arranged a table for four, he went back and told them he has a table, they got up and headed to the restaurant.

After they had ordered David suggested that we should hand the floor over to Alexandra, she had a big smile on her face and Miyu looked a little worried, I do not need a big wedding mother just family and a few friends you do not need to spend a lot of money on me. I am sorry to overrule you, but you are now a member of the James family and as such you will

have a large wedding. You are our only daughter and David and I would like you to be married from Queensberry Manor. In our position that would be the normal thing to do, and it would allow me to spend a little of David's money. Miyu was about to protest when Alexandra raised her hand and said, stop right there young lady.

This decision is not up for discussion, we will be having the wedding at Queensberry Manor, because everybody I know, when their daughters get married, they do so from the family home, the only difference in your case would be if you wished the wedding ceremony to be at the family home. That is where David and I got married and it is a fantastic setting as you well know. So that is your only decision to make, the family home, or the church in Oxford or Wantage. Now, I can no longer be your Matron of Honour and I am sure you only asked Martha and I because your friends had pulled out. That is true mother, my friends, families would not allow them to come to my wedding.

Well, maybe now, their families, will hopefully, change their minds. David is going to see Takahiro's father tomorrow and hopefully once the problem is sorted out, we can go and see your friends families. How many bridesmaids did you want, I would like four, but because we were paying I only picked two. How many friends did you pick the two from, six mother, and did all of the six girls families forbid them to attend your wedding. No, only the two I asked, would you be happy with those six girls being your bridesmaids, very happy. They are very nice people and as Henry would say sexy girls, then we will be asking all six. Once we have confirmed your bridesmaids. You can then start putting together a list of the people you would like to attend the wedding, how many would you allow me to ask, unless you go completely overboard. I do not think we will have a problem.

We will pay for all your bridesmaids, travel expenses along with anything else they may need. That way nobody should have any objections to them attending. Once Takahiro's parents are happy I will ask them to give me a list with names and addresses so that I may send out invitations. David said, I think we should eat our meal and you can get into this in more detail tomorrow, they started their meal and continued to talk about likes and dislikes, and Alexandra was getting more excited as the minutes ticked by. If Takahiro is not coming home tonight. Maybe we should get you a room here, Henry said. That's a very good idea my boy, but I do not have any clothes with me, not even a toothbrush, I will take care of that, after we have eaten we will go and see what we can find for you, thank you, Henry. When they had finished their coffee. Henry said, let's start by making sure they have a room for you, Henry excused himself and Miyu and they headed to the reception, once there Henry asked, if they have a room for his sister, certainly Mr James. We have one, two doors from your mother and father, will that be acceptable Mr James, that would be fine thank you, please charge this to my account. Certainly Sir.

Henry and Miyu walked out through the revolving door and turned left to walk along the street, within a few minutes they had found several shops

that sell ladies clothes they looked in the window of the first shop and Miyu said, the clothes in the window look very nice Henry, however, very expensive. It is not a problem, let us go in and take a look. They walked inside, and immediately a salesgirl approached them, how may I be of assistance today, we are just looking at the moment, thank you.

Henry spotted some very nice blouses and skirts, what do you think of these he asked, they look very beautiful Henry. What colours are you interested in, I like the dark blue and the burgundy the best, but I only need something casual Henry. What do you call casual, those jeans over there, the black or the blue, either I really do not mind. If you sort out what underwear you need. I will pick up these, Miyu headed for the underwear and Henry picked up one of each of the jeans and the burgundy and the dark blue blouses and walked over to the counter, Miyu joined him with two pairs of panties and two bra's, he paid and they left the store.

When they got back, they found David and Alexandra drinking coffee, are you two going to join us, that would be nice father. Alexandra asked what have you got in your bag, just a couple of garments mother, that's good. I am pleased you are taking care of your sister. They drank their coffee and Alexandra asked what kind of flowers do you like Miyu, I like Roses, Freesia's and Lily's, but I like almost all flowers. That gives me something to work with Alexandra said. They sat around talking and laughing and just getting to know one another better.

They met in the dining room for breakfast at 08:00 and everybody said they had a good nights sleep, David asked, do you have the address of Takahiro's father, Miyu wrote it down for him, when they had finished breakfast. David asked for the adoption papers plus your passport, Miyu opened her handbag and gave the papers and passport to David. He said thank you Miyu, he then got up and said, wish me luck, turned and headed for the door, he got in a taxi and gave the driver the address. Henry asked if they are going to get into the wedding preparations, we have to start soon Henry, there's a lot to do, then I'm going to take a walk, we will see you later Henry. Alexandra said, let's start by contacting your potential bridesmaids, Miyu took out her phone and started to call her friends. They all agreed to come to the Hilton and talk, they had another coffee while waiting, and thirty minutes later her friends started to arrive.

As they arrived Miyu introduced them to Alexandra and then she ordered coffee for them, when all six had arrived, Miyu said, I have something to tell you since I last saw you, I have been adopted by Lord and Lady James, this is my mother, Lady James. They all looked speechless, Hoshimi was first to speak, you are not joking, no, not at all, once father returns. I can show you the papers, my name is now Miyu James. Alexandra said, I understand a little about Japanese culture and I understand that your parents would not want you to attend any marriage that they thought the person was not honourable, that is true Naomi said.

Nobody can now say that, Miyu does not have any honour. Naomi said, if your adoption is legal, then nobody can object. That is fantastic

Alexandra said, now, Miyu has something to ask you all. I am getting married in June and I am asking if all of you would be my bridesmaids, they broke into Japanese talking amongst themselves then Kiyomi said, sorry, Lady James, please accept our apologies, no apology needed. What you did, would be totally normal in any country, six girls talk amongst themselves then they all said, we cannot see our parents objecting. Therefore we would like to be your bridesmaids.

Miyu jumped up and hugged them all and said, thank you all so much. Alexandra then told them Miyu would be getting married at the family home in Oxfordshire, England, again, they started speaking in Japanese, so Alexandra said, do not concern yourself about costs. David and I will pay for everything for you. You will be totally taken care of, you will stay in the family home with Miyu,, we have not got a date sorted yet, but that will be done before we leave in one week's time, now give me a hug and I will leave you alone with Miyu so you can talk, it has been very nice meeting you ladies and thank you for accepting, now, I will see you tomorrow so that we can sort out wedding dresses.

David entered the apartment block and told the desk clerk he had come to see Takashi Yoshino. He was asked to take the elevator to the 10th floor, he got out of the elevator and turned right and Takashi was waiting to greet him. It is very nice to see you again, David, you too, Takashi, please come into our home. Thank you David said, and walked through to the lounge. David asked, is your wife at home, I am afraid not, she went out early this morning to do some shopping. I am very pleased Takashi, it is better to discuss this man-to-man, I agree David. I know you have some traditions in Japan that we do not have in England and family honour is very important to you, that is correct David, I am so pleased you understand. That is why I forbid Takahiro to marry Miyu. I understand Takashi, however, since you did that, things have changed drastically and after listening to what I came here to tell you, I am sure you will give Takahiro your blessing.

My wife and I would be very happy if you gave us information that would allow us to tell Takahiro he has our blessing to marry Miyu. David reached into his inside jacket pocket and handed Takashi the adoption papers for Miyu along with her new passport, David said, please take a look at these documents and I believe you will be very happy. Takashi studied the documents and then looked at David with a big smile on his face, you have filled my heart with joy, thank you so much David. The change in Miyu's status means we will be very happy for Takahiro and Miyu to get married. He has known Miyu for years and there has never been anybody else in either of their lives. It was a very dark day when I had to forbid the marriage. You did this for my son David. Not just for your son Takashi, Alexandra has always wanted a daughter and Miyu made the perfect choice. Will you please ask your wife to make a list of family and friends that she wishes to ask to the wedding, complete with addresses. I am sure she will be more than happy to draw up a list, she can email it directly to Alexandra. They then had some herbal tea and David told

Takashi that the wedding will be in England.

When David arrived back at the Hilton. He found Alexandra and Miyu sitting in the garden, he walked up to them and as they turned to look at him, he said, I have some good news for you two. Takahiro's father is very happy and I am sure by now he has contacted Takahiro, he will speak to his wife and by the end of next week. She will send you a list of the guests she would like to invite, Miyu jumped up and threw her arms around David, kissed him and said, thank you father, you are more than welcome Miyu. Did you need to persuade him David, no, not at all Alexandra, he was very happy and could not stop thanking me for helping his family with this honour problem. I suggest you phone your bridesmaids Miyu, and find out if their parents are now happy for them to attend your wedding. Providing they are happy for their daughters to attend, make arrangements for you, Alexandra and I to see each of their parents. It can be one at a time or you can invite them here and we can talk to them all at the same time.

Alexandra hugged Miyu and said, I told you everything would be all right after David had been to see him, they stood and hugged for a couple of minutes and Henry walked in. Hello, my boy, have you had a good day, yes thank you father, I did a little sightseeing as I have never been here before, nice city, but so many people. How did your meeting go with Takahiro's father, very well my boy, he is very happy with the situation as it is now, I am sure he has already contacted Takahiro to give his blessing, Miyu is so happy she is crying. I am so happy for them father, it has certainly made life a lot easier for everybody. Henry asked what time are we having dinner mother, we can do that once Takahiro has arrived. Then I will go up to the room and shower and get changed, I think that's a very good idea Henry, what time will Takahiro arrive Miyu, he should be here within the hour father. They all decided to take a shower and get changed and wait for Takahiro to arrive.

Henry was the first to return to the lounge, he sat down and ordered a coffee, within ten minutes. Miyu arrived. He asked her if she would like a drink, a coffee would be nice Henry, he ordered one for her and then they asked each other how their day had gone. Miyu said, so far this has been the best day of my life, father told me he would speak personally to Takahiro's father and everything would be all right. He is true to his word. Father is amazing Miyu, if he tells you something will happen. Believe me, it will happen. What about you Henry, what did you do today, I just did a little sightseeing because I have never been here before, it is not a place I would wish to live as there are far too many people. Miyu burst out laughing and said, you do get used to it.

When do you leave Henry, later this evening, as I have appointments for the next three days, are they in Singapore, yes Miyu. It was very kind of you to come to see me Henry, I had to welcome you into our family, I just could not leave it until June and I felt it was not something I could do over the phone. Thank you Henry, you are the best brother anybody could have. Just then Takahiro arrived, Henry and Takahiro hugged each other

and laughed and complemented each other, they really are the best of friends Miyu thought. This really is a dream come true. David and Alexandra walked into the lounge, David shook Takahiro's hand and congratulated him on his forthcoming wedding. Thank you Lord James, it is because of you, my father has removed his objections, you are very welcome Takahiro. I wish to make a deal with you Takahiro, certainly Lord James, what can I do for you. Once you marry my daughter, you can no longer call me Lord James. You will have to call me the same as Henry and Miyu do, which is father. I know it is no use saying to you to call me father now, so I ask that you make the change when you marry my daughter. Takahiro smiled and said, I will do that Lord James.

The conversation during the meal was all about the forthcoming wedding, Henry said, you will need to be careful Miyu. If you give mother half a chance she will take over completely, oh, Henry, how can you say that. Quite easily mother if a person gives you their hand, you will quite easily take off their arm. I do understand why you might think that my boy. At 21:00. Henry excused himself and said, I have to be leaving now to catch my flight, he shook Takahiro's hand and gave him a hug. He then did the same thing to his father, he kissed his mother and hugged and kissed his sister. He then put his arms around Takahiro and Miyu and said, if I do not see you before your wedding, I will see you on the family estate in June. When will we be seeing you at home Henry, I would think in a couple of weeks mother. As he walked away Henry turned and said, take good care of my sister Takahiro, do not worry Henry, I certainly will. The taxi was waiting to whisk Henry off to the airport and he just made his flight.

About thirty minutes after Henry left. Takahiro and Miyu said, they should also be heading home. They all hugged and kissed, Takahiro once again said, thank you Lord James, Miyu said, I will see you at 12:00 tomorrow mother. Takahiro said, I have given this some thought over the evening meal and I am still having major reservations about calling you mother and father. I feel it would be easier for me if I call you, Okasama, and Otosama. That is mother and father in Japanese, Miyu said. Smiles all round and David said, I am sure Alexandra and I would be very happy being called mother and father in Japanese, however, only once you marry our daughter. They all laughed and hugs and kisses all round and they were gone.

After breakfast. David and Alexandra sat in the lounge and discussed all things that happened and been said since they arrived in Tokyo. Miyu arrived at 11:45 and David ordered more coffees. Miyu explained that Kimiko had phoned her earlier this morning and told her that her parents were happy for her to be one of Miyu's bridesmaids. Alexandra said, this is very good news Miyu. The girls all arrived together. More hugs and kisses and then Miyu introduced her father to her six bridesmaids, each one shook his hand and David said, pleased to meet you, each girl said, pleased to meet you, Lord James. Now I have met all you ladies, I can go off and do a little sightseeing and leave you ladies to sort things out. He

kissed Alexandra and Miyu and headed for the door. After David had left. Alexandra said, right ladies, where is the best bridal shop in Tokyo.

It all depends on how much money you wish to spend Miyu said, the dresses will be purchased on quality and not price Miyu. The seven young ladies discussed a lot of designers amongst themselves and came up with, Yumi Katsura Bridal Salon. She is one of top designers in Japan, then we will start with this lady Alexandra said. Alexandra went to reception and asked them to please arrange for a small minibus to take us shopping. The minibus arrived very quickly and they all got in, they told the driver they wish to go to Yumi Katsura Bridal Salon. He said he knew exactly where it was and within twenty minutes he pulled up outside this great looking Bridal Salon. They got out and Alexandra led the way inside the shop. They were met by a lady in her mid forties, she greeted them with a bow and asked, which one of you ladies is going to be the bride. Miyu stepped forward and said, I am the lucky one. We will also want six bridesmaids dresses Alexandra said. They looked at several different lines and Miyu tried on many dresses.

The designer started to show Alexandra and Miyu the different sketches she had come up with, some were a little too frilly for Miyu, however, one stood out above all the others. It was a relatively plain design, it did not have any frills or bows, it had a couple of darts that would accentuate Miyu's figure and very fine lace around the bodice. It also had a three metre train. Both Miyu and Alexandra thought this design was stunning on Miyu. Alexandra then said, Miyu are you sure you are happy with this one, this one is outstanding, are you happy with it mother. I think this is the perfect design Miyu, however, it is your day so it must be your decision, Miyu said, this one is beautiful mother. Alexandra turned to the designer and said, this is the design we wish to have. There were smiles, hugs and kisses all round. Now what can you come up with for the bridesmaids, something very similar. No lace around the bodice on bridesmaids dresses and the material should be, de Silk Satin Royal – Parisienne.

By having this style for the bridesmaids, they can use their dresses after your wedding for any formal occasion. That is a very good idea Miyu. How long will it take to make these seven dresses Alexandra asked. Three to four weeks would be enough time, then we would like to place this order. I will need a twenty percent deposit before we are able to start, that is not a problem, you can put it on my visa card. It was arranged when they must come back for their first fitting as they would need two, maybe three fittings. The designer explained why they may need three fittings, all our dresses only leave the shop once madam Yumi Katsura is happy with them, and not because the bride or her mother thinks the dresses are perfect. If your dress has a madam, Yumi Katsura label in it, she must make sure it is perfect before you take it away. Alexandra explained that she would come back for the second fitting.

Five hours after they entered Yumi Katsura Bridal Salon, the dressmaker had taken all measurements for Miyu and her bridesmaids.

They thanked the designer and the dressmaker and the excited party returned to the hotel. Once they were back at the hotel Alexandra said, right ladies, I wish to organise a dinner for your parents so David and I can meet them and tell them all about the wedding plans. Would they all be able to come tomorrow, they all said yes, with the exception of Emiko, she said, my father is away for at least one week. However, I am sure my mother will be able to come. They all agreed that 21:00 would be a good time for their parents. They had coffee and the girls all hugged Miyu. They hugged Alexandra and thanked her very much. Alexandra got up and said, I will see you all tomorrow evening ladies, I will leave you now with Miyu. Alexandra said you will find me in the garden when these young ladies have left. Thirty minutes later, Miyu joined her mother in the garden. Miyu threw her arms around her mother and thanked her and the tears welled up in her eyes. Alexandra, hugged and kissed her and said, this has been one of the best days of my life. I am so lucky to have a mother like you Miyu replied.

The next evening the parents of the girls arrived just before 21:00, they had a great meal and David and Alexandra really liked the girls parents, they were pleasant and seemed genuine people. Alexandra explained that they had not set up a definite date for the wedding as yet, however, just as soon as we return to England I will get that sorted out and let you know as soon as possible. David then said, as it is such a long way I would suggest you come for at least one week. You can all stay in the family home with Miyu, we have quite a few bedrooms. We will be joining friends for a ten day holiday so we will stay together, however, thank you for the offer Lord James. The parents of Emiko, Hoshimi, Kiyomi and Sakura all said they would be unable to attend. We are sorry to hear that David said, and he did not say anything else because he felt it may be a financial problem and he did not wish to embarrass them.

The time flew by and David and Alexandra had to say goodbye to Takahiro and Miyu. Before they left David paid a visit to Randolph's friend, he was given his copy of the adoption papers together with a copy of Miyu's passport, David thanked him and settled his account. Once at the airport Alexandra told Miyu she would sort out a date and start working on organizing her wedding. You can send me the names and addresses of the guests you want invitations sent to. However, you now need to tell me where you want to get married, family home or church. I would very much like to be married in the family home mother, I am so pleased Miyu, it does make a wonderful setting. It will be a Top Hat and Tails Wedding my dear, oh father this is going to cost you a lot of money, the saying is, "an arm and a leg" my dear. Do not worry about the cost Miyu, I can assure you we can afford to give you the finest wedding in Oxfordshire. Thank you father. Hugs and kisses along with some tears, then David and Alexandra walked through customs.

C

hapter 6

A

lexandra has a wedding to plan

David and Alexandra collected their cases and found Philip waiting for them, Philip shook David's hand and welcomed them home, they both said, thank you Philip. I trust you had a good trip Sir, we had a fantastic trip, thank you Philip. Queensberry Manor or London Sir, home please Philip, certainly Sir, unless we encounter a traffic problem we should be home within the hour. All Alexandra could talk about was whom she thought she should be inviting. They arrived home in fifty two minutes and Jessie was waiting to greet them, please Jessie, can the three of us have a coffee in the lounge, certainly Alexandra. Philip took the suitcases up to their bedroom and then parked the car. Jessie brought the coffee and they all sat down, we have some very exciting news to tell you Jessie, David said.

I told you before we left that we had legally adopted Miyu, Alexandra said, yes, you did tell me, and I am very happy as she is a lovely young lady, they all smiled. David will be going to work tomorrow morning and after breakfast I want to speak to all the staff Jessie, I will arrange that for 08:00, that's perfect. Now, apart from telling them we now also have a daughter. I also have some fantastic news to share with them, I just want to tell you tonight Jessie. You and I have a wedding to plan, Jessie smiled and said, well I know it is not Henry, so is Miyu getting married from the family home, she is indeed Jessie. We do indeed have a lot of planning to do then, do we have a date Alexandra, not as yet Jessie, however, it must be in June.

At 08:00 the next day Jessie had gathered all the staff in the dining room, Alexandra walked in and said, good morning every one, please be seated. I have some very exciting news to tell you all. Lord James and I have legally adopted Miyu, I am sure you all remember Miyu, as if as one, they all replied, yes ma'am. That in it's self is fantastic that we now have a daughter as well as a son, however, Jessie and I have a lot of planning to do, Miyu is getting married to Takahiro and the wedding will take place here at Queensberry Manor. There were a few comments about that is great, then Philip said, she is a very lucky young lady and we will all do our best to make it a special day ma'am. Thank you Philip, now, Jessie will be delegating specific jobs to some of you. I do not have a date as yet, however, we would like it to take place in June, Jessie and I will start putting a plan together so until then please carry on with your normal duties, thank you all so much for coming.

When the staff had left Alexandra told Jessie she will be in her office for a little while, must make sure everything is running as it should be, then I will try to speak with the Bishop. Once in her office, she asked Hillary her Private Secretary to bring her up to speed, Hillary reported that everything had run according to plan. That is fantastic, she then told

Hillary what had happened in Japan. Jessie, you and I, have a lot of planning to do, please try and get the Bishop on the phone for me, she walked into her own office. Within a couple of minutes her phone rang and Hillary told her the Bishop will speak to you now. Good morning Baron, that's rather formal Alexandra, how are you Richard, very well thank you, how are you and my friend, David. We are exceptionally well thank you, I have some exciting news to tell you, so can I come and see you, when would you like to come Alexandra, today if I can. This must be important, it is Richard, can you make 14:30? I will be there, thank you so much. She phoned Jessie and asked her to tell Philip I have an appointment with the Bishop at 14:30, he will be waiting Alexandra.

Alexandra was shown into the Bishop's office and they greeted each other with a hug, now, please tell me what is so important that you needed to drive to me today. She explained everything that had happened during the last month, he said, congratulations, that is fantastic you also have a daughter. She looked at him for a few seconds and then said, David and I would like you to perform the ceremony, we will be having it at Queensberry Manor. I understand and that is a beautiful setting, what date do you have in mind, towards the end of the month of June, because we have a lot to sort out. I can do Friday 27th if that is alright for you, that is perfect Richard. Send me an email with their full names and addresses and I will arrange the relevant documents, declarations and fees to the Registrar of Marriages. Thank you very much Richard, you are more than welcome Alexandra, if I do not see you before I expect to see you at the Wedding Rehearsal. We will be there. They hugged and she left.

When she got back to Queensberry Manor she sat down with Jessie and they had a coffee. We have a date Jessie, Friday 27th June, the Bishop of Oxford will be conducting the service, David will be very pleased as Richard is his friend. You should be in charge of the catering Jessie, do you have any idea of the number of guests, not right now, although it will be far too many for you to produce in your kitchen. You will need to visit catering companies and make your recommendation Jessie. I will then go through your short list with you and at that time we can discuss menu's, from that time on you will be in charge of the catering. Wow Alexandra, I just hope I will get it right, oh Jessie, you stand far more chance than I do. I will take care of everything else, you take whoever you want to assist you. I am sure the last time we had a marquee somebody mentioned a company that we may want to look at next time. That was Philip, Jessie replied, then send him in and I will have a word with him. When I have spoken with Philip I will phone Miyu and let her know what date her wedding will be, I will then start putting a list together so we know how many to cater for.

Excuse me ma'am, you wanted to see me, please sit down Philip. The last time we had a marquee you mentioned that a company that you thought we should look at the next time we wished to hire one. That is correct ma'am, I suggest that you look at Carnival Marquees, they really do look quite impressive. Then I am giving that job to you Philip, please find out what they will have available in June, how many guests will they

hold and prices, also get some brochures so David and I can have a look. So I am leaving that job to you Philip, no problem I will get onto that straight away, do you have any idea how many guests you will be inviting. Not at this stage Philip, I will be starting on the list in a few minutes.

After he had left Alexandra phoned Miyu, good evening mother, good afternoon Miyu, how are you and Takahiro, we are both well mother. Alexandra said, I have been to see The Bishop of Oxford, Richard Douglas Harries, or to give him his full title, Baron Harries of Pentregarth. Anyway, he will personally preside over your wedding ceremony, how did you manage that, I went to see him and asked a favour, he said, certainly, it really was that easy. Because the Bishop is performing the ceremony himself, I can only get Friday 27th of June, I do hope this is acceptable to you, it is perfect mother as I am sure everything you do will be, I do hope so Miyu. Okay, then that is confirmed so I can start sending out invitations, I look forward to receiving your list. I have started mother, that's good, they spoke a little longer and then said their goodbyes.

Alexandra sat at her desk and started to make a list of everybody she wanted to invite, it just kept getting longer and longer. When she had finished that one, she started on the list of people she felt she had to invite. From the house of Lords the first name was Baroness Thatcher, however, she believed she would not be able to attend because of her health. She wrote down Arthur Gore, Earl of Arran, then went right down to Nicholas Lowther, Viscount of Ullswater. She then looked at the House of Commons, and decided she did not want any members of the Labour Government and certainly, not Tony Blair and his wife along with Gordon Brown, in her home. So she looked at the Conservative Opposition, and decided that she and David liked several of them, and remembered that over the years a couple of them had indeed visited, Queensberry Manor. She started to write down their names. The names she added to her growing list, John Major, William Hague, Kenneth Clarke, Ian Duncan Smith, Oliver Letwin, Caroline Spelman, Michael Howard, Tim Yeo, Bernard Jenkin and David Davis. She read through the list of MP's again and remembered meeting three younger MP's about a year ago, and David had said to her at that time, I believe those three will go far in the party, so their names went on the list, David Cameron, George Osborne and Boris Johnson.

The next list was for Foreign Dignitaries, She looked at the countries in alphabetical order and started with the Australian PM, John Howard, then added Julie Bishop, Austria, Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Ursula Plassnik. From Belize just one name, Lisa Shoman, Canada, Kim Campbell, Chile, Soledad Alvear Valenzuela and Michelle Bachelet Jeria. Colombia, Carolina Barco Isackson and María Consuelo Araújo Castro. Denmark, Lene Espersen and Count Henri de Laborde de Monpezat, she liked him very much. El Salvador, she wrote, Maria Eugenia Brizuela de Avila. Estonia, Kristiina Ojuland. Finland, Matti Taneli Vanhanen and Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäk. France, she only knew one lady, Michèle Alliot-Marie. Georgia, Salomé Zurabishvili. Greece, Dora Bakoyannis, she

got on well with Dora. Israel, the PM, Ariel Sharon, Foreign Affairs Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and Tzipi Livni. Italy, Emma Bonino.

She then reached Japan in the alphabet, she knew the invitations could be critical for any career advancement that Takahiro might receive, so she spent far more time on Japan than any other country and put the following names on her list.

The PM, Junichiro Koizumi, Shinzo Abe, Chief Negotiator for the Japanese Government on behalf of the families of Japanese abductees taken to North Korea. Alexandra thought that it could be very good to invite Makiko Tanaka, daughter of former Prime Minister, Kakuei Tanaka, and she was also the first female Foreign Minister in Japan. However, Alexandra had discovered that her husband, Naoki Suzuki, whom she married in 1969 was adopted as an adult into her family, because she is an only child, this alone could be good for Miyu. Yoriko Kawaguchi has worn many hats over the years and David met her in 1991 when she was the Minister at the Embassy of Japan to the United States. Yasuo Fukuda, Chief Cabinet Secretary, who four years later became PM. Akinori Eto, who became a future Defence Minister, and David always thought he is a forward thinking man. Shigeru Iwasaki, who had also trained on the McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle fighter, the same aircraft that Takahiro fly's, was Major General of the 2nd Air Wing. He later went on to become the Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Council, becoming the highest ranking member of the armed forces. A very important man to get to know a little better.

She read through the names and thought, that is all I know about, maybe David will add to my list. Latvia was next, and again like so many countries she only knew one person, she wrote down Sandra Kalniete. Liechtenstein, Aurelia Frick. Macedonia, Ilinka Mitreva. New Zealand, Helen Clark and John Key. Norway, Anne-Grethe Strøm-Erichsen, Alexandra met Anne-Grethe like so many Scandinavian politicians, while she was in the university skiing team. She skied all over Scandinavia and has stayed friends with many people she met during her university days. From Paraguay, she only knew Leila Rachid de Cowles. Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, she said to herself, yes, I know David, it should be under T, for The Philippines. Spain, Ana Palacio Vallelersundi.

She then came to her home country, Sweden, and all seven friends had become politicians. Anna Lindh, Mona Ingeborg Sahlin, Gudrun Schyman, Kjell Stefan Löfvén, John Fredrik Reinfeldt, Lars-Magnus Harald Christoffer Ohly, Soraya Viola Heléna Post. She was pleased she had kept in contact with all of them from her university days.

Switzerland, Micheline Calmy-Rey. Alexandra was very pleased she had got down to the last country. The United States of America. She was feeling pleased she had almost finished and feeling a little bit cheeky so she wrote, President, G W Bush, Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Acting Navy Secretary, Susan Morissey Livingstone and Victoria Jane Nuland.

Alexandra sent an email with the file attached to the email address at

their apartment in London, this would give David two nights to go through the names on her invitation list, she expected him to take a few off, however, she was sure he would be adding people she did not even know.

At breakfast the next morning Jessie sat down with Alexandra to show her some brochures that had arrived in the post from company's that did wedding receptions. These look very nice, however, take the car or get Philip to drive you and visit them personally, you need to meet them and find out how you feel about the people. If you are not happy with anything or anybody at a company, move on there are plenty out there that will want this job. Once you have narrowed it down to two, we will meet them together to make the final choice. Over coffee Jessie told Alexandra that Philip would be leaving at 09:30 to visit three company's to look at their range of marquees, that's great, then you had better take the Range Rover. Just before going to her office Alexandra said to Jessie, let the three of us meet for breakfast tomorrow to see how we are getting on.

Philip visited Oxfordshire Marquees and after speaking to them he moved them to the bottom of the list, because they can only accommodate a maximum of three hundred guests, he felt Lord and Lady James would be inviting more than three hundred. He then called in at Country Marquees, he liked the people and their marquees looked very nice and he was sure they would be able to accommodate the number of guests. The last on his list was Carnival Marquees and he really thought they had something special, he arranged with them to go and watch them putting up marquees for a wedding reception at Broughton Castle in two days time. He returned to Queensberry Manor with all the information he needed for the meeting of, Operation Wedding Planer, tomorrow morning.

Jessie, on the other hand, was having a difficult time with the second company she was visiting, she felt she was talking to the right person, Jennifer Rees Bauer said, she is the owner of Bauer catering. Jessie thought you are a snob and very rude. We will not be dealing with you. Jennifer Rees Bauer repeated her question to Jessie, I asked you for lady James's telephone number, Jessie replied by saying, and I thought I explained to you that the first meeting is with me, because I will check out all catering companies before lady James gets involved. Now why would you need to speak to lady James at this time, because I only deal with the person that pays the bills, not a servant. Well, good luck with that attitude, because you will not be doing any catering at Queensberry Manor, for this wedding reception or for any in the future, good day. Jessie turned and headed for the door, Jennifer Rees Bauer shouted, I am still waiting for lady James's phone number, without turning round Jessie said, you'll find it in the phone book under Queensberry Manor.

Jessie got back into the Range Rover and set the SatNav for the third company, the SatNav told her it was a twenty-two mile drive. Just as Jessie parked outside the offices her mobile rang, it was Alexandra, Jessie said hello Alexandra, how are you Jessie, I am fine thank you. I have just arrived

at Oxford Fine Dining, I take it you did not like Jennifer Rees Bauer, not at all Alexandra, I found her to be very obnoxious and obviously a spoilt brat. She sounded exactly that on the phone and she told me she wanted to speak to me in person and not deal with a servant. Well, you can imagine the tongue lashing she got. I just wanted to make sure that you are okay after dealing with that very rude person. I am fine Alexandra, it is her loss, maybe she will learn how to deal with people before her company goes insolvent, bye Jessie, see you later, bye Alexandra.

Jessie was just about one hour early for her appointment with Vanessa Moor, the Events Manager. She apologised for being one hour early and asked if it was possible that Vanessa could bring their appointment forward, if not I will come back in one hour. The receptionist said, please take a seat and I will try and find her and see if she can see you straight away. The girl came across to Jessie and told her that Vanessa can see you in about fifteen minutes if that is alright, that is fine thank you. She told the receptionist that the reason she is early is because she had just walked out on a very rude person, I am so sorry the girl replied, Jessie just smiled.

Ten minutes later Vanessa Moor introduced herself and showed Jessie through to her office. Jessie once again explained who she was and what she wished to talk about, they went through how they work and she showed Jessie the fixed menu's but told her they can prepare whatever Lady James wishes to have. Vanessa asked if she knows the number of guests, Jessie explained this is in the early stages of planning, and invitations have not been sent out as yet, however, she should know within two days how many guests will be invited. On checking the postal code on the map, Vanessa told Jessie that Queensberry Manor is only 40 miles away, so we can cater for 3500 guests with ease. She then showed Jessie around and introduced her to all the staff, after Jessie had asked some questions she was very impressed with the efficient way Vanessa answered them and the quality of the food, crockery, glasses, napkins and table linen used. Jessie left with their brochure and business card, feeling very happy and headed for the last one of the day.

Complete Catering is very local to Queensberry Manor being about 8 miles away, and Jessie knows that David likes to use local where possible. She was shown round with great respect and was impressed with what she saw, she knew it was going to be a tough choice between these two companies. They were both very professional and the quality was equally good at both companies, the staff were pleasant and friendly, she just wondered how she was going to make a decision. Again she left with their brochure and business card. As she drove back to Queensberry Manor she burst out laughing as she realised it will be Alexandra's decision to make and not hers.

At breakfast the next morning Alexandra, Jessie and Philip sat down to discuss what they had done yesterday and what they had planned for today. Right Philip you are up first, please tell us how you got on yesterday. Firstly, I have a suggestion for a name, they both looked at him and waited, he smiled and said, Operation Wedding Planner, that is what I think we

should call these meetings. I like the name Philip and from now on that is what we will call these meetings. Please continue Philip, I visited three companies, the first was Oxfordshire Marquees, very nice, however, they can only handle 300 guests and I think you will be inviting more than 300, you are quite right Philip. I then went to Country Marquees, I liked the people and their product and if I had not continued I would have been happy recommending them.

Fortunately I then stopped at Carnival Marquees and I felt they have something very special, I arranged with them for me to go and watch them putting up marquees for a wedding reception at Broughton Castle, I have to be there at 07:30 the day after tomorrow. You feel this one is the best so far Philip, yes I do Lady James, they are very professional and very friendly, do you have anything else to report, not at present, just to give you their brochure and business card. Thank you Philip, do you wish me to leave Lady James, heavens no Philip, we are all in this, Operation Wedding Planer together, and I hope you are as interested as Jessie and I are, thank you ma'am. They looked through the brochure and both Alexandra and Jessie agreed that Carnival Marquees looked nicer.

Jessie then went through her day, and apart from her run-in with Jennifer Rees Bauer she felt she had a very positive day. She stated that either of the two companies she would be happy to recommend, however, we would need to check out their food preparation and presentation. Oxford Fine Dining and Complete Catering offered the same service and everything about them looked to be perfect. Like Philip she then laid on the table their brochures and business cards. On looking through the two brochures Oxford Fine Dining looked more professionally printed but that did not mean they would be better.

It was then Alexandra's turn to tell them what she had achieved. I finished my list of all the guests I want to invite and then made a second list of all the people I felt I had to invite, I then emailed this list to David giving him two days to check through the 730 names. Alexandra heard both Jessie and Philip draw in breath, she laughed and said, I only have one daughter and this may be the only wedding we get to plan. David replied with an email late last night, she continued, I expected David to remove some names, however, it was only 22 but to my surprise he added a further 164. These are people I do not know, as they are mostly business associates.

This gives us 894, all numbers include wives, girl friends or plus one. Now, on top of these numbers, Henry will have a small list, Takahiro and Miyu along with his parents will be sending lists, it does not mean that they will all be able to attend, so until we receive the replies we will not have a final number. So at present you can only advise the caterers and marquee suppliers how many guests have been invited. I have just realised that I have not included the bride and groom and the bridesmaids, along with all the staff at Queensberry. You will have to make a rota for the staff you will need on duty Jessie, however, I do expect all staff to be guests. That is very kind of you Alexandra, all our staff are fantastic and they must be

included, in fact you can hire extra staff so that all our staff can attend without having to change over.

What do you have on tomorrow Philip, nothing at all ma'am, Jessie what about you. I am going to Heriot Caterers as they seem to have a very good name, then if you do not have anything on Philip you can drive Jessie, certainly ma'am. I will be sorting out the design of the invitation cards so that they can be printed early next week. That was the end of today's meeting and they all went their own ways.

Alexandra sat down behind her desk and when Hillary arrived Alexandra explained that today she had to design the invitation card, so unless it is urgent, please do not put any phone calls through to me. She then phoned Miyu, hello mother how are you, I am very well how are you and Takahiro, we are both fine thank you, what about father, oh, David must be alright otherwise he would be complaining, and they both laughed. Right young lady, will you please design an invitation card today, I will be working on this as well and we can compare later today to see what you are happy with, maybe we combine the designs and take idea's from both.

That could work Miyu, in fact I will start laying out the wording and you start with the front cover, lets start just as soon as we put the phone down, okay mother. Now, how are you getting on with your list of guests, we are trying to keep it as short as possible without upsetting anyone, why in the world are you worrying about the numbers Miyu, so that we keep the price down. My dear daughter, stop thinking that way right now, you have become the daughter of Lord and Lady James and if the cost of this wedding was going to become a problem, David would have told us. You just go through the friends that you want to invite and then all the people you feel you should invite, then send me the list complete with addresses. If we do that mother our list will be about 30, I am not sure they would all attend but that seems a little high when father is paying.

Miyu, let me tell you about my list and then maybe you will stop worrying about yours. I started with friends that I wanted to attend, then I looked at the one's I felt I had to ask, and these are people from around the world, I then sent my list to David so that he could remove any he did not want and add people that he felt he should invite. Like business colleagues also from around the world, people that I may not even know. Anyway the list I sent David had 730 names on it, oh my god mother, what did father say to you, the short answer is, nothing, he removed 22 names and then added a further 164. This gives us 894 guests, however, it does not include Henry's list, your list and Takahiro's mothers list, also I had forgotten 30 very important people that need to be on my list, so at present we have 924. I think you will now understand that it really does not matter how many names are on your list, it will not be a problem. I do not know any of those people you are going to invite mother, I am sure you do, I do not think so, you know Sir Randolph and Lady Martha and all the staff at Queensberry Manor, and I am sure John and Theodore will be on Henry's list. So you see you know far more than you realise. In any

case, it is David and I that invite the guests, not you and Takahiro, so you really do not have to know them before your wedding day. Oh mother, I do not know what to say to you, again, the short answer is, nothing. Just come up with a fantastic design for the invitation card, let us talk again tomorrow, I will phone you at 07:00 my time. I have to go and get on Miyu, send your design via email. Thank you and good night mother, please give my love to Takahiro.

Jessie walked into the reception of Heriot's, and was immediately shown into Jane Arens office, Jane greeted Jessie very professionally, as with the previous companies Jessie explained who she was and what she wished to talk about. After checking on the map, Jane confirmed that they could handle an event at Queensberry Manor, however, because of the distance she would not wish to take on many more than 2000 guests. Jessie said, it will finish up at less than 2000 because there are 924 with three more short lists to come. We will wait and see how many accept. Jane then showed Jessie around and she met all the staff that were on duty that day, she also thought, everything from the staff, the preparation of the food to the linen that they used for the presentation was more than acceptable. She left with their brochure and business card. On the way back to Queensberry they met a lot of traffic which was apparently due to a serious accident. Philip suggested they stop for a late lunch which would give time for the traffic to clear, he pulled up outside the Red Lion, he looked at Jessie and said, I think this will do, she just smiled.

Alexandra worked on getting the wording correct for the invitation card, she wrote down several different lines for Miyu, and in the end decided that just, "Our Daughter Miyu" was correct. She then just pasted an outline of a bride and groom for the front cover, she then emailed the file to Miyu hoping that she had come up with something special. At 14:30 Alexandra headed down to the restaurant as she was feeling a little hungry. She spotted Christine sitting by herself, hello young lady, hello Alexandra how are you, I am very well Christine how are you. Very happy and very busy planning a wedding, anybody I know, I do not think so Christine. My daughter is getting married at the end of June, your daughter, I am sure Henry told me he was an only child, that was true until a week ago, we adopted Miyu. I have heard that name before and I think she was engaged to Takahiro, you are quite right Christine, she is engaged to Takahiro. I did not realise you can adopt an adult, you cannot in this country Christine, we adopted her in Japan, it's a long story for another day.

Anyway, I will be sending you an invitation and I will just put, plus one, because as far as I know you are not yet married. I am guessing Henry may have your name on his list, that is once he gets round to sending it to me, however, you are on my list anyway. Thank you Alexandra, the waiter arrived and they both ordered a salad, Alexandra then asked Christine about her golf, how is it being a professional, it is fantastic Alexandra, I play all over the world and try to see as much of the country that I am playing in as is feasibly possible, a lot of countries it is not possible because of the time restraints. I am so pleased you are enjoying your life and do

hope you can find the time to come to Miyu's wedding, let me write the date down and make sure I keep it clear.

At 17:00 Alexandra checked her email, she found several but not the one she was hoping to find, she closed her computer down and tidied her desk and said, good night to Hillary. She headed back to the house, she walked into the kitchen and found Jessie talking to one of the maids, they both looked at her and said, good afternoon ma'am, she smiled and replied, yes it is. When you have finished what you are doing Jessie, can we have a coffee and a chat about our progress today, certainly.

Ten minutes later Jessie walked into the lounge with a tray of coffee, poured two cups and sat down opposite Alexandra. Did you have a good day Jessie, yes, I did thank you, what about you, I have finished the wording for the invitation card and I am now just waiting for Miyu to come up with a design for the cover. Tell me all about Heriot's Jessie, They really are fantastic people, they all made me feel special, like it is my daughters wedding. Alexandra burst out laughing and said, well Jessie, if we had adopted her when she was a little girl, you would have brought her up like you did Henry, and like you think of Henry as your son, you would have considered Miyu your daughter. Jessie started to say something and Alexandra put up her hands and said, do not bother to deny it, and before you say anything, I love you like a sister and do not resent the fact that Henry seems to get on better with you than he does with me.

Tears came to Jessie's eyes and she smiled a big smile and just gave a nod. Now that is out of the way, do you think these people would do your daughter proud. Absolutely, everything is as near to perfection as anybody could achieve, so Heriot's are at the top of your list Jessie. Jane told me because of the distance to Queensberry she would not wish to take on many more than 2000 guests. Well, that is not a problem as I cannot think that the three lists we are waiting for will amount to more than 200. Jessie gave Alexandra their brochure and business card, Philip is leaving early tomorrow so we do not need to meet for, Operation Wedding Planer, and they both smiled.

Henry thought to himself that it may not be a good idea to go back to the family home until after Miyu's wedding. He could just imagine his mother loving the fact that she now had a wedding to organise, she would be in her element. So he threw himself into his work and signed up another twenty clients before the end of May, the company was ecstatic, with his performance. Lydia was getting concerned that he was spending far too much time working, all the flying he was doing could not be good for him, she sat back in her chair and a smile came to her face, anybody would think I was his mother she said to herself.

Henry emailed his list of names to his mother, she opened the attachment and just shook her head. Hello mother, I only seem to have a few people I would like you to invite to Miyu's wedding, they are as follows, She sat and read out the names and realised for probably the first time in her life that she now knew all of Henry's friends and she felt very sad for him. John Ackerman, Theodore Anderson, both plus one, if it is

possible I would like to invite Theodore's parents. Lydia Bishop and her husband Ian and Christine Davidson and her mother Jennifer, both plus one. That's all mother, love you, Henry xxx.

She sent an email straight back to him, are you telling me you do not know anybody else that you would like to invite Henry. He sent an email back to her the following day, explaining that he did not have any other male friends, I do have some female friends and two of them I will be inviting to my own wedding if I ever find a sexy young lady that would like to marry me. The two other ladies I know very well, however, you would probably think it would not be appropriate to invite them. So there you have it mother, the names I have sent you are all I have. Love you, Henry xxx.

She read his email again and a tear came to her eye, you must lead a very lonely life Henry. Jessie walked in and took one look at Alexandra and immediately asked her what is wrong. Oh Jessie, it is Henry, I am so worried about him now, what is wrong with him Jessie asked? just read these two emails and you will understand. Jessie read them and a tear came to her eye, I now see why you are sad, he does not have any friends since he left Oxford. He travels all over the world far too much, where is he now. I think he is in New Zealand or Australia, not sure which one.

What about that girl he saved in the car accident, I think her name is Olivia, that is correct Jessie, she lives with her mother in New Zealand and I guess mother and daughter are the two he is talking about. He needs a wife that will slow his travelling down, you are right Jessie, I will see who I can find. Just stop right there Alexandra, you know full well that any attempt by you to match make, would end in total disaster. You are quite right Jessie, so I should leave that to you. Oh no you cannot put that on me, I will never do that, I do class Henry as much mine as he is yours, however, I do believe that Henry would not accept either of us trying to interfere in his life, and David would not be happy either. They just stood and looked at each other, lets move on.

Before either of them could say another word Alexandra's computer made a sound telling her, she had mail, she looked and said, this is from Miyu. Miyu explained what she had come up with and I hope you like it mother. Alexandra opened the attachment and saw what Miyu had made, at the top of the page was Queensberry Manor House and below that was the bride and her father walking up the isle towards the manor house with guests either side of the isle. The house, path, guests, bride and father were embossed so that they stood out, what do you think of her design Jessie, it is very different and looks very good. The more I look at it the more I like it Alexandra said, I think we will go with this Jessie. I have to go and find a printer, I had better make a couple of phone calls first, please tell Philip to be ready.

She phoned Miyu, hello mother, hello Miyu how are you, what do you think of my design. It is very different and the more I look at it the more I like it, so are you planning to accept it. Miyu? it is your wedding so you must be happy with the layout of the invitations and all other printed

stationary. But you told me it is you and father that invite the guests and not Takahiro and I. That is very true, however, you and I make a decision together on everything else. In other words, unless either of you two really do not like somebody it should not matter who I invite. All other aspects we work together, I am sorry mother, I misunderstood you. On the invitation layout and the colour I would be happy to leave that to you, are you sure Miyu. Very sure, I would just like my design on it, that is all, it will be I can guarantee that. I will phone you just as soon as I have a mock up before they get printed. Please chase Takahiro's mother to give her list and I hope I will also receive yours in the next day or two, certainly mother.

Alexandra walked out of the front door and Philip was waiting by the car, we need to go to a couple of printers in Oxford, Philip, do you have anywhere in mind ma'am. I have a couple of names, however, if you know of any we can take a look at them. They visited four printers with one of them being rather rude, during the conversation the owner asked the names of the bride and groom, she then looked at Alexandra and said, I did not realise that Lord James is Japanese. Alexandra replied, he is not, he is an English lord, why would you think that, because why would you give your daughter a Japanese name if neither of you are Japanese. You are a very rude person and you will never do any printing for anything that Queensberry needs printing, ever.

From there they went to Oxford Print Centre and then to Vivien B's, Alexandra told them what she wanted along with a copy of Miyu's design for the front cover. Not sure of the total quantity as yet but it will not be more than 1000. We will put together a full quotation with a sample of each piece of stationary you might plan to use, this way you will not only be able to see our quality, you will also get an idea of the different designs. e.g. Name cards for each guest placed on the table where you want them to sit. A1 table plans to be placed on easel stands at the entrance and several other places around the venue depicting table lay out, showing each table with, it's given number, this will make for quicker seating of guests. Order of Service, if you plan to sing a hymn it can be printed on this sheet, they can be printed single or double sided. RSVP cards with self addressed envelopes, and Menu's, you may also require a map for people not from around this area. If you are having guests from around the world it would be very nice to have menu's and order of service printed for each couple, because most ladies will wish to take these home with them.

When Alexandra got home she thanked Philip and told him our next meeting will be after I receive all quotations, thank you ma'am. She sat with Jessie and while drinking a coffee she told her what she had seen today. I need to check emails to see if I have the final lists. Miyu had sent both hers and Takahiro's mothers, together which amounted to 75, which means the total number will be one short of 1000. She immediately emailed David and asked if he had missed anybody because this will be the last chance to add names, she received an email later that night which just said, too bad, love you, David xxx.

Alexandra picked up the phone and then realised it was far to late to

phone Miyu. She phoned her first thing in the morning, hello mother, hello daughter dear, she then told her all about yesterday, leaving out the rude person. I hope to receive their quotation by tomorrow at the latest, once I have made my choice I will then send all samples by courier to you, that is not necessary mother, you can choose. No Miyu, it is your wedding and not mine, it is fantastic that I get to plan this wedding, something I never thought I would be able to do, so you will tell me which one you prefer. Maybe, you will not like any of them and I will go to another printer and send you more samples. I am sure there will be at least one design I will like, I do hope so. She then told her the total number of guest she will be inviting and also asked how Takahiro and his family are getting on.

Before Miyu had time to answer Jessie came in with a package from the printers. I have the samples so I will ring you back and you can then tell me if Takahiro is okay. Alexandra opened the package and she and Jessie looked through the samples, both Alexandra and Jessie picked out the same one, she removed the quotation then resealed and addressed the package to Miyu. She picked up the phone and called Hillary telling her she has a package to send to Tokyo urgently, please arrange for it to be collected as soon as possible, certainly Alexandra. She then looked at the quotation and noted that the one they had selected was not the most expensive, that must be a first Jessie, and they both smiled.

You and Philip should phone the two companies that you prefer and ask them to send a quotation for a total of 1000 guests, once we have the quotes back you can make arrangements for them to come and inspect the property and the marquee companies to give ideas for the layout. Have you decided what meat you want to have Alexandra, I have come up with a plan for that Jessie, on the reply cards we will have three little boxes for the guest to tick, e.g. Beef, Lamb or Vegetarian, that way the caterers will get a precise number for each meal. That is a great idea Alexandra, that way their quotation should be lower because they will not be wasting food.

The next day Miyu phoned, Jessie answered telling her that her mother is outside talking with Philip, I will call her, please hold the line. Sorry to keep you waiting Miyu, that's okay mother, now do you like any of the samples, they are all very nice mother so maybe you should go on price. Oh Miyu, what must I say to make you realise that price is of no concern to me, it is only the quality of the card and printing, so price should not be a concern for you either. Oh mother, you are expecting me to fit into your world and I am not finding it very easy to make the change. I will ask Henry to speak with you as he has been our son a lot longer than you have been our daughter. Now which one do you prefer, my favourite is number 5. That is fantastic because both Jessie and I also like that one. Please send the packet back to me and I will place the order, just as soon as I have a sample with names and wording on I will send it to you to make sure you are happy with it before giving them the final approval.

Alexandra asked Philip to drive her to the two printing companies where she told both of them what she wanted, showing them Miyu's design and telling them she needed 1020 invitations with reply cards. She

would like to see one made up exactly as if it was the finished item. One printer told her they cannot do that, Alexandra only needed two words, why not. Because if you do not like it and we have to start again the costs just keep spiralling until they are out of control. I see, so let me understand exactly what you are saying. I tell you what I want and you go ahead and print them. We make a mock up with the wording you give us. Surely that is what I thought I had asked for. Not quite, you will receive a card with the wording as you have laid out, however, the card will not be like the final one. The wording and layout can be changed as often as you want without any further charge. Once we layout the final card complete with the embossed part of the card, this can only be changed by paying the set up fee again, so this is why we go the other way.

The other way does not work for me, because my daughter lives in Tokyo and she needs to see what the finished item would look like. I need these cards and replies to be printed as quickly as possible as they will be sent to guests all over the world. If I pay a set up fee will you produce a finished invitation card and reply card, yes, however, that would be £65.00. Do you take Visa, she paid and went through what she wanted and was told, this should take no more than three days. Please send it by messenger as soon as it is ready.

The second printer told her that he can have that ready in two days, however, if you change your mind and wish to make any changes then you would be charged an additional fee of £75.00. The first set up is included in our price. Now what names do you want on this sample, I think you can put Sir Randolph and Lady Ashworth. Please send it by messenger once it is finished. I will do that and in the package will be an acceptance form that needs to be signed and returned before we can start, it is at that time we will need a deposit. As Alexandra got into the car she said to Philip, these people are far more professional than the first crowd.

The morning of the second day the messenger arrived with the package, Alexandra opened it very carefully and removed the card, it was wrapped in very soft paper just as they all will be. She removed it from the soft paper and it was very beautifully done, it really did look very professional. She called Jessie to come and take a look. Jessie picked it up and just said, oh Alexandra this looks absolutely beautiful. She phoned Hillary and asked her to get the parcel company to call straight away, she then wrapped it back up the same as it was. I need a bigger box to send this in, I am sure I have one that arrived this morning Jessie said, I will go and fetch it. She returned with the box and it was perfect, she then printed an address label and stuck it on the box, within the hour it had been collected. She phoned Miyu and told her the sample invitation and reply cards were on their way, she should receive them tomorrow, I love you mother, and I love you Miyu

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Chapter 7

Wedding plans are put into place

Over the next two days the layout and all wording for the invitation cards, reply cards, place cards, menu cards, order of service cards and thank you cards had been agreed upon. Seating plans to be printed on A1 size sheets which will be placed on easel stands around the venue. Alexandra then set about putting all the guests names and addresses onto an Excel programme ready for the printers. Miyu was blown away with the speed that Alexandra made things happen, she just hoped that some of her mothers organisation skills would rub off on her.

Alexandra and Jessie were having a coffee and talking about what still needed doing, when Alexandra stopped and said, we need to get Philip in here now, it is only fair and I would not wish him to think we do not need his input. Jessie got up and went to fetch Philip, please sit down Philip, I wish to bring the operation wedding planner meeting forward Philip, certainly ma'am. I have just finished all the stationary details so I would like you to drive me to the printers tomorrow, what time ma'am, 08:30 would be good Philip, I will be ready. Have we received any quotes back from the caterers and marquee companies yet, Jessie and Philip both replied not as yet, maybe a phone call with a gentle reminder of the urgency.

Within minutes Philip returned with the post and both quotes from the marquee companies had arrived, as they are addressed to you Philip, it is only right that you open them, he smiled and opened the envelopes. Both companies had laid out their basic charges and both said, they needed to see the venue before giving a final amount. Philip pointed out that there is just £92.00 difference in price, please contact them and arrange for a meeting on site.

Jessie found out that both her caterers of choice would be sending their quotes tomorrow morning. Philip popped his head around the door and said, excuse me ma'am, one at 11:45 and the second at 15:30 tomorrow, thank you Philip. Alexandra decided she should get back to her office to make sure the estate is running fine and no problems had turned up. That night David phoned and asked how she is getting on? she was excited and told him how far along with her plans she was and what was happening tomorrow. He smiled and told her he missed her and would be home on Friday.

At 08:30 Philip was driving away from Queensberry Manor on route to Vivien B's, this was the printer that Alexandra had selected. Alexandra was shown in to Vivien's office, I think I have everything we need for you to start printing, Vivien looked through all the cards that Alexandra had placed on her desk. Clipped to each one was a piece of paper with the wording she wanted printed. This looks in order Alexandra, we will print

one invitation card and one reply card for you to approve. Once that is done we will start printing, you do not need any others until you have your replies and know the final number. Alexandra then told Vivien that a lot of foreign dignitaries are being invited and I will need you to sign a none disclosure agreement. Vivien looked shocked and said, I have never been asked for this before. Alexandra assured her that once she sees the names on the invitation list she will understand why she is asking. Vivien then said, if you are inviting well known foreign dignitaries I have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain, where do I sign.

Philip answered the front door and standing there was Vivien, good morning how may I help you young lady. I am looking for Lady James, please step inside and he showed her to a small waiting room, please have a seat and whom May I say is looking for her Ladyship. I believe it is the lady from Vivien's ma'am, I will be right there Philip. Good morning Vivien, good morning Alexandra, what a beautiful house you have, yes it is special. I have brought you the two finished samples, Vivien opened a box and placed it on the table, inside was a stunning invitation card, Miyu's design really stood out on this A5 two page card. Alexandra picked up the card and opened it and read the words on the inside page, it looked absolutely perfect. You have made a very good job indeed. I used Sir Randolph's details again so you would see the addressed envelope to him and the reply to yourself. Are you happy with a cheque or would you prefer a bank transfer, a cheque would be fine thank you Alexandra. Looking through the 999 names on your guest list, I understand why you have asked for a none disclosure agreement, I thought you would. With names like these it can only help my business once your wedding is over.

After showing Jessie the invitation and reply cards, Alexandria boxed them back up and sent them to Miyu telling her these were hers to keep.

At 11:30 the first marquee company arrived and Philip introduced Lady James to them, she told them where she wanted the wedding service to be carried out. They looked around and came up with the adjacent area for the sit-down reception which would be connected with a tunnel. This would be a good area for the wedding party to greet all their guests as they went through the tunnel to take their seats. On the far side of the reception marquee would be a marquee for the caterers with in and out doorways. Once the meal was over, one end of the large marquee would be opened to reveal the dance floor. Are you happy with that suggestion Lady James, that looks very good to me, I will be talking to Lord James over the weekend and will let you know. Would you like me to drop by and talk to Lord James myself, that will not be necessary at this time, if Lord James has any questions he will call you. I will make up a formal quotation on what we have discussed today, and I will get it in the post tomorrow morning.

Miyu phoned and told her mother that the invitation and reply cards look absolutely beautiful and she is very happy with them, she just wished she could come and help. That is a very good idea Miyu, talk to Takahiro and get on the next flight, do you want me to book a ticket for you. Oh

mother I would love that, just as long as father is happy, he will be happy because I will be happy. I will phone you with your flight details, thank you mother.

The second marquee company arrived dead on time and again Philip introduced Lady James. They pretty much suggested the same marquees as the first company with a couple of added things. Wedding ceremony marquee to be slightly wider, this would make the main aisle wider by three feet and the aisles on either side also wider. They also suggested at the end of the main aisle to have a stage, this would mean the bride and groom would have to climb up two steps to stand in front of the Bishop. They would then stand eighteen inches higher. This would give the guests towards the rear of the marquee a much better view of the ceremony. Alexandra liked this suggestion. They then asked where is the parking area, Alexandra said, please follow me and they all walked to the rear of the house. It will be in this area between the rear of the house and the front of the old castle, so all cars will be out of sight and not be on any photo's. We plan to have Groundtrax Track-Panel to save the ground getting churned up and also the guests get out of the vehicles and walk without getting their shoes dirty.

I do like that, however, have you considered what they may look like by the time they enter the marquee if it is raining. I am suggesting a high rain proof cover stretching completely over this car parking area, it will need to be high enough to allow a coach to drive under, just in case there are any. That is also a good idea Alexandra said. Do you have any questions or is there anything else we can do to make your life a little easier. I take it you will have a covered walkway for the caterers, yes indeed, we will take it from that maintenance service road. With your quotation can you include a map of the lay out of the marquees so that I can show the caterers. Certainly Lady James, that is all part of our quotation, you receive two maps, one is to give to your caterers and the other is for you. Once you have placed your order we can provide several maps in case you need to give to flower arrangers. We will take some measurements before leaving and I will get this quotation drawn up and delivered by tomorrow afternoon.

At the wedding planners meeting the next morning Alexandra asked Jessie if she would arrange with Jane at Heriot's to visit on Monday because Miyu will be here by then. We should receive a quotation from Carnival Marquees later today. I am sure Jane will require a map of the marquee layouts and distances from food preparation to tables. Please remember to ask Jane if the food preparation marquee is large enough and if there is anything else she may need, Jessie made notes. Now that we are waiting for the quotations for the marquees Philip, will you please contact George Thomas the golf course manager for the name of the company he uses that puts down temporary car parking. I do not think we have anything else to discuss before the marquee quotations arrive. I will be in my office at the club if you need me.

Gerald Fitzpatrick from Carnival Marquees, arrived at 16:30 and asked

to speak with Lady James, Philip explained she had to go to work, however, please take a seat and I will phone her. Gerald was shown into the waiting room and Philip phoned Alexandra, she asked Philip to please give Gerald the phone. Good afternoon Lady James, good afternoon Gerald. I would like to go through this quotation with you, please go through your quotation with Philip and he will explain to Lord James and I over the weekend. If Lord James has any questions he will contact you directly. I trust you are happy to do that, that is fine Lady James as long as Philip understands exactly what you want. He understands perfectly Gerald.

Alexandra phoned Lydia and asked her where Henry was, he is in Australia for the next two days and then he has a day in Singapore before returning to London. Do you need to get a message to him Lady James. I just wanted to tell him that Miyu is coming to visit for three weeks while we are finishing up the wedding preparations and maybe he could spend a couple of days with her. I am sure he will, so I will change his appointments and let him know. If you are happy to let me make her flight booking I can get her on the same flight as Henry from Singapore. Oh Lydia, that would be fantastic, once I have the flight details I will notify Miyu, Henry and yourself.

Lydia phoned Miyu and told her that she will be making the bookings for her. Now Miyu, Henry is in Australia for two more days and then he fly's to Singapore for a further two days before returning to London. Are you happy if I fly you to Singapore the morning after Henry gets there, you can then spend the afternoon and the next day with Henry. You will be flying to London on the same flight that Henry is booked on. That would be fantastic Lydia. When I have made the arrangements I will email you, thank you so much Lydia. Lydia booked her flight from Tokyo to Singapore staying one night at the Raffles Hotel and then flying to London on the same flight as Henry.

Lydia then sent emails to Henry, Miyu and Alexandra giving the flight details.

Henry walked into Raffles Hotel at 13:30 and asked the front desk for his key, they told him his sister was waiting for him in the lounge. They hugged and kissed and Miyu could not stop talking about not seeing Henry for so long and naturally her wedding. Henry just smiled and said, lets get something to eat in the courtyard. On the way to the restaurant Henry asked her how is Takahiro? He is very well Henry and sends you his best wishes, thank you Miyu. Over lunch Henry asked what would you like for your wedding present, nothing Henry, we just want to share our day with all the family. That's not acceptable, however, I do have a suggestion for you, what is your suggestion Henry. I could arrange your honeymoon as my present, surely that is for the bride and groom to take care of. I guess that is what normally happens, but just think about this before rejecting my offer. If I arrange your honeymoon then it would be a surprise for both of you. I can guarantee you would get a fantastic honeymoon and all I would need to know from you would be countries that you would not like to spend your honeymoon in. Please talk to

Takahiro and this is the wedding present that I would like to give you, I promise I will talk to Takahiro and let you know.

After lunch they walked around the shops in the courtyard and around the outside of the hotel. Miyu found a beautiful pair of brown/burgundy leather ankle boots. Henry gave his card to the girl, I will pay Henry, not a chance sister dear, when you go shopping with me, I always pay. She squeezed his arm and said, thank you so much Henry, you are welcome. Henry said, if I get out of this suit we can take a trip down the river. They walked back inside Raffles and Henry asked Miyu to please order coffee while I change into a pair of casual trousers. When he returned the coffee had just arrived and the two of them sat drinking and talking for the next twenty minutes. They walked along hand in hand and found one of the boats that take you down the river, they paid and got on board and sat at the front. Miyu had her camera with her and was snapping away at everything she could see. She asked another passenger to please take a photo of her and Henry on board, they both had a great day.

The next day they walked around the shops and did a lot of sight seeing. They had a great meal before heading to the airport for the overnight to Heathrow. Roger was waiting and Henry introduced Miyu, they shook hands and Roger said welcome to London Miss James, thank you Roger. It was not long and they arrived at Henry's Penthouse, while Parker took Miyu's details down Roger took the cases up to the Penthouse. They walked inside and they removed their shoes and he introduced Miyu to Lydia. They hit it off straight away, Henry said to Miyu, please take a look around while I talk to Lydia. When Henry walked into the lounge he found Miyu looking out across Hyde Park. She turned and hugged him and told him he has a fantastic home and I do love your bed. However, I did not find the notches, he smiled and told her, that is because he is the only one that has slept in that bed. That is absolutely unacceptable, you need a wife to share this beautiful home with. Your paintings are also beautiful Henry and I am pleased you have only the one in your bedroom, I hope that is because you will leave any more for your wife to choose? If you pick a bedroom you can take a shower while I am doing the same. Once they had changed they headed out to do some sightseeing.

After lunch Henry asked, do you want to go to Queensberry this afternoon or tomorrow morning. As much as I would like to spend some more time alone with you, I think I should go today. Okay, let us head back to the Penthouse and arrange for a flight. Henry found out that he had two full days before heading back to New York. He phoned the Private Jet Charter company at Biggin Hill and asked for a helicopter to take them from Battersea Heliport to Queensberry, Ted told Henry I can only do this in one hour, that will be fine, thank you Ted.

They landed on the front lawn at Queensberry and Philip came to collect Miyu's case, Henry turned back to John and asked if he could be picked up around 15:00 tomorrow. I will tell the office as soon as I return, hope to see you tomorrow John. They walked into the kitchen and found Jessie in her office sorting out some paperwork. She jumped up and kissed

and hugged Henry and Miyu, your mother asked me to tell you that she would be in her office. I do not think she knew you were coming home Henry. Lets take a walk and go and find her Miyu. They headed off to the golf club holding hands, lots of kisses when they found Alexandra, I did not know you would be gracing us with your presence Henry, he just smiled.

The three of them walked back to Queensberry and Henry asked, how is your wedding planning going mother. Very well thank you Henry, did you wish to help, I do not think you need my help mother, this is why Miyu has arrived. Alexandra just smiled and asked him how long will he be staying, I leave at 15:00 tomorrow mother. Where are you going to next Henry, New York I think. Henry had a good day relaxing and by the time John arrived he was ready to leave. He kissed Jessie and said, the wedding is all they talk about, you may not see me until the day before this wedding. Oh Henry, a girls wedding day is very special and it is the responsibility of the brides mother to take care of that. So whether you like it or not, this is a big deal around here. I love you Jessie, I love you too Henry.

On Monday morning at 09:30 Jane from Heriot's arrived together with Peter the Master Chief. Alexandra, Miyu, Jessie and Philip walked around the grounds where the marquees would be laid out and answered a couple of questions they had. Alexandra suggested they step inside so they could look over the plans that Carnival Marquees had given them. Peter was happy with the size of the kitchen marquee and it's position in relation to where they could bring their vans to deliver. Depending on the final number of guests we may be able to reduce by one marquee together with table and chairs.

By Wednesday the decision for stationary, marquees, caterers and temporary car parking had been decided. Alexandra phoned them and told them she accepted their quotation. However, they still needed to sort out flower arrangements and a band. David needs to ask Randolph to be the speaker and we should give somebody the job of welcoming all the guests.

Everything had been sorted and the only thing left was to receive the invitations back so they would know how many guests would be accepting. By the end of April Alexandra had received replies for 582 accepted and 280 unable to attend, this left 137 still to reply.

All her friends from the Scandinavian countries had accepted which she was very pleased about. All MP's along with members of the Lords had accepted. She was very happy and everyday she opened more replies and most of them were accepting. By the 7th May everybody from Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Austria had accepted, with nobody coming from El Salvador Estonia and Macedonia.

On the 10th May Alexandra had a phone call from the US embassy, requesting to make an appointment for a Mr John Montgomery. I would be happy to do that if you can tell me what the nature of the appointment is about. Certainly, Lady James, you sent an invitation to the President and first Lady along with several government officials, to the wedding of your daughter to Mr Yoshino. Mr Montgomery is part of the Presidents Secret

Service details and they do need to take a look around and ask you some questions before the President can accept. When would he prefer to come, if you can make it tomorrow or Sunday. I can do either, then how does 11:30 tomorrow sound. I look forward to meeting him.

Philip pressed the button and said, how may I help you. A man's voice replied, my name is John Montgomery and I have an appointment with Lady James. I do have you down sir, however, I do not know anything about the lady sitting next to you, she is one of my team she is, special agent Miller, do you need to see proof. Not at this time thank you, please follow the driveway. The gates opened and he drove in. Philip came out to meet them and he asked them to please follow him, he showed them into the waiting room and went to inform Lady James. Philip returned and again asked them to please follow him to the main lounge where Lord and Lady James were waiting for them.

Hand shakes and introductions all round, Alexandra said, please be seated, she then asked if they would like coffee. Everybody thought that was a good idea so she turned to Philip who was still waiting and asked him to please ask Jessie. You have a beautiful home Lady James, thank you. The coffee arrived and Jessie had included some biscuits, thank you Jessie. David said to John Montgomery, no doubt this visit is for you to check us out. Not really Lord James, you and Lady James are known to the Secret Service from the time you visited the President when he was the Governor of Texas. However, we do need to ask about your staff and to take a look around your magnificent grounds. All our staff that work in or outside tending the grounds have been with us for years. When you say years Lady James, how many do you mean. Without checking the records I am pretty confident that the last person employed was twenty years ago. That is a long time.

Would you object to us having a list of names of your staff, not at all David replied. Addresses would be helpful, all staff live on site. We have built one and two bedroomed houses within the grounds, we can include the staff houses when we show you the grounds. I will also need a list of your guests that have been invited, I have already printed you a copy in anticipation that you would require one. Thank you Lady James, I see you understand how these things work.

They drank their coffees and David and agent Miller had a couple of biscuits each. Do you need to look around the house at all, Special agent Montgomery said, it is not necessary, however, agent Miller wished it was. Alexandra stood up and said, come with me young lady, let me give you the guided tour. Agent Miller got up and gave her boss a big smile. While the ladies were looking round the house, David suggested they ride around the property on horse back, that's a good idea. David excused himself and went to find Philip, he returned and said, the horses will be waiting when we get to the stables.

When the ladies returned agent Miller thanked Alexandra for showing her round and said, apart from the White House this is the most magnificent house I have ever had the privilege of looking round. David

said, thank you my dear. We are going to ride around on horse back young lady. Alexandra said, we need to change, come with me agent Miller I am sure to be able to find you some riding gear. We will have some for you also Mr Montgomery, he followed David.

David and Alexandra showed the two agents around, Miyu said as long as we will only be walking or trotting I will come with you. They split up so that they could cover more ground, Alexandra and Miyu showing Pauline Miller the staff houses and fence line to the back gate. This gate is mainly for staff or deliveries concerning the house and grounds. The only time deliveries come through here for the golf course is when we have a tournament on.

We have just had these new gates put in place, as you see they are double gates. You cannot get through the second gate until the first one is closed. You need to swipe a card to get them to open. During the wedding these gates will be manned 24/7 by the Grenadier Guards. Their commanding officer has given the authority because David was a former Grenadier Guards Officer. So nobody will get through these gates without a full identity inspection. We can follow the fence line right around the property on this path. Queensberry Manor House is totally separate from the rest of the property. There are a total of four gates, the main gate you entered by, this is the staff and delivery gate. Then we have two gates to go through to the golf, one is for vehicles delivering at tournament times and the other is a pedestrian gate. This is mainly used by the family.

David and John Montgomery headed through to the golf course were they rode completely around the fence line of the course. They checked the maintenance building and all other enclosures within the course. After that they passed through another locked pedestrian gate, this gave them access to the farm. As you will see the farm only has normal fencing along the road and to divide our farm from the next farm. The golf course and the manor house both have security fences. They returned to the stables and their horses were taken care of. While walking back to the house John asked David where are you planning to have the cars parked. David showed him to the rear of the house and said, this area between the house and the old castle will be used for parking. It will have proper ground covering as we will be using the Groundtrax Track-Panel and this area will be covered just in case it rains. It seems that you have thought of everything Lord James, I cannot take the credit, Alexandra and her team have arranged everything. Do you wish to see anything else John or for that matter, do you have any questions. I only have one, however, it is a personal one, fire away. When you and Alexandra visited The president in Texas, while he was still the governor. We had to run a check on you and I cannot find anywhere in our records that you have a daughter, our records only show one son, Henry.

Takahiro is one of Henry's friends from his university days, and during those years Takahiro and Miyu got engaged. Miyu's parents committed suicide one year before she finished her studies. When they decided to marry the Japanese honour system raised it's ugly head and Takahiro was

forbidden to marry Miyu. We had met Miyu two years before and found her to be a wonderful young lady. We decided to adopt her. I did not know you could do that in England, you certainly cannot in the US. We had to adopt her in Japan as the Japanese law allows for adult adoption. I will amend our records and we will run a background check on her and her family. They headed back in the house where they found Alexandra, Miyu and Pauline were already changed and drinking coffee. Lets get out of this riding gear John. When they returned Alexandra poured the coffee and they talked about the wedding. You must be a very happy Miyu, getting married from this house, I could not be happier Pauline, it is the most magnificent setting, I am very jealous.

Providing there are no problems with any of the guests, I do not see any reason that the President and first lady will not accept your invitation. That is great news John, will you be accompanying the President. Unfortunately I will be in another country on the other side of the world. That's a shame because I was going to ask if you two could be seated as guest. Pauline's face lit up. John said, I take it that means you would be happy to give up your holiday, oh yes. You will come Pauline, I would love to. I will give you an invitation card, unfortunately your name will have to be hand written because they have already been printed. Please excuse me, I will do it straight away, she came back into the room and handed her the invitation along with the reply. Do I have to give you a name if I bring a partner, not at all, one either way makes no difference. Thank you so much.

Three days later Alexandra answered the phone and John Montgomery said, good evening Alexandra, good evening to you John. I am just phoning to let you know that all guests on your list have passed with flying colours, thank you John. This means you will be receiving a reply from the first lady accepting your invitation.

On Thursday morning a buzzer sounded and Philip pressed the intercom for the front gate and a females voice told him she has a delivery for Lady James from the American Embassy. Please follow the drive to the front of the manor house and I will meet you there. She asked Philip to sign and she thanked him and drove away. He found Alexandra and gave her the envelope he had signed for telling her it was hand delivered from the American Embassy, thank you Philip.

She opened the A4 size envelope and found five self addressed envelopes which she knew would be holding invitation replies. She opened each one and found that all five had accepted. Inside the one from Laura Bush she had included a hand written letter. She read the letter which thanked her for her invitation and stated that they will be very happy to accept. Both her and George fondly remember the time she and David spent at their ranch in Texas. She was looking forward to getting a tour of her manor house and meeting her family. Alexandra headed out to the garden to find Miyu, I have some good news for you Miyu. What is it mother, the president and first lady of America have accepted our invitation along with the four others from government.

I am a little worried mother, why Miyu, I may do or say something that I should not. My dear daughter, please remember that this is your big day, so whatever you do or say will be more than acceptable. Let me tell you what I have thought about while planning your marriage. It is your wedding day and you are the most important person at that wedding. David always says the groom is only there to make up the numbers. Miyu burst out laughing. I also invited people that I feel will help Takahiro in his carrier. With the exception of Takahiro parents I do not know any of the Japanese guests that have accepted. Although David has met all of them over the years.

Now that President Bush has accepted and four other government officials from the US, I do believe this will help Takahiro's advancement within the military. Oh mother, you do not know the Japanese men in positions of power, there is a very old English saying Miyu. It is not what you know. It is whom you know. Just wait and see if I am right, they both smiled.

By the end of May, Alexandra had received the remaining outstanding replies back, a total of 644 accepted with 355 unable to attend. She was very pleased that everything was moving into place just a little sad that a couple of friends could not accept. Not serious as all the main players had accepted. Miyu, can you please make a new Excel document, certainly mother, what do you need. Jane will need to know how many of each, lamb, beef and vegetarian meals she needs to prepare. She will also need to know which tables require which meal. Vivian will need the table numbers for each guest. I will get started on that straight away mother.

Alexandra phoned Vivien, Jane and Gerald telling them the total number of guests. Gerald told her he could reduce by one marquee and would send her an updated quotation. Jane said, I need the total number of meals, Miyu has just started an Excel document which will tell you what meal each guest would like along with the table number where each guest will be seated. That would be fantastic Alexandra and I will send an updated quotation to you.

Vivien said, I now need to know which guests will sit at which tables. We have just about finished sorting that out as we do not wish to offend anybody. Miyu is putting it all in an Excel document for you and you will receive it within two days. That's great Alexandra, I will send an updated invoice for you.

That evening David phoned and told them he had found a wonderful lady that is more than happy to welcome all our guests, do not keep us waiting David, please tell me her name. She is, Baroness Boothroyd, oh David that is fantastic, she is a lovely lady. You my darling, know just how to get exactly what you want, and I will want plenty from you young lady. That has never been a problem, whenever and whatever you require I am always ready for you. I have also managed to obtain the services of another young lady, she will be bringing her backing group along with her band. Oh David why do you keep me on edge, he laughed and said, Kylie Minogue. You are the best husband a wife could ask for, I know. Alexandra

told him she would come up to London to spend the night with him on Wednesday as we have pretty much finished, I look forward to that Alexandra.

On Wednesday morning Philip drove Miyu to see Jane and Vivian, she gave them the document she had typed and asked both of them, if that is all they needed. They both confirmed that they have everything they need, and thanked her. She returned to Queensberry and Jessie told her that Alexandra had just left. Miyu and Jessie had a coffee and a long chat about everything, Miyu realised that Jessie was just as excited as her mother was about her wedding.

On the Monday 24th June, a platoon of armed Grenadier Guards arrived from Abingdon barracks, they took up position on the four gates and also started patrols throughout the grounds. The first people to be checked onto the property were Gerald and his team to erect all the marquee's along with the cover over the car parking area. On Tuesday morning they erected the marquee for the catering. All marquee's were left completely open so the air could circulate through them. Gerald told Philip that they would be back tomorrow to lay the flooring in all marquee's. Midday Tuesday, another team arrived to lay the Groundtrax Track-Panels, they had to lay a temporary road leading to the car parking area, and all the car park. They finished by 18:30, as they were driving out they said to Philip, see you on Monday mate.

Thursday all chairs and tables were placed and the marquee's closed up. Early Friday morning all tables were laid, flower arrangements were brought in and the bands equipment was set up. The food in the caterers marquee was being prepared. The final touches were finished while David and Alexandra were still in bed.

Also on Tuesday morning Henry, Takahiro and the six bridesmaids arrived for the Wedding Rehearsal with the Bishop. Because the marquee's had been erected they had to land a little way from the manor house. As they were collecting their cases two armed guards arrived and politely asked for some form of identity. They all produced their passports and one of the guards saluted and said, sorry we had to ask you two gents, not a problem Henry replied.

I would like to welcome you ladies to Queensberry Manor our family home, a lot of excited chattering amongst the six ladies, naturally all in Japanese. Takahiro said to them, please only speak English when other people are in the same room as you, I would not want Miyu's parents and certainly not the staff to think the Japanese are rude. We understand Takahiro and we will try very hard, thank you. Lots of hugs and kisses once they stepped inside. Alexandra asked Miyu to please introduce your friends to all the staff and then show them to their rooms, if you want to show them the house then it is okay because nobody else has arrived yet. If you want to freshen up lady's before you take a look around it is up to you. When you see Jessie please ask her if we can have some coffee, certainly mother.

They headed to the kitchen and found Jessie in her office, she jumped

up and shook hands with the six girls and introduced them to all the staff. Jessie then told Miyu she had put them in the bedrooms each side of her room. Four maids were sent to help the girls settle in their rooms. The maid explained that she had put two bridesmaid dresses in each of the three rooms when they arrived from the dressmaker. Lady James told me you would more than likely change rooms, so just let me know and we will make the change for you. Miyu said, it is not necessary for you to do that, if they want to change rooms then they can do it themselves, thank you Miyu.

At dinner that night David explained to Takahiro that he could no longer sleep with his daughter in the family home until you are married. A roar of laughter exploded around the table, you might all think this is funny or that I am joking, so let me assure all of you, I am deadly serious. Jessie will tell you which room you can sleep in Takahiro. Henry said, are you going to stand guard at his door father. That will not be necessary Henry because Takahiro is a man of his word, and once he has given his word, I know he will not break it. You have my word Lord James, I will not sleep with Miyu until we are married. Father only said in this house Takahiro. It does not matter Henry, I have given my word.

They all headed to see the Bishop for the Wedding Rehearsal, Takahiro and Miyu were introduced to the Bishop and they both liked him, they felt very pleased that he had agreed to perform the service. He went through what was going to happen and where everybody should be standing. He then told them the questions he will be asking them and as long as they are still happy to make this commitment, the answers they should give. Do you have any questions for me young lady, I am pretty sure I understand thank you. He then turned to Takahiro and asked, what about you young man, I am very clear on what to do and say thank you sir. The Bishop smiled and said, okay, lets give this, a try. Takahiro and Henry stood in front and slightly to the right side of the Bishop. Alexandra sat in the first row of seats on the left.

David and Miyu stood just inside the door with the bridesmaids behind them waiting to walk down the aisle. It looks like you are all ready so we can begin. Henry turned and looked at his father and sister and said, here comes the bride. With that David squeezed Miyu's hand and stepped forward. When they got to the alter David extended his right hand and shook Takahiro's hand. He then turned back to Miyu pretended to lift her veil with his right hand and gave her a kiss on the cheek. He then lifted Miyu's right hand from his left hand and gives her hand to Takahiro. He then sat down next to Alexandra. The Bishop then went through the main part of the ceremony without and hiccups. Takahiro and Miyu walked back down the aisle, they hugged and kissed and the Bishop declared this Wedding Rehearsal has taken place without any problems. I am sure it will be the same on Friday.

Early Thursday morning a secret service detail arrived to check that everything was in order. With that detail was agent Miller. The guests started to arrive that were staying at Queensberry, Philip had arranged a

coach to collect them from Heathrow and it had to make several runs because of the different times they landed. Henry's close friend Theodore Anderson 2nd along with his mother and father arrived in the first coach and when shaking David's hand the Vice Admiral said, it had been a few years since we have stayed at Queensberry David. Henry and Takahiro came over to greet them and after they shook the Vice Admiral's hand, Henry kissed his wife and told her it is great to see you once again. He turned and hugged Theodore and asked how are you, a little tired Henry, I have only just got back from a six months tour of duty. However, when the first of the Oxford four is getting married, you just have to come. Will you be next Henry, Alexandra touched Theodore's arm and said, not the way he is going as he does not have even have a girl friend. I take it you mean one that he cannot bring home. She smiled and said, I guess you are right.

I have put you in Henry's room Theodore, you are making me share with Henry, Lady James. Not at all Theodore, he will be staying in Oxford at the Vanbrugh House Hotel with Takahiro, that's perfect Lady James. I see you do not change my friend. There is no point reinventing the wheel Henry, when you have the best friend anyone could have why would you want to change him. They both burst out laughing.

Four of the bridesmaids parents were also in the first coach along with, Lene Espersen and Count Henri de Laborde de Monpezat from Denmark. Matti Taneli Vanhanen, Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäk from Finland. Anne-Grethe Strøm-Erichsen from Norway. Then Alexandra's fellow country men arrived, Anna Lindh, Mona Ingeborg Sahlin, Gudrun Schyman, Kjell Stefan Löfvén, John Fredrik Reinfeldt, Lars-Magnus Harald Christoffer Ohly and Soraya Viola Heléna Post. Micheline Calmy-Rey From Switzerland. Aurelia Frick from Liechtenstein. Ana Palacio Vallelersundi from Spain. When Alexandra had welcomed them all and told them the maids will help where needed. She spotted agent Miller, she walked up to her and gave her a hug, where is your suit case Pauline, in the car ma'am. Alexandra said, drop the ma'am, it's Alexandra unless I am in the company of your President then I would think you would be expected to give me my title. Now go and fetch your case and Anne here will show you to your room. I have put you next to a couple of Americans. Thank you very much Alexandra. That was not very hard was it, no ma'am. Alexandra lifted her hands, shook her head and said, I understand.

The New Zealand and Australian's guests arrived in the second coach, Helen Clark, John Key, John Howard and Julie Bishop. From the US, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Susan Morissey Livingstone and Victoria Jane Nuland. The president and first Lady had to stay at the US embassy.

At midday a helicopter landed, Sir Randolph and Lady Martha together with Baroness Boothroyd and Lydia and Ian stepped out and thanked the pilot. Again identities were requested. The staff came out to collect the cases. As they walked to the house Henry came out of a side door to greet them, he shook Sir Randolph's hand and kissed Lady Martha, he turned put out his hand and said, welcome to Queensberry Manor Baroness, it is

very nice to meet you Henry, however, just call me Betty. He smiled and then shook Ian's hand and hugged and kissed Lydia and said to them, welcome to Queensberry. May this be the first of many visits. Oh Henry, I can see why you only want the best in life. I do sometimes think I might have been spoiled when I was a little boy Lydia. Mother and father are waiting for you at the entrance. Hugs and kisses all round, Alexandra told Martha they are in their normal room and Betty is in the next one along, I have put you amongst the Americans Lydia. These young ladies will show you to your rooms and give you any help you may need to unpack and put your clothes away.

Alexandra asked if all the guests could assemble on the lawn so that she could inform them that she is giving an informal dinner just for the guests that are staying at Queensberry. There will be three other guests arriving that are not staying here, I want this evening to be kept as casual as possible, so this is not a formal dress do. I am sure we will have plenty of that tomorrow. Most of you are very good friends so I am sure it will not be a problem for you. For the three of you I do not know, I trust you will be happy to indulge me. She looked at Betty, Lydia and Ian, they smiled back at her. We have to have it in one of the marquees because I cannot fit you all around my dining room table. There was a roar of laughter.

David tells me I should tell you all whom the other three guests are. Squadron Leader John Ackerman from RAF Brize Norton which is just up the road, John makes up the last of the Oxford four. All of them are like sons to David and I, they spent most weekends here while studying at Oxford. They were all great young men to have staying with us. I have been told by the other two guests to please ask you all to keep it informal. This couple we met on their ranch in Texas before he became President, they should arrive at 18:30. Lydia squeezed Ian's hand and said very quietly, this family knows a lot of important people.

At 18:28 a US air force helicopter came over the tree line escorted by two British army Apache's, the US helicopter landed on the side lawn while the two Apache's circled overhead. As the rotors came to a stop the two Apache's landed just behind. President Bush and first Lady Laura Bush stepped out, he turned and saluted to the pilot, once they walked clear he turned and gave a wave and nodded his head to the two Apache pilots. David and Alexandra walked towards the helicopter to greet them, hand shakes for the men hugs and kisses for the ladies. Welcome to Queensberry Manor, thank you very much, I must say David, this puts our ranch to shame and it would give the white house a run for it's money. The one big difference between you and I George, at the end of your term you get to return to Texas, when I retire I stay at home. George hugged David and said, you have a fantastic home and a wonderful sense of humour, thank you George. If you have time after the wedding you can take me a walk around and explain a little more about the English lords. If we are still tied up with guests, will it be alright with you if I get Henry to stand in for me, no problem David.

As this is an informal dinner please just take a seat anywhere, this is

good chance for everybody to mix and talk with people you have never met before. I have placed marker pens and sticky paper on the tables, please write the name you would be happy for the other people to call you just at this informal get together. Laura Bush said, that's a great idea Alexandra, she wrote Laura and stuck the piece of paper on her chest. She then sat next to Miyu and one of her bridesmaids. The President found Henry and Theodore sitting together and talking to, Julie Bishop, Ursula Plassnik, Helen Clark, Aurelia Frick and agent Miller. He asked if he may join them? certainly Henry replied. Firstly, let me write on that piece of paper like your mother asked. He picked up the pen and wrote, George. I see you two guys only selected to sit with the ladies. Well Mr President no disrespect to you, but I always find far more enjoyment talking to a lady. He laughed and said, I cannot say things like that Henry. I guess that goes with the job sir, now let me introduce you. He went around the table and they all shook hands.

Aurelia Frick asked how are your mother and father Henry, I would imagine by now father has checked the cost and just hopes my mother does not come up with anything else. Everybody on the table laughed. My mother is in her element, she always wanted a daughter so she could spoil her. As I understand it, it was this year your mother and father adopted Miyu. That is correct, Takahiro came up against the Japanese honour system and father decided to solve it. So mother got her daughter and I got a sister. George asked, how do you feel about getting a sister that way Henry. I am very happy and if I had been given a choice I would have picked Miyu, she is a wonderful young lady. My brother-in law is one of my three friends. You only have three friends Henry. I do know a lot of people, however, I would only say I have three friends Mr President. Stop right there Henry, I have written my name and stuck it on my chest and if my memory serves me well, it does not say Mr President. He pointed to his name tag and said, George.

John had joined a table with two bridesmaids along with Sandra Kalniete, Ana Palacio Vallelersundi, Matti Taneli Vanhanen, Gudrun Schyman, Kjell Stefan and Kim Campbell. This was a table that laughed a lot as everybody seemed to be enjoying their selves.

After they had all eaten Alexandra stood up and said, I am making a request to the Oxford four, well, only three of you because Takahiro has more pressing things on his mind. After the wedding and the reception the floor will be open for everyone to dance. I am asking if you three young men will dance with as many ladies as you can. I am sure it will not be possible to dance with every lady, however, what I am saying is please do not hog just one lady Henry. That is being cruel mother, however, I will do my best to comply, thank you.

With that the band arrived and asked if they could start playing. The band started up and Henry said, may I have this dance Ursula, thank you Henry and they stepped onto the floor. Halfway through the dance more and more people were moving to the dance floor. At the end of the dance Henry walked Ursula back to her seat and said, thank you. He turned to

Julie Bishop and asked her to dance, certainly Henry, you dance very well, thank you Julie. After the dance he asked Pauline, and during the dance he asked where do you hail from, Arizona. So George is your President, he most definitely is, and I am having a bit of a problem with calling him George, why is that. Because I am part of his secret service detail. So you are a plant so you can keep your eye on him and the rest of us. No Henry, your mother invited me as I am on holiday. I would not worry, he seems a pretty laid back sort of guy.

After Henry, Theodore and George had danced with each of the ladies on their table they sat down and had another drink. George said, I know all your names, where you come from and what you do, that is apart from you two. I do not know anything else about you apart from your name. He turned to Pauline, I am sure I have seen you before, however, for the life of me I cannot put my finger on where. I am part of your secret service detail Sir. You have done very well and you did fool me, I am not on duty Sir. Lady James invited me as I am on holiday. He patted her hand and said, it's only George for tonight, thank you Sir.

He turned and asked Theodore, what about you son, I hear the American accent. I am in the US navy Sir, what is it you do. I am the XO on the USS Jimmy Carter. That makes you Vice Admiral Anderson's son, that is affirmative Sir. Just for tonight my name is George. Thank you Sir. Your mother said something about the Oxford four, what is all that about Henry. John and I met at school where we both played in the cricket team. We both got into Oxford and we met Theodore and Takahiro, we got on very well and shared a house near the campus. Most weekends we would come here and ride, shoot or play golf and I guess because we were always together we became known as, the Oxford Four. Nice story Henry.

I think we should ask a few more ladies to dance. They split up and Henry went to find one of his favourite people. He found her talking to one of the bridesmaids. Would you do me the honour of having this dance with me Lady Martha, she pointed to her name and said, no Lady on here Henry. I am sorry Lady Martha. While dancing she said, I think it is about time that you dropped the Lady and Sir titles Henry. I have never ever called the two of you anything but Sir and Lady, I understand that Henry and I am sure it will be difficult for you in the short term.

However, you have grown into a very sensible young man and we are very proud of you. Thank you, and he looked into her eyes and said, Martha. She smiled and hugged him. He returned her to her seat and asked Baroness Boothroyd. Would you do me the honour of having this dance with me Betty, I would very much like that Henry. After the dance had finished he made a point of dancing with all the bridesmaids. He then found Theodore's mother and asked her. How are you getting on Henry, just tired as I do far too much travelling Nancy. How are you and the Vice Admiral, we are great thank you, and when are you coming to visit us again. Make a plan Henry you know we will always have a bed for you, bring your girl friend. I would if I had one. Oh Henry you are just as bad as Theodore. Henry looked around and thought he had danced with all

the ladies, with the exception of his mother, sister and Laura Bush and Lydia.

He found three of them sitting together talking ten to the dozen. He looked at them and told them I am pretty sure you are the only young ladies I have not had the pleasure of dancing with. Thank you Henry I am very happy with you, you are welcome mother. Which one of you may I dance with first, they all smiled at him and Laura told him, you had better dance with your mother because you should never leave your mother until last. He held out his hand and before waiting for him to ask, Alexandra stood up and held his hand and they walked to the dance floor. I am very proud of you Henry and a lot of ladies have been asking about you, he just smiled at her. They had a waltz and then returned to the table. Takahiro had taken Miyu for their last dance before they get married. George was dancing with Laura, so he went off to find Lydia. He came up behind her and asked if she would do him the honour of having this dance with him. She smiled and stood up and just said, with pleasure. They danced a quick step and then a waltz, all the ladies are correct, you do dance very well Henry. Thank you Lydia, this is definitely the most fantastic house and grounds I have ever seen and I now understand how it is you get on so well with people, you have been meeting people all your life. He smiled and said, please excuse me I must go and dance with the first Lady. Henry put his hand out to Laura and asked if she would do him the honour of dancing with him. It is I that would be honoured Henry.

They walked onto the dance floor and during the dance Laura said, my daughters will be jealous of me dancing with such a good looking young man. I think you are trying to embarrass me Laura. Your mother never told me what you do for a living Henry, so I am wondering if you like your friends went into the military. I know they joined the military because Takahiro told me when we danced. Henry replied, I just felt that one of us had to have a proper job to pay for those boys playing with their toys. She burst out laughing and Henry said to her, we all followed our fathers. Takahiro's father was in the navy, however, Takahiro wanted to fly so he joined the air force. John's father was in the RAF before he died, John is now a squadron leader flying C-17's out of Brize Norton, just up the road from here.

My American friend Theodore followed his father into the US navy and he has moved up the ladder quicker than most. What does he and his father do, he is Vice Admiral Anderson's son. Theodore is the XO on the USS Jimmy Carter. Such a responsible job for such a young man. This means you are an investment banker Henry, guilty as charged Laura. They talked none stop and had three dances before Laura said, we should stop now. I hope we get the chance to dance again tomorrow Henry as you are a very good dancer. I promise I will make sure we dance more than one dance tomorrow, thank you Henry, we had better get back. As they walked past George he said, I see you are hogging my wife Henry, just you wait until tomorrow George, all three of them laughed.

He then asked his sister and they danced like a pair of professionals, I

love dancing with you Henry you are in control and lead me perfectly, thank you sister dear. I believe your friend Christine is coming tomorrow and mother told me you learnt to dance with her, that's correct Miyu. Mother says when you and Christine dance the Tango the floor stays clear just to watch, that has happened Miyu. Do you think you could dance a Tango at my wedding for me. I would be happy to do that just as long as we can get hold of Christine so that she can bring the proper shoes and a Tango dress. I will phone her, please Henry. He phoned Christine and told her what Miyu would like the two of them to do tomorrow. He asked her if she was up for it, sure Henry I like dancing the Tango with you. If you bring your dress and shoes we can get changed just before we do the dance, I will see you tomorrow Henry. He turned to Miyu and said, all fixed, I love you Henry, I love you to Miyu and I would do anything for you, I know Henry.

Henry found Takahiro and told him it was about time to leave, you are going so soon Miyu asked, well Miyu it's not leaving much time for the bachelor party I have planed. Philip drove them into Oxford to the Vanbrugh House Hotel. They checked in and went to their rooms and unpacked, they met up again at the bar for a couple of drinks and any last requests. Takahiro said, I just hope I do not mess things up Henry, why in the world would you think that my friend. I guess because I know your mother has invited several top Japanese military and government officials. That's my mother, get used to it my friend. Now, do you have any requests that I can help with, I do not think so Henry. Good then we are ready. Let's have a drink to celebrate your last night of freedom.

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Chapter 8

Miyu's wedding

The house came to life early on Friday morning as the guests were coming downstairs a maid was standing at the bottom telling everyone that a buffet breakfast was set up in the dining room. Once they had selected their breakfast they could choose to sit at the main table or take their plate outside.

At 13:30, Alexandra and Martha ushered Miyu along with her bridesmaids upstairs to their bedrooms Alexandra had arranged for one maid for each of the three bedrooms to help the girls get dressed. Alexandra and Martha had decided to help Miyu get ready. Four hairdressers arrived and three make-up specialist, as each girls hair was finished one of the make-up ladies would start on her make up. The hairdresser started on Miyu and after showing her three different styles Miyu decided she would like her hair up which would show her neck and bare shoulders. It was time for the make up, after thirty minutes with the make up artist Alexandra said, you look beautiful. It was all going according to Alexandra's plan as it was now 15:45 so she said, 45 minutes to go so it is time to put on your dress.

By this time all the bridesmaids were ready, they came into Miyu's bedroom. I have a comb to put in my hair so the veil can be attached to it. Alexandra said, before you get that far David and I have bought you a little something which we hope you will wish to wear today. If you do then this can be the something new. Perfume young lady, Alexandra picked up the bottle and handed it to Miyu, when she had sprayed it on her neck and breasts she gave it back to her mother. She picked up her bag that she had placed on the bed and removed a jewellery box. She opened it and turned it towards Miyu so she could see it. Miyu just looked in astonishment and said, oh mother you did not have to buy me anything, this wedding must be costing a fortune, never mind about silly things like cost. You put the earrings in and I will put the necklace on for you.

Alexandra picked up the Rose Cut Diamond Cluster Necklace in 18ct White Gold on a single chain of 14ct White Gold, this came complete with matching Rose Cut Diamond Cluster Drop Earring in 18ct White Gold. She placed the necklace around Miyu's neck and Miyu removed the earrings from the box and put them on. Take a look in the mirror my child, it is just large enough to be perfect and finish your bare neck off. Miyu turned and looked in the mirror, her mouth started to drop open. Alexandra asked what she thought, it is beautiful mother and it really does finish it off, it makes my dress stand out more. Everybody smiled and agreed, most of her bridesmaids were holding both of their hands up to their mouths and telling her she looks beautiful.

Martha picked up her bag and said, I have something old that you can borrow if you would like to. She removed a larger jewellery box than the

one Alexandra had taken from her bag. I wore this when I got married and she opened the box, inside was a diamond studded tiara. I am so pleased you wanted your hair up as this tiara will fit perfectly, Martha placed it on Miyu's head and stood back and said, perfect, please take a look.

Miyu turned back to look in the mirror and was overcome with emotion. You spoil me, thank you Lady Martha. Everybody agreed she looked like a princess. Martha said, you now have, something old, something new, something borrowed, we need something blue. Miyu said, I have a blue garter does that count.

That is perfect my dear where is it, in the top draw. I have got two so that Takahiro can remove one and throw it to the single men and I can keep one. They were the same in a very pale blue lace with a darker blue ribbon. Alexandra asked the bridesmaids to pick up the front of Miyu's dress, you can now put your two garters on. When they had done that Alexandra gave a quick spray onto Miyu's legs by the garter. All the girls laughed. Now ladies, I think it would be better if all of you use the same perfume as Miyu, that way different perfumes will not be vying for dominance.

Coach loads of guests arrived from 13:30, all vehicles entered through the main gate and all invitations were checked and ticked off the sheet, this was done by four armed Grenadier Guards. Coaches and cars not staying at Queensberry for the wedding, stopped at the drop off point at the rear of the house before driving out through the rear gate. It was a beautiful day so guests were wondering around the flower gardens. At 15:25 three limousines arrived at the main gate, when they checked the second car they stepped back and saluted, welcome to Queensberry Manor Mr President. The president and first lady headed towards the guest seating area. George and Laura Bush had two outside seats in the second row behind Takahiro and Henry. These seats had been reserved for them on request of the secret service. Other guest started to take their seats ready for the service. At 15:30 a taxi entered through the main gate and the groom and best man got out and walked up the aisle to take their seats in the first row. Both Henry and Takahiro smiled and nodded to the two guest in the row behind.

Ten minutes before 16:00 two open horse drawn carriages pulled up at the rear of the house, the first one was for Takahiro's mother and father, they got in and were driven away. The second one was for Alexandra, Jessie and Philip. They gave the first coach a few minutes before getting in, I must say you look very smart Philip, thank you ma'am. Alexandra squeezed Jessie's hand and said, if we have forgotten something it's too late to worry now, Jessie just smiled and told Alexandra that everything will be fine. As their coach turned the last bend in the driveway they could see that Takahiro's parents were walking up the aisle. Philip and Jessie walked up the aisle first and when they got three quarters of the way up the aisle Alexandra started to get out of the coach. She elegantly walked up the aisle smiling and nodding her head to the many guests that acknowledged her. She took her seat and let out a deep breath, Jessie squeezed her hand.

Once Alexandra was seated that was Henry's Que. So he got up and walked to the speakers podium, which was set slightly off centre to the left, he climbed the two steps and silence fell. My lords ladies and gentlemen I give you Baroness Boothroyd to give thanks to the guests.

Betty Boothroyd climbed onto the speakers podium and said, my Lords Ladies and Gentlemen it is my honour and privilege to give thanks to all the guests here today. Lord and Lady James wish to thank you all for taking the time to join them in being witness to the marriage of their daughter Miyu to Mr Takahiro Yoshino from Tokyo, Japan. It would be my pleasure to name you all individually, however, with over 640 guests here I feel Miyu would not be getting married today. A roar of laughter came and then silence fell once more. Once again, thank you all for coming to this magnificent home. I would also like to thank the Bishop of Oxford for personally giving this service, or to give him his full title, Richard Douglas Harries, Baron Harries of Pentregarth. I am sure that to some of you none United Kingdom citizens it may feel that we in the United Kingdom have a lot of pomp and ceremony. As I have said many times before. Nobody does it better, more laughter. The speaker for the occasion of this wedding will be Sir Randolph Ashworth. Thank you all for attending.

At 16:20 two open horse drawn carriages pulled up at the rear of the house. David and Miyu got into the first one, the bridesmaids got into the second. This took about ten minutes for all ladies to be happily seated. We will be late father, that is traditional Miyu, it is good to keep him waiting a little, it keeps him on his toes. This is your wedding day, I always think the groom is only here to make up the number. On this day you get to do what you want, you do not have to ask for anybodies permission. However, that will change from tomorrow, she smiled and knew her father was letting her know that her life as she knows it now will be changing. It is not too late to change your mind Miyu, if you have the slightest doubt at all, it is better to call it off right now. I do not have any doubts father I have known Takahiro since we were at school together, this is the man I want to marry. The carriages pulled away from the rear of the house completely out of sight of the guests. The horses trotted along the temporary road towards the main driveway and turned left. They had around 200 metres before following the driveway around to the left, at that point the Manor House came into view and they had a further half a mile before they arrived at the place they must get out of the coaches and start to walk up the isle.

As they came into view the Bishop stood and took his position on the podium just waiting for the bride and her father to walk up the isle. There was excitement amongst the guests, they started to turn and look at the arrival of the bride. The carriages stopped and David and Miyu got out followed quickly by the bridesmaids. They lowered the veil and straightened her train, then four of them picked her train up and the other two walked directly behind. David said, are we ready ladies, and everyone replied yes. David proudly walked his daughter up the isle, as the band started to play, here comes the bride. All guests stood up and mainly watched the bride and her father walk up the isle, the six bridesmaids only got a casual glance.

David walked Miyu up the isle with his head held high, he was dressed in his Ceremonial Uniform complete with sword. Because David was an ex Grenadier Guard he received permission to wear his Ceremonial Uniform for his daughters wedding. Because it was taking place in a private setting they could not have stopped him anyway. He looked very smart, distinguished and very proud in his red jacket along with one red stripe down the outside of each trouser leg and on his head his bearskin with a single white feather.

Miyu was a very beautiful bride, her dress looked spectacular with the lace bodice and the darts made her waist look smaller than it is. The three metre train with six bridesmaids just made this bride look out of this world. Her necklace, earrings and tiara just made a picture perfect bride.

They reached the podium level with Takahiro and Henry, David turned to Miyu and with his right hand lifted her veil and kissed her on her cheek. He then turned to face Takahiro's and shook his hand, using his right hand he lifted Miyu's right hand off his left hand and placed her hand in Takahiro's. He looked up and smiled at the bishop, stepped three paces backwards, turned and walked around behind the bridesmaids. David sat on the first row next to Alexandra and next to her was Jessie and then Philip. She squeezed his hand and smiled at him.

The bishop asked the bride and groom to please step up onto the podium, they climbed the three steps and sure enough, even the guests at the rear could now see what was going on. The bishop smiled and asked very quietly, are you both ready, they both nodded. Takahiro was wearing his Air Force dress suit in dark blue and he looked very smart.

The Bishop looked at the guests and said, because this wedding is taking place in this wonderful setting of Queensberry Manor House, it seems appropriate we use the service from the Book of Common Prayer 1662 which will be given in the traditional language.

http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/Marriage_1559.htm

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this Congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that

the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined.

Therefore if any man can shewe any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

The bishop waited a good twenty seconds before continuing.

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.

Takahiro, wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

I will.

Miyu, wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

I will.

Who gives this woman in marriage to this man?

David stood up and said, I do.

Our Saviour has instructed that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave to his wife. By his apostles, he has instructed those who enter into this relation to cherish a mutual esteem and love, to bear with each others' infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble, and sorrow. In honesty and industry to provide for each other and for their household in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as heirs of the grace of life.

Please face each other and repeat after me, he turned slightly to Takahiro and read the vow which Takahiro repeated.

I Takahiro, take thee Miyu to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

He turned to Miyu and read her vow which she repeated.

I Miyu, take thee Takahiro to my wedded husband to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, to death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

Please place the ring on the bible.

Henry removed the ring from his pocket and gave it to Takahiro who placed it on the bible the bishop was holding out.

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my

worldly goods I thee endow: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Takahiro and Miyu knelt down and the Bishop said, let us pray.

O eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life: Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Bishop joined their hands together and said. Those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder.

The Bishop spoke to the guests and said.

Forasmuch as Takahiro and Miyu have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth to each other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be man and wife together, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

Psalm 67

God be merciful unto us, and bless us : and shewe us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us:

That thy way may be known upon earth : thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise thee.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad : for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

God shall bless us : and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. **Amen.**

The Bishop said.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Guests replied. Christ, have mercy upon us.

The Bishop said. Lord have mercy upon us.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. **Amen.**

The Bishop: O Lord, save thy servant, and thy handmaid;

Answer from guests: Who put their trust in thee.

Bishop: O Lord, send them help from thy holy place;

Answer from guests: And evermore defend them.

Bishop: Be unto them a tower of strength,
Answer from guests: From the face of their enemy.
Bishop: O Lord, hear our prayer;
Answer from guests: And let our cry come unto thee.
The Bishop;

O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, bless these thy servants, and sow the seed of eternal life in their hearts; that whatsoever in thy holy Word they shall profitably learn, they may in deed fulfil the same. Look, O Lord, mercifully upon them from heaven, and bless them. And as thou didst send thy blessing upon Abraham and Sarah, to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send thy blessing upon these thy servants; that they obeying thy will, and always being in safety under thy protection, may abide in thy love unto their lives' end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O merciful Lord, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased: We beseech thee, assist with thy blessing these two persons, that they may both be fruitful in procreation of children, and also live together so long in godly love and honesty, that they may see their children christianly and virtuously brought up, to thy praise and honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint, that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and, knitting them together, didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one: O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church: Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that both this man may love his wife, according to thy Word, (as Christ did love his spouse the Church, who gave himself for it, loving and cherishing it even as his own flesh,) and also that this woman may be loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband; and in all quietness, sobriety, and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons. O Lord, bless them both, and grant them to inherit thy everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, who at the beginning did create our first parents, Adam and Eve, and did sanctify and join them together in marriage; Pour upon you the riches of his grace, sanctify and bless you, that ye may please him both in body and soul, and live together in holy love unto your lives' end.
Amen.

All ye that are married, or that intend to take the holy estate of Matrimony upon you, hear what the holy Scripture doth say as touching the duty of husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands.

Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the fifth Chapter, doth give this commandment to all married men; Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word; that he

might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself.

Likewise the same Saint Paul, writing to the Colossians, speaketh thus to all men that are married; Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Hear also what Saint Peter, the Apostle of Christ, who was himself a married man, saith unto them that are married; Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge; giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Hitherto ye have heard the duty of the husband toward the wife. Now likewise, ye wives, hear and learn your duties toward your husbands, even as it is plainly set forth in holy Scripture.

Saint Paul, in the aforementioned Epistle to the Ephesians, teacheth you thus; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. And again he saith, Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And in his Epistle to the Colossians, Saint Paul giveth you this short lesson; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Saint Peter also doth instruct you very well, thus saying; Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

The Bishop held out his hands and said, please rise. Takahiro and Miyu stood up and heard the words, you may kiss the bride. Takahiro lent down and kissed Miyu gently.

Within the spirit of this scripture, the Bride and Groom would like to

receive the blessing of their parents on this holy union.

Parents please rise.

David and Alexandra together with Takahiro's mother and father stood up.

The marriage of Miyu and Takahiro brings together two different families; two unique story lines, so a new chapter in their lives can begin to unfold.

Though this relationship was formed out of the love these two have found in each other, their marriage will ultimately be blessed by the support of their families.

Who stands with this woman to symbolize her family's support of this union?

David and Alexandra said, we do.

Who stands with this man to symbolize his family's support of this union?

Takahiro's parents said, we do.

Parents, please kindly be seated. Thank you.

The Bishop explained, because this wedding ceremony was not held in a church we have had to make a few little changes. If you would be kind enough to remain seated while the bride and groom along with the rest of the wedding party walk to the area behind me so they can take some photographs. They will be facing you all so that Queensberry Manor is their backdrop. When the photographer has finish they will walk back down the aisle to the greeting point. You can then follow them in the normal order you would at any wedding and you will then meet and greet and shake hands and give congratulations. Please bear in mind there are over six hundred guests so we ask that the greeting is kept very short. Lord and Lady James along with the bride and groom will make time during the reception to move amongst the guests and talk to everybody, we thank you for your understanding.

They headed to have their photographs taken and afterwards they walked back down the aisle, photo's were taken of them walking down the aisle towards the camera and away from the camera by two of several photographers taking images of everybody along with a video of everything that was going on.

The wedding party took their place waiting to greet the guests as they walked into the reception area. The ushers did their best to move the guests along as quickly as possible, however, with six hundred people it still took almost one and a half hours. As the guests came into the dinning area the ushers were showing them to their seats and the staff were waiting to offer drinks, that part went like clockwork.

When everybody had taken their seats and their starters had been placed before them Sir Randolph climbed onto the podium and said, Pray silence for grace by Baron Harries of Pentregarth, The Bishop of Oxford.

Sir Randolph stepped down and the bishop stepped up and said, lets say grace. Lord God, Creator of the universe, Father of us all, we have gathered here around this dinner table to celebrate the love and

commitment that have united Miyu and Takahiro in a wonderful bond of marriage. Bless, Father, this food that we are about to receive with grateful hearts as a sign of your continuous bounty and providence. May your generous blessing descend also upon these newly married spouses, their families and friends present here at this joyful banquet. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, on God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Sir Randolph said the cutting of the cake will take place before the meal is served. Takahiro and Miyu walked to a table with a very large five tier cake on it. They picked up the knife and made a cut in the precut slice.

The meal was served and the food was fantastic, Alexandra beamed that she had made the correct choice of caterers, the meal lasted for almost two hours. David looked around at all the guests and saw a sea of smiling happy faces, everybody was talking to everybody else on their tables, he squeezed Alexandra's hand and when she looked up at him he just said, congratulations my dear.

As the coffee was being served Sir Randolph climbed back onto the podium and said. My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention please. While we are waiting for the coffee and the toasting glasses to be filled, Baroness Boothroyd has suggested to me that not all of the guests here today may know about the tradition of the toastmasters costume. Firstly, I am Sir Randolph Ashworth a very close friend of the family.

The red-coated toastmaster is a unique British tradition. The story of the red coat is that, about 1750, the Earl of Derby "the Earl that started the famous horse-race" had his butler wear the Earl's own Hunting Pink "red riding coat" this was to impress his guests. Some toastmasters wore the 1700's silk knee-breeches and stockings until Edwardian times, but famous toastmaster William Knightsmith popularised the red tail coat around 1895 "his portrait hung in the Café de Paris till the 1980's." Victorian full evening dress set the style for today "red tailed coat, white bow tie, wing collar, white starched waistcoat, black trousers". Though the previous uniform of a black tail coat with sash is still worn within the City of London.

The guests clapped and a lot of them said, we did not know that, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise for the Loyal Toast. He waited for everybody to stand up and silence fell over the guests, he raised his glass to shoulder height and said. **The Queen**

Everybody raised their glasses and repeated the phrase, The Queen, Long live the Queen.

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated for the father of the bride, Lord David James.

David climbed onto the podium and looked around at all the guests, most of them he knew. I would like to thank all of our wonderful friends that have taken the time out of your busy schedules and some of you have travelled a very long way to come here today and share with Alexandra and

I the marriage of our daughter. Thank you for making our day so special.

I must compliment my beautiful daughter, you are a stunning bride. Takahiro, you are a very lucky man and we wish to welcome you with open arms into our family, may you both always be happy. You do look the perfect couple.

Please rise, for the bride and groom, 645 people stood up and said, to the bride and groom.

Sir Randolph said, the groom replies.

Takahiro climbed onto the podium

My Lords Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to thank Lord James for his toast to his daughter, the bride.

Thank you all very much for making this such a wonderful day, when I look around I can only see four or five people that I personally know. I do see many people that I know who you are, although, until today I had never had the privilege of meeting you. I would like to thank everybody for the gifts they kindly gave Miyu and I and for being witnesses.

I thank both Miyu's Okasama and Otosama and my own Okasama and Otosama for making this day so perfect, thank you.

Miyu, you look very beautiful and I can honestly say you are the perfect bride, thank you for accepting me as your husband.

It is with a very happy heart that I pay thank's to my best friend Henry, thank you for doing me the honour of being my best man.

Miyu's bridesmaids, Emiko, Hoshimi, Kimiko, Kiyomi, Naomi and Sakura you were perfect. I wish to thank you for helping Miyu and I am sure you calmed her nerves. My Lords Ladies and Gentlemen, please rise for a toast to the bridesmaids. Everybody stood up and said, the bridesmaids.

Before stepping down he turned to look at David and Alexandra and said, I am very honoured to have been accepted into this family and I wish to make this promise to Okasama and Otosama, standing in front of all your friends as witnesses, I will always take good care of Miyu.

He stepped down and Sir Randolph stepped up.

Pray silence for the best man, Henry James.

Henry looked around and smiled and thought, this is the first time I have stood up in front of so many people and they are all waiting for me, this could work out just fine.

I wish to thank Takahiro for his toast to the bridesmaids, you gave such kind words my friend. Sister dear, you are just far too beautiful for me to not pay you a complement. You are without doubt the most beautiful bride I have ever seen, I am sure everybody here today sees a beautiful stunning bride, and I love you so much.

Before I say anything about my friend, I should say, this is the part that both mothers are dreading, will Henry embarrass us. Several guests laughed. You can relax ladies because I cannot come up with one questionable thing my friend has ever done in the years I have known him. He has always been the perfect guy, the one that all mothers would want their daughters to bring home and say, I have met Mr Perfect, he is without

doubt, the perfect gentleman. I wish you both all the happiness in the world.

Please raise your glasses for a toast to the bride and groom. The guests stood up, raised their glasses and said, the bride and groom.

Just before I give the podium back to Sir Randolph, I would like to make a challenge to my brother in-law. The guests just stood and waited to see what Henry was going to say. Please be seated, I am challenging Takahiro to a game of golf tomorrow, you could hear people draw in their breath. Do not look so worried my friend, if I had just got married I would not be playing golf tomorrow either, so I have got a plan for you.

This family has always been competitive and we would all hope that will extend to you. You now have a very good chance to impress your new in-laws. Accept my challenge and then ask your father in-law to stand in for you. Believe me when I tell you, he would not dare refuse your request in front of all his friends. Everybody laughed and a lot of guests said, bravo Henry.

Must I find a glove Takahiro? Takahiro stood up and said, that will not be necessary Henry, I accept your challenge, Henry bowed his head. Takahiro turned and looked at David and said, will you do me the honour of standing in for me for this challenge Lord James. It would be my pleasure Takahiro.

Henry smiled and continued, as I look around I see over six hundred faces and I am sure some of you would also like to play golf, so I have turned this challenge into a fund raiser for a local charity. All monies raised will go to the battered wives charity in Oxford, Lady James is the president of this very worthwhile charity. Alexandra took a deep breath and put her hand to her mouth, this charity not only supports those wives that have been battered it also looks after the children, unfortunately it really is very much needed. Now just in case anybody is wondering, I can confirm, mother knew absolutely nothing about this. The only person that knew was Jasper Conway the club professional.

The staff will be going from table to table placing forms so that anybody who would like to play tomorrow can tick the little box and fill in your name along with your handicap. Jasper and I feel that if we play foursomes then we could have 150 players. I have made the entrance fee £250 and as I have said, all monies will go to the charity. I understand that not all of you will be able to stay an extra night, although I am sure you would want to. Then I am guessing that not all of you play golf, so you may be a little upset and feel I have excluded you. You are perhaps feeling you would wish to donate to this worthwhile charity.

Well, I am very pleased to tell all you good folk that we have placed a second box on the form just for all of you that do not play or cannot play tomorrow. Fill out your name and tick the bottom box and so you will not be left out, and please do not forget to fill in an amount you are happy to donate. Everybody smiled, lots laughter and then, George Bush said, you will make a very good politician Henry, the guests erupted in laughter.

Now you have already asked father to stand in for you Takahiro, I guess

I must address your stand in. Once we know the number of players that wish to play father, how would you feel if we each picked the first five players for our teams and after that the rest of the names are picked out of a hat. Would you be happy to accept that. I think that would be fair my boy and would we toss a coin to see who picks first, we could if you like father, however, I feel that as I made the challenge you should pick first. Then I accept. Once you kind people have filled out the forms they will be collected and given to Jasper for sorting into two piles, players and none player.

Sir Randolph told everybody that the cake has been placed into small boxes and the staff will place them on the tables for each guest to take home with them if they wish to.

The bride and groom will honour us with the first dance. They have chosen an Elton John song and to sing it we have, Kylie Minogue. Kylie said, Miyu and Takahiro it is my privilege to sing, **Your Song**.

The bride and groom glided across the floor in a perfect waltz, just before the song finished David and Alexandra cut in and that was a signal for Henry to start dancing with the bridesmaids. Just before the next song finished and Takahiro's parents cut in, David and Alexandra then asked two people from the table they had stopped by, it turned out to be Arthur Gore, Earl of Arran and Lady Gore. At the end of each dance another person was asked to dance and this was continued. By the time Henry had danced with the last bridesmaid a lot of people were on the floor dancing and it looked pretty full.

He then asked Miyu before she got whisked away, people were stopping to watch Henry and Miyu dance, she just loved dancing with Henry and they talked about the day so far. He returned her to her seat and she thanked him for everything he has done, my pleasure Miyu, he looked at her and said, I have to move on, mother wants me to dance with as many guests as I can, I love you Henry, he smiled and walked away. Takahiro's mother had just finished dancing so Henry asked her, they danced two dances and she said, that's just in case we do not manage to dance again Henry.

He saw Condoleezza Rice sitting on her own so he went over and asked her, love to Henry. They danced a waltz and then a quick step and the next one was a fox trot, are you happy to do another one Henry, very happy ma'am. Drop that Henry the name is Condoleezza please use that, you are a very good dancer Henry, however, I better let you go as I know your mother has asked you to dance with as many ladies as possible.

Henry walked back to the table and drank a glass of water, he then noticed that most of the Japanese were still sitting at their tables. Alexandra had mixed people up so that it was not a one country table, he asked Shigeru Iwasaki's wife to dance, she beamed and said, thank you Henry. They danced so well together they had two dances, he returned her to her seat and she put her hands together and bowed slightly he did the same and thanked her. If you cannot find anybody to dance with later on you can always ask again, if that happens I most certainly will. He spotted

Lydia and asked her, they walked to the dance floor arm in arm. This is without doubt the wedding of the year, your mother has spared nothing and she looks very happy.

When am I going to your wedding Henry, I have to find somebody first Lydia, they laughed and he walked her back to her seat. Next to her was Aurelia Frick so Henry asked her, I think you are going to be worn out before the evening is over Henry. Henry liked Aurelia and he had two dances with her. He asked Julie Bishop next and then he found Mona Ingeborg and she said, it is a long time since I last saw you in Sweden Henry, I have not been since I left school. Then it is time for you to come again, I will try.

Henry's mother was taking a break from chatting to all the guests so Henry asked her to dance, oh Henry I am so proud of you and everybody I have spoken to has commented on your dancing and they are all waiting to be asked. I cannot dance with everybody mother, it is just physically impossible. I know Henry just do your best. He then danced with, Anna Lindh, Leila Rachid de Cowles, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Ana Palacio Vallelersundi, Helen Clark and Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäk. He had danced two dances with each lady and needed a break so he returned to his seat and found he was the only one on the table. The dance floor was pretty full and everybody was enjoying themselves.

He finished a bottle of water and thought he should use the loo before dancing with anybody else. As he was returning to the dance area he saw Kylie Minogue and asked her to dance, your dad asked me to come here and sing he did not say I could dance as well. They both laughed and walked onto the floor and danced a quick step, Henry told her about the dance his sister wanted him and Christine to do, I will look forward to that Henry.

He then found George and Laura Bush, he walked behind them and said, good evening Mr President and madam first Lady, hi Henry, I see you have been around the floor several times, I have indeed Sir. May I have this dance young lady, you may indeed Henry and it's Laura when nobody is here, he smiled and walked her onto the dance floor. They danced a waltz, foxtrot quick step and jive and talked about life, when they returned she said to Henry. When you get time come to the White House and I will personally show you around, if you have a girlfriend by then, bring her. Thank you Laura, I will make a plan.

He then saw the wife of a local MP, Samantha Cameron and asked her, they danced a couple of dances and she told him, your family home looks wonderful Henry, yes it is a very nice house and I really liked growing up here. When they got back to her seat Frances Osborne was talking to David, Henry thanked Samantha and asked Frances to dance. As they walked onto the floor she said, I was hoping you would ask me as you seem to be the best dancer on the floor. Frances was also a very good dancer and they managed four dances before she said, got to stop Henry you are wearing me out, he laughed and he walked her back to her seat.

Henry found Jessie and asked her if she would do him the honour of

dancing with him, I most certainly will, however, your mother wants you to dance with other ladies. If she is not happy Jessie, just send her to me. They had three dances and Jessie told Henry she needed to stop and rest a little, he gave her a squeeze and a kiss and said, thank you, she was more than happy. He then went and found Martha and they danced three waltzes and a foxtrot. He then danced with Baroness Berridge, Baroness Browning, Baroness Ashton and Caroline Spelman. He then looked for Baroness Boothroyd, she told him, my name is Betty, I am not in parliament or with lots of toffee nosed people Henry.

He then danced with Norma Major, Soraya Viola Heléna Post, Susan Morrissey Livingstone, Victoria Jane Nuland and Alma Powell. He again drank a bottle of water and then danced with every Japanese lady as he knew his mother would wish him to before moving on to other countries. Every Japanese lady asked him the same question, slightly different words but the same question. How do you feel about Miyu being adopted as an adult, do you feel let down or even betrayed. Henry's answer was always the same. I have known Miyu for more than four years and without doubt she is a wonderful sister, in fact, if I had been given a choice I would have picked Miyu. As far as feeling betrayed or let down, absolutely not.

Sir Randolph climbed onto the podium and the room fell into silence, the bride will be throwing her bouquet in a few minutes. Will all the single ladies gather on the dance floor and that includes you Kylie. All the single ladies walked onto the dance floor, six bridesmaids in their early twenties to a seventy something, not very many though.

Miyu walked onto the dance floor and stood in front of these single ladies, I hope it works for the one that catches it. She turned and asked if they are ready, the reply came back, we are. Miyu remembered what her mother had told her, throw it high and a little back, she threw it and Kiyomi one of the bridesmaids was the one that caught the bouquet. All the ladies gathered round and wished her good luck, she was shocked and very excited as this was the first one she had caught.

Sir Randolph again stood on the podium and said. We all hope this works for you Kiyomi.

Now Lords, Ladies and gentlemen we have a little treat for you. Miyu has asked Henry and Christine to dance a tango for her, they will go off and get changed so while they are doing that we can have another three or four dances. When they return we will give them the floor.

Henry walked Christine into the main house and upstairs to his bedroom, you do know this is the first time I have been invited into your bedroom Henry. He smiled and told her, she can get dressed in the bedroom and he will get dressed in the dressing room. Before he got dressed he used the toilet and when he was dressed he opened the door a little and asked if he could come out, yes Henry I am ready. He took one look at her and just said, wow, he spun her round and told her she looked fantastic. My, how you have changed from the young girl I first saw on the driving range. They headed back downstairs and stood just off to the side. Kylie spotted them. When she had finished her song she said, I am going to take a break and if you can all clear the floor we can watch a tango.

Christine walked onto the floor to the left of the band and Henry walked to the right, as they stopped and turned to face each other their faces changed to what Henry always calls the tango look. He walked across the floor and put out his hand, the band started playing and she took his hand and they walked six paces with Henry leading and then he turned and pulled her to him. Miyu knew this was going to be a very sexy dance. Christine had the sultry look of a lady from the club area of Buenos Aires, Henry held himself aloof with an arrogant look on his face. They moved in almost perfect time, their feet played and their bodies pressed tightly together, he threw her away and pulled her back and they still held the look. Miyu was over the moon and was so pleased she had asked Henry. Alexandra asked, when did you arrange this, I asked Henry yesterday.

The tango came to an end with Henry holding Christine very close with them staring into each others eyes. Everybody jumped to their feet and clapped and a lot of guests kept saying, more, more. Henry kissed Christine and walked her towards the band, he was given a microphone and when the clapping and shouting stopped, he thanked everybody and then apologised for the mistake they had made, which most people did not notice.

He continued by saying that, we have not danced since we were eighteen and we did not have a chance to practice. I trust you are happy sister dear, Miyu stood up and said, thank you, you are both great, however, it seems we want more, he looked at Christine and asked if she was happy to dance one more, she leaned closer and replied, very happy. Henry, lets dance the rumba, the guests again clapped so Henry said, I think they would be happy with that.

The rumba was a slower dance and the rumba is known as the dance of love. Henry made it passionate and when they had finished everyone was again on their feet clapping and asking for more. Henry picked up the microphone again, thank you all, however, we feel we should stop now otherwise the bride and groom will not be able to get away. So before you two love birds sneak away, I would ask that Christine and I get one last dance with each of you. Miyu and Takahiro walked onto the dance floor and Miyu kissed Henry and Takahiro kissed Christine and thanked them. Henry turned to the band and asked for a waltz please, Henry and Miyu paired up and Takahiro and Christine. The four of them danced perfectly, when it was finished they all kissed again and walked off the floor. Takahiro and Miyu disappeared to go and get changed, two of bridesmaids went with them to help Miyu out of her dress. Henry and Christine returned to her table where they sat and had a drink.

Theodore and John sat down and they talked for about twenty minutes before George Bush walked past and stood for a couple of minutes and asked them, how they are getting on, they all said, very well thank you. Are you going to stay for the golf Mr President, I would not miss that Henry, is it a good course XO. The last time I played here it was a fantastic course Sir, maybe we will be in the same team. Henry smiled and said, you never know your luck in a raffle Mr President. As he was walking away he turned and told Henry there are two ladies waiting for you, with this costume on

Sir. I think they fancy you in that Henry, please be kind enough to tell them I will be there directly. When he had gone Christine asked, who is he talking about Henry, I am guessing that he is talking about his wife and possibly Condoleezza Rice. So you are moving in higher circles nowadays Henry. He just smiled and gave her a kiss and thanked her for the dance, talk to you guys later.

He headed over to find Laura Bush, those Latin dances were fantastic Henry, do you fancy giving it a try Laura, not in this dress Henry. Must say I like your costume, thank you Mr President, must I get changed back into my tails before we dance again madam First Lady, no way Henry, lets go. They headed for the dance floor and had two waltzes and a quick step before returning. George said, if you are in the great state of Texas and we are on the ranch do come and see us, your father tells me you ride horses, I do, I stable Sultan here and try to ride him every time I come home. I have to find Condoleezza Rice because I promised her I would dance with her later, she will like the costume Henry, I hope so.

He found her talking to Shigeru Iwasaki, who said, I think this young man would like to dance with you Condoleezza, she turned and saw Henry walking towards them, they both said, hello Henry. I am sorry to interrupt you, do not be sorry Henry, Condoleezza and I had finished and I am sure she would rather dance with you than talk to this boring man. I know I would if I was in her place. Are you happy to dance with me in this Latin outfit, more than happy Henry, they bowed to Shigeru and he did the same to them.

Condoleezza is a good dancer so they look great on the dance floor, they did fast, slow and even a sexy tango, guests stopped to watch and at the end they clapped. He walked her back to her seat gave her a hug and said, thank you, thank you Henry.

The bride and groom returned and Takahiro signalled to Henry. Henry made a phone call.

Once they had finished saying their goodbyes Henry escorted them to the helicopter and said hello John to the pilot, he hugged and helped Miyu into her seat and shook Takahiro's hand. Love you both, now go and enjoy yourselves and have a wonderful life together. He returned to the family and they took off, circled around the house and flew over the heads of the guests at about 100ft. The pilot told them that was Henry's request.

Henry returned to the reception and found Sir Randolph waving some papers at him. He walked up to Sir Randolph and was given the papers. This was the results of the golf challenge, Henry read it through, he saw 144 names to play golf, Sir Randolph told him when he is ready just give me a wave and I will announce you. Henry sat down at the first available table and read through the papers. When he had finished he stood up and waved the papers so Sir Randolph could see him. Sir Randolph climbed the steps to the podium, silence fell. My Lords, Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Henry James.

They exchanged smiles as they passed each other, Henry placed the papers on the podium and looked out at the guests. My Lords, Ladies and gentlemen, I can now tell you all what fantastic people you are, I gave my

brother in-law a fun challenge and you guys have excelled my wildest dreams. 144 of you have put your names down to play golf, that's great because that will make 36 fours which we can manage nicely tomorrow. I see names on the list that I did not think would be playing, I take it the world will run for another day while we are still partying. Everybody laughed, we agreed to pick the first five names father, so if you wish we can do that here. That will be three groups of four two from each team teeing off, this should give Jasper and his team of helpers enough time to sort out the rest of the groups. Jasper has suggest that from number six he will pick a name out of a bucket and these golfers will join your team and then my team alternately. Are you happy with that father, I am Henry.

Before we pick our first five players, I would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank Jasper and his staff for sorting all of this out and tallying up the donations. Again everybody clapped and said, thank you Jasper and staff. Henry continued, everyone of you in this room tonight has made a donation to the battered wives charity. The total amount that we will be giving is, £174,150, as I have already said, you are all fantastic, thank you so much. Madam President will you step up and receive these cheques. Alexandra walked up and kissed Henry and took a tray with all the guests cheques. Henry stepped back and Alexandra stepped up to the microphone, she had a tear in her eye and said, I am overwhelmed with your generosity and we will be able to make a lot of improvements and naturally, I will write to everyone letting you know what we have done with your money. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I should just say, that when Henry made this challenge I thought. Oh no Henry, do not spoil Miyu's day, I now believe this will just finish her day off perfectly. Thank you so much, she stepped down and kissed Henry again. He stood up and said, it's not very often my mother admits she is wrong, the room roared with laughter.

Would you please step up father. David walked to the podium and shook Henry's hand. We agreed you get to pick the first player on your team father. We did indeed Henry, David looked at the names on the list, his first pick was Takahiro's father. Henry picked Theodore, David then picked Junichiro Koizumi. Henry's second pick was Christine, David's next was Kim Campbell, Henry picked Shigeru Iwasaki. David's next was John Key and Henry picked George Bush. David's fifth was Lord Michael Ashcroft, while Henry picked John. I have to tell you father that with three of the Oxford four playing together you are going to have a hard time to win this challenge.

Henry thanked his father and shook his hand saying, may the best team win.

When the engines had been shut down and it was time to take their International flight, Miyu asked the pilot where are we. Biggin Hill ma'am. They walked into the office and they were welcomed and asked to show their passports, the customs officer handed them back and said, have a good flight. We are ready to take off so please follow me out to the aircraft. They were shown to a small private jet, so you are not taking me very far Takahiro, this Gulfstream can fly around the world Miyu, so anywhere is

possible. They were welcomed on board by both flight attendants and once they had settled down in their seats they realised that they were the only ones on board.

Have a beautiful life together,

Once airborne the flight attendants asked if they would like a glass of Champagne to carry on with your wedding celebration Mr & Mrs Yoshino. You know we have just got married, Mr James has told us all about you and he specifically asked us to make sure his sister did not know where she is going for her honeymoon. He told you that, I spoke to him personally. The pilot came back and congratulated them and gave Takahiro an envelope and said, this is from Henry James.

Takahiro opened the envelope and read.

Dear Takahiro and Miyu,

The airfare is just a small gesture, when you get home you will find a letter from the bank in Singapore. I have made a deposit as your wedding present.

Please sign and return the documents to the bank. This will give me the authority to invest your money for you. Please try not to draw anything out of this account for at least five years.

If you should need any money for anything at all, please ask me and I will loan you whatever you need to be paid back whenever you feel you can, at 0% interest.

I trust you will have a fantastic honeymoon, see you soon.

Love Henry, xxx

My friend is crazy Miyu, how can he give us money as a wedding present when he has paid for the airfare. The simple answer is, he can afford to give any amount of money he wants to. He wants to help us financially so that we can start our married life without any worries. We are very lucky to have Henry as a brother.

By 07:30 all players had assembled at the club house, coffee and bacon rolls were on offer for those that wanted. Henry called the five members of his team to one side and told them he had made his selection of who would be playing with whom.

He put George Bush with Theodore and John with Christine. Before you ask, I have done this for a reason. Theodore and George make up the American side of our team, and it does not matter what you say George, Theodore will never call you George, the best you might get, would be Sir. I am relying on you Christine to keep John on track and that leaves Shigeru to be my partner.

Any questions, they all shook their heads and Henry said, this is the first time you and I are playing on the same team Theodore, he smiled.

David picked his team, he played with Takashi, Takahiro's father, Junichiro Koizumi with John Key and Michael Ashcroft with Kim Campbell.

They teed off at 08:00 and David's drive went straight down the fairway, Henry matched his father. Takashi's shot landed five yards short of the green, Shigeru's shot landed on the green leaving Henry a twenty yard putt. David chipped to within two yards of the pin, Henry's putt ran around the

hole leaving six inches to finish it off. Takashi sank the putt for a par, Shigeru matched giving a half, they moved on to the second hole. This is a par 5 and Takashi made a good drive to the centre of the fairway, Shigeru blasted his drive with his ball a good forty yards ahead. David's shot was eighty yards short of the green, Henry stepped up and landed on the front edge of the green. Takashi's shot left David a ten yard putt to finish off. Shigeru left Henry a 12 inch putt, which he made without a problem and because David had missed his putt, this gave Henry the hole.

This play carried on for the first nine holes with Henry being a half up. On the back nine Henry got into the swing and he and Shigeru finished three and a half up on his father. Hand shakes all round and they sat on the terrace having a drink and watching the next foursome. This finished with Theodore and George finishing one and a half up. Christine and John finished two up so this gave Henry a seven hole lead. When all foursomes had finished Henry won by two and a half holes. Congratulations my boy, thank you father.

Davis said, we did are best team, however, Henry's team was stronger today so we get the runner up prize. Henry will be paying for all the meals. Henry looked at his father and David said, did I forget to tell you the winner pays for the meals, sorry my boy, I must have forgotten. Everybody roared with laughter.

Henry willingly paid and when they had finished it was hand shakes all round with friends telling each other, do not stay away for so long in the future. Alexandra's friends from Sweden told Henry to make a plan, so he can come skiing with them. Everybody enjoyed both the wedding and the golf and they all parted company in a very happy mood.

Chapter 9

New friends

Amanda lived in the area of Hell's Kitchen in New York City, and she met Henry while they were travelling on the subway in July 2002, she sat down next to him and he asked her if she had been jogging, she smiled and said, I am sorry about my state but I have just come from a really good workout at the gym. Henry said, when I am staying in New York I try to jog every morning. Amanda said, it sounds like you are from England, that is correct Henry replied, I have business in the city and usually come for at least one week every month, I do not think I would jog at this time of night though.

Amanda said, I need to get home to receive a phone call, this is why I did not have time to shower and change before leaving. I would not go jogging in the park alone at night either, they exchanged names and Henry said, I always stay at the Ritz Carlton and as it is very easy just to cross the road I go jogging in the park. I usually jog around the pond from 07:00 most mornings, maybe I will see you one day. She smiled and said maybe.

Two days later they met up while jogging around the pond, Amanda was with a man and she introduced him as, Joe García, my father, they shook hands and Henry said, pleased to meet you Joe, likewise Joe responded. They started to jog again and when they reached the Ritz Carlton, Henry said, well, this is my stop, and he then asked Amanda if she would like to get a bite to eat later that night.

Amanda said, that sounds very nice Henry, however, do you just mean me, or are you including my dad, you can bring your dad if he would like to join us, and before you ask Joe, that would include your wife. They all burst out laughing and Amanda asked, did you have anywhere in mind. Henry responded by saying, I do not really know any other place around here, so I usually eat at one of the restaurants in the hotel. I have never eaten at the Ritz so I would be very happy to do that, she then asked him, what time suits you, 20:00, he said, I will be there, on my own, and they said their goodbyes and parted company.

Amanda walked into the Carlton at 19:50 and found him sitting in the lounge drinking a coffee and talking to another hotel guest, when he saw her he stood up and excused himself and walked towards her, she smiled at him and he said, I must say that you clean up really nice, she looked at him and he smiled and said, I have only seen you in a track suit up till now, I trust you are happy with the transformation, more than happy you look fantastic. I also note that you are early, I do not like being late she replied, would you like a drink before going through to the restaurant he asked, a Martini would be very nice thank you, he called the waiter and ordered a Martini and a red wine and they sat down in the lounge. She asked Henry what he did for a living and why does he come to New York every month, I am an investment banker and I work for a small investment bank in London, I have several American companies that I look after and it usually brings me here at least one week per month, what do you do, I am an analyst, what do you analyse, oh some pretty boring stuff she replied.

They finished their drinks and proceeded to the restaurant, the maître d' said, good evening Mr James your table is ready and he walked over to a table by the window, when they were seated he gave each of them a menu and said, I will be back in a little while, he came back and asked if they were ready to order, Henry had the duck and Amanda had the fillet steak with the chef's sauce, and to drink Mr James, Henry asked Amanda if red was okay for her, that would be nice she replied.

Henry ordered a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, while they were waiting for the meal they had a little small talk, they were just learning a little about each other, it was then that Henry learnt that Amanda is almost five years older than him. I would need to see your passport before believing that, they both smiled. They felt it was a very pleasant evening and Henry said, we should do this on a regular basis, and Amanda replied, I would like that Henry. They exchanged cards and Henry said, I am leaving tomorrow, however, I will be back in ten days time and I will be here for five days, so I will call you and if you are able we can make arrangements to meet up. On Henry's third trip to New York after the first meeting with Amanda they finished up in her flat and they made love, this has now turned into a regular event.

Henry makes regular business trips of at least one week per month, sometimes two weeks per month to New York, and he always managed to spend several nights with Amanda, they became very good friends. Henry never seemed to be in London for very long which meant he did not get to see his mother as often as he would like to. He knew he must find a wife and change his lifestyle, sleeping with different young ladies from all over the world was not as great as most of his colleagues thought. They all thought, what a lucky bugger he is, how they wished they had his life, he told them, the first six months is great, but after two years the excitement fades away.

It wasn't just meals and sex, Henry and Amanda got on really well and she took him to see lots of interesting sights in and around New York. They went to see many Broadway shows and this helped Henry relax, however, he always felt that Amanda found it hard to fully relax. Over the months Henry learnt that Amanda had been married before, she told him that her husband died violently, was it an accident Henry asked, no, he was shot. I am so sorry Amanda. It's okay Henry it was a couple of years ago and I am still getting over it, in fact I do not know if I will ever consider getting married again. It will be very sad if that turns out to be the case Henry said, you would make somebody a great wife. I am not interested at present Henry. That's a great pity Amanda, because I was just going to ask you if you would become my bride. She smiled and said, I am having a great time right now and I do not want anything to change that. Henry made a mental note not to bring that subject up again.

Henry and Amanda see each other most times when he is in New York, some times she was not at home when he phoned, he guessed she had gone away on business. Once or twice he saw Joe in the park and he told Henry she was away on a course. I am sure she will contact you when she returns, thank you Joe, and it's nice to see you again, you to Henry and

keep well.

Christmas 2002 came around all too quickly for Henry, he very much looked forward to spending two weeks at the family home over Christmas time each year. This year Takahiro and Miyu would be there. However, the amount of requests for appointments from referrals he was receiving really meant he could not spend two weeks away. He no longer had to look for potential new clients as they all came to him from referrals.

Lydia told him to stop trying to kill himself, and you will take the two weeks over Christmas, in fact we will both take the two weeks and I do not want to hear another word about this subject. They will be prepared to wait until the New Year, they will not go away so just stop trying to work 24/7. I have told you this before and I think it is about time you listened to what I keep telling you. Go and find yourself a wife, one that will make sure you take breaks and holidays. I know you mean well Lydia and I also know you are correct, I do need to slow down and I would love to get married to Miss Right, however, it is not as easy as you seem to think it is, I understand that Henry.

Henry and Lydia had an appointment with Sir John on the morning they broke up for Christmas. Please come in you two and sit down. How are you both keeping Sir John asked, I am very well thank you Sir John, Lydia said. That's good to know young lady, what about you Henry, I am just fine thank you, Lydia keeps telling me to find a wife, if you get the right one she could be very good for you Henry. Lets get down to the reason you are both here. I am sorry to tell you that Matthew is not very well at present, he is not likely to return before the end of March, and Sir Malcolm has taken his family away for Christmas, so you are left with me.

You two have signed contracts to the value of £198 million for the year 2002, we are very happy with your performance. So we have put both your salaries up by 50% for 2003, we think this is a fair amount and trust you will both agree with us,

Lydia's mouth dropped open and Henry said, we both agree that is a very fair increase Sir John, thank you very much.

Because we agreed to carry all contracts forward you will receive your bonuses on the total amount of contracts you hold, £346m. This makes your bonus £865k Lydia. Lydia made a quick recovery, thank you Sir John, you are very welcome Lydia, we will also be putting your bonus percentage up to 0.5% for next year. I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. I hope to see you in a year's time.

Lydia stood up and wished Sir John a Happy Christmas and shook his hand and said, thank you Sir John. She turned to Henry and said, I will wait outside for you.

We do not know how you manage to sign up as many contracts as you do, we also note that not one of your clients have ever cancelled or reduced their investment. Just in case you have not worked it out Henry, your bonus will be £5.19m. Thank you very much Sir John, I trust you are happy, very Sir John, now go and have a very Happy Christmas with your family and please give your father my best wishes. Thank you Sir John, I certainly will.

Lydia was talking to Josephine when Henry came out of Sir John's office, he said, I am ready when you are. They both wished Josephine a very Happy Christmas and walked out of the company offices. Henry said, hang the expense lets take a cab, Lydia just smiled. Within fifteen minutes they arrived at the Penthouse, once they were in the office Lydia said, thank you Henry. For what, I did not do anything, you chose me to work with you. I chose you because you do not need to be told what to do each day, you know what you are doing and you are very good at what you do. I am the one that relies on you because without you I could not manage to see as many clients as I do. Which would mean I would not sign as many contracts as I do. You and I should respect what each other does, we are a team and we work very well together, we need each other.

I did not believe I would ever be paid that amount of money, just make sure you put some away for a rainy day, we can talk about how you want to invest your money in January if you would like to. I would like to do that Henry, now give me a hug and a kiss and go and have a great Christmas, They exchanged Christmas cards and Lydia left for the holidays, see you next year.

Without a doubt Christmas 2002 was the best Henry could remember, all his family were there and Sir Randolph and Lady Martha always stayed three days. John Ackerman also managed a couple of rounds of golf with them. During Christmas lunch, Takahiro told them all, that two days before they flew out he received a phone call from Major General Shigeru Iwasaki, he told me to come and see him on the 6th January as he has something to discuss with me, Just before he rang off he asked me to please wish Lord and Lady James along with Henry, a very happy Christmas.

What do you think he wants to talk to you about David asked, I have no idea at all, Alexandra beamed and said, I believe he wants to give you a promotion, oh, Okasama, that is not possible as I have not been in this position long enough. I bet you have been spotted low flying Henry said. Takahiro said, because I know I have done nothing wrong I do not have to worry about meeting him again, good thinking my boy. Make sure you let us know how your meeting goes Alexandra said, I will certainly do that.

Henry returned to London late afternoon on Tuesday 7th January 2003. He phoned Lydia and they told each other about their Christmas holiday, she then told Henry she is still trying to clear the backlog of calls I found when I got back yesterday. This morning I found another five and they all want appointments with you ASAP. Sorry Henry, but Roger will pick you up at 22:35 tonight flying to Singapore where you have eight appointments staying ten days. From there you have two days in the Philippines before flying to Sydney for three days.

While you are down under, I have made you an appointment in New Zealand, I have given you an extra day as I know you like to spend a little time with your friends. Then we have a new city to go to, Perth, Western Australia, it's only two but I have given you four days because of the travelling.

However, from the excitement in their voices I pretty much expect you

to sign them up very quickly. I see the New Year has not changed your expectation Lydia, I am sorry Henry but we have been working together for two and a half years now and I have stopped wondering how you do it. Do I then come home Lydia. I was not told that this year you would only be working three weeks per month, and she burst out laughing. I do love you Lydia Bishop and I you Henry James.

So if I am not returning home where are you sending me next. From Perth you fly direct to San Francisco, again this is a totally new City, you have four appointments over five days but again because it is new I have given you two extra days. From there you stop over in New York and spend five days before returning. I am sorry Henry but twelve of these appointments came from December, you are such a slave driver Lydia. I have told you to find a wife and settle down, he just smiled to himself. So I will not see you before the middle of February Lydia, afraid not Henry. Please make a note to talk about your bonus as soon as I return.

We need to talk about any investment you wish to make, I am more than happy to leave that to you Henry. If you are happy I think it would be easier if you deposited the amount you are happy to invest in the same account as I deposit your Christmas box. The only disadvantage, if you can call it that, would be you would no longer see how much your Christmas boxes grew by. However, if you use that account your money would grow quicker. If you wish to do that I will make the changes when I return.

Roger arrived just before 22:35, Henry said goodbye to Parker, he then told him that he would only be back the middle of February. That's a long time Mr James, what can I do, duty calls, he turned and left. Henry slept after he had read the files for the Singapore meetings. He signed seven of the eight so he was happy with his progress for the new year, he felt he was very close to the target he had set himself, of ten per month and we still have sixteen days left.

Chapter 10

Takahiro gets some good news

While waiting for his flight to the Philippines he phoned Takahiro and Miyu, hello Henry how are you, I am well thank you Takahiro, I am phoning to find out how your meeting went with the Major General. I thought that Okasama or Ootosama would have called you and told you. I returned home on Tuesday 7th and I flew out that evening so I have not heard from either of them, so please tell me your good news.

It is good news Henry, I have been taken off flying duty and I have been sent on a three weeks intensive diplomatic course. Wow Takahiro that sounds fantastic, Miyu is very happy but I do like flying Henry. What happens after you finish the course. Providing I pass I will be promoted to a General and stationed at the Japanese side of Misawa Air Base.

Who is on the other side of the base. It is a large American air base and the Japanese Air Self-Defence Force also fly out of there. Will you then go back to flying F-15 Eagle's, no Henry, I will then have three months to learn the job of the present Major General who will be retiring. I will then be promoted to a Major General and take over from him.

Congratulation Takahiro you are definitely the main man. I have to go now Henry because your sister keeps holding her hand out for the phone and telling me to hurry up, bye Takahiro. Hello brother, hello sister how are you now you are going to become a lady of leisure, it is very exciting Henry and I do hope you will come and visit us. I will try and make a plan, you had better, where are you Henry, waiting for my flight in Singapore airport. Where are you going, the Philippines and then Australia, New Zealand then back to Australia, San Francisco and New York. I then return home the middle of February. That is far too much travelling Henry, they are killing you, get a wife and settle down, you are starting to sound like Lydia. Just look after yourself Henry, I will try sister dear.

Henry also signed two new clients in the Philippines and just before the last meeting broke up, one of the directors asked Henry if he knew of anybody that would be interested in purchasing an offshore drilling company. Please tell me something about it. The track is 78 miles north west of Calusa island in the South China Sea. The company is registered in Manila as, Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd. The track covers an area of 600 square miles, and has been in my uncles family since it was registered in 1922. This company has never operated since it was registered and does not own any ships or equipment. Do you have any idea how much your uncle is asking, he mentioned \$20m. I do have somebody that might be interested, however, \$20m would be far too high for him. However, I can only ask.

While Henry was waiting for his flight to Sydney he phoned Sir Randolph, Mary told him that Sir Randolph was in court, she asked if she could take a message. Henry gave her all the details about Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd. Please ask Sir Randolph if this could be a good acquisition, just as soon as he returns, I will give him your message Henry.

However, as I do not have much to do right now, I will start a search, oh Mary, I do have some of the best people looking after me, bye Henry.

He also managed to sign two in Sydney along with one in New Zealand. While there he spent a full day with Olivia, Alexa had to go to Australia as her friend was taken ill, so he did not see her. They had a great day sightseeing and talking. Henry then flew to Perth and he liked this city as soon as he arrived.

By the time Henry had boarded the BA flight at JFK he had signed twenty-two new clients, he was very happy with his performance. However, he felt very tired so for once he ate on the flight because he would not feel like making anything when he got home, he needed a few days off to recover. Roger was waiting for him in the usual place, welcome home Mr James thank you Roger, I trust you had a good trip sir, very good Roger, it seems like you have been away for months.

I think it is six weeks Roger and I am going to spend the day in bed tomorrow as I am so tired. I need to recover before thinking of anything else. Roger took his cases up to the Penthouse for him and Henry collected his post from Benson, welcome home Mr James thank you Benson, I trust you made many deals sir, I had the best six weeks for deals since I started, however, I am very tired Benson and need to sleep. As Roger got out of the lift Henry shook his hand and just said, thank you Roger.

Henry had a shower and made a coffee and after he had finished drinking the coffee he climbed into bed and fell asleep. It was 09:30 when Henry woke up and he decided to jog around the park, forty five minutes later he returned and while showering he thought. I must unpack and sort out my washing. He opened his case stood back and said to himself, I have to find a housekeeper. He switched the washing machine on, made a coffee and headed for his office. He decided he was going to look for a holiday that he could take on his own without feeling lonely or out of place, it must be interesting and educational if possible. When he sat down at his computer he found a note from Lydia, hope you had a good trip, see you next week. Please phone Sir Randolph.

He picked up the phone and a voice answered that he did not recognise, he asked for Sir Randolph, the young lady asked him if Sir Randolph is expecting him, I believe he is. May I tell him who is calling, Henry James, just hold on Mr James I do know Sir Randolph is expecting your call. Hello my boy how are you, hello Sir Randolph, I feel a lot better now I have slept thank you.

I have checked out Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd, they have never operated and do not have any debt. Their taxes and management fees are paid up to date and the position and size of the area are pretty much what you were given. I have checked out other tracks in the South China Sea and Royal Dutch Shell have several dozen. Their nearest track is fifty miles to the east. I do not know anything about Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration other than, it is big business producing big profits.

If this land turns out to have oil or gas deposits then would move you into the big league Henry, I was not looking at working it Sir Randolph. I thought if it is a good investment I would be hanging onto it for several

years before hopefully selling for a large profit. That is good thinking Henry, however, I am not the one to advise you on this type of investment. I am not asking your advice as an investment opportunity, I needed to know if it is genuine.

It is definitely genuine Henry, how much are they looking for, I was given \$20m but I only consider that a starting amount and not the final amount they would accept. Can this be purchased without my name on the documents Sir Randolph, certainly my boy, you would leave that part to me. Thank you for your time and trouble Sir Randolph and I feel you should send me a bill for your time. Are you looking to visit me in hospital Henry. I do not understand Sir Randolph. If I was to ever charge you for anything I was to do for you, Martha would seriously attack me. Oh Sir Randolph, Lady Martha is such a lovely person and I am sure she would never do that. If you think that then you do not know Martha. She is a lovely person, however, she looks on you as the son she never had.

Henry searched for holidays that he might like to take, he then heard the washing machine stop so he went to hang his clothes up in the laundry. He went back to the office and closed the computer down and decided it was time for him to look for a car as well as a holiday.

The next day Henry flew to the family home to spend a couple of days relaxing. When he arrived Philip said, welcome home Mr Henry, hello Philip how are you, very well thank you, you are also looking very well, you should not sound so surprised Mr Henry, they shook hands and Henry went into the house. Henry walked into the kitchen and found Jessie watching one of the maids, Henry walked up behind her and put his arms around her waist and said, good afternoon Jessie, oh Henry you should have told us you were coming home. You do know you are getting more and more like my mother. She turned in his arms and gave him a hug, Henry looked at the rest of the staff in the kitchen, good afternoon ladies, good afternoon Mr Henry.

He played a couple of rounds of golf and went riding and really felt a lot better, he knew he needed to do this more often and promised himself that he would. He had some great meals with his mother and as normal Jessie spoiled him. He got back to his Penthouse late afternoon and Lydia arrived the next morning. She told Henry that she had twenty potential clients just waiting for an appointment and that does not include the fifteen you are going to see in the next twelve days.

He told her he had sorted her investment out and all being well her money should start growing a little quicker than it has been. He then phoned Martin Flores in the Philippines telling him he had asked his contact about your uncles company and my contact wants to know the amount your uncle will accept. As I told you Henry he is looking for \$20m. We all have amounts in our minds that we think are what we want for anything that we wish to sell. However, reality sets in and we know that was just a starting amount. So Martin, if your uncle needs a quick sale and he comes up with a serious price I will pass this on and I am sure a sale can be reached. The problem that your uncle has, is that no tests of any kind have been carried out on this track, so it could turn out to be, just a

piece of seabed. My contact has told me he would take the chance for \$8m, I do not know if he will drop so low, I can only ask him and get back to you tomorrow.

Sunday morning Martin phoned and told Henry his uncle is prepared to drop to \$10m but would not go to \$8m. I do believe my contact would go to \$9m but not \$10m, please hold the line Henry, sure Martin. My uncle wants to know if this would be a very quick sale, I am sure it would Martin, this man does not like to mess around, once he makes a decision he wants it done very fast. My uncle says, if it can be completed in under one month then he will accept \$9m. Please email me your uncles name and the name and address of his attorney. I will pass this on straight away and I am sure my friends attorney will contact your uncles attorney.

Within three minutes the email arrived. Henry phoned his father, his mother answered the phone and just wanted to know when he was coming home again. I do not know mother. I am rushed off my feet, I am flying out to Singapore tonight and will not be home for three weeks. Is father there, hang on I will pass him the phone. Hello my boy how are you, very busy father, how are you, I am very well my boy thank you, just one thing, it seems like a long time since we had lunch on a Wednesday. I am sorry father as I do enjoy our lunches. What can I do for you my boy, I wish to know if my private banker would be prepared to make me a loan, I am sure they would, how much do you need my boy.

I am looking at £1m father, I am happy to advance you that amount my boy, I do not need to ask my banking partner to cover any of that. I will pay you back at the end of the year father. Do you need to know what I need the money for, that would be nice my boy. I wish to purchase a track of land as an investment, where is this land my boy, in the South China Sea father.

On which island, not on an island father. It is 660ft down on the sea bed, about half way between Half Moon Shoal and 78 miles west of Rizal, Philippines. Good God Henry this is the big league, I know father, however, I am only looking at this as a long term investment and would not think about selling for several years. Where must I send the money to. Sir Randolph's holding account thank you father.

When David put the phone down Alexandra asked, does Henry need to borrow some money, yes my dear he has asked for £1m which he will pay back in December. What does he want it for, he is buying a track of land at the bottom of the South China Sea, they just looked at each other.

Henry phoned Sir Randolph at home and told him what he had arranged with Martin and his father. When do you want me to transfer my money. I will start on this tomorrow morning so phone me in three days Henry. Thank you Sir Randolph.

Henry flew out Sunday evening for five nights in New York, he managed to spend three with Amanda, they had a great week and neither of them wanted it to finish. On the morning of Wednesday Henry phoned Sir Randolph and asked when must he transfer his money. Your father has transferred £1m so you need to send me £8m, I will do that straight away Sir Randolph.

He then phoned Daniel Knox and arranged for the £8m to be transferred to Sir Randolph's holding account. By the time Henry returned home he had another six signed contracts. He managed a day in London before heading to Singapore, Australia and New Zealand for three weeks. It never seemed to stop and this hectic work load carried on all through 2003, he did manage a five day trip to Yellowstone park in July.

Chapter 11

Yellowstone Park

Rachelle is also an American, she lives on a horse ranch just outside San Jose California and she is what most people think of as, a bronzed bikini blonde. Rachelle has never been married and just loves the relationship she has with Henry. Henry loves Rachelle and deep down he believed this is the girl he will marry one day. They met in July 2003, he was twenty six and she was twenty four. They had both booked a white water rafting trip on the Yellowstone River in Montana. They sat next to each other in the raft and had small talk during the ride down river, and then had dinner later on that evening. During their dinner they discovered that they had both booked the next three days in Yellowstone Park and both were staying at Lake Lodge so they met for breakfast and spent the day looking for as many animals as they could find. They also saw bubbling mud pots and geysers, and they both had a great time and exchanged personal information and it was agreed that the next time Henry came to America he would phone Rachelle and they would get together and see how they felt about each other,

They kissed goodbye and went their own ways, they both felt very excited. Henry returned to New York three weeks later and had four days business lined up which he managed to finish in three. He phoned Rachelle and they decided to meet in Denver, Colorado. They spent the next three days talking, sightseeing and making love. Henry was smitten with this beautiful young lady and wanted to spend the rest of his life with her. They agreed that they would spend as much time together as they could, she was learning to run her fathers horse ranch so her life was very busy, but she said she would make time to see Henry whenever he was in America.

Two days later Henry said his goodbyes to Rachelle and returned to London as he needed to complete some contracts before heading to South East Asia for two weeks. He managed to spend five days in London before heading to Singapore for ten days, picking up six more contracts. From Singapore, he made his second trip to Manilla in the Philippines, spending seven days and signing five contracts. He then flew to Sydney and spent a further five days and another five contracts were signed. The small investment company he worked for were staggered by Henry's success rate, Henry by now was signing up more contracts than the rest of the employees put together. During a senior board meeting they decided once more that a substantial increase in his salary would be happening at the end of the year, not to mention a much larger bonus than any other Junior partners received.

Because it is closer to fly to the west coast of the United States than to fly back to London from Sydney, he tries to always fly to San Francisco and if possible spends time with Rachelle. He managed three days before heading to New York to spend five days there. He bumped into Joe while jogging in the park and he told Henry that Amanda was out of town for

a couple of days, but she should be back by Thursday. I will tell her you are here until Friday and I am sure she will contact you, thank you Joe that is kind of you, take care Henry and they went their separate ways.

Amanda phoned Henry after speaking with her father on Thursday afternoon, she walked into the Carlton at 19:30, they hugged and headed straight for the dining room. Over dinner Amanda asked how he enjoyed his holiday in Yellowstone Park. Henry told her that he had a fantastic time and he met a young lady who was on the same tour as he was.

Where does she come from Henry, she lives on a horse ranch just outside of San Jose, California, I have to say she is a real fox. Amanda laughed and asked, does that mean that I am not? I think I stepped into that one, oh yes you did Mr James. Have you decided if you are going to see her again Henry. We will try and meet the next time I am over here, I am so pleased for you Henry, so it may turn into a Californian wedding. Henry just smiled at Amanda, he replied by saying, you never know your luck in a raffle. I have to look because you are not interested, she did not pass any comment. After a fantastic meal they headed up to Henry's room, tore each others clothes off and made mad passionate love. On the Friday Henry spent the night at Amanda's apartment and flew home at 16:35 on Saturday.

On Sunday morning he flew to the family home, and he always feels very happy when he returns to Queensberry Manor as it is such a beautiful house and the setting is spectacular. He got out of the helicopter and was greeted by Philip the butler, good morning Mr Henry and welcome home, it's good to be here Philip and you are looking very well indeed, thank you sir, and so are you, are my parents at home. Your father is out ridding and your mother was in the lounge the last time I saw her, thank you Philip, I will go and find her, and I will take your case to your room sir. He found his mother standing and looking out of the large windows and he said, good morning mother, she turned around and almost ran into him, throwing her arms around him and scolding him for not letting her know he was coming home.

Alexandra James is a very attractive lady, she still has a near perfect figure and with high cheek bones which gives her face a stunning look, at 49 she still looks the perfect lady of the manor. They walked around the garden arm in arm and talked and talked, well, Alexandra did most of the talking as she was in her element having Henry all to herself. He asked her if she fancied a game of golf tomorrow morning, that would be great, maybe we can get your father to join us. When David arrived he also put his arms around Henry and they hugged and smiled, David asked Henry why he had not told him he was coming home, he then asked Alexandra if lunch was ready as he was starving, I will go and find out, in the mean time you should go and take a shower.

On their way to the dining room they met Jessie who was standing in the hallway, you look very well Henry, so do you Jessie, and they hugged and she beamed with happiness. Jessie started working for Alexandra before Henry was born, she is the same age as Alexandra and there is a strong bond between them. She is the only one in the household that can

get away without saying Mr Henry or Mr James. When David and Alexandra went away it was Jessie that looked after Henry and they have always been close.

After dinner the three of them sat having a drink and talking about things in general and the open fire was making a very pleasant atmosphere, David started to nod off so Henry asked him if he would like to join mother and I for a game of golf in the morning, as I believe you are not working until Tuesday. That would be very nice my boy, what time do you want to tee off. 08:00 would be good if we can get a tee time, leave that with me my boy, I still have a little pull around here, that's fine father, I am going to turn in now and I will see you two in the morning, he kissed his mother and squeezed his father's shoulder as he walked passed his chair, they both said, goodnight Henry and he walked out of the room.

Henry walked into the kitchen at 07:00 and put his arms around Jessie and said good morning, it is so good to see you in the morning Henry. You should consider moving back home, he burst out laughing and just kept hugging her and said, how do you think that would work out Jessie. Well I do know your mother would be very happy indeed. I am sure you are right, but we both know that it would not work in the long run, they smiled at each other and he asked her what she was going to give him for breakfast.

If you join your mother and father in the breakfast room I will be finished just now, thank you Jessie, I do miss having you make food for me, is that all you miss Henry, not really Jessie, I miss everything about living here. After breakfast they set off for the golf course, when they arrived at the clubhouse Henry spotted Christine, he asked her if she was playing and she told him she is checking to see if she can get a tee time. I am sure my mother and father would be happy for you to make up a foursome. David said, that would be great, please join us.

Henry noticed her bag was still the Signal violet coloured one that Jasper had given her. Do you keep this as a good luck charm, Henry asked, she smiled and told Henry, not really, it works and it is not damaged so I do not need to change it. Jasper tells me he has made a lot of made to measure clubs over the last five years and he believes this bag has a lot to do with it.

Henry told Christine that he had seen it on TV a couple of times, the camera guys always seem to home in on your bag and Jasper's name stands out really well, so I am sure the free advertising helps him. It was a beautiful morning, cold and crisp and the ball seemed to fly a lot further, after they had finished the game they looked at their score cards, Christine won by one shot from David with Alexandra a further shot back and Henry finishing a very sad last. They laughed and said the winner must buy the drinks, David said I have some fine scotch at home I will give you all a glass before lunch, only one dear. David just looked at Alexandra and said, you know you can have anything that I own. Christine thanked them for the game and declined the drink.

She gave Henry a peck on his cheek and said, we must not leave it so long next time, maybe I should give you some pointers as you seem to

have gone downhill, they all smiled. After lunch they sat around drinking coffee and talking in general, I should come back home more often I really do love it here, it's so peaceful and this house makes me feel very happy. His father said, I am very pleased you feel that way my boy. Henry thanked all the staff for what they had done for him and he said goodbye to them and left at 18:00 for his flight back to Battersea Heliport in London, he felt he was going to his house and not his home.

On the 24th November 2003 Henry proposed to Rachelle, he did the right thing and first asked her father for permission to marry his daughter. Jack Jacobsen or JJ as he is known to all his family and friends said lets go for a little walk and have the father and prospective son-in-law talk. They walked down to the river and sat on JJ's favourite bench. JJ said, I do not want you to get upset by my questions but I do not really know you and I feel I should ask you a little about yourself. I know what Rachelle has told me but that was not told to me by you. It is important that you answer my questions truthfully because if at a later date I find out you lied to me, I will feel justified in shooting you. Henry smiled and said, I do not have a problem with you asking me any questions, however, if they are personal questions about Rachelle and myself I feel that you should ask Rachelle. That's more than fair JJ said.

Are you married or have you ever been married before, no, not even close Henry answered, have you ever hit a woman, never, came the quick reply and unless she was trying to kill me or somebody I care about I never would. Have you ever taken drugs never replied Henry, not even at university JJ asked, no, I have never taken any kind of drugs except when I was in an accident as a child and the doctor prescribed something for me. okay, JJ said, just one other serious question to ask you.

Can you support Rachelle to at least the manor she is accustomed to. Henry smiled again and said, I most certainly can, however, before you ask me I will not tell you how much I earn or how much money I have in the bank, as I believe that is a personal thing. However, I do not have a problem to tell you about my fixed assets. JJ said okay, then tell me.

I live in a five bedroomed Penthouse in Hyde Park Gardens in London, I own this property outright and it is one road up from the north side of Hyde Park, just so you may have some idea as to where I live. I am looking for a two bedroom apartment in the Knightsbridge area of London which is on the south side of Hyde Park, as I am planning to employ a housekeeper. I am also looking at purchasing property in South East Asia and Central or South America, as I feel that bricks and mortar are the best investment over the long haul. I know this is not a fixed assets, but I also own Sultan, my black Arabian stallion. Rachelle would love the stallion, she would indeed Henry said. JJ said, it looks like you have your head screwed on right young man.

Do you have any other questions for me JJ, not at this time as you have answered the important ones, and you have more than satisfied the financial question, so you have my blessing to marry my daughter. Henry said, thank you JJ. That's okay Henry, but it does not mean she will marry you, she can be like her mother, very stubborn at times, however, I do wish

you well because I am sure Rachelle's mother would have liked you and it is always good to have a son-in-law that you like and trust, having said that, never break my trust because if you do, then all hell will break loose, Henry just smiled.

Later that day Henry and Rachelle were riding around the ranch as they always do when Henry is there, they stopped on top of a ridge and got down to rest and take in the view. Rachelle sat on a large rock and Henry stood behind her and massaged her shoulders, she looked back at him, smiled and said, that is very nice. After several minutes he stopped and walked round to face Rachelle. She looked up at him and he got down on one knee. Rachelle, will you do me the honour of marrying me and he held out a little box, she took an intake of breath as she was taken by surprise and just stared at him.

You have not given me any inclination that you might be doing this, no I did not, but is that a problem he asked, no, not really. I would have had a little time to give it some serious thought. I do love you very much Henry, and she took the little box from Henry's hand and opened it. She looked at the largest diamond she had ever seen and tears came to her eye's, this is the most beautiful ring I have ever seen. Oh, Henry you really are the perfect man, however, I feel that we have not known each other long enough to make such an important step. He got up and took her in his arms and she said you live in London and I live here how the hell would it work, because I do not want to live in London.

The relationship we have is a perfect one, why would you want to change that, you are free to do whatever you want and to see whoever you want to, most men would not wish to rock that boat. I am not most men, I am my own man and let me tell you this, I fell in love with you on that raft in Montana and my feelings have just got stronger and stronger. Over the last six months I realised that I just want to spend the rest of my life with you and only you. I do not wish to see other girls, please tell me what is wrong with that. Absolutely nothing other than I am frightened that what we have will fall apart if we get married.

What can I say or do that would change your mind. It is not you Henry, it is me, I love you and if I was a normal person I would be honoured that you want to spend the rest of your life with me and I would jump at your proposal. Most girls would marry you just to get their hands on this ring, but you know I am not like most girls. Please give me more time Henry, and if I have hurt you I am sorry, I am just frightened to take that final step and she gave him back the ring. You can take as much time as you like, however, do not think that I will go away because I will not. I am a very determined person and when I think you have had enough time to think my proposal over I will ask you again. Now, I think it is about time you feed me, they kissed and hugged and got on their horses for the ride back to the ranch. As they walked past JJ, Henry smiled at him and said, I see what you meant about being just like her mother.

C

hapter 12

F irst car and a two bedroom apartment

The first week in December Sir Randolph phoned Henry and told him he had found an apartment for him to take a look at. It is a two bedroomed second floor apartment in Basil Street, Knightsbridge, just along the road from Harrods and close to the south side of the park. If you are interest in taking a look I will get back to them and make arrangements for you to view it. Do you know the owners Sir Randolph, yes Henry I do. I would be able to get it for £400k because it is in need of renovating. The sale must go through within one week. It would have to be today as I fly out at 23:45 tonight. I will make an appointment for 14:00 , if you take a taxi and pick me up ten minutes before. Henry and Randolph were shown around and it did need a total renovation, it is in a good position Henry and I would estimate another £200k and you would have a property that would be valued at £850k That's a good investment whether you rent it out or just flip it. Henry shook Sir Randolph's hand and thanked him, I will transfer £450k into your holding account this afternoon, thank you my boy.

When Henry got back to his Penthouse, he walked up to Lydia and gave her a kiss on her forehead, now what in the world is that for Henry. I think I remember you telling me that Ian works for a building firm, that is correct Henry, he is the Chief Buyer. Lydia just looked at Henry and then asked, do you need something Henry. Does Ian's company do renovations, most definitely. Can you arrange with Ian that his company gives me a quotation, certainly Henry, what do you need renovating. I have just purchased a two bedroomed second floor apartment in Basil Street, Knightsbridge, it needs a complete renovation. Once the paperwork has been sorted out I will get Sir Randolph to send you the keys, do you know how long it will take, I do not know for sure, however, it will be days not months.

Henry walked into the lounge and phoned Daniel Knox and asked him to transfer £450k into Sir Randolph's holding account, he gave him the bank details of the law firm. I will do that straight away Henry. You do realise that you have had this account since June 2000 and we have not had the pleasure of meeting you face to face yet, I will try and make a plan Daniel, in the last year I have started to travel to Mexico, so I will ask Lydia to arrange a stop over before returning to London. I look forward to meeting you Henry. Henry then phoned Randolph and Mary told him that his godfather was not available. Please tell Sir Randolph I have transferred the money and once he has received the keys would he be kind enough to send them to Lydia together with the address. I will do that Henry just as soon as he is free.

The first week in December Henry decided it was time to look for a sports car so he jotted down several names of cars, he looked at his list

and decided he could afford to Purchase the best, so he started to eliminate several makes. Jaguar was the first to go, then Maserati followed by Aston Martin, he had three left on his list and decided to take a look at all three. He phoned for a taxi and gave the driver the names and addresses of the three dealers he wished to go to. Which one do you wish to visit first sir, I have no preference as to the order, whichever is the easiest in this traffic.

Henry walked into the Ferrari dealership and looked around the models on the showroom floor. He opened the drivers door of the Ferrari 575M Maranello, it felt like he was trying to steal a painting from the louvre as two salesmen descended on him and in a not so friendly voice said. may we help you young man. I am just taking a look to see which make I like. Should we speak to your father young man, what in the world would you need to speak to my father for. Just to make sure he is happy to pay before we take you out on the road. Henry smiled and removed the list from his pocket, making sure the two salesmen saw him cross off the Maranello, they would have also seen the other two on Henry's list. He looked up and said, I trust you will have a nice day gentlemen.

He got back in the taxi and said to the driver, I will give those people a miss, the next showroom was Lamborghini and once again Henry walked in looked around and walked up to the Lamborghini Murcielago. As he opened the drivers door a salesman stepped towards him and asked, can I be of assistance sir. Henry looked up and smiled at him, they shook hands and exchanged names. I am looking for a sports car, then you have come to the right place. The salesman explained everything about the car and then asked if Henry would like to test drive this model, I am sure I would like to test drive the car before purchasing. Well, unless you own an equivalent type of car I would need to arrange a test drive at Brands Hatch Circuit. I understand, however, I do have another make that I wish to look at before taking a test drive, that's fair enough Henry, just let me know and I will organise it. Who am I up against Henry, Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster. That's a very nice car Henry, I do hope I will hear from you, I will let you know, thank you.

Henry walked into the Mercedes-Benz dealership and was greeted by a very attractive young lady, how may I help you sir, I wish to see a sports car please. Certainly sir, please take a seat and I will call one of the salesmen, thank you. Within a couple of minutes a salesman arrived and introduced himself and asked Henry's name, Joy tells me you wish to look at a sports car, that is correct. Lets step over to the back of the showroom, Henry followed and they stopped next to the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster. The salesman explained everything about this model. Henry stepped back and walked around the car looking at the differences between this one and the Lamborghini Murcielago he had just seen.

He noted that the type of doors on both cars were scissor doors, however, that seemed to be the only similarity between them. The Mercedes-Benz had a slightly smaller engine size and was a V8 as opposed to a V12, it was also an automatic which Henry preferred. The Lamborghini is manual and he thought it would have more use on a race track than around London. He also liked the look of the Mercedes-Benz

a little better, so if it felt good on a test drive this would be the one for him. Do you have any questions Henry, just one, okay, fire away. When can I test drive this model. I have one at another branch and could get it here tomorrow, would that be acceptable for you Henry, that would be more than acceptable. It was arranged for midday, I will see you tomorrow, before you leave Henry do you have a colour in mind? Because it is German, I would think it should be black, I agree. I can bring it to your house Henry, that would save you coming across town, I will see you at midday.

As promised the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster pulled up outside Henry's Penthouse, this one was a dark blue and Henry thought, that's not a bad colour. Henry drove both in the city and on the M25 and fell in love with this car. When they returned Henry parked and he shook Danny's hand and said, I will take a black one please, where do I sign and when can I have it delivered. He gave Henry some papers to sign and told him he could have the one on the showroom floor on the 15th, however, I will need a deposit of £10,000 and I will also need to know how you plan to finance this vehicle. Please give me your account number and I will transfer the deposit today, I will also transfer the balance as soon as it is ready for collection.

It was that time of the year when Henry and Lydia went to see Sir John, please sit down, are you both keeping well. Yes thank you Sir John and how is Matthew. I am afraid he had another stroke at the end of last month Henry and he is still in hospital, he is not expected to recover. We are very sorry and please pass our love on to his wife. You two have once again passed all expectations. Signed contracts to the value of £229 m so we have decided to double your salaries for next year, and your percentage will be put up by 0.18%. Do you have any questions for me, they both shook their heads, Sir John stood up and shook their hands and told them to go and enjoy the Christmas holidays. Lydia's bonus was £3.889m she was over the moon and hugged Henry. Henry's bonus was £10.868m, there just seemed no stopping this team.

Henry and Lydia returned to the Penthouse in a taxi, this is a good tradition to take up, Lydia smiled at him. As they entered Benson handed Lydia a packet, thank you Benson. When they got in the office Lydia opened the packet, inside was two sets of keys and I note from Sir Randolph.

Dear Lydia,

Henry has asked me to send these keys to you and the address is,

2nd floor Basil Mansions

Basil Street, Knightsbridge

Please remind Henry to have the locks changed.

Yours faithfully,

RA

Henry said to Lydia, it would make more sense if you keep the keys and give one set to Ian so he can arrange for a quotation. I will go with Ian and have a look at your new apartment over the holiday, it's not new Lydia, do not be exact Henry, it's new to you, you are quite right Lydia.

Anyway, when it is finished I can go back and see what the finished job looks like. Do you want me to arrange for a locksmith, when the renovations are completed. Henry opened the safe and gave Lydia her Christmas card. You should not give me a bonus any more Henry, why is that Lydia, because you heard Sir John today, I received a bonus of £3.889m. Whatever you get from the company has nothing to do with what I choose to give you as a Christmas present. Rather, look at any money you receive like the Americans do.

An extra buck does no harm. Now go and enjoy your Christmas, you to Henry. I nearly forgot, the next time I am in Mexico will you please bring me home via Belize, our bank manager has pointed out to me that I have had an account with them since June 2000 and we have never met face to face. I will make a note Henry, thank you.

Henry was looking forward to his two weeks Christmas holiday with his mother and father. He was also very much looking forward to seeing Takahiro and Miyu again as they were coming for Christmas. Henry had just finished his coffee when Benson called, a Mr Alexander is here to see you Mr James, thank you Benson please tell him I am on my way down. When he walked down the steps Danny shook his hand and said, it's all yours Henry, all paper work is in this file along with the spare set of keys, I have filled her up with fuel for you, thank you Danny. I really hope you will get a lot of pleasure out of driving this superb roadster. I am sure I will, just then Danny's ride pulled up, They shook hands, wished each other a Happy Christmas and Danny said, if you have any questions just give me a call, I surely will. Henry got in his car and drove it into the parking garage. When he came out of the lift Benson said, that is a beautiful car Mr James, I did fall in love with her on the test drive. Back in the office he phoned Roger's mobile, good afternoon Mr James, hello Roger. I was hoping to see you at the office today, sorry I had to go to Heathrow, is there any chance you can call past here in the next thirty minutes. That would not be possible because I have to drive Sir John home. I am asking because I have a Christmas card for you, I can leave it with Benson and you can collect it whenever you have the time. I can do that tomorrow, I will tell Benson and I will see you next Year Roger, have a great Christmas, you to sir.

Henry picked up the three envelopes from his desk, went to his bedroom and picked up his small case and headed to the lift. This year Henry had increased all the Christmas bonuses, Roger's had gone up to £20k, Benson and Parker's were now at £10k each, he was more than happy to give the three of them a good bonus. He gave the three envelopes to Benson and explained that Roger would be calling some time tomorrow, also would he please give Parker his card.

Certainly Mr James, before I leave do you know of a good reliable person that would come and clean my car when it needs it. My next door neighbour is retired and he has a little job cleaning cars, he has a little van and I know he also has a pressure washer if the underside is muddy. His name is Matthew, he really is a very nice man and like all pensioners he needs the extra money, when I return in January please give me his number

and I will phone him. Thank you Mr James, they wished each other a happy Christmas and Henry got in the lift to go down to the underground garage.

He placed his case in the boot and got in his new car, he sat there for a little while just listening to the engine noise, the engine made absolutely no vibration, he could not feel anything it was so smooth. He drove out of the garage and headed for the A40, not long and he was on the M40, he found he had to be careful not to be heavy on the gas peddle as this car is very responsive. At 85 mph he set the cruse control and it just purred along eating up the miles, no hold ups and he exited at junction 8 forty five minutes after leaving Hyde Park Gardens. The rest of the 30 mile journey, again he found very little traffic, he drove into Queensberry Park with a total journey time of 1 hr. 15 min. He felt very happy and as he pulled up at the front door. Philip came out and greeted him. Is this beautiful car yours Mr Henry, it is indeed Philip, I only got it today and I am over the moon with it. Should I leave you to park it Mr Henry, not at all Philip, I am sure it will be just as safe in your hands, thank you Mr Henry

During the Christmas holiday he played several rounds of golf over the two weeks, not to mention the shooting, especially since it had been a few months since he picked up his rifle. He played golf with his mother, father and Takahiro, a couple of times he and Takahiro played with friends from Oxford University. He also went on a couple of shoots with his father and Edward the game keeper.

Edward was the one who had taught Henry how to shoot way back when he was ten. Henry liked Edward and treated him more like a friend than an employee. Lord James allowed Edward to teach Henry how to shoot providing Henry became a serious student and passed his exams the next year and all future years, Henry said, that sounds like a challenge father and I accept your challenge father. From that day forward Henry became a very serious student and found that he liked his studies and by liking them it made it easier for Henry to excel at school and also later at Oxford University, he always believed that his father's decision to make a deal with him, letting him start shooting was the reason he has become such a successful businessman, it gave him a purpose in life.

Each Christmas seems to be getting better because Takahiro and Miyu were there again. More golf, more pheasant shoots, Henry also had a couple of cross country runs on his old track, and they had a lot more fantastic food. Henry told them, this sure beats airline food and everybody burst out laughing. During the Christmas meal Miyu asked Henry how come you are so good at your job. He will tell you it's his boyish charm Miyu, but I do not agree with him David said. I really do not know how I manage to sign so many contracts, but why would you ask Miyu, because you promised me last Christmas you would visit Takahiro and I at our home and you never came.

How do you explain that Henry, Alexandra asked. Then everybody around the table started saying, come on Henry, explain why you could not take time out to visit your sister. When the shouting had died down,

Henry said, in my defence I can only say that I actually said, I will try and make a plan. Not good enough my boy, his father said, followed by his mother who told him she was very disappointed in him. Is nobody coming to my rescue, they all just laughed. If I gave you a formal invitation would you actually come, most definitely sister dear, do not try to sweet talk me brother, I never gave it a thought sister. Everybody was smiling, then Randolph said to Miyu. My experience in life has taught me that it is far better to arrange a meeting with the person that makes the appointments. Just speak to Lydia and I guarantee you, Henry will arrive. Henry just shook his head, I feel you are all picking on me, and Miyu said, I will take your advice Sir Randolph.

Before I return to London father, please tell me which bank account you would like me to repay my loan into. I will do that Henry and congratulation on full ownership of your track of land, thank you father. Are you going into housing or commercial development Henry. Not at all Miyu, my track of land is just for investment, I plan to keep it until some large company starts sniffing around. Alexandra said, Henry's track of land is in South East Asia Miyu. Whereabouts Henry, the South China Sea, that's a big sea Henry, can you narrow it down a little. It is midway between Half Moon Shoal and Palawan Philippines, most of those are not inhabited, Takahiro said.

My track is 660ft down on the seabed. Miyu and Takahiro just looked at Henry. Do not look shocked Miyu, your brother is going to drill for oil, my god Henry. My father is just joking Takahiro, I am not planning to work this track at all. I purchased it at a very good price and I will sit on it until an oil company wishes to purchase it from me, that's all there is to it. So you are planning to become rich, Takahiro said, your brother-in law is already rich, he is hoping to move to the super rich bracket David said. All I can say is the best of luck Henry, thank you Lady Martha, she looked at him and placed her fore finger of her right hand on her left breast. He smiled back at her and nodded.

C

Chapter 13

S

panish Colonial

Henry felt his life seemed crazy at times, he was spending less and less time in London and more and more flying between New York, San Francisco, Singapore, Sydney, New Zealand and now the Philippines. He made the small investment bank he worked for a lot of money, and he received a very good salary for doing just that. He also received some of the largest bonuses paid to any banker, which made Henry one of the highest paid investment bankers in London.

However, Henry felt he never found time to relax and enjoy what he had, he just seemed to be flying from one city to the next and he knew he had to make some serious changes in his life before they were made for him. He was now working in his Penthouse, going over a batch of new quotations with Lydia, he stopped what he was doing and said to her, I need your help. She looked up and asked him what he needed her to do, I need to spend more time at home, I feel this job is killing me, I have no life of my own, it is just work, work, work all the time.

She looked at him and said, you work far too many hours Henry, everybody at the firm knows this, however, because you bring in so much business they do not say anything to you, they would like you to cut your working down, but they know they will never say anything that may slow the contracts down.

You need to find a wife, one that will make you stay at home more, that is not as easy as you seem to think it is Lydia. I do not see why Henry, you have the looks, the money, the properties and you are one of the kindest men I know.

Please stop Lydia, you are embarrassing me. I have found someone Lydia and I have asked her to marry me last November, that is fantastic Henry, when do we get to go to another wedding of the year, not for some time yet Lydia, because she turned me down. What's her reason for gods sake.

Sorry Henry, that just came out, your private life has nothing to do with me. You are the closest that I have to a friend Lydia, you know more about me than anybody else, just use your charm and slow down my work load a little. She smiled at him and thought, if I were single and twenty years younger, I would throw my hat in your ring Henry James. I will see what I can do to help you, in the meantime, move on and find another wonderful young lady that will marry you.

Now, this is your itinerary for the next two and a half weeks, you have two appointments in Singapore, three in the Philippines, one in Wellington, two in Brisbane, two in Sydney, three in Perth and three in New York. I think you are trying to kill me off Lydia, I cannot change what is already booked, however, from now on we will be seeing less new

clients which will give you more time to concentrate on your existing clients, I will make sure you have more time between clients. I almost forgot, Sir Randolph phoned last week and told me to tell you that he has found some Spanish villas for you to look at in Nicaragua, I am going to tell him he can make an appointment for Friday 2nd of April, Henry was about to say something when Lydia said, do not say another word Henry, just go and do your thing with your eyes wide open and your mind working on better options.

While Henry was in Wellington he managed to see Alexa and Olivia even though it was only for two hours while he was in the airport. Olivia told Henry she had met someone and hoped he would turn out to be the special one, Alexa smiled at Henry and said, before you ask, no, I have not found anybody, just keep looking Henry told her. What about you Henry, how is your love life, I have met a young lady and I have asked her to marry me, when is the wedding, and we hope you will invite us. Olivia almost shouted. I have asked her again and she has asked once more to give her more time, so there will not be a wedding this year, and just to confirm with you. When I do get married you two will certainly be on my guest list.

Thank you Henry, but why in the world is this girl not snatching your hand off, Alexa asked. I do not know but she wants more time. Oh, and you being a gentleman have agreed to give her more time, Henry just smiled and nodded his head. He flew to Brisbane and signed two more contracts, in Perth he only managed one. He then flew straight to New York.

Henry phoned Amanda when he arrived in New York and they arranged to see each other the next night at the restaurant in the Carlton. During the meal Henry told Amanda that on Thursday he will be going to Nicaragua to look at three properties to possibly purchase one. She was excited and told him she loved Nicaragua, whereabouts are you looking, the estate agent has three for me to look at, the first is just outside the small town of Puerto Diaz, the property is 185 hectare which is around 460 acres, it has over 3000 feet of shoreline on Lake Nicaragua. There is a large colonial house that apparently needs a lot of renovation, dating back to the time the Spanish Conquistadors walked this land. Henry said, I really love old properties and I am really looking forward to seeing this property. I have been looking for some months now. Amanda asked, do you speak Spanish Henry, a little, but not very well Henry replied. Would you like a translator Amanda asked, are you offering your services Henry replied, if you would like me to go with you I am more than happy to do so. That would be fantastic, can you get Thursday and Friday off work, that would not be a problem. I will book airfares and the hotel, we can fly out on Thursday morning and return Sunday evening if that is okay with you, that sounds great Henry.

They boarded a US Airways flight to Managua, Nicaragua at 09:45 on Thursday, Amanda asked, do you always fly business class Henry, no, I do not he replied, so you are just trying to impress me then, no, not at all, I usually fly first class but no airline is offering first-class flights to Managua,

Nicaragua, she just smiled. The flight had one stop in Miami and the total flying time was seven hours and forty minutes, Henry had booked a 4×4 and they collected it at the airport. They drove the 40 km from the airport arriving at Hotel Spa Granada at 19:30, they checked in and then walked along the street to find a little restaurant. They took their time over their meal drinking a bottle of wine, finishing with a nice coffee, they strolled back to the hotel showered together and then made mad passionate love.

They met the estate agent at 09:00 the next morning and Henry told him that they would follow him in their 4×4, this way they did not have to come back directly after viewing the properties, they could drive around and get a better feel of the area. It took just over two hours to get to Juigalpa and a further thirty minutes to get to Puerto Morrito. The first property which was 7km outside of the small town of Puerto Morrito, they drove up a dirt road and at the end there was a magnificent colonial villa, it really did look like the Spanish Conquistadors had lived here. Henry immediately fell in love with this colonial, however, it did need a lot of work doing to it, and that was only the outside.

They walked around the outside and then went inside where most of the rooms just needed superficial work. Henry was surprised that the inside of the property was in such good shape, however, the grounds around the property had been sadly neglected and were very overgrown. However, the view across the lake is really fantastic. The two Volcanoes, Maderas and Concepción on the other side of the lake looked fantastic. Please remind me what the asking price is, the owner is asking \$1,2m, Henry told the estate agent he is very interested in this property, and does not need to view any others today, he will talk to his barrister and make a formal offer, you should have that by tomorrow at the latest. The agent asked if he was sure and Henry replied absolutely, so he locked the house back up and left them wandering around the property, Henry said to Amanda, this is a perfect property, but it needs a lot of work Henry and I am sure that will cost a lot of money.

Henry replied, but it's perfect, just look around you and think of the possibilities, I will put this property back into it's once magnificent state. If you manage to buy this Henry, do you have a company to do the renovations for you, I have been given a couple of names, however, I need somebody that can come and keep their eye on the work being carried out as I just do not have the time. They walked along the edge of the lake in both directions from the villa and the longer they stayed there the more excited Henry became. I may know somebody if you are interested Henry, he lives in Granada and I am sure he would be interested in earning a little extra money and he is very reliable, and he also speaks English. I would be interested in that, however, let's make sure the sale goes through first, there can be problems with ownership in Central and South American countries.

They walked around the property and Henry phoned Sir Randolph and asked him to get hold of his friend in Nicaragua as he wished to make an offer on a fantastic property, what is this property my boy, Sir Randolph

asked. It is a property that dates back to when the Spanish Conquistadors walked this land, however, it needs a lot of renovations but it is a magnificent property. Henry told Sir Randolph that he wished to make an offer of \$600k, subject to all documentation being in order, if this is acceptable, once we confirm all documents are in order the money would be transferred immediately.

Sir Randolph said I will get onto this straight away my boy, and your agent should receive your offer in writing by tomorrow morning at the latest, thank you Sir Randolph. Henry put his Mobile back into his pocket and gave Amanda a hug and a kiss, they continued to walk around the property close to the villa and in all the overgrown vegetation they found the fruit and coffee trees.

Henry just loved this property more and more. They stopped for a bite to eat at Puerto Morrito and Amanda asked, how long will it take your Sir Randolph. The owner will receive my offer by tomorrow morning at the latest, that is very quick Henry, once I make up my mind Amanda, I move very quickly. They drove back to the hotel and had a quick shower and went for a walk around the streets of Granada, Henry's mobile rang and when he answered by saying, hello Sir Randolph. Just to let you know my boy, your offer has not been accepted. The owner said he will accept \$800k but will not go below that figure, I am prepared to pay him \$800k subject to the normal checks, I have asked them to move quickly and this should be done within the month at the longest. Henry said, thank you very much for your time and trouble Sir Randolph, once the documents are drawn up you will have to return to sign them.

They did quite a lot of sightseeing for the rest of the day, they went to bed around 23:30 after consuming two bottles of wine. Henry was in the shower at 06:30 the next morning and Amanda joined him, they got dressed and went down for breakfast. While they were drinking their coffee the estate agent phoned Henry and confirmed what Sir Randolph had already told him, the estate agent told Henry he has never had anybody make a decision so quickly, we did not believe that people do this, Henry replied, that is my life I am afraid, everything is done at full speed. Just after 16:00 Henry received another call from Sir Randolph telling him that it looks like all the papers are in order so the sale can go ahead. This means that you will probably have to come back in 14 days time to sign the documentation, that is fantastic I will get hold of the agent immediately.

Henry then phoned the estate agent and told him that everything looks in order so the sale will be going through, the money will be transferred immediately on signature of the documents at the attorneys office, the agent thanked him and told him he would see Henry just as soon as the documents are ready, just one request, what is that Henry, I need to borrow the keys as I wish to show a couple of builders around so that they can give me their quotes for the renovation of the property, just drop by on your way there tomorrow, Henry said. thank you.

Henry then phoned the building companies and made arrangements for them to meet him at the villa in the morning. One he would see at

09:30 and the other at 14:30. He then said to Amanda, well, you had better call your man in Nicaragua, she phoned and within seconds he answered, she asked him to please come to the hotel as soon as possible. He arrived within 10 minutes and when Henry saw him he smiled to himself and thought, I saw you yesterday at the airport. Amanda introduced him as José, they shook hands and Henry asked him if he would be interested in overseeing the renovation works of a property he is in the process of purchasing, most definitely José replied, then could you be here by 07:00 tomorrow morning, I will be here and he got up and left. Would you like to take a coffee in the garden Amanda, I would like that Henry. They found a nice secluded seat and Henry ordered some coffees and they sat down to enjoy the garden.

They were drinking their coffee and Amanda said, what is this strange look on your face Henry. It is not really a smile, just thinking, then I will give you a penny for your thoughts. I was just thinking that you two are not very good spy's, what in the world do you mean Henry. I am not trained by MI6 and as you know, I am just an investment banker. However, it is quite obvious that something is going on between José and yourself. I have no idea what you mean Henry, please Amanda, do not treat me like I am stupid, this man was waiting for you at the airport. He was then in the hotel when we got there and he gave you the firearm last night at the restaurant, the one you are now carrying. Are you sure about all of this Henry, well, I know you spoke to him at the airport, and I know you spoke to him at the restaurant. However, I did not actually see him giving you the firearm, but I do believe that is how you got it. Are you sure you are not working for MI6 Henry? I am just an investment banker, however, as I said, I am not stupid and I know what I saw and I would appreciate the truth.

You certainly deserve an explanation Henry. I am not an analyst, although I do analyse from time to time, but not what the average person analyses. I am the deputy chief of the CIA's New York bureau, and José works for me, he is as you said, my man in Nicaragua. I suggested him for your building renovations because he is honest and reliable and not for any other reason.

Henry just looked at Amanda and did not say a word. I am guessing you have several questions to ask me Henry, and where possible I will answer them. I guess I will think of more as time goes by, but for now, just a couple. When did you have me checked out. After we met on the subway, I thought you looked like a decent guy and I knew I would make the effort to see you again, so I asked. You feel you have to check out every guy before you have dinner with him. My father is the head of the FBI office in New York, and when I was younger he would let me date guys just as long as he had checked them out first.

When I left home and became a CIA agent he made me promise to check out every guy before going out with him. Henry looked at her and said, so in my case he wanted to see me himself, yes and no. I do go running in the park with my dad about three mornings a week and before

we saw you that morning I had just told him that I had met an Englishman. Before he could say anything we met up with you. When you left us he looked at me and I said to him, before you ask I will put in a request. He just replied, better make it urgent if you are planning to see him tonight. I told him to stop worrying as I am a big girl now, he just gave me a hug and said, let me know, we parted and went our separate ways.

I take it the report on me came back as okay to have dinner with. It came back as too good to be true, they could not even find a parking ticket for you. So my dad asked one of his contacts at the Metropolitan Police headquarters in London, and they confirmed that you come from a very well known affluent upper class family. However, they also told my Dad, if you need to know anything else you should ask the secret service that look after the President. So my dad called and spoke to the head of the service, he confirmed that all your family had been checked out early in 2002. When dad asked why they had checked out the James family, he was told. The President and First Lady attended the wedding of their daughter in June 2002.

Your father is Lord David James and your mother is Lady Alexandra James originally from Sweden, you have one sister that was adopted in 2002. She lives in Japan with her husband, Major General Takahiro Yoshino. So you totally checked out. You did not tell me you are a friend of the president Henry. I do not consider I am a friend of your president. I must confess, I got on better with the first lady, we had several dances over two days at my sisters wedding and I found her a very nice and easy to get along with. They were not the only ones that attended. Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Acting Navy Secretary Susan Morissey Livingstone, Victoria Jane Nuland. I also danced with those ladies and must say, they were also very nice ladies.

Amanda then said, I did not realise the amount of money you have made until yesterday. I find it easy to make money Amanda, it is time to relax I find hard to find. Have you been doing this job long Amanda, well, I have been a CIA agent since I was 22. I was made up to deputy of the CIA's Bureau in New York two years ago after my cover had been blown. Do you find it an interesting job, very interesting Henry, well, in case you are a little worried that I might blow your cover. I can assure you I am a man of honour, I do not kiss and tell, so your secret is safe with me, thank you Henry.

I do have a personal request to ask though, she smiled and asked what it was, is there anyway you can make life a little easier for me when I come through US Customs. She just laughed and said, I will ask my dad to see what he can do, but no promises, thank you Henry replied. That night they had the wildest sex Henry has ever had in his life, and before dropping off to sleep he wondered if he had asked the right American to marry him.

The following morning José arrived in plenty of time, on the drive out to the property Amanda explained to José that Henry had fumbled them, I think he must be an MI6 agent because not many people would have noticed the contact between you and I, José asked, are you an MI6 agent

Henry, not at all, I am just an investment banker. They met the architects from both of the companies and Henry, with the help of Amanda and José explained what work he wanted doing, he told them that he wished to put this building back to it's former glory and all bedrooms must be ensuite, so I do expect to loose some bedrooms where you turn them into bathrooms. They both asked lots of questions and made plenty of notes and took lots of photos, they both said, they would get back to Henry within 10 to 12 days with a full proposal. When the architects had left Henry asked José, if he had a price in mind for the work that he needed doing, José replied, \$250 per week, if you are happy with that figure, I am more than happy, however, if the work is kept on schedule I will pay you a bonus, Henry and José shook hands. José declined Henry's offer of lunch and left.

Henry and Amanda walked along the road and tried another restaurant for their meal, after they had finished it was time to drive back to the airport and catch their flights back to New York and London, when they had landed Henry thanked Amanda and said, I will phone you tomorrow, he was just in time to check in for his BA flight to London. Henry slept on the plane but still decided to work from home on Monday, Lydia arrived just at 09:30 and they worked for three and a half hours. Henry told her all about his trip but left the part out about the CIA. After lunch Henry phoned Amanda and once again thanked her for all she had done for him in Nicaragua, she replied, it was my pleasure. She then asked him when he was going back to Nicaragua, which he replied, just as soon as I know the documentation is ready to sign, they said their goodbyes.

Two days later when Henry got back from his jog around Hyde Park Lydia was already working, they said good morning to each other and then Lydia told Henry that a couple of investments had started to drop, let me take a shower and I will take a look. He came back and sat at his desk and asked Lydia which ones, she told him, twenty minutes later he told her that only one change was needed. All done Henry. Tomorrow you have an overnight to Mexico City, four appointments. You then fly to Acapulco and as normal an extra night for dancing, all three ladies are very happy, I bet they are. You then fly to Belize to see our banker, I have given you two days there, that's fine Lydia. You then get two days at home, thank you kind lady.

All four companies in Mexico City signed with Henry for a total amount of £8m he was very happy and he still had a night of dancing to look forward to. He had a great night in Acapulco and as before the three ladies looked stunning and Henry just wished they were not married to his clients, they got him so turned on, and all three knew it.

On his way back to London he had two days in Belize, he met all the banking staff and he really liked Daniel Knox and thought, this is a man I could make a friend of. He realized that was the first time he had ever thought like that since he made friends at Oxford. Daniel showed him several places of interest around the island and Henry said, this could be a good place to have a holiday home, I can keep my eyes and ears open if

you so wish, that's kind of you Daniel.

The following week Henry was in Singapore for four days, and because he had to go to San Francisco the week after he flew direct from Singapore. He spent the weekend with Rachelle and JJ and had a fantastic time, he told Rachelle that he was purchasing an old Spanish Colonial in Nicaragua and needed to sign the papers on Friday, would she like go with him. That would be nice Henry but I just do not have time as I have to go to an auction on Saturday, maybe next time he replied, maybe she answered. Later that day Henry was sitting talking to JJ and when Rachelle arrived with some drinks and snacks, JJ said to her, I am more than capable of dealing with the auction honey, so if you want to go with Henry it is not a problem. That's kind of you daddy, but I really do want to go to that auction.

C

Chapter 14

A

manda has to disappear

On Wednesday morning Henry phoned Amanda and told her he was going to sign the documentation and pay for the Spanish Colonial on Friday 30th, he then asked her if she would like to go with him, she asked him if he was going on Thursday, he replied, yes. He then told her he was in San Francisco and he could meet her in Miami if she was interested in going with him. She said, she was very interested and what time did he want to meet her in Miami, he said, I can get a flight at 16:30. So I would suggest you join me tonight in the Mandarin Oriental if you can make that, I will definitely see you tonight at the Mandarin Oriental. Henry then phoned US Airlines and made a booking for the two of them to Managua, Nicaragua on the 11:30 arriving at 14:00 on Thursday. He also booked the same hotel in Granada.

Nobody knew Henry when he walked into the Mandarin Oriental, because he had never been to this hotel before, he was shown to his room which he was very happy with. He took a shower and got changed into casual clothes. He then went down to the lobby to wait for Amanda, he ordered a coffee and a small bottle of still water and sat by a window looking out at the view, just as he was thinking about ordering another bottle of water, Amanda walked into the lobby.

She spotted him straight away and they walked towards each other meeting in the middle of the lobby, where they hugged and gave each other a peck on the cheek, he took her cabin case and they headed for the elevator, on the way up to their room he asked if she had a good flight, it was okay nothing exciting though, well, lets see if we can make the next four days a little more exciting. Once in the room they had a passionate kiss, Henry then asked, if she wanted to eat at the hotel or in a little restaurant close by.

Amanda said, I know of an intimate little place close by and the food is very good, do we need to book Henry asked, I Don't think that would be necessary on a Wednesday evening. They headed off down several side streets and finally arrived at the, Not By The Waters Edge, Henry said, that's a great name, you would never forget that. They went inside and it was quite busy, so they had a drink at the bar, the barman kept staring at Amanda and they both thought he must be a bit of a dirty old man and smiled at each other. Henry noticed that the barman opened a draw and looked at something inside and then looked back at Amanda, he did this two or three times before closing the draw, after he had served two other customers he picked up the phone and dialled a number, he was too far away to hear what he was saying and Henry said to Amanda, I think that guy is phoning about you, do not become paranoid Henry, I am sure it is nothing, well I am not so sure.

Their meal arrived and they were shown to a table at the back of the

room, and Henry had to agree, the food was very good, they also had a bottle of wine and finished with a coffee. Henry paid and they got up and left to head back to the Mandarin Oriental, as they left the barman again made a phone call.

They retraced their route and as they turned into the next road three men attacked them, Amanda managed to fire off one shot and the guy that was punching Henry collapsed and as he went down he took Henry with him. The other two overpowered Amanda and dragged her towards a car, Henry pushed the guy off her and realised that he was already dead, he found the guys Glock 21 two feet away, Henry picked it up and realised that this was the first time he had held a handgun, he headed towards the two guys trying to get Amanda into their car, she was struggling and one of them said, get in the car bitch or I will put a bullet in you.

Henry quickly and quietly moved to within twenty feet of the two guys that were still struggling with Amanda, he then said, that would not be a good idea, I would advise you to put your firearms down and let her go. One of the men let Amanda go and spun around and fired a shot at Henry, the bullet whistled past Henry's left ear and he did not give him another chance, Henry put two rounds in his chest, and he went down and was dead before he hit the ground.

The last guy pulled Amanda in front of him and jammed his gun under her jaw bone, he looked at Henry with a smirk on his face and said, I think you should put your gun down, then turn around and walk away. Henry replied, that is not going to happen, if you do not I can assure you she is going to die right now, Henry replied, it is you that is going to die because I am going to stamp out your life right now. Quick thinking Amanda, stamped her stiletto heel into the left foot of this guy, he shouted out in pain and moved his head about six inches to the right, Henry felt he now had a clear shot and he took it. The guy dropped to the ground with a bullet in the centre of his forehead. Amanda kicked the gun that had been jammed under her jaw bone away from him, this was an automatic reaction, as he was already dead. She then rushed to Henry and asked him if he had been shot, no, I am fine thank you, she gave him a hug and said, thank you for saving my life. I am in your debit, it was my pleasure, please think nothing of it.

Amanda took out her phone and looked through her contacts and selected a number, when it was answered she said, hello Jeff, it's Amanda. She listened and then said, we can catch up later Jeff, I need a team to clean up three bodies and she gave him the street name. She turned to Henry and told him a team will be here in five minutes, Henry replied, while you wait for them I have something to do. What is that Henry, I have a barman that I wish to talk to, do not go there Henry, wait for the team to arrive and we will all go together. Henry thought about it and decided that would be a better option, so he said, okay, I will wait with you, just remember that I am a little upset with that guy and need to have a serious talk to him.

The CIA team arrived in four vehicles, two from each direction of the

road in less than four minutes, Henry thought, that's pretty impressive. Six agents got out leaving one in each of the vehicles, three of them checked out the dead guys. The fourth walked up to Amanda and shook her hand and said, nice to see you again Amanda, how have you been keeping. Well, apart from tonight, I am very well thank you Jeff, he then looked at Henry and asked, who do we have here, friend or foe, most definitely a friend Amanda said.

She then introduced Henry to Jeff and they shook hands and both said, nice to meet you. Jeff looked a little longer at Henry and said, this is very strange, because MI6 would normally tell us when they have one of their operatives in our back yard. So why are you here Mr Bond. Henry and Amanda burst out laughing and Jeff just looked from one to the other, Henry told Jeff that he did not work for Her Majesties Government. Three of the other agents drove off with the three bodies, and the other three gathered round and one of them said, if you can move out of the way boss, we will clean up the road. Jeff said, lets step out of their way while they clean away the blood.

Do you have any idea why they attacked you Amanda, none at all Jeff, do you recognise any of them, no. We may as well go to the agency now and debrief you guys, and Jeff moved towards his vehicle. Henry said, not so fast Jeff, I have some questions to ask a barman before leaving here. Jeff looked at Amanda and asked her what barman, the barman in the Not By The Waters Edge restaurant. Do you believe he has something to do with this attack on you, most definitely Henry replied. Why do you say that, because he kept staring at me and then he picked up the phone and dialled a number, he was too far away to hear what he was saying and Henry said to me that he thinks he is phoning about me. Henry also spotted him making another call just before we left, I told Henry he was being a little paranoid.

Well that's what happens when you spend most of your time behind a desk Amanda. Next time I bet you will have more faith in Mr Bond. Lets go talk to the barman, but I think it would be better if you waited in the vehicle Amanda, just in case it is from eight years ago. Amanda said, good idea Jeff, just make sure you look after Henry. Jeff turned and told one of his guys to follow in his vehicle, they walked back around two corners to the, Not By The Waters Edge restaurant. Jeff said let me go in first and I will get to the other end of the bar and you can then come in and question him. Henderson will stay by the door, Henry gave Jeff three or four minutes and then he walked in.

He went straight up to the barman who just stared at him, the barman headed to the phone and made a call. When he had finished he walked back to Henry and asked if he wanted a drink, just some information please, sure what do you want to know. Henry smiled and asked him, who had he just phoned, the barman looked at Henry and said, that's private.

Henry said, I bet it was the same guy you phoned just before we left a little earlier this evening. He looked shocked and before he could say another word Henry grabbed him and dragged him over the counter

slamming him onto the floor face down, he then removed the Glock from his waist band and jammed it into the barman's neck. This is your only chance to tell me what I want to know, do you understand me, yes I do.

That's a shame Henry replied, I was hopping you would not cooperate and I could then dish out a lot of pain. At this point the other people were trying to leave and Jeff told them, we do not have a problem with anybody else so please just stay where you are. The barman was still complaining and told Henry, you cannot do that it is not allowed, the police have to work within the rules. I know the law, I am sure you are right about that, so it's a good job I do not have anything to do with the Miami Police department, the barman swallowed hard, and Henry said, just answer my questions.

Jeff thought I am pleased I gave Mr Bond the first crack at him. Henry dragged the barman to his feet and shoved him behind the bar towards the draw, he told him to place the draw on the counter which he did, Henry then told him to take three steps to his right and sit on the floor cross legged. Again the barman complied. Henry then looked through the contents of the draw and found Amanda's photo with a phone number on the back. He picked her photo up and asked the barman who does this number belong to. I do not know his name the barman replied. Henry said, wrong answer, and he hit him across the face with the Glock, a cut opened up on his cheek, you and I will now take a little ride and if you mess with me one more time you will never ever return to this bar, do I make myself clear, the barman nodded. Henry said, I cannot hear you, the reply came back, yes sir.

Now get up and lets leave before I change my mind. They walked outside and Henry told Henderson to cuff him and keep your eye on him. He walked back into the bar/restaurant and asked Jeff, do you think there is anything else we need to look at before leaving, I will leave two men here and they will take a good look around, thank you Henry said. Henry handed Jeff the photo and asked if he could trace the number on the back, leave it with me, they walked out and got into Jeff's vehicle, the barman was sitting in the middle handcuffed to Henderson, Henry got in the other side and he noticed he had a black bag over his head, Amanda sat in the front and indicated to Henry not to mention her.

The drive to the CIA office was in silence and when they arrived Jeff told Henderson to put the barman in the holding room, Henderson handcuffed him to a bar on the table. Jeff then said, this way, once in Jeff's office he pointed to the chairs for Henry and Amanda to sit on. So what do we have here Amanda, Jeff asked, I wish I knew she replied, Jeff said, lets start at the beginning and see if we can make some sense of tonight. Lets start with you Mr Bond, why are you and Amanda here, Amanda said, hang on Jeff, Henry and I are on a private trip absolutely nothing to do with the agency. I do not mean to pry Amanda, but you were nearly killed or kidnapped tonight, so I think that anything I ask you, you should not really have a problem with.

I do not have a problem answering anything you ask me, Henry said.

Amanda looked at Jeff and nodded. So why are you and Amanda here. We are on our way to Nicaragua, so that I can sign for a property I am purchasing, very nice, Jeff said. Can you please explain why you did not fly together from New York. Certainly, I was in San Francisco on business and when I had finished I phoned Amanda and asked her if she wished to go with me. She said, that would be great so we met at the Mandarin Oriental. Have you been to Nicaragua with Amanda before, yes.

Now Mr Bond, what is the real reason you are in this country. Amanda said to Jeff, you do not seem to believe what we told you before. Henry is an investment banker. For Christ sake Jeff, just type Henry James into the system and read what the FBI say about him, okay Jeff said, and he typed Henry's name into his computer. After Jeff had read what was on the screen, he turned to Amanda and said, I see you have already checked him out, also her father, and that was just to have dinner with me Henry said.

Henry stood up and removed the firearm from his waistband and placed it on Jeff's desk, saying, I think you should take care of this. I removed it from the man that Amanda shot, it is with this firearm I shot, the two men that were attacking Amanda. That was some very good shooting Henry, where did you learn to use a firearm like that, Amanda asked. That was the first time I have shot with a handgun, however, I do own my own rifle in England. You have to be joking Henry, no, I am serious, I have never even held a handgun before shooting those two guys.

You have never used a handgun before and you shot a guy in his forehead from twenty feet away and his head was less than six inches away from my head, that is correct. I would have been very worried if I had known that Henry, it's a good job you did not know then. Jeff said, you must be a very confident man Henry to be able to make a shot like that with a young lady you think a lot of so close. I am a very confident person in everything I do Jeff.

Amanda and Jeff just looked at each other and both raised their eyebrows. Amanda said, if the situation had been reversed I do not think I would have taken the shot. So by now I would have been in some out of the way building being tortured to death Henry said. I am very pleased the situation was not reversed Amanda, me to, and she smiled at him.

An agent walked in and told Jeff the phone number belonged to a little car repair shop down town, Jeff replied take a team and hit it very hard. I want answers tonight. Henry stood up and asked for the firearm back, Jeff said not so fast Henry. I do not understand Jeff, you let me speak to the barman. I see where you are going with this Henry, however, that was when I thought you worked for Her Majesties Government. Because you are an investment banker I cannot let you run around my city with an unlicensed firearm. I cannot take you on a raid either, sorry but that's the way it is. I can assure you both that we will get to the bottom of this because we get very upset when one of our own is attacked and threatened. We are not like the FBI Henry, we work a little outside of the law. Jeff asked Amanda if she thought it had anything to do with Marseille, she replied by saying, it's not a good idea to go there. Jeff looked at

Amanda and asked her to please step outside, once outside the office Jeff said to Amanda. I am not looking for an answer to this, but is Henry a jogging partner or is he somebody that you would share your bed with, that's a little personal Jeff.

That's why I said I am not looking for an answer. I just feel that if he is sharing your bed, then after tonight you really do need to explain to him what happened in Marseille. Because if this turns out to be the same people then you may have to disappear. I understand Jeff, and looking at it that way I think you are right. Jeff said, I will leave you to talk to Henry and he walked away. Amanda returned to the office and sat down in the chair and said to Henry, I have some explaining to do. Henry just sat and looked and did not reply. Jeff thinks this could be related to the problem I had eight years ago.

Eight years ago I was working undercover in Marseille and my partner and I had got very deep into a Middle Eastern network of Al Qaeda. We were very close to getting all the information we needed to take down several Al Qaeda agents. My partner and I were sitting at a street café talking to one of the Al Qaeda agents when my husband showed up. We had been married for two years and my husband was an FBI agent, however, he was a very jealous man. He had used his contacts to find out where we were staying in Marseille. He walked up to us and said, I am sick and tired of all this CIA bullshit, so get your bags you're coming home with me right now.

All hell broke loose, the Al Qaeda agent at the table shot me three times before we managed to get our firearms out, my partner shot the Al Qaeda agent but before we could move there were shots from across the street. My partner was killed instantly and my husband went down bleeding profusely. Three men stood over us talking in Arabic and they kicked each of us in turn, they decided that if we were not already dead we were going to die very quickly. They jumped into a car and drove off. Within seconds the police arrived, followed shortly by an ambulance and we were taken to the local hospital.

I was patched up, although I had been shot three times they were superficial wounds and I was not too seriously injured, my husband went into surgery. He died later that day and I was flown back to the states, along with two bodies, our mission of five months had failed and my partner was dead, all because of my stupid jealous husband. I was not a happy person at all and it took me a couple of years to get over that incident. However, if it is related to that incident in any shape or form then I have a serious problem and I would be forced to disappear.

Henry stood up and put his arms around Amanda and just stood and hugged her, she looked up at him and smiled. After a couple of minutes Henry said, whatever you need from me, you only have to ask, thank you Henry. Jeff entered the office and said, okay, let me tell you what we know so far. It appears that the barman was promised \$50,000 if he phoned a number telling them that you had entered his bar. The owners of the repair shop are small time petty thieves who again just like the barman were

promised \$50,000 to make a call once they heard from the barman. They received two calls, the first was the barman telling them he had spotted the girl in the photo and the second was telling them she had just left the bar, they in turn make two calls. That is consistent with what you spotted the barman doing Henry. At this time the barman and the guys from the repair shop do not appear to know each other, they were both told that once the calls had been verified somebody would bring their money.

Right now we have placed our own guys in each premises waiting for the guy that is going to come and kill them. They will need to tidy up the loose ends so to speak, it may not lead to the top dog but we will follow up every opportunity. Jeff's mobile rang and his agents at the repair shop told him that they had apprehended two guys and were bringing them in. Well done Jeff said. By now it was 23:30 and all suspects were being questioned, reluctantly they were giving up their information with more people being detained. This was looking more and more like the tip of the iceberg,

Jeff was discovering several terrorist cells around the country. He now had agents in LA, Chicago and Huston following up on leads as well as his guys in Miami. By 02:00 it was looking more and more likely the Marseille connection was the reason they had been looking for Amanda. The CIA Bureau in Marseille and Paris were springing into action and heavy handed interrogation had started.

As information came to light CIA agents around the world sprang into action. So much information was being discovered it was worrying that without this impetus it may never had been discovered before it was too late. By 09:00 twelve Al Qaeda cells had been discovered, one in Miami, two in Chicago, three in Houston, one in Marseille, two in Paris, one in London, one in Rochdale and one in Birmingham. They have all been raided and forty seven Al Qaeda terrorist had been arrested.

Most law enforcement officers thought this was a fantastic night for the good guys, one man was very worried. Jeff walked back into his office to bring Amanda and Henry up to speed, he told them the good news and Amanda asked him, what about the bad. Jeff replied, yes there is some. It has been found that you have been on the radar of the Al-Husseini family since you killed two of their sons, they never believed you had been killed in Marseille. They set up cells in America trying to infiltrate the FBI just to look for you. We do not know if the infiltration into the FBI was successful or not. However, I believe it was by chance you were spotted by the barman.

However, John Rizzo feels this time you must disappear, I have been instructed to make arrangements for your funeral. I am not going into the witness protection program whatever he says, Jeff put up his hand and said, stop right there. He told me he did not think that would be suitable for you. That's good, did he say why he thought that, yes, he feels that going through the witness protection program would mean that several people would need to know about you.

If Al Qaeda have already infiltrated that program, he stopped, smiled

at Amanda and said, we would really be going to your funeral. He feels that it would be safer if you just disappeared yourself. I have been instructed to give you whatever assistance you need, and once you are set up to arrange a \$500,000 deposit into your bank account. That's big of him Jeff, but I have no idea where to go. Jeff said, let us work together and see what we can come up with and then decide the best way to go.

Henry just looked from one to the other and then said, you pair have been trained to adjust in the field, to quickly change whatever is needed to make your operation work. However, I am guessing that this has never been a scenario in one of your training sessions, so you really do not have any idea what to do next.

They both looked at Henry and said in unison, you are 100% right. First let me change our flights to a later time, he made a call to Us Air and changed their tickets to fly out at 14:00. Once that was done he turned back to Jeff and Amanda.

I see the problem is very easily solved looking at it from a private industry point of view and not from a government agencies. You need as few people as possible to know where you will be living and staying Amanda. Jeff said, absolutely, Henry continued, to disappear without a trace can only be done in one of two ways, one is by the witness protection program, where everything is sorted out for you. If you wish to do it by yourself then you need time to set it up. As you cannot use either of these ways, how do you go about disappearing completely. We understand the problem Henry, but do you have a suggestion Jeff asked. Henry simply said, yes, I believe I do.

First I have a couple of questions for both of you.

Are you happy to put your life in my hands Amanda, my answer is yes to that, however, I do not think you should be involved in any of this as it is just too risky for you. Henry smiled at her and replied, then you should never have accepted my offer of dinner that night in July last year, because since then I have been involved. Does José know we were going to Nicaragua today. I did not tell him because I did not have time before I flew out of New York and I thought I could contact him when we get there.

My other questions are for you Jeff, can you guarantee to get Amanda out of the country without going through the normal channels. So that there is absolutely no record of her leaving the country. That would not be a problem, and will you be able to keep her safe for one to two weeks longer. Because I think I should carry on as normal, that way it will not stand out as though I am acting out of character.

Providing Amanda is happy to stay in this facility I can keep her safe. Henry then asked Jeff, when you go to tell Joe what has happened to his daughter and you go back to his home with him so that you can help him with making the arrangements for Amanda's funeral. Make sure that you arrange Amanda's funeral for next week. After the funeral has finished, before leaving, you must make sure that Joe understands that it would be better if he could carry on as normal. I can do that Henry, however, Joe

will not know the truth as it will be better if he does not, maybe later but not now.

Henry looked at his watch and it was already 10:30. Now, I must get back to the hotel and take a shower and check out. I will pack Amanda's case and if you can then drive me to the airport you will have her case in your boot. That's great so far Henry, when do I get to know the rest of your plan,

Henry just looked at both Jeff and Amanda and said, neither of you will ever get to know my plan, that is why I asked you if you are happy to put your life in my hands. Okay, I understand Jeff said. I take it you will arrange for a new identity for Amanda, I will be taking care of that Jeff replied.

Henry just stood and looked miles away, I am thinking about how I will get hold of Jeff once I have left Miami. He looked back at Jeff and said, I believe I would be right in thinking that you will be able to see every time I arrive at JFK, that is correct Henry. In fact I can see every time you enter the US from anywhere, then when you see that I have booked a flight to Denver, whether it is an onward connection or a day or two later. You will need to meet me.

Lets say at the United States Mint, two hours after my plane lands in Denver. At this meeting I will give you a list of everything I will need for you to send with Amanda, this may be the only meeting we will have, as it will depend on if I can get all stages of my plan in place before I see you. Are you sure you are not an MI6 agent Henry, just imagine what I could achieve if I were, they both smiled. Having said that, this could be our only meeting, I was thinking that even if I only need the one meeting to sort out the disappearance of Amanda, you never know what might happen down the road, so lets say. If I need to speak with you at any time in the future, then I will fly to Denver, this can be changed as time goes on but for now Denver is a city that I do not have any clients in. So if I fly to Denver then it means I need to speak with you Jeff. Jeff agreed and thought it was a good plan so far.

Now, it is time for me to leave, so how about a big hug Amanda, she jumped up and gave him a hug and a kiss, he told her it may be a couple of weeks before he sees her again. But please try not to worry, once I have signed the papers and transferred the money for the Spanish Colonial I will be flying back to London so that I can start working on my plan. Unfortunately, we can no longer be in touch until you are safely in another country, as you never know who may be listening.

Amanda gave him a squeeze and said, thank you for saving my life last night, and I am happy to put my full trust in you Henry. He replied by saying, I have got to go, but first, do you have one of my business cards on you. She put her hand in an inside pocket and fished out a card, yes I do, make sure you take that card with you unless you can remember my mobile number, only call me if things have gone terribly wrong and you are being held. Do not call for any other reason, have a safe trip and he turned and followed Jeff out of the office.

When they got back to the Mandarin Oriental hotel Jeff parked in a side road and said, he would wait here, I will try not to be too long. Henry stopped at reception and told the girl that he needed to take a shower before checking out, that is not a problem Mr James. He went up to his room showered and packed both cases and returned to the front desk and asked the receptionist if he could settle his account. Just one moment Mr James I will get it printed out for you, she gave Henry a print out and he paid with his credit card. He returned to Jeff's car placing both cases in the boot.

On the way to the airport Jeff asked, are you sure you are up to this challenge Henry, because Amanda's life is now in your hands. I do believe that once she leaves the US and she is handed over to my protection she stands a better chance with only me knowing the plan. I trust you are right. Jeff pulled up by the departures doors and they shook hands, I will be keeping a close eye on the arrivals at JFK and flights to Denver, in the mean time I will arrange a new identity for Amanda. Just a thought Jeff, I think it might be a good idea for her to keep her pilots license as you never know when she may need to use it, that's a good idea Henry, see you in the Mint Jeff.

Henry picked up his case and without turning back disappeared through the terminal doors on his way to check-in. He just made his flight and when he had made himself comfortable in his seat he went over all the events of the last fifteen hours and realized that he had to make Amanda's disappearing trick work, if he messed it up the Al-Husseini family would kill her.

He landed in Managua, Nicaragua, picked up his hire car and drove straight to the attorneys in Granada, he explained that he had a problem and could not get the morning flight and he needed to sign the documents as quickly as possible so that he could transfer the money and return to London by Saturday. The attorney said we can do it straight away because my next client has not arrived as yet, he went through the documents and Henry explained that his Barrister, Sir Randolph Ashworth, had gone through the documentation and was happy for me to sign.

The local attorney smiled and pushed the documents forward for Henry to sign, once they had both signed Henry took out his phone and spoke to Daniel Knox and asked him to please transfer the funds, they should be in their account within a few hours, thank you Daniel. Henry explained to the attorney what Daniel had said, and then thanked him for organising the paperwork so quickly and again apologised for being late, he then asked him to send his account and I will transfer what I owe you, no rush Henry all in good time. Henry excused himself and walked down the road and found a little café, sat and ordered a coffee, while waiting he phoned BA, explaining to them that he wished to change his ticket from Wednesday next week to today if possible, because he had to get back to London by tomorrow.

They came back to him telling him that the only way they could get him back to London on Saturday was to fly him out of Granada in the

next two hours direct to Mexico City, and then take the direct overnight flight to London, landing at 06:30 Saturday morning. Henry said that sounds great, I will drive back to the airport straight away. Both flights were on time and Henry managed to get a good sleep on the flight to London. When he arrived at Heathrow he picked up a taxi and went straight home, Henry said good morning to Benson on his way to the lifts, he went straight to his bedroom and had a shower and got dressed. He packed a small suitcase, locked up the Penthouse and went down to the garage, removed the cover off his car and drove out of the garage at 08:45 driving straight to his parents home.

As Henry entered the estate and drove along the road towards the family home it all felt very peaceful and Henry knew how lucky he was to have grown up here. Henry pulled up by the front door and Philip greeted him, good morning Mr Henry, good morning Philip, do you know if my parents are at home, yes sir, your mother and father are sitting in the garden at the rear of the house. Thank you Philip, are you staying tonight sir, yes Philip I am, then I will place your luggage in your bedroom, Henry nodded and set off to find his parents. His mother and father were talking very quietly and leaning forward in their chairs, Henry said, this looks very serious I trust it is not about me. Oh Henry, it's so good to see you his mother said, she jumped up and hugged him, when she let him go he walked over to his father and they shook hands and hugged each other.

David said, I thought you would still be in Nicaragua Henry, I would have been father but I need to have a serious talk to both of you, so after signing the documents I changed my flights and flew back yesterday, arriving at 06:30 this morning. This must be serious for you to do that my boy, yes father it is, do you need money my boy, it is nothing like that father, I have already transferred the money so I now own a Spanish Colonial that was built by the Conquistadors in the 1530's, when I have finished renovating, it will look magnificent. Both his mother and father said, congratulations Henry, now tell us what is so important that you cut your time in Nicaragua short and then came straight here my boy.

I wish to know if you would be prepared to help me with a very serious problem I have, whatever the problem is Henry we will help you. Not so fast mother, let me explain why I am asking you and only then, should you make your decision, and I will understand if you say, no way, we do not want any part of this. This sounds very serious Henry, yes, it is mother.

I have an American friend that I have become very close to, she is the one that went with me the first time I went to Nicaragua to look at properties, and she helped with the translation. She is the deputy chief of New York's CIA office, both his parents looked shocked, on Thursday night we met up at the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Miami, she flew in from New York and I from San Francisco, we planed to take the morning flight to Managua, Nicaragua. That evening we went out for a meal at a little restaurant that Amanda recommended, the food was fantastic, but it was after we left that we were attacked by three men.

I do not need to go into great detail, but after a lot of questioning had

taken place, it has led to a lot of arrests in America, France and England. It turned out that eight years ago Amanda had been undercover in France for five months and her cover got blown, there was a gun battle, and they killed three Al Qaeda terrorists, she was shot three times and survived, her partner took two rounds from an AK47 and was killed instantly. It turned out that two of the terrorists were the sons of the Iranian Al-Husseini family, unbeknown to anybody in the CIA they did not believe that she had been killed so they set up a crude surveillance system in Miami and it was Thursday night some bartender spotted her. The Al-Husseini family, have now put out a fatwa on her, that means she must be killed on sight.

The top man in the CIA, John Rizzo, has told Jeff, the head of the CIA Bureau in Miami that Amanda must now disappear, Jeff has been instructed to make arrangements for her funeral. Now, normally when this type of thing happens you would go into their witness protection program, but the program might have been compromised so she cannot disappear through that program. John Rizzo feels she must go it alone, now, for her to do that she would have had to put a plan into place long ago. So the easiest way would be for me to take charge and make it happen for her.

Apart from Jeff and José in Nicaragua, and Amanda's father Joe, nobody else can tie me to Amanda, so I am pretty safe. That is a short description of the problem I have, so I have come to my favourite people in the world to ask for their help. David and Alexandra looked stunned, and before they could say a word, Henry asked them, if the loft above the stables is still empty. Alexandra replied, not any more Henry, Georgia has taken over the job of manager of the stables, and instead of giving her a large increase in salary we gave her the two bedroomed loft.

That sounds like a plan mother. David asked Henry if he loves Amanda, do you mean love as in wanting to marry her father, I guess so my boy, then not at this time, because I feel that I have not known about her life in the CIA long enough to make that sort of commitment father. I understand that you are worried that I have taken on this responsibility, and I will understand if you do not wish to be part of it, not that you will be now as Georgia has moved into the loft, so I will look for another option. Do not be so quick to move away from Queensberry Manor my boy, I am sure this property has seen it's fare share of mysteries over the years, so just maybe it is time it had one more to hide away.

Henry looked at his mother and then back to his father and asked what do you have in mind father. David told Henry that they have just finished renovating the old wood cutters cottage so that they could rent it out, we have turned it into a two bed, two bath, kitchen come dinning room and a lounge, now if you feel that this is suitable for your American friend, we can take a stroll over there and let you see what your mother has turned it into. That is fantastic father, thank you for being there for me, you are my son, there is nothing else to say. Henry hugged his father and thanked him and turned and hugged his mother and kissed her, I will go and get the keys Henry.

When she returned with the keys, the three of them walked towards the cottage, it was a good 800 yards from the main house and when they arrived he saw that Alexandra still had some work in the garden to finish. She opened the door and walked inside followed by David and Henry, she showed Henry around and told him she was going to order furniture on Monday, but maybe it would be nice for Amanda to pick out her own. Henry hugged her and told them, that nobody could have better parents than he has. David said, well that's settled then, we are going to have an American lady staying here.

They stood around looking and talking and David asked, how do you plan to get her here my boy, well, now that her accommodation has been sorted out I can move onto the next part of my plan. Jeff has assured me that he can get her out of America without going through the normal channels, so there will not be a record of her leaving the country. I am going to phone John my university friend to see if he would do me a favour, as he is in the RAF, however, I am not sure if he is in the country or not, I just know that he flies out of RAF Brize Norton nowadays.

Do you have his number my boy, yes father I have it in my phone because we still play golf once a year. Henry phoned his old university friend and hoped he was not flying, hello Henry how are you, I am fine John how are you, things are going great at present thank you. John, is it possible for me to visit you this weekend, I will be at home tomorrow morning as long as you are here before 11:30. How about we meet in Huffkins Bakery and Tea Room, for coffee at 09:00 tomorrow, I think it only opens at 10:00 Henry, whatever time it opens I look forward to seeing you again Henry, me to John.

Would either of you like to play a round of golf with me, that would be very nice my boy, David said, are you going to join us mother, I was going to do some checking to see about placing adverts for renting out the Wood Cutters Cottage, however, now that it is no longer on the market to rent I am free, so I would very much like a game with my favourite men. They walked back to the main house and David phoned the professional shop to make sure they could get a tee time, thank you, and he put the phone down, turned to Alexandra and Henry and said, tee off at 12:15.

They picked up their golf bags and headed for the car, on the way Jessie walked into the hall and said hello Henry, hello to you Jessie and they hugged, she told him that she would make his favourite dish, he smiled at her and said, see you later Jessie. David drove them to the clubhouse and they got changed straight away, when David and Henry came out of the changing rooms Jasper Conway said, good afternoon gentlemen, David and Henry replied and they all shook hands, they parted with Jasper saying, have a good game, he turned and walked back into his shop. They headed for the first tee and Henry teed off first and landed in the semi rough, David's ball did not have the distance of Henry's, however, as David said, not as far as you my boy but in the centre of the fairway looks like a better place to me, they all smiled and walked on to the ladies tee.

Alexandra made a magnificent drive landing twenty yards past David's

ball, I can see I need to take more care otherwise I will get whitewashed by my parents. After nine holes Alexandra was leading David by two shots with Henry a further two behind his father. Henry picked up two shots over the next four holes and said, that's better father, I had to stop the slide, his father smiled and during the walk around the course both mother and father asked him about Amanda, he answered as best he could and then told them that I am sure she will arrive with a very different name, this is very James Bond my boy.

By the time they had finished Henry and David had picked up another shot and Alexandra had dropped one, so they all finished with a 77 and Henry was very pleased with his game because he had not played for several months. They headed back to the main house and they all went upstairs to take a shower and get changed, Jessie had made a roast leg of lamb which she knew was Henry's favourite, this was followed by a wonderful baked cranberry cheesecake, coffee in the lounge Alexandra asked, and they both nodded. More small talk and Henry said at 21:30 I think I should have an early night, he again thanked his mother and father and headed up to bed. David and Alexandra were very happy that they had been able to help their son in his hour of need.

Henry left the main house at 09:25 for the sixteen mile drive to Witney, he parked and walked into Huffkins Bakery and Tea Room just as it opened at 10:00 and Squadron Leader John Ackerman was already there, they shook hands and Henry asked, how did you get in before opening time, like you always say Henry, it's not what you know, it's whom you know. The waitress brought two coffees, John looked at Henry and said, it sounded like you needed to talk with me urgently Henry, that is correct John, I am all ears so spit it out and lets see if I can help you. Firstly, what do you fly nowadays, well, since last year I fly a C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft, Matthew is my co-pilot, you do remember Matthew, yes I think his name is Bailey, that is correct, and Kate is the air loadmaster, we are a very close knit crew and work very well together. Henry continued, I have a friend that needs to disappear, she is an American and was a CIA agent, however, Al Qaeda, that is the Al-Husseini family, have put out a fatwa on her.

John raised his eyebrows but did not say a word, Henry continued, I need to know if you would allow her to stowaway on one of your returning flights. That is a big ask Henry, I do understand that John, and I also understand that you could be in serious trouble if you got caught and admitted you knew about it, that is affirmative Henry. Before I make any decision I need you to explain to my crew why you want us to do this, that's fair John, he took out his phone and made two calls asking the person at the other end of the phone to please come straight away to Huffkins Bakery and Tea Room, they both told John they would be there in fifteen minutes. Ten minutes later Johns crew arrived, Henry recognised Matthew Bailey from a few rounds of golf they had played over the years, they shook hands and Henry said, good to see you again Matthew, same here Henry, the third member of John's crew was Kate Bolton, Henry

shook her hand and said, nice to meet you Kate, she replied, likewise Henry. I must say you are pretty much as John described you, I trust it was not all bad Kate, not at all. Henry ordered more coffees and John said, I asked you here because Henry has something to ask us and it is not something I can say yes to on my own.

They both looked at Henry and Matthew said, what could be so serious that you need us to agree to, you are the boss John. That may be so on board, however, there is more to this, so you need to hear Henry out and then decide, Okay Henry tell them what you told me. Henry started by saying, what I am about to tell you must not be repeated, Kate looked shocked but did not say anything.

Henry continued, I have an American friend and she is in danger of being assassinated, Kate's eyes got bigger and Matthew just looked at Henry, Al Qaeda, that is the Al-Husseini family, have put out a fatwa on her. Oh my god Kate said, that family is evil. Henry continued, normally when something like this happens they would put her in their witness protection program, however, the problem is, the FBI programme has been compromised. This means she must disappear on her own, the problem with that is, to disappear you need to have set up your plan in advance, she did not do that. I am guessing like most of us she did not think she needed to, and the fatwa has only just been ordered. I asked John if he would allow her to stowaway on one of your returning flights, because this could be serious, John feels you need to make your own decision.

Matthew said, sorry Henry, but I have a wife and family and if we got caught my career would be over and we could be prosecuted, Henry nodded. John looked at Henry and said, it looks like you must find somebody else because I will not override Matthew. Kate said, hold on John, what if you did not know anything about a stowaway Matthew, then you could not be held responsible. Technically you are correct Kate, then I think you should leave before anything else is said, and John and I will see you on the base. I think that is a good idea Kate. Matthew stood up shook Henry's hand and said, sorry Henry, but what I do not know about I cannot be held responsible for, he turned and left and said over his shoulder, see you on base skipper, a couple of minutes later he popped his head round the door and dropped Kate's kit bag inside, she got up and went to pick it up.

Henry asked Kate why is she so happy to help, I have done two tours in Afghanistan and I have seen what extremists will do, my fiancé was captured while on patrol and he was tortured and beaten and his body was dumped near a British base just to send us a message, they had to check his DNA before we knew who he was. I am so sorry Kate, it's okay Henry, it was three years ago and I have managed to move on since then, so if I can help you, I am more than happy to do so. What's your reason John, you are my best friend Henry and I do not have a wife or children, so just being your friend is a good enough reason for me to go out on a limb for you, thank you John. Okay Henry, how are we going to do this, I think you

need to tell me when you will be landing at a foreign air base. We fly out later this afternoon going to the Souda Air Base on Akrotiri Peninsula on the island of Crete, we are taking part in a NATO training exercise and we will be there for one week, so that would be easy for the CIA to get her there as it is an American base. I see how you might think this is a very good chance as they can get her into that base without any problems. I do not like it, because if that was all I am looking at, then I would get them to fly her to RAF Mildenhall, however, far too many people would know where she went.

Kate then said, the week after we are going to an air show which is also open to the public, where is that Henry asked. It's the ILA Berlin Air Show John replied, that sounds perfect, we land a week on Thursday and the public are let in on Saturday and Sunday. Our aircraft is on static display Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. On Sunday afternoon we take part in a refuelling flight over the field and then head straight back home. Kate told Henry this would be the perfect opportunity for a stowaway to hide in our cargo hold without being noticed, that is with a little help from a friendly loadmaster. Are you two sure about this, John and Kate looked at Henry and said, it would be a pleasure to help. Okay, Henry said, how do you want to do this, I am thinking about the first contact between my friend and you Kate, and what do you suggest she wears. Kate just stared ahead and suddenly she started searching in her kit bag and after checking an inside pocket in the bag she put something in Henry's hand.

When she joins the tour of my load bay make sure she is wearing this, Henry looked in his hand and he saw a lapel pin, on it was, a moulding of the C-17 Globemaster. What day do you wish her to arrive, I would say that would be up to you, however she must take a tour of our cargo bay on the Sunday morning between 10:30 and 11:00 as that will be the last visitors we will show around, at 13:30 we will start getting ready to taxi out for our refuelling display and if she is not on board by then, she will have missed her ride. That's fair enough, I will do my best to make sure it happens at the right time, now what do you want her to wear. Kate replied, casual clothes with flat shoes, that way she will blend in with the general public. A back pack to carry any other clothes and any personal items she might wish to bring. She should also carry an American flight suit so that she can change into it once on board, that way if we are stopped on our return at Brize, we can justifiably claim she was hitching a ride, John said.

That's a great plan you two have come up with, however, I do see a potential problem. I am guessing you picked up this lapel pin at some air force base around the world Kate, she nodded and said, Arizona. That means it is possible that you could see two or three people wearing one the same, I had not thought of that Henry, so what else can we use. We can still use the lapel pin, I think it is a good conversation starter, we just have to add some questions and answers.

All three thought about what could be asked, then Henry said, how does this sound. You spot Amanda wearing the pin and you immediately ask her, where did you get that pin, she replies, my father gave it to me,

you come back and say, did he fly C-17's then, she must reply, no, he just likes them. That makes sense Henry, we can just add one more question, you then ask her, do you have more displays to look at, her answer must be, no, I am sure I have found my contact. That would absolutely mean you have the right person Kate.

Have you done this before Henry, and they all burst out laughing. John stood up and said, I think it is about time we made a move or flight lieutenant Bailey might post us missing. John looked at Henry and asked him, where are we going to hand your lady friend over to you, The Chequers is open until 22:00 so if you arrive later than you expect to, I can just sit and wait, The Chequers it is then, we should make it for 19:00. Henry said, no contact until a week on Sunday, after Henry paid they left and they all shook hands and again Henry thanked them. Now, if you should get stopped leaving the base with Amanda and you are getting some serious questions thrown at you, just phone me and I will come immediately and attempt to sort it out, we will see you in The Chequers in two weeks time. John and Kate got in John's car and drove off.

C

hapter 15

H enry puts his plan into effect

Henry got into his car and before driving away he made a phone call, the voice at the other end said, Henry James, how the hell are you, very well thank you Takahiro. How are you, looking forward to the next time I beat you at golf, well, the next time you beat me at golf will be the first, if I remember correctly.

They both laughed and Takahiro asked Henry what he could do for him. I need to come and talk to you, because I desperately need a very big favour, you cannot talk on the phone Henry, it would save you a long flight, I would prefer the long flight Takahiro. You are welcome to come any time Henry, as I am here all week, just ask at the gate when you arrive, thank you Takahiro, I will try to get a flight out today. Takahiro then said, it is a long way Henry, how about I meet you in Singapore, that would be fantastic Takahiro, then I will see you in the Raffles Hotel on Beach Road, tomorrow.

Thank you Takahiro. Henry phoned Singapore Airlines and managed to get a seat on the 22:40 landing at 16:35 local time, he then sent Takahiro a text giving him his flight number and landing time. He drove back to the family home and parked his car outside the garages and walked into the main house giving Jessie a hug on the way to find his mother and father. He found his father reading in the lounge, David asked, how did you get on my boy, John will help me father and it should be reasonably easy for them, with the only problem they may have is leaving the base on their return.

I am flying to Singapore tonight to meet another friend in the Raffles Hotel tomorrow evening, I will stay over and fly out on Tuesday morning, having said that, I had better make a reservation, forgot about that because Lydia normally makes all my bookings for me. Please excuse me father, I had better phone the Raffles Hotel now, certainly my boy.

Henry dialled the Raffles Hotel and booked a room for one night along with transport to and from the airport. Well, that's all sorted so I better go and take a look at what clothes I have here. Henry checked out what clothes he had in his room and decided he had more than enough he packed his case with what he needed for the couple of days he will be away, he then added an extra shirt, underpants, handkerchief and socks, just to be safe. As the weather was nice and warm they had a late lunch in the garden, your father tells me you are flying out tonight, that is correct mother, I am meeting a friend in Singapore. I am worried about all of this Henry, and she pulled a strange face, I know your father is loving every minute of all this cloak and dagger stuff, we all need a little excitement in our lives Alexandra, and this is perfect, all three of us are taking part in helping this young woman. Do not worry mother it will all turn out fine, I am sure it will Henry.

Just before 18:30 Henry asked his father if he could arrange a lift to Heathrow for him, certainly my boy, I will speak to Philip, thank you father. Within ten minutes Henry and Philip were on their way, during the drive to Heathrow Henry told Philip what time he would be returning on Wednesday and Philip said, I will be here to pick you up Mr Henry, thank you Philip. Once the aircraft had lifted off and the hostesses came round Henry asked for two bottles of water so that he could lie down and drink the water whenever he felt like it without worrying the hostesses during the flight. He thought about what he was going to ask Takahiro, and decided on a direct approach, he would either say he will help or he will not, Henry does not like grey areas. He then settled down and drifted off to sleep.

His flight landed at 16:35 local time and Henry found his transfer to Raffles Hotel, he checked in and the receptionist gave him a message, he opened it and read the message, see you in the restaurant at 19:00, Takahiro. Henry went up to his room and took a shower and got dressed and returned to the foyer and spotted Takahiro just leaving the reception, they greeted each other like long lost brothers. It is so good to see you Henry, and you are looking very well, you too Takahiro, how long is it since we last met, I believe it it was at Christmas my friend. We must try harder to meet more often Takahiro said, you are right, we do need to see each other more often Henry replied. I have booked us a table in the Raffles Grill because the food was fantastic the last time we ate here, yes, I do remember Henry said. They were shown to their table and Takahiro said to Henry lets order and then you can tell me why you thought it necessary to fly halfway around the world just to speak to me in person. They ordered and while waiting for their meal they asked about each others families. Henry asked Takahiro how is my sister, she is fine Henry, she asked when are you going to visit us. Their meals arrived and Takahiro asked, now, how may I help you Henry. Henry then told his friend as much as he could about what had happened to Amanda.

Takahiro sat in silence until Henry had finished, he then said, what do you want me to do for you Henry. I wish to know if you can get Amanda to the ILA Berlin Air Show by Saturday the following week, the CIA will be able to fly her in to your base whenever you need them to. I take it, you do not want her name to be on record anywhere along with her journey, that is correct Henry replied. Does it matter to you who she travels with, not at all because she is a young lady that is capable of taking care of herself, so if anybody thought he would take advantage of her he would be in for a rude awakening. I did not mean that Henry, what I meant was, do you need the Japanese air defence force to deliver her to the air show. I am asking because I know we are not going this year. Sorry, I misunderstood you, it really does not matter as long as she gets there by a week on Saturday. I will make this happen Henry, I may have to call in a few favours, but one way or the other, I will see that she arrives on the date you need her there. When do you want the CIA to fly her to Misawa Air Base, she can come as soon as they can get her there, I will not have a

problem to put her up for a few days while I sort out her transfer. Miyu will be more than happy to help you Henry, she wanted to come with me when she knew I was coming to see you, please give her my love. Is your friend a pilot by any chance, she has flown Super Cobra Choppers in Afghanistan and she also has private jets on her license.

That is fantastic, because pilots like to help pilots, make sure she brings a flight suit with the Insignia of a Naval Aviator and a Cobra patch on it. Does she need a dress suit Takahiro, that may be a good idea to have one just in case she needs it. Is there anything else she must bring with her, not that I can think of Henry, if she is short of any personal items I am sure Miyu will sort that out. Okay then, Henry gave Takahiro the C-17 Globemaster lapel pin, please tell her she must wear this lapel pin all the time she is at the Berlin Air Show, because this is the only way her next contact will recognise her. She must visit every static aircraft display at the show until her contact makes themselves known to her. She does not need to stick around at each display waiting for her contact, she just moves on to the next display, they will be looking out for her, she should dress in what she thinks is suitable to wear at an air show. Now, the important part, because her contact does not know her, they will ask a few questions and if she gives the right answers she will get her next ride. Henry gave Takahiro a sheet of paper and on it was the questions and answers, he asked Takahiro to please give it to Amanda so that she can learn it word for word.

On the top were the words; You must put the lapel pin on once you arrive at the ILA Berlin Air Show making sure it is in plain sight, you will then walk around all the static aircraft displays until you are approached by your contact.

Once your contact sees the lapel pin, you will be asked. Where did you get that pin from?

Your answer; My father gave it to me.

Contact; Did he fly C-17's

Your answer; No, he just likes them.

Contact; Have you got more displays to look at.

Your answer; No, I think I have found my contact, you will then hand the lapel pin to your contact.

Do not deviate from this script, your contact will tell you what to do from then on, please do as they ask.

Takahiro looked at the sheet of paper and said to Henry, this seems foolproof. They had a couple more drinks and talked a little about Takahiro's job on the base, he told Henry that he was now a Major General and it was his duty to make sure the Japanese part of the base ran smoothly and efficiently, they shook hands and gave each other a brotherly hug, Henry said please thank Miyu for me, I will Henry. Takahiro got into a taxi and was whisked away, Henry went up to his room and got into bed and drifted off to sleep.

Henry felt refreshed and ready for the day ahead, he walked into the Tiffin Room to have a leisurely breakfast, while drinking his coffee he

phoned Lydia and told her he would be back on Wednesday evening, so if you have any appointments for me in New York late Thursday or any time Friday I would be able to take them. That is great Henry because I have to keep putting off Charles Stanford, he keeps calling and asking me to make an appointment with you. I told him you were on holiday so if Friday morning is good for you I will phone him, that's fine Lydia. Roger will pick you up.

If you can get me on a flight to JFK around 06:00 Thursday with an onward connection to Denver, just need to hand a document over, so I will need about four hours on the ground. I will make a reservation for you immediately Henry, thank you Lydia, I guess I will see you next week Monday. Henry finished his coffee and went to check out, he then headed for his transfer back to the airport. On the way to the airport he phoned the family home and Philip answered, Henry told Philip that he did not need to collect him at Heathrow because he was going home first, Philip said, thank you for letting me know Mr Henry. He boarded the Boeing 777 and the hostess greeted him and showed him to his seat. Henry prefers overnight flights because he can sleep most of the way, as today was a daytime flight he watched a couple of movies.

When Major General Takahiro Yoshino walked into his office on Wednesday afternoon, his secretary gave him a list of messages, he looked through them and decided he only had one important message out of the seven on the list, he phoned Major Chuck Gomez and quickly sorted out his inquiry. He told his secretary he did not wish to be disturbed for the next thirty minutes, he then phoned an old friend, Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston of the Royal Australian Air Force, how the devil are you Takahiro, very well Johnny thank you, and what about you, fair dinkum mate. Now, what can I do for my favourite Japanese friend. I wanted to know if the RAAF is showing at the ILA Berlin Air Show this year, yes we are, do you want an unofficial ride with the best air force in the world mate. I do need an unofficial, unrecorded, ride for a young lady into the ILA Berlin Air Show,

My god Takahiro, you do have a way of collecting your debts, can I take it that's a yes, providing this person is not a terrorist, I can confirm she is not a terrorist, also, will she be alright in an F-111C, which will make four stops for refuelling on the way. I am 100% sure she will be happy with that Johnny. Okay, I will make sure she gets a ride and no questions asked on the way, now she must be here before 16:00 Tuesday. How are you going to get her here, possibly a private jet from Misawa Air Base, if I have a problem or it is a different flight, I will be in touch, otherwise I will let you know when she is on route. I will see she is kitted out with flight gear and she can stay in our quarters at ILA Berlin Air Show if she needs to,

Thank you my friend, I guess I am in your debt now, damn right you are Bruce. He then called for his transport and he was driven across base to talk to Major Joseph Cohen, he found him walking around one of the hangers. Hi Takahiro, how are you, I am fine Joseph how about yourself,

like always, different day same shit. What can I do for you, I want to know if it is possible to fly somebody out of this base without any record of them leaving, that would not be a problem depending on where they were flying to, because some bases are harder to get out of once you are there.

The base would be the Royal Australian Air Force's Base at Tindal, that's about 350 miles from Darwin, Northern Australia, Joseph said, lets go to my office and take a look, he checked the distance to Tindal and turned to Takahiro and said, I can get your guy there in a C130, I will use it as a training flight, when do you want me to arrange it, and my plane will need refuelling so that I get it back, the refuelling will not be a problem and my guy must be there on Monday, then that will be a Sunday night flight, Thank you Joseph, I guess I owe you a big favour now, they smiled at each other and Takahiro said, I will be in touch, they shook hands and Takahiro returned to his office. He then sent a text to Henry, need package here on Saturday latest. Within a couple of minutes he received a reply from Henry, it will happen early Saturday.

In the CIA Bureau in Miami, Jeff's computer came to life and a window popped up on his screen, it stated that Henry James, would be landing at JFK at 11:30 Thursday, with an onward flight to Denver International landing at 16:20. Jeff went to see Amanda and told her that Henry was landing tomorrow, with an onward flight to Denver, this must mean that he wants to speak to me, I will be in the Mint at 18:20 as arranged, I wonder how far he has got with his plan and what else he might need from you Jeff. I will tell you tomorrow, now the good news, your new documentation has arrived, what's my new name she asked Jeff. You have become Victoria Santiago, he handed over her new passport along with driving license, identity card, known as a Documento Nacional de Identidad (DNI), and her pilots license, I see I am no longer an American citizen, that's correct, you are now a Spaniard and you have a Spanish passport which lets you move around Europe without any problems. The main point about becoming Spanish, it does have one big advantage Jeff said, you no longer have to pay American tax which means wherever you live in the world there is no chance of the system flagging up that you have not filed a tax return, because you are no longer in the system.

Please remember, whenever you are in Europe you should always carry your identity card. I am sure you would like to know that the British have found a large bomb making factory in Rochdale and more explosives in Birmingham, along with a further fourteen more arrests. Well, I guess it makes me feel a little better about giving up my life and being buried, you are not being buried on Monday, you are being cremated, far less chance of the bodiless coffin being opened. That's a good idea Jeff, it was your father that wanted you cremated and your ashes scattered in a rose garden, that sounds like my dad. I really do hope he will be alright what with loosing my mum last year, I am sure he will, once a little time has passed, and I will bring him up to speed on the arrests around the world as they happen, thank you Jeff, that will make him feel a little better.

Henry got out of a cab on the other side of the road to the US Mint

and paid the driver then headed across the road to enter the Mint, when he got halfway across he spotted Jeff walking along the pavement, they both adjusted their speed they were walking so that they met on the pavement, Jeff said, lets keep walking, I have spotted a better place to meet and talk. They walked a block and turned a corner and entered the Civic Center Park, this looks nice Henry said, lets head over to the Greek Amphitheatre and we can sit and talk without anybody being in earshot.

So tell me Henry, how far have you got in the week since you left us, my plan is in place Jeff, it now depends on you being able to get the items Amanda will need and to fly her out of here. Her new name is Victoria Santiago, she is a Spanish citizen, with a Spanish passport, driving license, identity card and pilots license, she has helicopters and private jets on her license, I decided that by having a European passport she can move around Europe far more easily than she could with a US passport. Being European, she will be completely out of the US tax system, far less chance of her being spotted, that's fantastic Jeff.

Okay Henry what is it you wish me to do to get her out of the country. She needs to fly into Misawa Air Base in Japan by Saturday at the latest, I can make that happen for her to arrive almost any time on Saturday, lets say 06:30 Henry replied. She must have an air force dress uniform and a flight suit, I am guessing that now she is Spanish the suit must be from the Spanish air force Jeff said. I think there would be less chance of any questions being asked if her documentation was checked, Henry replied. Jeff was writing on a pad everything that Henry was asking for. She will also need casual clothes for at least eight days.

My god Henry you must be moving her around the world, well, maybe not completely around the world Jeff, however, she will not be going directly to her final destination, as I feel there is less chance of her name popping up the way I have arranged it. Is there anything else I need to get her before she leaves or anything else I must arrange, the only thing your pilot must adhere to, when he lands at Misawa Air Base he must taxi to the end of the runway and turn onto the last taxi way, there will be a pick up which will be displaying a follow me sign, he must follow that pick up truck.

When the pick up stops that is when Victoria must get out on her own, her contact will make themselves known to her when she is on the ground. She will then be driven away and the pilot must again follow the pick up, which will take your aircraft to a refuelling station. It is your decision whether your aircraft returns straight away or the crew stays to get some sleep.

So that is the last time I will see her Henry, yes as far as I am concerned it will be Jeff. Once she is settled in her new home I will come and see you and let you know that she is alright, that's kind of you Henry, at that meeting you can give me her bank account details so that I can get her money transferred.

That is a potential leak, I see one possibility, deposit her money in a numbered account, if you are not happy with that you need to come up

with another suggestion for the next time we meet. When you move to another country Henry, you need a fair amount of money to set yourself up. Do not worry about that Jeff, I will see that she has enough to start a new life.

This seems like a good place to meet Jeff, however, where do we meet if it is raining, I would suggest the art museum Henry, just over there, we can decide once we meet if we move on to another place or stay in the museum. Your flight arrangements worked very well Henry, so lets leave it the same. They stood up and shook hands and Jeff said, well done Henry, see you when you are ready, Henry replied, thank you Jeff and please give Victoria my love and I will make a plan to go and see her once she has reached her final destination. They parted company, with Henry heading back to West 14th Avenue to find a taxi to return to the airport and Jeff heading towards Colfax Avenue to take his taxi.

Henry checked in at the BA desk at Denver International and told the girl that his luggage is in waiting for him at JFK. She looked on her computer screen and told Henry it is all in hand Mr James, he thanked her and headed to find a cup of coffee. He sat down at a table and while drinking his coffee he sent a text to Takahiro, telling him his package should arrive early on Saturday. Within five minutes he received a reply that just said, thank you. Takahiro called for a driver and headed over to the other side of the base to speak to Major Joseph Cohen, when he walked up to him Joseph asked, is the opp a go, most definitely Takahiro replied, she will land early on Saturday. So your guy is a girl Takahiro, that's right Joseph, trust that's not a problem for your crew, not at all my friend, we fly out 16:00 Sunday, they shook hands and Takahiro returned to his office.

When he got there he phoned his friend Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston, Johnny answered his phone, do you have good news my friend, I do Johnny, she will arrive here early on Saturday, and we will fly her out at 16:00 Sunday, is that on a private jet Takahiro, no, it's a C130 on a training mission, it should be with you around 03:30 Monday. That's a good time to get here as the base does not have very many civilians around at that time of the morning, I will meet her and take her back to my quarters and Bonnie will take care of her until 15:00 Tuesday. Thank you Johnny, no worries mate, I will let you know by text when she arrives, Takahiro said, thank you.

Before Henry had got back to JFK, Jeff had returned to the CIA Bureau in Miami, he immediately went to see Victoria, she looked at him and asked, how is Henry, Henry is looking tired but in good shape and he sends his love. He has put together his plan and you will be flying out of here at 10:30 Friday, wow, Henry does not waste any time. Where am I going, Misawa Air Base in northern Japan, and from there Jeff, I have absolutely no idea. Henry has given me a list of clothes you must bring with you along with some instructions that must be followed to the letter, Victoria just looked at Jeff. I will read out the list of things you must have in your bag, starting with, an air force or naval dress uniform, a flight suit,

with the appropriate Insignia on, Naval Aviator and a Cobra patch if we go for the navy. Victoria's eyes got a little bigger, Jeff continued, Henry and I agree that as you are now a Spaniard, they should be Spanish air force, so I will have to make sure I get the right Insignia. I will also make your rank a Colonel because I feel the higher the rank the less questions you get asked. You will also need casual clothes for at least eight days, eight days Jeff, have you got that right, I did question that by asking if you are going around the world, he told me, no, not completely around the world, he seems to feel that the more he moves you around the safer you will be.

I do not know his plan or who he has contacted, however, I am guessing he has called in a few favours along the way, getting you to Misawa Air Base is the easy part, what happens after you arrive I have no idea. I have clothes for four days that I had in my suitcase, so how do I get more, I will ask Wendy to come down and see you and you can tell her what you need, it's not that easy when you have no idea where you are going.

Well, I think Henry would have said if you were going to a cold climate, but take a light casual jacket with you. He also told me what we must do when we land, as it is a little different than normal CIA flights, anyway we will comply to the letter. Once you step off the aircraft I will never see you again, you will be on your own and totally in Henry's hands. I made arrangements for our flight on my way back here so I must now arrange for your Spanish air force uniforms and on the way to my office I will send Wendy down to you, thank you Jeff.

Henry checked into the Ritz Carlton and went straight to his room and had a shower he then went down to the restaurant to eat, during his meal he went over everything in his mind and in the end decided he could not start worrying and he was sure his friend Takahiro had made the right connections. The next day Henry was making the largest deal he had ever made and it was not even midday, he felt incredible. He phoned Rachelle and JJ answered the phone, how are you JJ, I am just great Henry, how are you, on top of the world thank you JJ, sorry Henry but Rachelle is not here and I have no idea when she will be back, not to worry JJ, please tell her I called.

He then phoned Lydia and told her about the deal and asked if she could get him back any earlier, she told him she would try, twenty minutes later Lydia phoned to tell him she can get him on an earlier flight if he can get to JFK in the next thirty minutes, I will be there, and he just made the flight. When he landed Roger was waiting for him and they shook hands and he drove Henry to his Penthouse. Benson opened the door and said, Good evening Mr James, I trust you had a good trip, very good thank you Benson. He got to the lift and Benson said, here is your post Mr James, he took it and thanked Benson, on the way up he thought I hope Victoria is okay.

When he got inside he made himself a coffee and went into his office, sat down and whilst drinking his coffee he opened his post, he had the normal bills which he put in his in-tray to sort out another day. The last

two had Nicaraguan post marks, he smiled and thought, these guys are quick. He read each quotation and then placed the two plans side by side on the work table, he carefully read each one again and went over their plans. Each of the quotations had it's merits, however, there were several differences in the change of layout of the on-suit bedrooms.

Henry liked them both, however, the master bedroom on one of the plans really stood out, and as it was only \$15,500 more Henry felt this would be the one he would go for in the end. He would not make a rash decision and he would go through the plans at least one more time. He sat back and although he would show Victoria the plans, he realised that she would never be able to go and see the renovated villa. Henry then put the plans away in a draw and did some work on the new deal.

When he had finished he just sat and looked around his office, got up and walked into the lounge and stood and looked out over the park, he thought, if I cannot get a wife, I must at least get a housekeeper. He thought, when I have got Victoria settled I will start by looking for a housekeeper. Better still, I will ask Lydia to start looking for a housekeeper.

The CIA's Gulfstream G550 lifted off from a private air strip close to Miami at 10:30 Friday heading for Hawaii, Victoria said, this is going to be a long flight, we should be there by 21:00 Jeff said. We then have a further eight hour hop to Misawa Air Base, should arrive at 06:00 Saturday morning. Victoria went over everything that Henry had told Jeff that she must take and then asked Jeff, what do you have to do when we land that is different to a normal CIA flight. I have flown into this base before and it has a very long runway because of the aircraft that use the base.

Our Gulfstream does not need this length of the runway, so we normally turn onto the first taxiway available after landing, Henry has given instructions that we must taxi to the very end of the runway and take the last taxiway. We will be met by a pick-up truck that will have a follow-me sign on the back, we follow this pick-up and when it stops that is when you get off and from that point on, you are on your own, your contact will meet you and you will be driven away. We then continue to follow the pick-up which will take us to a refuelling point, after refuelling we can then decide if we wish to return straight away or take a break.

Victoria asked Jeff to please go and see her father whenever he gets the chance, he promised he would, they had some small talk and then neither of them had anything else to say, they both felt sad that this would be the last time they would see each other. At 20:45 the captain switched on the intercom and said, we will be landing in ten minutes sir. The landing was a very smooth one and Jeff told Victoria to move seats and take the one facing backwards, this was so that the pilots could not identify her, they had got on the plane before she did, so they did not know who their passenger was as they would never see her face. This happened from time to time so they did not think it strange. Within forty minutes they had refuelled and were back in the air and heading to their final destination. Victoria and Jeff sat in silence, both in their own worlds wondering how life had got to this stage when you had to disappear to stop some extremist

from killing you.

The intercom came to life and the pilot said thirty minutes out sir, and we will be escorted by two military fighter jets, and to save you asking sir, I do not know why, within a few minutes they had an F16 on each wing. Victoria asked Jeff if this was normal, he replied, by saying I do not think so, however, it could be for any number of reasons and none of them would be because you are on board, she smiled and said, thank you Jeff, you have been a good friend over the years. The F16's flew along side the Gulfstream right down to an altitude of 200 feet, then as the Gulfstream's wheels touched down they pulled up and were gone.

The pilot had not landed on the numbers at the start of the runway as normal, he only touched down a further 3000 feet later, he taxied to the end of the runway and turned onto the last taxiway, as he did so the flashing follow-me lights switched on. They followed the pick-up for around 2500 feet and then it parked and also stopped the flashing lights, and they changed to read, leave engines running. Jeff said, I guess this is your stop Victoria, they both stood up and hugged each other, Jeff then told her that Henry said, he would make a plan to go and see you once you have settled in your new home, she just smiled. Jeff opened the door and looked out towards the waiting vehicles, there was a man standing beside a Jeep, Jeff turned to Victoria and said, my god, Henry must know some very powerful people, if I am not mistaken that is Major General Takahiro Yoshino, he is in charge of the Japanese side of this base.

They squeezed hands and Victoria moved passed Jeff and went down the steps and walked towards the man standing by the Jeep, just before she got to him, the flashing follow-me lights switched on again and the pick-up moved off, Jeff closed the Gulfstream's door and it taxied away following the pick-up. Once the noise level had dropped the man stepped forward and bowed, and said, I am Major General Takahiro Yoshino and I am a friend of Henry James. Please come with me, Victoria said, I am pleased to meet you. He opened the passenger door and Victoria got in the Jeep, we will be going to my house where my wife will have breakfast ready for us, that's kind of her, he smiled and asked if there was anything she needed, a shower and a sleep would be great. What must I call you, if we are alone or just with my wife you can call me Takahiro, if anybody else is close by you should not speak.

We will eat first and then my wife will take care of you. Within ten minutes they arrived at Takahiro's house, they walked into the house and he said, our guest has arrived. Takahiro's wife was about the same size as Victoria and he introduced her as Miyu, Victoria thought, I have seen this lady before. However, she could not remember where she had seen her, she walked up to Victoria and hugged her and said, any friend of my brother is a friend of ours, please tell me what is your name. I am now known as Victoria, that is such a pretty name, come, I have breakfast ready and after breakfast Takahiro will go to work and you can take a shower and a rest and we can talk a little later. Believe me, she can talk, all three of them laughed.

While Victoria used the bathroom Takahiro sent a text to Henry, it said, arrived safely. They sat down to eat and had a little small talk nothing personal other than Victoria said, so you are Henry's sister, yes. During breakfast Takahiro's phone made a noise, he said please excuse me and he looked at his phone, it was from Henry and all it said was, thank you. Henry knows you have arrived safely, however, he has no idea about the next leg of your journey. Victoria looked shocked, do not worry Victoria, Henry asked me for my help and I gave him my word I would take great care of you. Because I know, Miyu would do me great physical harm if I did not help Henry.

We would do anything for Henry, apart from being my brother, he helped us years before I became his sister, when Takahiro was at Oxford University and I had a huge problem. You just feel lucky to know Henry James, I do know that, he has already saved my life. I would have been kidnapped by extremists and more than likely beaten to death by now if Henry had not shot two of them. Takahiro left to go to work and Miyu cleared away the breakfast dishes and said, let me show you to your room, she said, do you need anything, clothes, make up anything at all, I think I should give you a pair of jeans and a top because you cannot have very much in that kitbag. You are quite right Miyu, I was told for eight days so I only have two pairs of trouser, one I have on because I have a flight suit and a dress suit. While you take a shower I will wash the clothes you have on so you will have them clean to take with you, just leave them on the bed and I will come back for them.

When Victoria got out of the shower her clothes had gone and in their place was a pair of jeans, a beautiful burgundy blouse with matching bra and panties along with a little note, Victoria picked up the note and read it, please do me the honour of keeping these few items of clothing, fondest love, Miyu. A tear came to her eye and she thought, what wonderful people. She got dressed and went to find Miyu, she hugged her and said, thank you for the gift, you are more than welcome and now you will always remember us, you can be sure about that. They walked around the garden and talked about life in general, so you are Henry's beautiful sister with such a wonderful husband.

He did not tell me anything about who I would be meeting or where I would be going. When I first saw you I thought I know this lady but I could not remember where I had seen you. I now know, I saw a wedding photo and she pointed to a photo that was on show, I saw it on Henry's phone. They both smiled and Victoria thought, I could become very good friends with Miyu. I have asked Takahiro to try to get home early tonight because you will be tired and need to go to bed early, I am sure he will do his best. They spent the rest of the day talking like old friends and Miyu showed Victoria her hobbies and said, I wish this was your final destination because I think we could become good friends. Victoria replied by saying, not sure about living on a base again, but becoming good friends with you, I would very much like that.

They had an early supper and afterwards while drinking coffee Takahiro

said, I guess you would like to know where you are going, Victoria just smiled and Miyu said, of course she would like to know and so would I. You will fly out at 16:00 tomorrow on a C130, which is booked as a training flight, so no record of you will be on file. The flight will arrive at 03:30 and you will be met by our very good friend, Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston of the Royal Australian Air Force, he is at Base Tindal in northern Australia. He is one of the good guys and he will take very good care of you.

I do not know the day or time of your next flight, however, you will be taking the side by side seating in one of their F-111C's, you will make several stops along the way and you will finally land at the ILA Berlin Air Show in Germany. He then placed a sheet of paper in front of Victoria, and told her, she needs to learn this word for word, because you will only get your final ride if they are happy you are the right person. He then placed the lapel pin on top of the sheet of paper, she picked it up and looked at it and then read what was on the sheet of paper.

Henry had written, do not deviate from this script, your contact will tell you what to do from then on, please do as they ask.

Takahiro said, I think this is fool proof and definitely the type of instructions that Henry would come up with, Miyu agreed. Miyu then said, I think it is time for you to retire Victoria, you have another busy day tomorrow. Victoria stood up and hugged and thanked Miyu, she then turned to Takahiro and put out her hand, in my house you get a hug, and he placed his arms around her and she hugged him back and said, thank you very much. Victoria went up to her bedroom and hand washed her blouse, bra and panties and hung them in the shower when she had finished, she climbed into bed and thought, what a wonderful family you have Henry, she then drifted off to sleep within ten minutes.

She woke up at 07:30 and thought I must have been very tired to have slept so long, she went into the bathroom and found her clothes had dried and she put them on the bed and folded them up and after removing clothes to travel in she placed the beautiful clothes that Miyu had given her into her kitbag. She then jumped in the shower. When she returned to the bedroom she found her clothes that Miyu had washed for her, they were neatly folded and placed on the bed. She picked them up and placed them in her kitbag, got dressed and went to find Miyu. She found her sitting in the garden with Takahiro drinking coffee, good morning sleepy head Miyu said, good morning to both of you Victoria replied.

They both jumped up and Miyu gave her a big kiss and Takahiro did the same, we would like to class you as one of our family Takahiro said, I would like that very much, thank you so much for all your kindness. I am sorry that I will be unable to see you again, I do not even know where I am going, it is better that way, nobody in the CIA knows where you have gone to, so nobody can ever find you Takahiro replied, unless it is by a chance sighting Victoria told him.

The pilots of the C130 will not see you, there will be one loadmaster with you, so unless you introduce yourself he will not know who you are.

I will take you to Major Joseph Cohen at 15:40 today he will not ask your name and he will tell the loadmaster, you are a high ranking government official, speak only if you are spoken to, do you have a book to read, I did not have time to pick one up before leaving Miami. I have a couple of English books if you would like one, Miyu said, I think that would be a good idea Victoria replied.

Miyu prepared an early lunch and after drinking their coffee they all hugged each other and Takahiro and Miyu said, we will see you again one day, Takahiro said, you can count on that. I will just use the toilet and pick up my kitbag, she did that and with a tear in her eye, she smiled at Miyu and they left. Takahiro took the kitbag off Victoria and told her he would hand this over to the loadmaster to place on board, also let him carry it off the plane for you. I do not know if you will see Johnny's wife, Bonnie, however, if you do, will you please give her Miyu's love, certainly Victoria replied, Miyu has already asked me to do that.

When they arrived the C130 was ready on the tarmac just waiting to be kicked into life, they got out of Takahiro's Jeep and Takahiro and Major Joseph Cohen saluted each other and Joseph shook hands with Victoria and said, when you are ready ma'am, thank you Major, she turned and shook Takahiro's hand and said, thank you. The two pilots were already seated and the loadmaster was standing at the rear next to the ramp watching the passenger, Major Joseph Cohen raised his hand and twirled his fingers and the four engines started to power up, it only took a few minutes and they were all at idle revolutions just waiting. Takahiro said I will drive you to the C130 and the three of them got in his Jeep, he stopped directly behind the load ramp so they got less turbulence from the props.

Major Joseph Cohen picked up her kitbag and walked up the ramp towards the loadmaster, the loadmaster saluted and Major Cohen gave him the bag and lent forward and said, she is a high ranking government official, speak only if you are spoken to, and take care of this kitbag, yes sir. She shook Takahiro's hand again, turned and walked up the ramp. The loadmaster said, welcome aboard ma'am you can sit in any of the seats along the side, thank you Sergeant, the first one will be fine, he placed her kitbag next to her and returned to close the ramp. Takahiro thanked Joseph and then drove to his office, he stood outside and watched the C130 take off. He checked for any messages and only found one which could be attended to tomorrow, he then sent two text, one to Henry which said, on the way, the second to Johnny was even shorter, airborne. Within minutes he received two back and they both said the same thing, thank you. He drove home and spent the rest of the day with Miyu.

Once airborne Victoria got the book out that Miyu had given her to read, she also removed a small bottle of water and took a sip. She read the book which was about Henry the V111, she smiled and started to read. Once she got into the book and wished she had read this, years ago and she would be finding more by the same author, however, this one will be her first book to keep in her new home, wherever it may be. The loadmaster was nodding off until the intercom in his helmet came to life,

the pilot asked, is our passenger alright Sergeant, that's affirmative sir. At 03:00 the pilot told the Sergeant, please advise your passenger that we will be landing in twenty minutes, yes sir, the Sergeant got up and crossed the fuselage and said, excuse me ma'am, the pilot wishes to advise you that we will be landing in twenty minutes, she looked up and said, thank you Sergeant and went back to reading the last few pages of what she thought was a fantastic book.

They landed at 03:20 and taxied off the runway and finally stopped next to a hanger, once the engines had stopped the Sergeant opened the load bay ramp and standing there was a man, the Sergeant picked up Victoria's kitbag and said, please follow me ma'am, she got up and followed the Sergeant down the ramp and they walked up to the man waiting next to a car, the Sergeant saluted and asked, should I place the kitbag in the trunk sir, yes please Sergeant. He then turned to Victoria and shook her hand and said, I am Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston, welcome to the great country of Australia, she replied, thank Air Vice Marshal, he opened the passenger door and she got in. He got in the drivers side and said, firstly, what is your name, Victoria, nice name, now, if we are alone or with my wife you can call me Johnny, if anybody else is in earshot it would be better not to say anything. We will go to my house now as my wife will be waiting to meet you and we can have some breakfast, that sounds great Johnny.

Bonnie is a lovely lady and she is the love of my life. He stopped the car outside of a very nice detached house, he then picked up Victoria's kitbag from the boot and said, this way young lady. Bonnie stood in the doorway and as they climbed the three steps to the front door she said, welcome to our home, please come inside. Victoria said, thank you and followed Bonnie, I am sure you need to use the loo first then we can greet each other properly, yes please, I am busting.

When she came out she walked around and found them both in the garden, Bonnie turned and gave Victoria a big hug and said, please sit at the table and I will bring out the breakfast, she sat down next to Johnny and when Bonnie had sat down he said, sorry love I forgot you do not know Victoria's name, I do now Johnny. Victoria told Bonnie that Miyu sends her love and wants to know when are you all getting together again? That's a good question, the problem is, trying to work out when both of these guys are off duty at the same time. I will work on him to make sure it is soon, Johnny said, I am right here you know, and they all laughed.

During coffee Johnny said, this is a very unusual request to get, requests normally comes from a government agency and not a private person, so I would appreciate it if you would be happy to tell us a little about yourself. Takahiro told me you are one of the good guys so I am happy to answer some questions, that's fair.

How do you know Takahiro and Miyu, I had never met them until I arrived at Misawa Air Base, that's sounding more strange Johnny said. Victoria then told them, Takahiro and I have a mutual friend, he is Miyu's brother. Then we are talking about Henry James, Bonnie said, unbeknown

to me he asked Takahiro to help him. There must be a very serious reason Victoria, yes there is,

I have been a CIA agent since I was 22 and was made up to deputy of the CIA's Bureau in New York two years ago after my cover had been blown. I have now had a fatwa placed on me by the Al-Husseini family. Jesus Christ Victoria, what did you do to deserve that, because they are evil people. I shot and killed two of their sons, good for you girl. Why did they not put you in the witness protection programme, it would have been a lot easier for you. Because they think Al Qaeda has compromised the program, oh shit. Well, that explains why you need to do it this way, do you fly Victoria. I have private jets on my licence and I did three tours in Afghanistan flying Super Cobras, no more questions, I consider you, one of the good guys. I will make sure you are protected while in my care, Victoria said, thank you Johnny.

Johnny said, I need to send a text to Takahiro to let him know that you have landed safely, the text simply said, arrived safely. Takahiro turned to Miyu and said, Victoria is with Johnny and Bonnie. I will let Henry know but he first sent a text back to Johnny which said, thank you. Johnny then said, I am going to the office now, you two ladies should not talk about me.

Bonnie replied, I am sure we have more important things to talk about than you Johnny Weston, however, if I run out of things to talk about I can then start on you. He laughed and replied, in that case there is no chance you will ever get to me, they all laughed and Johnny walked out the door.

They spent the day looking around the garden and talking about anything and everything and they got on like a house on fire, Victoria relaxed and really enjoyed the day. When Johnny came home, Bonnie said to him, whenever you feel like it, everything is ready for you to start the barbie, thank you love.

They had a few drinks and then Johnny started the barbie, their meal lasted several hours and they talked and talked into the small hours and had a great time, Victoria did not want it to end, she was relaxed and having such a good time and had forgotten all about the Al-Husseini family.

At 01:30 Johnny looked at the ladies and said, one of us has to work tomorrow so I think I must call it a night. They just smiled and Victoria said, thank you for a great barbie Johnny, you are welcome Victoria, Bonnie then told Johnny she would be up in a little while. They continued to talk and at 02:45 Bonnie said, I do not want this night to end because you leave tomorrow and it will be a long time before I see you again, but it is getting late and although you will not physically be doing anything tomorrow, I am sure the flight will be tiring, so we should call it a day. They hugged and tears came to their eyes and they said, goodnight to each other.

The following day Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston walked into his office and made a call, please send the show team to my office and he put

the phone down. Within minutes there was a knock on the door. Enter, Squadron Leader Jessica Wilson, Flight Lieutenant David Mansfield, Flying Officer Helen Irvine and Flight Sergeant Douglas Kelly entered his office, they all stood at attention and saluted. Stand easy Show Team. Can I take it you have everything in place, yes sir, route sorted, time and place of your refuelling stations and presentation at the show all in order Squadron Leader, yes sir. Good that's what I expect from my pilots, now, I have called you all here this morning because I am about to make a couple of changes.

They all stood and looked at the Air Vice Marshal and waited to find out if any of them had been dropped from the operation. Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston continued. Your operation has been changed, there were a couple of sighs, barely audible, however, not missed by the Air Vice Marshal, he raised his eyebrows, this operation has now become a covert mission. The four members of the team looked shocked because they could not see how an air show could be covert.

Let me explain, you are taking a passenger with you, so one of you will be giving up your seat. Squadron Leader Jessica Wilson thought, lets hope the passenger does not fly fast military jets, that way David and I cannot be dropped. I have decided that Flying Officer Helen Irvine is the one to give up her seat, Helen said, yes sir. Do not be too upset Flying Officer, you will be taking a second class ride on a Qantas flight, and you will be flying out as soon as we have finished here. Your mission has gone covert because your passenger does not exist.

You will not ever mention her to anybody at any time, this is very important because if you do, it could mean her life. She is only making a one way trip so you get to return in your first class F-111C, Flying Officer Irvine, thank you sir. Now, if I thought I could not trust any of you I would have no hesitation in replacing you and I am sure I would not have a problem with replacements, I am sure you would not sir. So, do not let me down because I have given my word, we can do this Squadron Leader Wilson said, we will not let you down sir, and it is our privilege to assist, thank you Squadron Leader.

Your passenger is not an Australian, however, she is very well thought of in certain government circles, she does hold a pilots licence although she has never flown fast military jets. One thing she has done that gets her my respect, she became a Marine and then did three tours in Afghanistan flying Super Cobra's. She will be wearing a flight suit with the insignia of a Colonel. So you and everybody else that she comes into contact with, will salute her, they all replied, yes sir. I am relying on you Squadron Leader to take good care of her and hopefully you will have enough room to share your accommodation with her at the show, I am sure we will sir. I do not know how long she will be with you once you get to the show, but I think she will tell you when she leaves, or not, as the case may be. I will personally bring her to your F-111, fifteen minutes before you take off, he then shook the hand of each of them, stood back and saluted, and said, have a safe flight and do us proud, yes sir.

Henry was watching a movie just to pass the time away, he read the text from Takahiro, it said, arrived at next staging point. Henry said to himself, thank you Takahiro and replied to the text with just, thank you, he then went to bed and slept soundly, only waking up at 07:00, he realised that he had not stopped until last night and also had been very concerned about Victoria. He got up and decided to jog around the park as it had been over three weeks since he had jogged anywhere, and jogging always got his mind working. After he had showered and had a little breakfast he went to his office and started looking through his client list, picking out ones that he had not seen for a long time and thought, I must make some changes with the way I do business.

Lydia let herself in and Henry gave her a hug, she looked at him and asked what was all that about, you do know I am old enough to be your mother Henry, I do know that Lydia, it just seems like I have not seen you for months and I miss you, that's all. She smiled at him and told him he needed a wife, I would agree with you, however, I keep telling you it is harder than you might think. We keep having this conversation and I do not seem any nearer than the last time you brought it up. Firstly, I would like you to start looking for a housekeeper for me, it's about time, I know what you want as far as the job is concerned but what are you looking for in the person Henry.

Well, I do not want somebody that needs to see me everyday before she starts work, she must be able to sort her jobs out herself, flexible working is a must. What sort of flexible do you mean. You know my work scheduled so you know how many days I am away in a month, as far as I am concerned she does not need to work on those days if she does not need to, having said that, I would want her to work the weekends I am at home. Okay, do you want tall, short, fat, thin, blonde or brunet Henry, I am not that fussy for a housekeeper Lydia, as long as she can cook and clean and whatever else a housekeeper has to do and she takes regular showers, I will be happy. Leave that with me and I will start with the agencies and see what we come up with, thank you Lydia. They moved on to Henry's client list and he told her that he felt he needed to make sure he sees all his clients regular. I thought we were going to travel less not more Henry, I have great faith in you Lydia and I am sure you will come up with a suitable plan, oh, I do love you Henry James.

Before Lydia left she told Henry his schedule for this week, I have two appointments for you in Los Angeles, I have given you one day to get there and one day to see both clients then one day to rest and look around the city and one day to get back. You will then have the weekend to do whatever you do at the weekends. She got up and gave him a file and said, Roger will pick you up at 17:00 today I will see you next week Henry, thank you Lydia, and she left.

As she was going down in the lift she thought, getting a housekeeper for Henry could be harder than it seems. Henry phoned his father and said, sorry father, but I will not be able to have lunch with you this week as I am leaving for LA tonight, sorry to hear that my boy, however, we

trust everything is going according to plan. So far to plan and on time father, that's great my boy, please give mother my love and tell her I will be home on Saturday staying until possibly Tuesday. She will be very happy my boy, thank you father, have a good flight Henry.

Victoria thought, this is another lady I would like to be friends with, Bonnie said, a penny for your thoughts. Victoria smiled and replied, I was just thinking about you and Miyu, I really would like to become friends with both of you, however, my present situation does not allow me to do that. Hell, I never even got to say goodbye to my Dad. Bonnie took Victoria's hand in hers and looked deeply into her eyes, Victoria thought it looks like she is looking into my soul.

I know your life right now has turned upside down and I am sure you feel a little lost and alone, but I am sure your young man will take care of you wherever you end up. I am sure Henry will take care of me, however we both know very well that we can never become more than good friends, in fact I feel that I will never be able to marry anybody again because it could put their life in danger. I see where you are coming from Victoria, but believe me, you will find somebody and settle down with him, you will make somebody a fantastic wife and I am sure some place down the road we will all meet up again, that would be wonderful.

I think I had better get changed into my flight suit and be ready when Johnny comes back, she turned and headed for the bedroom. Johnny arrived before she had got changed, Bonnie told him he was a little early, you are right dear, just thought we could have a little chat before leaving. Victoria returned to the lounge and saw Johnny and asked him if we are late, not at all I just thought we could sit and have a coffee before you leave us, that's nice of you. Bonnie went off to make the coffee and Johnny said, I know it's a bit late but is there anything you still need, because you only have to ask. I think I have everything thank you. They sat down with their coffees and Bonnie said, you look very fetching in your flight suit Victoria, what do you think Johnny, I agree with you she looks like a very sexy Spanish lady. Are you Spanish Victoria, well, I am now. Johnny got up and said, I think we should be going, Victoria got up and hugged them both and thanked them for all they had done for her, they both said, it was a pleasure. Bonnie said to her, remember what I said, your life will change for the better and I am sure we will see each other again. Johnny picked up her kitbag and they walked out to his car.

The refuelling tanker had just left when they pulled up next to the F-111's, they got out of the car and everybody saluted. Johnny said, the Colonel here is your passenger Squadron Leader, as I said, take good care of her, no problem sir. Pleased to meet you ma'am like wise Squadron Leader, Johnny gave Jessica the kitbag and said, I hope you can stow this somewhere, she smiled and took the bag from him. He turned back to Victoria and saluted her and said, have a safe flight Colonel, she returned the salute and said thank you Air Vice Marshal. He then turned and again saluted his team and returned to his car driving off to a safe distance. Right hand seat please Ma'am and they both climbed into the cockpit, the

ground crew fired up the F-111's and pulled the chocks away and saluted to the pilots. Are you buckled up Ma'am, yes thank you, okay then we are ready to taxi. She then contacted the tower and asked for permission to taxi to the holding point, your good to go, Jessica released the brakes and they rolled forward picking up a little speed, when they got to the holding point they stopped and waited for the tower, their intercom came to life and the voice on the other end said, after the two F-111's that are on finals, land, you will be clear to move onto the runway.

Two F-111's screamed overhead and as soon as they touched down Jessica rolled forward and took up her position on the right hand side of the runway. As soon as she stopped Flight Lieutenant David Mansfield lined up his F-111 on the left hand side in line with his Squadron Leader. They waited for the tower to give them permission, it came loud and clear. You are clear to take off, now go show the rest of the world what the best air force looks like, have a good and safe trip. You do have permission Squadron Leader. Thank you tower, she then asked David if he is good to go and I take it you heard we have been given permission. She looked across at the other aircraft and he gave her the thumbs up sign, they released the brakes and pushed the throttles forward, the afterburners came to life and the planes jumped forward, gathering speed as they travelled down the runway. Excuse me ma'am, hope you will be okay with this, but we will be doing a four-point roll after take off, we will roll to starboard and my wingman will roll to port.

I do not have a problem with that Squadron Leader, I am pleased ma'am, this will be our departing manoeuvre when we leave the show for the final time. Once we are airborne we will pull up vertical, rolling out at 45,000 feet, we roll to starboard and our wingman rolls to port, we descend in a heart shape, meeting at the bottom at 2,000 feet, we should be about one mile past the end of the runway, we then bank to port and our wingman banks to starboard this will line us back up with the runway.

We will then be at 600 mph and as we fly down the runway at 1,500 feet we perform a four-point roll and once we have completed the manoeuvre, we head home. Well, that's the plan, so this will be our last practice before heading off, that sounds fantastic Squadron Leader, and Victoria sat back to watch this manoeuvre from a position she had never been in before. When they rolled out of vertical at 45,000 feet it looked like the whole base was standing on the tarmac watching them. They banked out of the heart shaped descent and came screaming along the runway performing a perfect four point roll.

The manoeuvre was made to perfection and the voice on the intercom said, that looked spectacular, the whole base loves you guys and naturally we are all jealous. Have a safe flight, thank you tower, see you in a weeks time, over and out.

Johnny Weston stood watching his show team while they made a flawless series of manoeuvres and he said to Bonnie, those guys are damn good. She looked at him and before she could say anything, he added, that Sheila is a damn good pilot, Bonnie just smiled at him and said, I do hope

Victoria was happy with that.

Squadron Leader Jessica Wilson flicked her intercom on and said, excuse me ma'am, I trust you did not have a problem with that manoeuvre. Not at all, I thoroughly enjoyed it, my first time from this position, I could do that on a regular basis. You are a very good pilot Jessica, thank you ma'am. Just to let you know we will be climbing to 55,000 feet and then ease off to our cruising speed of Mach.9, we will then fly for 2,297 miles over the Indian Ocean and land at the Cocos Islands for refuelling.

Our next hop is 1,694 miles to Diego Garcia for more fuel, we then have a 2,133 mile hop to Thumrait Air Base in Oman. From Thumrait we fly the 2,100 miles to Hania on the island of Crete, where the US Navy will kindly give us a bed for the night.

In the morning we fly the 1,319 miles to the Berlin air show. If you need to know anything at all about any of the stops we will be making, please just ask me and I will do my best to answer you. Thank you Jessica, I do hope it is okay to call you Jessica, it is fine ma'am, however, I am not asking your name because Air Vice Marshal Weston told us our mission has become covert, because you do not exist.

Victoria smiled and said, thank you Jessica, so we will only call you ma'am or Colonel. Which country owns the bases we will land at Jessica, I am sure the Americans own Diego Garcia. No ma'am, Cocos island is an Australian base, Diego Garcia is actually a British base which is leased to the Americans. Thumrait Air Base in Oman was built and paid for by the American military, however, it is technically an Omani base. The airport at Hania is one of the islands two international airports and the runway is shared with civilian flights along with the Greek air force and a few American military aircraft.

There is a deep water port called Souda Bay, which is a US Navy base, they support the 6th fleet in the Mediterranean. Have you been to any of these bases before Jessica, yes, I have been to Cocos island and Diego Garcia but not to the other two. I Don't think that you will have any problems with the bases we are going to. Nobody in their right mind would question a Colonel, I do hope you are right Jessica.

When Johnny got back to his office he sent a text to Takahiro which just said, into next phase, need four stops. He then carried on with trying to get the backlog of work down.

Roger was waiting for Henry when he left his Penthouse, good afternoon Mr James, good afternoon Roger how are you, very well thank you sir, trust you are also okay, yes thank you. Henry asked Roger about his family and found out that his young son had been in an accident and had broken his left arm, other than that he seems okay thank you sir. I am sure he will be popular with the girls, as they will all want to write their names on the plaster cast, they both smiled and within a few minutes they arrived at Heathrow.

While Henry was waiting to board his flight he received a text from Takahiro, it said, just left, need four stops. Henry thought, she must be getting a ride in a military jet, that's the only reason I can think of that

would need four stops to get there. He said to himself, you are definitely the man Takahiro, he then replied saying, thank you. Henry boarded the 747-400 and was greeted and shown to his seat, once airborne a meal was served and after the meal Henry watched a movie and then settled down and dropped off to sleep.

Jeff's computer came to life in the CIA Bureau in Miami, a window popped up on his screen, it stated that Henry James, would be landing at JFK at 02:30 Tuesday, with an onward flight to LA International, returning to JFK on Friday at 16:30 and on to London Heathrow two days later. Jeff thought, no meeting this trip, I do hope Victoria is okay.

Henry boarded his flight and settled down for the long flight to LA, he thought, I do hope Victoria is okay. Henry slept most of the way to JFK as he would on any other flight, he got through customs as normal so nobody in the FBI or CIA had made any changes to the way he was treated when he arrived. As normal he was sped through customs with respect and kindness. He had not seen this agent before and when she took him to pick up his case he said to her, thank you for your time and trouble ma'am, no problem Mr James, now you have a good day sir, thank you, you too.

The F-111's landed at the three bases for refuelling and nobody asked the Colonel anything, she was saluted at every base and was only asked what she would like to drink. When they were airborne after leaving Thumrait Air Base, Jessica said, so far so good ma'am, thank you Jessica, it is just the overnight stop coming up, do not worry, it will not be a problem ma'am. They landed at Hania and taxied to the holding station for military aircraft, a Jeep was waiting and they climbed aboard and were driven to the US Naval base. Salutes all round and they were taken to the mess hall and had a very good meal, as Jessica had said, nobody asked any questions, Victoria was very relieved. After the meal they decided to have an early night and they were shown to their quarters.

Henry's connection was on time and he cleared the terminal by 11:00 and he found a driver with his name on a board and he was driven to the Montage Beverly Hills, he had never been to this hotel before, however, he was very happy with Lydia's choice. He took a shower and then phoned Rachelle, he told her he was in LA and would there be any chance of seeing her on Thursday, not really possible Henry and it is a long way just for one day, can you come here when you have finished with your clients and stay for the weekend. I am sorry Rachelle, I have to be back in London by Saturday and she replied, maybe next time.

He took a tour around Beverly Hills taking in the stars homes, had a great salad for lunch and he received a text from Takahiro, saying, arrived safely at 4th stopover, Henry replied with the simple, thank you. In the early evening he had one of the best steaks he had ever had.

The next day he saw his first client and this turned into a contract which made him very happy, Henry felt the second client in the afternoon was a time waster and realised this was never going to happen. On his way back to the hotel he thought, 50% is not bad and he did not phone but

sent a text to Lydia because of the time difference.

In the morning the show team woke up and had breakfast together, the staff on the base could not do enough for them. A couple of Air Force guys walked into the mess hall and after their meal they asked, are you the Australian's that are going to the Berlin show, Jessica replied, that's us, are you going? Not this year, we made it last year though. It's a good show so you should have a great time, thank you lieutenant, we will certainly try, have a good flight ma'am, and they turned and left. Jessica said, I think it is time to go, they all got up and picked up their kit and headed out to the F-111's.

There were two guys standing next to a refuelling truck waiting to refuel the jets, morning guys, morning Squadron Leader and they saluted. Can we top you up ma'am, yes please Sergeant, while they did that they stowed their kit aboard. After the truck had left another truck arrived to start the engines, Jessica checked that they had plugged the cable in correctly and then she climbed into the cockpit. She flicked on her mike and asked if everybody was ready to go, thumbs up all round so she told the ground crew to fire them up, they did and the engines came to life and just for a moment. Victoria's mind went back to Afghanistan when her Super Cobra was fired up.

The ground crew unplugged their cables and the truck moved away, one of the ground crew still had his audio and was asking Jessica and David if all gauges had come up to operating pressure and everything looked ready to go. They both replied all looks good to go Sergeant, then in a deep southern accent he replied, "Yo all have a good flight". They smiled and waved a salute and the Sergeant walked to the truck. Jessica asked the tower for permission to taxi to the holding point, a New York voice came back and said, just follow the pick-up in front of you, she replied, thank you. They followed the pick-up and when it stopped the New York voice said, there is an Olympic Airways 737 on finals, when it has landed you are clear to proceed to the runway, at that point the Greek tower will take over, have a safe flight.

Jessica replied, thank you for your hospitality and hope to see you on our way home, we will be waiting Squadron Leader. As the 737 landed and Jessica moved forward to the start of the runway Victoria said, I think the guy on the refuelling truck had other ideas and they both laughed. Once the 737 had turned onto the taxi way, a Greek voice said the F-111's are clear to take off, thank you tower, see you next week. She released the brakes and pushed the throttles forward and the F-111 rolled along the runway gathering speed as it travelled, the afterburners kicked in and they quickly gathered speed rolling down the runway, she told David they had got to V1 and he released his brakes and pushed the throttles forward and as he got to V1 Jessica called V2 and pulled her stick back, the F-111 jumped off the runway and they were airborne. David pulled alongside within a couple of minutes and they both checked their instruments and gave each other the thumbs up sign. Both aircraft climbed to their cruising speed of Mach.9 and altitude of 55,000 feet, they banked to starboard and

headed towards Berlin.

The F-111's arrived at the ILA Berlin Air Show on Thursday morning and once they were parked up, the show organiser spoke to Jessica and told her he would arrange for all signs and notices to be placed by tomorrow morning, ready for her inspection, she thanked him and he pointed her in the direction of their accommodation and he gave her four passes so that they could go in and out of the restricted area. They picked up their kit and walked away, the building was temporary accommodation and it looked like a container with windows, inside they found it had two bedrooms with twin single beds in each room and a shared bathroom, Jessica said, that one is for Douglas and David, the Colonel and I will share this one.

Once inside their room Jessica closed the door and said, I am unpacking my gear and as I have no idea what you plan to do now. Before she could say another word, Victoria put her arms around Jessica and hugged her and said, thank you for taking care of me and the safe flight here, you are welcome ma'am. Do you know what day you will meet your next contact ma'am, no Jessica I do not, and I have no idea if it is a man or a woman I must meet. I am guessing they know you. Well, they know how to spot me, so I must believe it will all work out perfectly, I am sure it will. I just wish to say, I am glad I was able to play my small part in helping you. Thank you so much and I do not think it was a small part you have played, they both smiled.

Victoria asked Jessica if she could take her and her team to supper later today, that is very kind of you ma'am and I am sure we would all like that, that's a date then. Victoria removed the lapel pin from her kitbag and pinned it on her flight suit, she told Jessica she was going for a walk and felt it best if she kept her flight suit on. She walked around the aircraft that had already arrived and watched as more aircraft flew in, she found she could not go to every aircraft as some areas were closed off due to aircraft movement. She sat at a little café and ordered a coffee and watched the comings and goings of arranging an air show. She watched the landing of the large Russian military cargo plane, the An-124 Ruslan and a C-17 Globemaster that taxied to an area she could not get to today.

She saw F-15's, F-18's and a C-5 Galaxy, all landing and taxiing to their parking area. A Boeing B-1 Bomber landed followed by an F-22 Raptor, she thought this is going to be a great show, such a pity I will not be able to enjoy it as much as I would like, as she was returning she saw Jessica and David, they said please join us for a coffee and they found another little café. They all sat down and Victoria thought this could be a little awkward, Jessica looked at Victoria and said, we are just going to talk about the show and that way it will be easier for everybody.

They all walked passed aircraft that had already parked and then found a restaurant and went inside and finished up spending the next five hours there. No personal questions came up from anybody and Victoria felt relieved, she was told all about Australia and how she should pay their great country a visit, she smiled and told them she would like that very

much. Victoria paid in cash out of the money that Henry had left with Takahiro, they strolled back to their plush 5 star Portacabin, took turns to shower and called it a night.

Henry walked along Rodeo Drive as he wanted to get a few things for Victoria, he went into four boutiques and purchased two dresses, four blouses and two pairs of tailored trousers along with a silk scarf. He returned to the Montage Beverly Hills where he ate a Waldorf salad, after drinking his coffee he went up to his room where he worked on the proposal for Lydia.

Takahiro received a text message, it read, your package has arrived safely at it's destination, he replied thank you for your kindness. Just before going to sleep Henry received a text which read, it's show time, he took that to mean Victoria had arrived safely, he replied with, thank you for all you have done for me, I will be in touch in a couple of weeks. On Friday morning he went to see the Battleship USS Iowa BB-6 which he found exceedingly interesting. He returned to the hotel where he showered and then checked out returning to the International Airport for his flight back to London.

In the CIA Bureau in Miami, Jeff's computer came to life once again and a window popped up on his screen, which stated that Henry James, had checked in for his flight to London, Jeff thought, so far this man is true to his word. When Henry landed at JFK the same agent greeted him and he was whisked through customs and onto the aircraft, he again thanked her and told her, he hoped he sees her next time, she just smiled at him and said, you have a safe flight Mr James. Henry arrived at Heathrow at 11:45 and Roger was waiting for him, they shook hands and Roger took his luggage to the car, placing it in the boot, good trip sir, yes thank you Roger, where to sir, home first please Roger as I need to shower and pack a case, I will wait for you sir. Benson greeted Henry and handed him his post, Henry unpacked and placed his dirty washing in the laundry basket and wondered when he was going to have time to wash it all.

Within twenty five minutes Henry was back in the car and Roger asked him, where to sir, Private Jet Charter company at Biggin Hill please Roger, certainly, subject to traffic sir, we should be there in thirty minutes. Henry then phoned the Private Jet Charter company and asked them for a chopper ride to Queensberry Manor, we will be waiting for you Mr James. When they arrived Roger asked Henry when must he come back to pick him up, you do not have to Roger, because I will be returning in my car, thank you for your trouble Roger, you are welcome Mr James. Forty minutes later Henry landed at the family home and was greeted by his mother and father.

He hugged and kissed his mother and shook hands and hugged his father, we are just about to have a coffee Henry, will you join us, yes please mother. When Jessie brought the coffee and cake out, she hugged Henry and said, welcome home Henry, thank you Jessie it's good to be back, we do not see you for months on end and then twice in a few days, I told you, you should move back home, and they all burst out laughing. When Jessie

had left he looked at his mother and father and asked them, are you still happy to have Victoria staying here. I thought you said her name was Amanda. I did, however, her new name is Victoria Santiago, she is now a Spanish lady with all documents in place, so this should be a lot easier for her to move around. So please forget Amanda. Just a thought my boy, does she speak Spanish, fluently father. We are more than happy to help you and as you say, not being an American it would be a lot easier for everybody.

Would you like to see what I have done in the cottage Henry, yes mother, that would be nice. She picked up the keys off the side table in the hall and Henry and his mother headed off to the cottage. I see you have more or less finished the garden mother, yes Henry, I thought I would have a little pond over here, but I will ask Victoria if she is happy with that before getting it done. She opened the door and they entered, Alexandra told Henry that she had just put the essentials in as she will take Victoria shopping in the next couple of days to get whatever she needs in the way of furniture, bedding or even clothes.

I expected nothing less mother, they laughed and hugged, Henry then said, you do realise that nothing can ever happen between Victoria and I, because my life is high profile and hers must never become high profile, I totally understand Henry. That does not mean I do not have to help her, and I want to do this, so there is not anything for you to say. Thank you mother, you are the best.

They went back to the main house and Henry asked if either of them wanted to go horse riding, not really Henry as your father and I went riding this morning. He went up to his room and got changed into his riding clothes, and headed out to the stables, he stepped inside and found Georgia just about to saddle up her horse. Good afternoon Georgia, hello Mr Henry, long time no see, afraid so Georgia, do you wish me to saddle up Sultan for you, that's kind of you but I think I still remember how to do that and they smiled at each other. How is Sultan keeping Georgia, I think he is in very good shape, I try to ride him at least twice a week to keep him in good shape. Thank you very much Georgia, you are welcome Mr Henry, he is a beautiful horse and a real pleasure to ride.

They saddled their horses and Henry asked if she would be happy if he rode along with her, that would be my pleasure Mr Henry. He then said, on one condition, that you stop calling me Mr, just Henry is fine, are you sure your mother and father would be happy if I do that. I would be happy Georgia and that is all that matters, she smiled and said, thank you Henry. They rode around the estate making the horses trot, canter and gallop and they both had a good couple of hours riding, Henry asked how are you liking your new position. I love it Henry and I have made a couple of small changes that I feel makes the stables run a little smoother, that's great, I am so pleased my mother and father offered you the promotion, I know it's a bit late, and I should have said this when I first saw you today, congratulations Georgia. Thank you Henry. They returned to the stables and Georgia said, please leave Sultan there and I will remove his saddle

Henry James

and rub him down, that's kind of you and thank you for the ride Georgia,
thank you Henry.

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V

ictoria finds her contact

On Saturday morning after showering Victoria got dressed in jeans, t-shirt and trainers, she then changed the lapel pin from her flight suit on to her t-shirt, and on the way out she checked that she had picked up all her documents. She walked from one static aircraft display to the next, looking at everything and making sure that everybody that wore a uniform noticed her. Victoria did not linger too long at each display, just long enough that anybody that was looking for the lapel pin would be sure to see it. Lunch time came so she stopped at the little café, she ordered a salad and a coffee and ate her lunch very slowly. Forty five minutes later she paid and carried on looking at more aircraft, by 16:30 she had looked at every fighter plane on display whether they were from the last world war or modern day aircraft.

She strolled over to the Russian An-124 Ruslan transport aircraft, this was the largest aircraft on display, in fact it is the largest transport plane in the world. The fuselage nose was hinged upward to open the front cargo hatch, and it was a spectacular sight, she asked a crew member if she could look around, sure Miss, please mind your step coming up the ramp, she walked into the fuselage and was amazed with the size of this plane. The young Russian loadmaster was more than happy to show her around, when he had finished she thanked him and started to walk down the load ramp, he asked her if she was from the Globemaster, she replied, no. I am only asking you because I noticed your badge, she smiled and touched the lapel pin and told him, it was a present, he smiled and thanked her for stopping by.

She continued on and stopped in front of a Boeing KC-135 refuelling aircraft, she stepped closer and read the information on the display board, a member of the flight crew asked her if she had any questions that he could answer for her, she politely said, no thank you and walked on. Next along the line was the RC-135W Rivet Joint Surveillance aircraft, this had been converted from a Boeing KC-135 refuelling aircraft. She moved on as nobody apart from the young Russian had noticed her pin. She had looked at a good two thirds of the displays and there was just over thirty minutes left before the show closed for the day, next in the line was the C-17 Globemaster, another transport aircraft, she recognised the shape from the pin.

She noticed that three people were walking up the load ramp so she joined them, the female loadmaster was showing them round and the man at the front was asking her questions, which she answered very professionally. When she had finished talking to the first man she looked up and spotted the lapel pin Victoria had on her t-shirt, Kate's heart skipped a beat and Victoria saw a slight change in Kate's expression.

Victoria stepped forward and said, hello, and then added, not quite as big as the Russian An-124 Ruslan Transport, this gave Kate her opening, and she asked,

Where did you get that pin from? Victoria answered, my father gave it to me.

Did he fly C-17's

No, he just likes them.

Kate swallowed hard and asked, have you got more displays to look at.

Victoria smiled and replied, no, I think I have found my contact, she then removed the lapel pin and handed it to Kate.

They stood and looked at each other for a couple of seconds, which seemed like an eternity to Kate, she stepped closer and said, please wait for these guys to leave. Once the German visitors had left the load ramp Kate turned back to Victoria and said, I am Kate and you are Henry's friend, yes, that is correct, I am sorry but Henry did not tell us your name, so Victoria said, I am guessing that is because he did not know what name I would be given. I am now known as Victoria and I am very pleased to meet you Kate, like wise, I have been getting worried because our departure time has been moved up to 10:30 tomorrow. Okay, let me explain a couple of things to you, the boss, Squadron Leader John Ackerman knows all about you along with myself, however, Flight Lieutenant Matthew Bailey does not, that is because he has a wife and family and feels he could not take a chance of jeopardizing his career, that's fair enough, Victoria replied.

He knows we are going to have a stowaway at some time during one of our flights back to base, but he knows nothing about when it will happen, that way he feels he should be okay if we are stopped back at base. Now before we shut up shop for the night, do you have a place to stay tonight, yes, I can stay with the crew that brought me here, that's good, I suggest you stay there again tonight. Do you have a flight suit with you, I do along with a dress suit, that's fantastic Victoria, if you wear your flight suit tomorrow and arrive here in the morning at exactly 10:15, I say that because the pilots will already be on board and in the cockpit going through the checks before engines are started. Even if some visitor is hanging around, just walk up the ramp and stow your gear in here, Kate showed Victoria where to place her kitbag. I will see you tomorrow then and Kate put out her hand, Victoria stepped forward and hugged her and said, thank you Kate, she turned and walked down the ramp and headed back to the Portacabin.

Henry returned to the main house and went up to his room showered and changed, on his way to find his mother and father he looked into the kitchen and found Jessie preparing the supper. He walked up behind her without her seeing him and he put his arms around her and said, do you have something nice for me to nibble Jessie, I see you have not changed over the years you have been away Henry, and I do not think I ever will Jessie. She smiled and told him, for you I always have, she stopped what she was doing and walked into the pantry returning with a barrel of home

made biscuits. He gave her a kiss and told her, she is the best and if she ever gets fed up working here she must come and work for him, she burst out laughing and said, out of my kitchen. He found his mother and father sitting in the garden so he offered them one of the biscuits, his mother smiled and told him, Jessie spoils you.

I know mother, and I told her that when she gets tired of working for you two, she can come and work for me. David and Alexandra laughed and told him, do not attempt to poach our staff. While they talked Henry finished off most of Jessie's biscuits. During lunch Alexandra asked Henry if he would be sleeping in the cottage tonight, David flashed her a look and shook his head. Henry replied, I doubt if we will sleep mother, she smiled and before she could say anything else Henry said, we have a lot to talk about, so sleep will have to wait. Good answer my boy.

After Victoria had stood in the shower for longer than she should have, she stepped out returning to her shared bedroom and got dressed. Just as she finished Jessica entered and they greeted each other, Victoria asked if she could treat them all to supper again? My wingman and his weapons systems officer have dates with a couple of local young ladies, so I do not think they would be interested, what about yourself Jessica. My treat though, if you are sure. After Jessica had got ready they left and outside the gates they got in a taxi and asked for a good restaurant, the taxi driver replied by saying, he knows just the place for two ladies on their own. They went inside without even noticing the name, they asked for a table and they both ordered a steak and a glass of red wine, the steak and wine tasted great and during the meal Victoria told Jessica that she had found her contact and had to go back at 10:00 tomorrow.

Jessica said, that is great and I am sure everything will go according to plan, I do hope so, as it would be a shame when I have got this far. After they had finished their meal Jessica paid and asked the waiter to please phone for a taxi for them. Just as they were getting into the taxi two men stepped forward and asked if they could share the taxi, Jessica replied I do not think so guys. One man started shouting abuse at them, so Victoria said, let me deal with this arsehole, she stepped between Jessica and this rude man, he threw a punch which Victoria sidestepped and jabbed two fingers in his throat, spun him round and slammed him face down on the ground, she then looked at the second guy and said, if you want some of the same, step forward, he turned and ran off.

She stood up and they both got in the taxi. Victoria indicated to Jessica not to say anything, they asked to go to the gate at the air-show, they got out and showed their passes and entered. When they got inside Jessica said, thank you for sorting that guy out, I wish I could defend myself like that, ask the Air Vice Marshal and I am sure he would sort something out for you. They hugged and said their goodbyes and thanked each other, knowing that they would never see each other again. They went to bed and in the morning Jessica left at 08:00, Jessica saluted and said, have a safe trip Colonel, and Victoria said, thank you Jessica.

Victoria picked up her kitbag and walked along the rows of parked

display aircraft, she arrived at the C-17 Globemaster at exactly 10:00, as she walked towards the ramp Kate spotted her and stood to attention and saluted and said, good morning Colonel, good morning Kate. Victoria walked up the ramp without turning back and stowed her kitbag in the locker Kate had shown her. Kate clicked the intercom and asked for permission to close the ramp, Squadron Leader John Ackerman asked if everything is on board, that's affirmative sir, then close your ramp, we will be starting engines in the next five minutes.

Kate closed the load ramp and checked that everything was secure, the engines fired up and she turned to Victoria and told her that she would be expected to take her seat on the flight deck. I will set up a jump seat for you, its not the most comfortable but it does the job. Now when we land I will come back to pick up my gear and John will get Matthew off as quickly as he can without him thinking that something, is not quite right. Once they have left and are about one hundred and fifty yards away we will follow, they will turn right to go to the gents changing rooms and we will turn left to the ladies changing rooms. We will then take a shower and get changed into our dress suit, Matthew never stays long because he likes to get home to his family, John and I usually have one drink after a mission and then leave. So I will see you once we land, she turned and headed for the flight deck, Victoria strapped herself in the jump seat.

When Kate entered the flight deck, Matthew said, you took your time, yes, just making sure everything is secure. John told Kate she had better take her seat as they are starting to taxi to the holding point. The Boeing KC-135 refuelling aircraft gathered speed down the runway and when it lifted off the tower gave the all clear for their C-17 Globemaster, this was followed by an F-18. All three aircraft banked to port and then did a very large 360 degree lining back up with the runway at five miles out John moved the C-17 Globemaster into position to take the refuelling nozzle that was hanging from The Boeing KC-135, on their port wing the US Air force F-18 was performing the same manoeuvre, as they flew over the fence at the start of the runway The Boeing KC-135 started to pump fuel into both aircraft. Ten minutes later they thanked the tanker driver and said their goodbyes to the F-18 pilot and headed back to base. Well that's our show over, John said, our ETA is 17:40, I cannot wait to get a decent shower Kate said, John and Matthew smiled and agreed.

While drinking their coffee Alexandra told Henry that she may be able to find Victoria a job if she was interested, that way she would be here legally and she would be able to move around without people asking questions. That sounds like a good idea mother, what did you have in mind for her, I thought that I should maybe do what you and your father are always trying to get me to do, employ someone to help me run the estate. I do like the sound of that Alexandra, David said, that's great mother I definitely approve, and I am sure Victoria will not take long to pick up whatever you decide to get her to do. I will give her a couple of days and then speak to her Alexandra said.

After I collect Victoria I will drive into the Wood Cutters Cottage and

park there, I am sure she will wish to shower if she has not been able to do so at the RAF base, and change before we walk over to the house where I will introduce her to you. That is fine Henry, it is also fine if she would rather wait until tomorrow, we will see mother. Henry then had another coffee and said, I think it is about time I left as I want to be at the rendezvous before the agreed time just in case they are early. His mother and father hugged him and told him that all will be okay and he should not worry, David then said, if "It" should hit the fan my boy, just phone and I will get Randolph here immediately.

Henry took a slow drive and arrived at The Chequers at 18:30, as it was a warm evening he sat outside at one of the tables, he ordered a coffee and a small bottle of still water. While drinking his coffee he wondered how John and Kate had worked the stowaway idea out, without Matthew noticing what they were doing, he started to have doubts if he had done the right thing in asking them to help. He thought about what he had done and decided it was too late for any doubts now, if his friends did not want to help him they would have said so. He hoped, trusted and prayed that after all Victoria had gone through, they did not get caught when arriving at RAF Brize Norton.

The C-17 Globemaster was on finals and Squadron Leader John Ackerman and his Air Loadmaster, Flying Officer Kate Bolton were thinking pretty much the same thing, final part of this mission, just hope we do not get stopped leaving the base. John made a perfect touchdown and they taxied to their normal hanger, once he had shut the engines down the little toe truck hooked up the Globemaster and proceeded to manoeuvre it backwards into the hanger. John said, well done you two and thank you, as always it is a pleasure to have you as my crew.

Kate stood up and said, I am going to get my kit, John said, once we have showered I will be buying, so I will see you two in the bar, they both smiled and Kate headed into the load area and John and Matthew picked up their gear and opened the side door and went down the steps. The ground crew saluted and said, welcome home sir, trust it was a good show, it was a great show thank you, and John and Matthew walked out of the hanger heading to the changing rooms. Kate found Victoria removing the jump seat, you did not need to do that Victoria, John and Matthew have left so we should be okay to leave now.

They picked up their kitbag's and Kate led the way to the side door and went down the steps followed by Victoria, the ground crew again saluted and said, welcome home Flying Officer, thank you Sergeant, they then turned and after checking the insignia on Victoria's flight suit, saluted and said, welcome to RAF Brize Norton Colonel, thank you Sergeant. She followed Kate and on the way to the changing rooms they passed several people and nobody asked any questions. They entered the ladies changing rooms and nobody else was in there, Kate said, so far so good and she picked a cubical and had a shower. Victoria laid out her dress suit and when she had dried herself off she got dressed, then she applied a little lipstick, eye shadow and sprayed on some perfume. Kate took one look at

Victoria and said, wow, you look fantastic, I take it the Spanish air force allow make-up and perfume, absolutely, we are far more civilised, they laughed and Kate asked, are you ready to enter the lions den.

It was 17:55 when the ladies walked into the bar, all eyes were looking at them, well what do we have here, one very drunk Flight Officer asked, before anybody could reply Victoria said, a Colonel, now show a little respect, because I know I have earned it. His eyes got very large as he realised what he had just said, sorry Colonel, he then saluted her, now put your drink down and go home before you get into trouble, yes ma'am and he placed his glass on the bar and left. John stepped forward and saluted but before he could say anything, in a very quite voice Victoria said, that is not necessary John. He only just realised who she was, he shook her hand and asked what would you ladies like to drink, they both asked for a red wine. He then introduced her to Flight Lieutenant Matthew Bailey, she put out her hand and said, pleased to meet you Flight Lieutenant, like wise Colonel, John then said, I take it you arrived with the other NATO personnel we have seen around the base, very observant Squadron Leader. Matthew stood up and said, it's about time I went home, will you give Kate a lift boss, certainly Matthew, see you in the morning, he shook hands with Victoria and walked out.

Lets sit at that table for a while before leaving, they sat down and John said, I take it you are who I think you are, well that depends on who you think I am, I see I am sinking deeper and you are not helping me Kate, Victoria and Kate burst out laughing. Victoria said, thank you for allowing me to stowaway on your aircraft, you are welcome. Now all we have to do is get you off the base, without being pulled over. The barman brought over a few bowls of nibblers and asked if they wanted another drink, yes please they all answered, same again ladies, they nodded and within a couple of minutes he returned with their drinks.

A fter we have finished this one I think we should make a move as I am sure Henry will be waiting. They finished their drinks and they walked out of the bar saying goodnight to everybody. John said, in this situation I am sure the protocol would be to put the Colonel in the front seat, Kate agreed, so they got in the car, he reversed out of his parking bay and drove towards the gates.

Please give us a big smile ladies, he pulled up at the gate and the guard walked forward and looked in the car, he saw a Colonel that he did not recolonise and guessed she must be part of the NATO personnel that were on the base, so he said, thank you sir and waved them through. Once outside they all breathed a sigh of relief, welcome to England Victoria. Thank you both so much, you are welcome, I do not know how I will ever be able to repay everybody that has helped me these last eight days. That is not important, now lets hand you over to Henry, he drove to The Chequers and parked next to Henry's car, they got out and John spotted Henry sitting at a table drinking coffee.

They walked up to Henry without him seeing them, and John said, will you please sign for the package I have for you sir, he looked up and with

a big smile on his face, stood up and shook John's hand, he then turned to Kate and hugged her and said, thank you. He looked at Victoria and she almost ran into his arms hugging and squeezing him. Would anybody like a drink, they all asked for a coffee, the waitress spotted that people had joined Henry so she came out and Henry said, four coffee's please.

He sat and just looked at the three of them chatting away about the poor guy in the bar like they had known each other for years. I have to say, she plays the Colonel part very well Henry, they smiled. When they had finished their coffee's John stood up and said to Kate, I think it is time we left as these two have a lot to talk about. They all got up and Victoria hugged and kissed John and Kate and once again said thank you very much, Henry put his arms around John and Kate and said to them, please give me a couple of weeks and I will be in touch, they said their goodbyes and John and Kate headed for the car. Henry said, I will just go and pay, I will be straight back, the waitress told Henry, that is £6.00 please, he gave her a ten pound note and said, thank you, thank you sir. He returned to Victoria and they linked arms and headed for his car. John was just reversing back, stopped, got out and opened the boot and handed Henry Victoria's kitbag, thank you, they waved and were gone. Henry opened the passenger door for Victoria, he then placed her kitbag in the boot, got in the car and said, time to start your new life.

I thought I started that more than a week ago Henry, no, that was just the transition from your old life to your new life. As he drove along the road Victoria told him that he had some very nice friends, and your sister is a beautiful caring lady, they have been so helpful. I think you are talking about Takahiro and Miyu, yes I am she answered. Are you sure you are not MI6 Henry, because this plan was put into operation very quickly and it was very efficient, it worked like clockwork. He just smiled and told her, it is not just the CIA that can make a plan you know, he pulled into the first lay-by that overlooked some of the estate and turned the ignition off.

She looked at him and said, this is a bit out in the open Henry, he laughed out loud and told her, just need to talk a little first. He pointed to part of the estate that could be seen and told her that this is where you will be living from now on. I do not see anything Henry, it is just fields, it is part of the family estate and my mother and father have agreed to you staying there. She just stared at him and said, what other surprises do you have in store for me, he smiled and said, just wait and see. He lent over and gave her a passionate kiss which she readily returned.

He started the engine and pulled out and drove along until he came to a little road which he turned on to, within fifty yards they came to an iron gate, Henry picked up a remote and keyed in a code and the gate opened, he drove through and followed the road for around two miles then turned on to an even smaller road lined with trees, not long and they stopped at the side of The Woodcutters Cottage.

This is your new home Victoria, she did not know what to say, so she got out of the car and Henry picked up her kitbag, held her hand and walked to the front door. He removed the keys from his pocket and gave

them to her, she asked him if it was locked, I am sure it is he replied, she put the key in the lock and turned it, she then turned the large knob and the door opened. She walked inside and saw a beautiful room with some fresh cut flowers in a vase and leaning against the vase was a white envelope, she picked it up and removed a card, it read, welcome to your new home, we hope you will be happy living here, lots of love, David and Alexandra, xxx.

This must be from the owners of the cottage, what kind people, David and Alexandra are my mother and father, and yes, they are very kind people. Oh Henry, he hugged her and they kissed, he then said, I am sure you want to look around. Yes please, she walked into every room and tears came to her eyes, this cottage is fantastic Henry I do not know what to say to you. You do not have to say anything other than, thank you, you are really the kindest person I know Henry James, I already know that, she smacked him lightly on his arm. How about you make a coffee while I go to the car, she walked into the kitchen and Henry went back to his car, he opened the boot and removed the bags that he got in LA, he returned and sat in one of the chairs at the table.

Victoria brought in the coffee and placed a cup in front of Henry and sat opposite him. He tasted the coffee and told her she had not forgotten how to make it, she smiled and shook her head, and I see you have not changed Henry, I never will. When they had finished their coffee's he picked up the bags and passed them over and said, I got these for you to start your new wardrobe. She took them and said, these are from Rodeo Drive, when did you go there Henry. Did you think that while you were flying all over the world enjoying yourself I should stay at home and just wait for you. She just shook her head and looked in the bags, and found, two dresses, four blouses and two pairs of tailored trousers along with a silk scarf, oh my god Henry, they are beautiful, she got up and walked around the table and gave him a very big kiss.

She sat down and told him all about her trip from the last time she saw him until he was asked to sign for his package. She could not speak highly enough of Takahiro and Miyu and Johnny and Bonnie they were the kindest people I have ever met in my life, they did not know me and they went out of their way to help me, such fantastic people, John and Kate were also great, I only saw John after we had showered and changed into our dress suits, and we walked into the bar, or as Kate called it, the lions den.

When she had finished telling him every little detail she again gave him another kiss Are you ready to meet the parents, she looked at him and said, I am ready for anything you want to do. Well lets go and see if Jessie has made us supper, they got up from the table and walked outside, she locked the door and they walked towards the main house. Henry told her, around the bend in the pathway is the family home, she stopped and looked at this very impressive manor house in front of her. I was born and grew up here, it is beautiful Henry.

They walked along the path and Henry said, lets go round the back, I

bet mother and father are sitting outside, Henry found them exactly where he thought they would be, they were both reading and drinking, red wine for Alexandra and whisky for David. I have a young lady I would like to introduce you to.

His mother and father stood up, this is Victoria Santiago, please meet my mother and father, Lord and Lady James. Oh, for heavens sake Henry, his mother stepped forward and hugged Victoria, please call us David and Alexandra. I am very pleased to meet you both, what is the correct way to greet a Lord, we are not on ceremony here Victoria, he shook her hand and said, welcome to Queensberry Manor.

Alexandra looked at Henry and asked him to please tell Jessie our guest has arrived. Would you like a drink before supper David asked, red wine would be very nice thank you. Henry found Jessie in the kitchen, hello Henry, have you brought your friend with you, I have indeed Jessie, very well, supper will be twenty minutes, please tell your mother, he gave her a hug and told her he would do that.

When he returned he found Victoria and his mother talking ten to the dozen, Alexandra was explaining that she will take her to get furniture and of course, you will need clothes because I am sure you did not bring very much. You are correct, I only brought the items I had with me in my suitcase in Miami, Miyu gave me a pair of jeans and a blouse with matching bra and panties. Henry has just given me, two dresses, four blouses and two pairs of tailored trousers, no bra's and panties Henry, no mother, I knew you would take Victoria to fill up her wardrobe and I did not want to take that away from you. They all laughed and smiled and Victoria said, you are all so kind, I have not just got a new name, my life has changed completely. Jessie walked out from the lounge and said, supper is ready ma'am. Oh Jessie, you do not have to say things like that in front of Victoria, Alexandra said.

Henry stood up placed his arm around Jessie and said, please let me introduce a very good friend of mine, this is Victoria, Jessie said, pleased to meet you Victoria, this is Jessie and she is a special lady, and I am sure she will look after you. Pleased to meet you Jessie, if you do not already know I will be living in The Woodcutters Cottage. I do know Victoria, and once you have settled in I will come over and see what you need, thank you Jessie. David said, let's go and see what Jessie has made for supper.

They walked through the lounge and this was the largest room that Victoria had ever seen in a family home, they followed Alexandra through to the dining room which had a table with twenty chairs around it along with a sideboard and a very large buffet server, and there was plenty of room for the staff to move around the table to serve a meal. Victoria also noticed the magnificent paintings on the walls of both rooms. Alexandra squeezed her hand and said, when Henry returns to London I will show you around, thank you Alexandra.

During the meal Alexandra said to Victoria, just let me know when you would like me to take you shopping, I especially did not get any more furniture because I thought it would be better for you to choose what you

like, which may not be what I would put in the cottage. I am sure it would feel more like your home if you choose. That is very thoughtful of you Alexandra, however, I must wait until I receive some money from the CIA. Oh, nonsense my dear, David said, you have the use of this cottage fully furnished, so all furniture costs are ours, and I will get my money back from Henry for any clothes we buy you Alexandra said.

Victoria's mouth dropped open and Alexandra told her, I am sure you would feel better if Henry bought your clothes than David and I. You are right again but I must speak to Henry first, that's not necessary Alexandra told her. Henry said, it's not a problem Victoria I will give you one of my credit cards along with the pin, what pin? In this country we use the chip & pin on our credit and debit cards, this means you no longer have to sign the docket, you just tap in your personal pin number. I guess the US will catch up soon enough.

After supper Henry said, I think we should get back to the cottage because we have a lot of talking to do, and he looked at his mother, Alexandra hugged Victoria and Henry shook his fathers hand and hugged and kissed his mother, David said, I feel the odd one out here, so he also hugged Victoria. They walked through the kitchen to say goodnight to Jessie and headed back to the cottage. You have been very lucky in your life Henry, I most certainly have, I cannot think of a better place to grow up at, than Queensberry Manor. When they got back into the cottage Victoria threw her arms around Henry and told him she could never have done this on her own and she has no idea how she will ever be able to thank him.

Just stop right there, sit down and listen to me. We have just done something that 98% of people would not be able to do, so do not feel bad that you are in the 98%, apart from any costs, I doubt that anybody in the CIA would have been able to pull this off on their own. So, stop worrying, just leave things to me for a little while longer, and when I have got everything in place, I will give you back your life, by that, I mean you will no longer be reliant on my family or myself and you will go where you feel it is safe for you to do so. She hugged him and kissed him and said, can we try out the bed, he smiled and said, that sounds like a very good idea, they walked into the bedroom and tore each others clothes off.

In the morning, Henry got up and made some coffee and when he returned to the bedroom Victoria was sitting up in bed smiling to herself, penny for your thoughts, I was just thinking that it is so quiet here nothing like New York, I was also thinking about my dad, I do hope he is alright now that he is on his own. Next time I am in New York I plan to make a point of seeing your father, once I have spoken to him I will make a decision whether to tell him the truth or just leave it alone. I would feel happier if he knew even if I could never see him again.

We will cross that bridge when we come to it Henry answered, for now, you must make a new life for yourself, my mother told me before I came to pick up my package, that now you are Spanish she will be able to offer you a job legally, which will mean you will meet people at work and also in

the local community, I know it will not be easy for you, however, for your own sake you must try. I know you are right Henry, but I am worried that I might be the cause of getting somebody killed, do not think like that, just start your new life and enjoy it, wherever it takes you.

We knew when we first became friends that our friendship would not lead to anything more than just becoming very good friends, I think we always knew that we would be able to rely on each other, however, a New York CIA Deputy Bureau Chief and a high profile investment banker would not be getting married. You are quite right Henry, although I did have some hopes at the beginning that it might go a little further, then reality stepped in and I came down to earth. They kissed and made love one more time and they both knew that would be the last time. Henry put on his track suit and walked over to the main house, showered and got dressed, he thanked his mother and she told him that his father left early to catch his train, I know he is hoping that he would see you for lunch on Wednesday, I will try mother but I could be in Australia by then.

Your friend is a very nice young lady Henry, I do like her and I will help and take care of her, thank you mother. I must go now and I am afraid I do not know when I will be able to get back. Just come when you can Henry and do not worry about Victoria, we will get on very well and before she knows it she will be working and meeting new people.

He hugged his mother and kissed her goodbye. He walked back to the cottage and Victoria was tidying up when Henry walked in, do you have to go now Henry, I am afraid so, I must keep my schedule as normal as possible for at least the next two months. I understand and I will always love you Henry, and I would do anything to make you happy.

Just make your new life work, and remember, not everybody gets a second chance, so make the most of it. He gave her one of his credit cards and told her the pin number and said, do not worry how much you spend because my mother will not. He then said, we should talk about José, would he have been told that you have been killed, eventually but maybe not yet and there is no way for me to find out, I will ask Jeff the next time I see him because I need to return to Nicaragua to speak with José and the builders, so I had better make a plan quickly.

They hugged and kissed and Henry got into his car, just before pulling away he said, write a letter to your father and I will deliver it personally the next time I am in New York. You may also want to write to Takahiro and Miyu along with their friends, as I plan to go and see them as soon as I can arrange it. I will do that Henry and leave it to your discretion if you give it to my Dad or not. My mother will take care of you and I will see you just as soon as I can, he then drove away.

Henry drove back to London and arrived at his Penthouse at 12:15, parked and went up to the lobby and after speaking to Benson he picked up his post and headed up to the Penthouse. Once inside he made a coffee and went to his office and started to open his post, nothing of interest, just a couple of bills. He phoned Lydia and told her that he is at home. She said, I will see you in two hours, he put the phone down and removed

the quotations that he had received from the Nicaraguan companies. He laid them out and went through them line by line making little stick-on notes against each item, he finished up with making his decision on the same one he had thought was the best when they arrived. He noted that the second one was also offering things in the grounds, like a yacht jetty, boat shed, garage, fences and gates, driveway and basic ground work. They had not given a price for these works so he sent them an email requesting a quotation, he also sent an email to the company that he had selected to do the renovations telling them that he was very interested in their quotation, however, he just needed to ask a couple of questions before making a final decision. He told them he was hoping to get back to the property within the next two weeks and he would contact them just as soon as he had a date.

Alexandra walked over to the cottage and found Victoria sitting in the garden, they greeted each other and Alexandra asked her how she was feeling, excited, frightened and worried, I cannot speak from personal experience, however, I am sure I would not be handling it as well as you seem to be. Now that both the men in my life have left, I can concentrate on showing you round and then talking about a position in the company for you, after that a little shopping for clothes and furniture.

It does not have to be in that order, maybe you might feel better if you had your hair done first, Victoria just looked at Alexandra as she took out her mobile and phoned her private secretary, the voice at the other end said, good morning Alexandra, can you please phone your local hairdresser and see if she can fit Victoria in today, that will not be possible Alexandra as they close on Monday's, I will phone tomorrow if that is okay, thank you Hillary, that will be fine.

I forgot, hairdressers are not open on Monday's, lets start by showing you round our family home and then after lunch we can start looking for some furniture, that sound great. You do not need to lock the door to the cottage, everything is perfectly safe here, I guess it's just a habit as you would not leave your door unlocked in New York City, we are safe out here in the country side. They walked arm in arm over to the main house and Alexandra said, lets start at the front door, this is really a magnificent house you have Alexandra, you are quite right Alexandra said, and showed her all the rooms and told her about the Earl of Banbury. She also told her that both David and Henry were born in this house, and as far as we can find out, the four previous generations were also born here. After the tour they went to find Jessie and asked if they could have a light lunch, will salad be alright ladies, they both said, thank you Jessie, would you like it in the garden, yes please Alexandra replied.

Lydia arrived at precisely 09:15, Henry let her in and gave her a peck on the cheek and said, good morning Lydia, she smiled. They went through to his office and settled down for two hours of intense work, Henry then asked if she would like a coffee, that would be very nice Henry, he went to the kitchen and when he returned with the coffee and said, if we have finished in here lets have this in the lounge, he placed Lydia's

coffee on a little table next to a chair and she said, thank you Henry. Have you managed to find a housekeeper Lydia, not as yet, although I have been to see one at the agency, she looked very nice and her references all checked out, it was when she opened her mouth, she had a very high pitched voice and an accent that would grate you every time she spoke. Please keep looking Lydia, I will.

Now this is your schedule for the next week, and she handed him a piece of paper. You fly out tonight for New York and return on Sunday evening. Roger will pick you up at 20:45, I would like you to make one change please Lydia, what are you wanting to change Henry. On my return to London I wish to stop over in Denver and only need about two hours so whatever you can manage, leave that with me and I will get back to you on that, she stood up and said, I had better be going, he walked her to the lift and when she got in he said, thank you Lydia.

Once on board Henry settled down to read the folders that Lydia had put together, all three were from recommendations, so he hoped he had time to find Joe. He was whisked through customs and headed to the Ritz Carlton, checked in and went to shower and change and went down to the restaurant for a meal. He felt happy and relaxed and looked forward to the week. Monday came and he headed to his first appointment, they were nice people and business was completed in less than four hours. He returned to the Ritz and once in his room he phoned Rachelle, JJ answered and told Henry that she was out of town at an auction. He sent a text to Lydia telling her the first one had signed up.

Thirty minutes later she replied with congratulation. He decided to go for a run around the park, saw lots of folk, however, nobody he knew. The next day was a replica of Monday and again he was finished before 13:00. He got up a little earlier on Wednesday and headed out to the park making sure he ran around the area where he knew Joe used to do his running. He was thinking that if Joe is still running he is not today, so he headed back towards the Ritz. Just before he got there he spotted Joe coming towards him, he decided to let Joe make contact if he wished to because he had three guys with him. At fifteen yards apart Joe spotted Henry and stopped jogging and Henry heard, good morning Henry, I have been wondering if I would see you soon. The three guys gathered round Henry who just looked at each one in turn, he turned back to Joe, put out his hand and said, nice to see you again Joe, I do hope you are keeping well. Joe shook Henry's hand and replied, as well as could be expected, do you have time for a long chat. I am afraid I do not even have time for a short one today, sorry Joe. Can we meet tomorrow same place Henry, no lets make it the first place I met you, I look forward to that Henry, we do have a lot of catching up to do. Two of the three guys were still standing in front of Henry, he looked them in the eye and asked, do we have a problem gents, sorry Mr James and they stepped aside. Henry went on his way and thought, something smells a little fishy.

He got back to the Ritz, had a shower and went down for Breakfast. He arrived at 08:30 for his appointment and was finished just after 14:30.

Eric Henderson asked if he would like to join Victor and our wives for a meal that evening? That is very kind of you Eric that would be very nice indeed. Where and when, Keens Steakhouse and would 21:00 be good for you Henry, that sound perfect Eric, thank you.

Henry arrived at Keens Steakhouse at 20:50 and was asked his name, I am joining Mr Eric Henderson's party, this way Mr James and he was shown to Eric's table where he was introduced to their wives. It was a pleasant evening and the steak was one of the best he had ever had. At 23:45 Eric said, I think we should call it a day, keep in touch Henry and maybe we can do this again, that would be very nice Eric, however, it would be my treat next time, your on Henry.

The next morning Henry got up at 06:00 as he wished to make sure that he was waiting for Joe, as he rounded the pond he spotted Joe about 100 yards away. Today there was only one man with him, when they reached each other Henry shook Joe's hand and said, good morning Joe how are you, good morning to you Henry and I am fine thank you. This is Fred one of my guys, Henry shook his hand and said, pleased to meet you Fred, you to Mr James. Fred turned towards Joe and said, see you in the office boss, Joe nodded and Fred just said to Henry, next time Mr James, and he left. Lets take a walk over here Joe, as they walked towards some trees Henry steered Joe to a bench under a couple of Cherry trees that had started flowering.

You do know about Amanda Henry, yes Joe I do, they sat down on the bench and Joe started to ask Henry what he had heard, Henry removed an envelope from his pocket and held it out for Joe, Joe looked at it. On the outside of the envelope Henry had written, are you wired, the reply came back, no, why do you ask. Henry turned the envelope over and again Joe read, I have a scanner would you mind if I run it over your track suit top, knock yourself out. Henry removed a small scanner and ran it over Joe's top, no bleeps so Joe said, are you happy Henry, I am Joe.

Now, you had better tell me what's with the cloak and dagger stuff. I am sorry I had to do that Joe, it was just a precaution and when you have read the letter you will understand everything. I am now going to get up and walk backwards and forwards along the path in front of you and if anybody is watching they will think I am on my phone. With that Henry got up from the bench and put his phone to his ear and slowly walked back and forth in front of Joe.

Joe looked at the envelope and wondered who could have given Henry a letter for him, he slowly tore it open and removed one A4 sheet of paper, Joe recognised the hand writing immediately, that of his daughter. He looked up at Henry with a tear in his eye, for anybody walking by and looking at them, one man was reading and the other was talking on his phone. Joe read in silence and Amanda gave her father the shortened version of what had happened to her. She told him her name had changed but did not give him her new name, she told him she no longer lived in the USA, but again did not tell him where she now lived. She told him she owes her life to Henry because without him she would be dead. Joe read

through the letter once more and knew that it was genuine and she was fine because she had signed it, your little princess.

When she was a little girl Joe was a little over protective, he smiled and thought, Amanda would say, just a little, is that all Dad. He told her that if she was somewhere that he did not know about and she was perfectly safe, if she needed to write to him she should sign her letter, your little princess. He folded it up very slowly and precisely so that he could regain his composure, he sat and waited for Henry to finish his imaginary call.

When Henry returned to the bench, Joe put out his hand and said, thank you Henry, I will be in your debt for ever. I did what anybody would have done Joe, that's not the way I see it. Just so that you know, I have absolutely no knowledge of what is in that letter. I suggested to her that she writes a letter to you on the understanding that I will decide if I give it to you or not. The letter is so you know she is alive and very well, I am sorry we could not tell you before now, because if you were being watched your grief would be natural. Was it Jeff that organised her relocation into the witness protection program, not exactly Joe. John Rizzo head of the CIA was not sure if the program had been compromised and felt she must go it alone, now to do that you need to have set something up before hand, so they did not know what to do.

I offered to help on the understanding that Amanda was happy to place her life in my hands unconditionally, by that I meant she would not know where she was going until she got there. I told Jeff, once I had made a plan I would contact him. We do have a meeting place that I can go to at any time and he will meet me there. He arranged for a CIA flight out of the US so there are no records of her being alive, because several of Jeff's agents know she is not dead, Jeff does not know where she has gone to once she was handed over to the first contact. She travelled with two further contacts before she finished up at her final destination. So there are only a very small number of people that know who she has now become.

I will need to go and see John Rizzo because the CIA are going to give her \$500,000 and they want to put it directly into her bank account. That is not going to happen, because if it did then there would be a paper trail leading to her and it would have been pointless in moving her the way I did. If he will not deposit the money in a numbered account or into an account that I control, then I will tell him to keep his money and anything she needs over her salary I will pay for. She is working Henry, she is Joe, she has found a job and she is very happy, upset in the fact she could not tell you or see you.

My god Henry you should not have had to do this on your own, it was for the best Joe, so just leave it at that. Now, if you would like to reply to her letter I will be jogging somewhere around the pond early tomorrow morning. At this time Joe, I do not want to give you anymore details until we both feel it is completely safe to do so, I understand Henry. I am hoping I can find a place that would be safe for you to meet her, that would be fantastic Henry and because you have done such a great job so far I am

more than happy to leave that to your judgement of when and where. Thank you Joe, I think I should be going as I do not wish to be late for my appointment. I will see you tomorrow morning Henry, you have a good day, you to Joe.

Henry signed up another client and was finished before midday. He returned to the Ritz and got changed into casual cloths, he then visited Belvedere Castle in Central Park. After that he decided to find a little restaurant and have a meal and retire early.

The next day Henry again got up nice and early put on his track suit and headed across the road to the park, he did two laps of the pond before Joe turned up. They shook hands and carried on jogging around the pond, about half way Henry asked is everything okay Joe, not sure Henry, I just feel somebody could be watching me. That is not good Joe, is it since we met yesterday, it is mainly when I look back since Amanda was killed little things stand out and could be of concern, or I could just be paranoid. You do not strike me as a man that gets paranoid Joe, never before Henry, in that case I would suggest you take this seriously.

Have you had any personal changes in you office Joe, one agent two weeks ago and one female filing clerk ten days ago. My question would be why, the agent was transferred because of a retirement, filing clerks come and go. I would check them both out, I have started to make my own discrete inquiries. If they had anything to do with the death of my daughter I would find it very hard not to blow them away. I understand that Joe, however, take the correct path, Joe just smiled, you are a good man Henry.

Is there anywhere we can get a drink of coffee Joe, two doors from your hotel Henry, they crossed the road and headed for the coffee shop. Once inside Joe pointed towards a table in the back of the room and they sat down. When their coffees arrived Joe gave Henry an envelope, whenever you get the chance Henry, it will be a couple of weeks, Joe just nodded. Now how are we going to meet again without being spied on and listened to, I have given that some thought Henry and I have not come up with a fool proof plan as yet, so until I can do that I will not be jogging in the park while you are in New York.

I will contact Bill an old friend of mine he joined the agency one year after I did, I will get him to check out these two new people in my office as I know I can trust him. Until then we will just keep missing each other in the mornings. They finished their coffee shook hands and left, Joe crossed the road and Henry entered the Ritz.

He got to his last appointment and they just wanted to sign up, Henry pointed out that this is not how he does his business, they told him they have had two recommendations about how you have increased their investments Henry, they have both been with you since the end of 2000 and they are very satisfied with you. We have ten million US dollars just make our money grow, now where do we sign. Henry did not see any point in arguing with them. He was back in the Ritz by 10:30. He phoned Lydia and asked if she could get him back any earlier, I will try, just give me

Henry James

twenty minutes. She phoned back in fifteen and told him, overnight tonight, see you Monday, thank you Lydia.

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Chapter 17

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rganise the renovation

fter their lunch Alexandra asked Philip if he would drive them to Oxford to do a little furniture shopping, certainly ma'am. They looked around several shops and Alexandra spotted a beautiful dining room suite, what about this Victoria, this is very nice Alexandra but did you notice the price, stop looking at price when you are with me, I have never shopped on price and refuse to start now. What do you think, is there enough room to move around once it is in, I am sure there will be. Alexandra called a sales girl and told her they wanted this, anything else ma'am. We will keep looking and if we see anything else I will call you, the girl told her she would be over by her desk making out the invoice. Victoria was looking at a pair of bedside cabinets, I do like these Alexandra, then you will have them. Look over there by the window, that chair looks divine and would fit into your bedroom perfectly, they looked on another floor but did not see anything else that caught their eye. Alexandra paid by cheque and told them where to deliver, we can do that tomorrow if that is okay with you, that would be perfect thank you young lady.

The next day Hillary told Alexandra that she had booked Victoria into a hairdressers in Oxford for 11:00, thank you Hillary, after coffee, Philip again drove them into Oxford and Victoria asked for her hair to be cut about five inches shorter and she would also like some highlights. Alexandra told her she would see her back here in a couple of hours as she would check out the clothes to save a little time. When she had left the hairdresser said, I have never seen you two ladies before, Victoria replied, my friend has her hair cut in London and this is my first time to Oxford, do you like our city, yes, I do so far, I think it looks very nice. I hope you will like your hair when I have finished and you will come back and I will become your hairdresser, we will see.

Alexandra returned at 13:15 and Victoria was just paying, Alexandra said, you look fantastic, thank you, she turned back to the hairdresser and said, I guess I will be returning in a few weeks, I hope so. Philip opened the car door and as they were getting in the car, he said, your hair looks very nice Miss Victoria, why thank you Philip. You look like a new woman Alexandra said, Victoria just smiled. Alexandra shook her head and said, it is no wonder that I shop in London, it is so difficult to find anything decent in this city. They did find a couple of very nice dresses and blouses and some jeans, not much Victoria, but it should keep you going until you and I manage to go shopping in London. It is fine Alexandra, I have more than I need for now, Alexandra smiled and shook her head. Can we go home please Philip, certainly ma'am. Once back home Alexandra suggested that tomorrow they could look around the estate and see what job she could find for Victoria.

At 20:40 the intercom buzzed and Henry answered, good evening

Parker, good evening sir, your driver has arrived, thank you Parker I am on my way down. He locked the door and got in the lift, when the doors opened Roger took his case and placed it in the boot, Henry got in the front and they headed towards Heathrow. On the way Henry asked, how's your son Roger, did he get lots of girls wanting to write their name and number on his cast, he did get quite a few, in fact more than he thought he would, that's great just hope his left arm will be perfect when the cast comes off, I am sure it will, and thank you for asking Mr James.

While waiting for his flight he phoned Takahiro, Miyu answered the phone, and Henry said, good morning Miyu, she replied good morning Henry, how are you, I am very well thank you, and how are you and that lucky man you are married to, we are both very well. Now Henry, how is your friend, she is fine Miyu and if she knew I was phoning you she would have sent her love, please give her our love the next time you speak with her, I certainly will. I am afraid you have missed Takahiro, Henry, he left early for a meeting with some top General. That's not a problem as I would rather speak with you anyway, and they both laughed.

What can we do for you Henry, I would like to meet up with you and your friends and spend a little time together, I would like that very much Henry, where did you have in mind, what about Australia, a smile came to her face and she said, that sounds like a very good idea as Takahiro needs a holiday even if it's just for a couple of days. How about you talk to him and see if he can make it for next weekend as I have to go back to Singapore, and on the way to Australia I have to go to Manila in the Philippines. Where do you go to in Australia Henry, Sydney this time and then I go on to New Zealand before going on to Los Angeles or San Francisco, I just cannot remember which one. You are going to kill yourself Henry, you need to slow down, in fact you need a good wife, you are quite right Miyu.

What about your friend Henry. She is a lovely girl Miyu, however, we both knew before this happened that our friendship will never go any further, and you young lady are no longer available. It would not go down very well if the Lord of the Manor said, he wanted to marry his Japanese sister. Because I cannot ask you I have asked another young lady to marry me, when is the date, not for a while Miyu, as she has turned me down, twice so far, she turned you down and you asked her again to marry you, what in the world is wrong with you Henry James. I will phone you just as soon as I have spoken to Takahiro, are you at home now, he laughed and she asked him, where are you. I am sitting at Heathrow waiting for my flight to Singapore, how long are you there for, one day and then I fly to Melbourne for one day, and then on to San Francisco for three days, returning to London on Monday morning. They are killing you Henry, what day will you be in Australia next week, Friday or Saturday. I will organise for at least a week, I will phone you tomorrow morning and tell you my plan. Miyu, you are one of the most fantastic ladies I know, and I know you do mean that Henry, until tomorrow Henry, goodnight Miyu, good morning Henry.

Miyu phoned her friend Bonnie, and they chatted for at least half an hour asking about everything without mentioning Victoria's name. Miyu told Bonnie that Henry would like to see them at the end of next week if possible, he has suggested to meet up in Australia and I think it would be very nice to spend at least one week together, I do hope that you and Johnny will be able to join us. Bonnie told Miyu that would be absolutely fantastic, I will phone Johnny's secretary and see if she knows whether he has anything on, that's a good idea Bonnie, I will do the same. Do you have anywhere in mind, no, not at all, anywhere will be great. I will phone you back at 12:00, and they said their goodbye's.

Both Bonnie and Miyu found out that their husbands did not have anything special fixed for next week so they both asked the secretary's to pencil in one weeks holiday in their calendars. Bonnie then started to search for places for them to stay for a week. She remembered that Johnny had told her that one place he had always wanted to go to was the Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort, in the Kakadu and Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory. This became her Achilles heel. Bonnie contacted the resort and asked them to hold three Villas for 48 hours, they agreed so she then phoned her special friend Miyu, when Miyu answered the phone Bonnie told her she has 48 hours to get Takahiro to agree to take leave from Saturday next week. I will promise to do things to him that he would only dream about, and if that does not work, I will threaten him with physical harm. They laughed and agreed to talk tomorrow.

That night they both spoke with their husbands and when Miyu told Takahiro that Henry had phoned and asked if they could see him next week, that is great I trust you told him for sure. I also told Bonnie that Henry would like to meet them and she also thought that was a great idea. So Bonnie and I thought it would be a good idea if we met up at the Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort, in the Kakadu and Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory. My god, you seem to have sorted it all out, I will just need to make sure I can get some leave, that will not be a problem Takahiro, as you do not have anything important in your diary. You know that as well I suppose, and you will find a weeks holiday pencilled in, I do expect something special Miyu, that will be a pleasure my love, I mean very special, so do I.

Johnny happily agreed providing there is nothing important happening, nothing is happening Bonnie replied, you know this how, I asked Jane and she looked in your diary and as you did not have anything important that week she pencilled in one weeks holiday, he just looked at her and then gave her a big hug. How come you so readily agreed, well, I thought I would very much like to see what Takahiro friend and Miyu's brother is like, I see Johnny, so it does not matter where I have booked, not really because I am sure you will pick somewhere nice. As we have never been there I would not know if it is nice or not, maybe I know the place, maybe you do, and maybe I will make you wait to find out, maybe I can seduce it out of you. Maybe you should try that, it might work, they kissed and made mad passionate love. Afterwards Bonnie said, that

definitely worked for me, we are going to the Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort. You little beauty, I know, Bonnie replied, they hugged and kissed.

The next morning Bonnie phoned Miyu and asked how did things go, we will be there, so will we, that's fantastic you had better tell your brother so that he can make arrangements. I will phone him straight after we finish talking. Henry had signed up his new client and had just got back to his room at the Raffles Hotel. Twenty minutes later Henry's phone rang, he answered by saying, I take it this is my sexy Japanese sister, you are terrible Henry James, and you are Japanese and very sexy and best of all, you are my sister, what am I going to do with you Henry, just make sure you keep me as a friend and a brother Miyu, that will never change Henry. The four of us will meet you next Saturday at the Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort, in the Kakadu and Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory, and she gave him their phone number in case he needed it. You have been booked in so you just need to turn up, thank you Miyu, please give my friend a big hug for me, bye Henry, bye Miyu, see you next Saturday.

Just before it was time for Henry to check out and depart for the airport he phoned Lydia, another new client for you Lydia, congratulations Henry, thank you Lydia. I need you to make a change to my scheduled next week, I am listening Henry, I need to fly into Darwin International a week on Saturday, and I will be staying there for one week, please tell me you are taking a holiday Henry, I am taking a one week holiday Lydia. That is fantastic Henry, I will make the changes later today, thank you Lydia. Henry was shown to his seat and as soon as they were airborne he settled down and went to sleep, when he woke and found out they still had one hour before they arrived at Melbourne, he asked for a coffee and a bottle of water and read Lydia's brief about the client.

Alexandra showed Victoria around the estate explaining what the estate produced, do you Play golf Victoria, yes, but my handicap is very high, what do you call high, twenty eight, we can work on getting that down if you would like to. I usually play at least once per week so you can join me once we have a position sorted out for you, thank you Alexandra. Alexandra asked Victoria what line of work would she be looking for, something completely different from what I was doing, that's understandable. How are your organisation skills, I have two and a half years of organising the New York Bureau, that sounds good to me, lets go to my office and talk a little more. Firstly, are you totally happy to live and work on Queensberry Manor, I believe I could never find a nicer environment to live and work in, not to mention, the owners are pretty fantastic people, so to answer your question, I am more than happy. That's great Victoria, let's go and introduce my new assistant to everybody that works here. We can sort out your salary and all legal stuff tomorrow, today you need to meet the rest of the staff, I will get Jasper Conway our club professional to build you a full set of clubs.

Alexandra introduced Victoria to everybody that directly or indirectly

works for her, she showed her all the different aspects of her job and told her that both David and Henry have been telling me I should get somebody to help me so that I do not have to put in such long hours. The problem has been that apart from the fact I have never really found anybody that, well lets just say, that I thought would be suitable. Victoria said, or is it the fact that you did not need the two of them to tell you what you should do. You understand me already. Anyway, with you arriving here to start a new life and you have told me you are more than happy to stay and live on Queensberry Manor this gives me the perfect opportunity to offer you the position of my personal assistant. This of course means we all win, I feel that you will be a major asset to the company, you will ease my ever increasing work load and it is totally my decision to employ you. David and Henry will be very pleased and they may feel they helped push me in the right direction, and you Victoria, get a very good start in your new life. Thank you Alexandra, you are a very thoughtful person and I will never let you down.

Henry found his transport and the driver drove straight to the Hilton On The Park, he checked in and read through his brief again, got in a cab and went to see the client. Again, his recommendation was from one of Henry's clients that had been with him since his first year as an investment banker. His client was so sold on Henry doing his business it would not have mattered what deal he put forward, they would have signed it. As it was 15:30 Henry sent Lydia a text telling her of their new client. He went back to the hotel and showered and changed and went people watching in the park for an hour or two, checked out and returned to the airport for his overnight flight to San Francisco. While waiting for his flight he phoned Rachele and told her he would be landing in San Francisco tomorrow morning and would she be able to spend some time with him, I would like that Henry, would you like me to come to your hotel on Friday afternoon. I would like that very much, will you be staying at the Ritz Carlton again Henry, yes I do like the Ritz, I will see you Friday afternoon then.

Jeff's computer told him that Henry James had checked in for his flight to San Francisco, from Melbourne Australia with Qantas, landing at 06:25 Friday. Jeff noted that Henry will be stopping in Denver at 17:20 Sunday, leaving at 21: 55 for JFK to connect with a British Airways overnight to London. He was pleased that he would be seeing Henry again as he would be able to find out how Victoria is getting on in her new life.

While Alexandra and Victoria walked through the grounds to the office, Alexandra asked her if Jessie had been to see her to find out what she needed, she did and what a very nice lady she is. Jessie is a wonderful person and she has been with me almost as long as I have been here, we are the same age and have grown up almost like sisters, she was the one that brought Henry up, as I had to take over the running of the company as soon as I married David. His parents died in a tragic accident and we brought our wedding forward so that we could make everything work. Henry love's Jessie like a mother, and I am not at all jealous, she took very

good care of him and probably did a better job than I would have done. You just let Jessie know what you need and she will arrange it for you, do I give her money with a list or will you invoice me at the end of the month. Neither of those things, you give Jessie your list and she will arrange to purchase whatever you have on your list, she will then unpack and place the items in the cupboards or fridge and that's that.

Victoria looked at Alexandra and said to her, you should know that nothing will ever happen between Henry and I, we will stay good friends but that is as far as our relationship will go. I know that Victoria, Henry told us when he came to ask for our help, both David and I like you very much, and wish to help you start your new life. You have given me a beautiful cottage to live in, surrounded by the most wonderful grounds and such lovely people, a job to die for and now you seem to have made me one of your family. I am unbelievable lucky, I just wish my Dad could visit me, maybe one day Victoria.

Henry landed and an FBI agent met him off the plane as normal and he was through baggage claim and customs before most passengers had left the aircraft. His transfer was waiting to whisk him to the Ritz, he checked in and went up to his room, he had a shave and a shower and was ready for his appointment. He met with the top people and found out that this company was very prosperous and the three top people were all young ladies. He found that a little different to all other companies that he had ever dealt with, a lot of companies had one or two ladies in the top positions but this was the first time he had come across the three top positions were all filled by young ladies. When he had put forward his offer they asked if he would step out to the outer office while they talked it over.

The secretary gave him a coffee and before he had finished it the door opened and he was asked to come back in, they all came forward to shake his hand and he was asked where do we sign. He told them his secretary would send them the final documents next week and he looked forward to taking care of their investments. He was then invited for dinner that night, he explained as nicely as possible that he could not make it as he already had a dinner engagement for tonight, they then said, next time you are in town give us a call, he told them he would and again apologised. As he was shaking their hands one of the ladies said, I trust this girl is worth it, he smiled and replied, me too.

On the way back to the Ritz he phoned Lydia, how did you get on Henry, I have a signed contract, congratulations Henry, thank you Lydia and I will see you in the office on Monday. Please make a note to ask me about a stop over in one weeks time, have a good weekend and I will see you on Monday, thank you Lydia. When Henry picked up his key card at the Ritz he was told, Miss Jacobsen has already arrived sir, thank you. He entered his room and they hugged and kissed then they showered together, while they were getting dressed Rachelle asked, do you ever stay in a hotel that we ranchers would stay in.

That is very hard for me to answer, because I have no idea what hotels you ranchers would stay in, well they would not be as posh as the Ritz.

Then my answer would be no, I do far too much travelling and I need a good nights sleep so I always stay in a five star hotel and fly first class where possible. You worry me Henry James, why is that Rachelle Jacobsen, because you are not like normal people, you always have to have the best, I cannot deny that. She gave him a kiss and asked him where he was taking her to feed her. I am taking you to Parallel 37, this is not a restaurant to feed you, it is an exquisite restaurant where you will Savour globally inspired California cuisine, it sounds wonderful Henry. Believe me, it is.

They only got up at 09:00 on Saturday morning, had a leisurely breakfast and Rachelle asked him what he had planned for today. Have you ever been to Alcatraz Island, Rachelle told him she had not, I have not either so what about we make a visit, that sounds good Henry. They got on the ferry and listened to a talk looked all around the island and checked out the cells, especially the bird man's cell. They had a great time more super food and lots of love making to finish off the day. On Sunday over breakfast Rachelle asked him, when are you going to give up this high profile job and join me raising horses, that could be some time off, and I could ask you, when are you going to give up your life of raising horses and become my wife. I do not know Henry, maybe never, if you wish to keep this lifestyle of yours.

Shall we take a ride on the Cable Car and then go to North Beach, you do know that it is not a beach at all Rachelle, no I do not, if it is not a beach then what is it Henry. It's the city's Italian Quarter, a neighbourhood of romantic European-style side walk cafés, restaurants and shops centred near Washington Square along Columbus and Grant avenues. You seem to be well read Henry, reasonably I guess, I take it you read that in one of the in flight magazines you see on a weekly basis, not at all. I do not read in flight magazines, if I do not have a brief to read, I sleep. Knowing about North Beach was because I had one of the best education's in the world, I attended Oxford University. Rachelle told Henry she had been on the Cable Car several times and I will give North Beach a miss today. I think I will take a slow drive home, but you should take the Cable Car ride.

They kissed goodbye and Rachelle set off to drive back to the ranch, Henry took a cab for the Cable Car station. After the ride had ended Henry got in another cab to go to North Beach where he found a couple of items he thought Victoria might like, as he was sure his mother would not find anything suitable in Oxford, she would have to take her to London. He returned to the hotel and had a light lunch took a shower and checked out, waiting for him was his transfer car to take him back to the airport. He checked in at the Delta desk and waited for his flight to JFK stopping over at Denver. A pop-up on Jeff's computer told him that Henry James had checked in for his flight to Denver. Jeff picked up his phone and said, I need a flight to Denver in the next hour, we will be waiting sir.

When Henry arrived at the Greek Amphitheatre just off 14th Ave, in down town Denver, Jeff was already waiting, as Henry walked past Jeff he said, 100 yards behind me, is he one of yours. Jeff replied, yes he is Henry. Henry stopped and turned around, before Henry could say anything Jeff

said, glad to see you are still as sharp as ever Mr Bond. They shook hands and walked over to a bench and sat down, how are you Henry, I am fine Jeff what about yourself, still cleaning up but other than that I am keeping well thank you. Okay Henry, you asked me here so I am thinking you have some news for me, I also have a couple of questions for you. Our friend has arrived safely in her new home and as far as I know she has already been offered a job. That's fantastic Henry, I will be seeing her in the next couple of weeks so I will be able to bring you up to date the next time I see you.

What questions do you have for me Henry. Are you absolutely sure her documents will stand up to scrutiny, absolutely Henry, they would stand up in Spain, so anywhere else will never be a problem. That's good to know, now, José your man in Nicaragua, does he know about Amanda, yes, I made a trip last week to explain to him what had happened to Amanda, during our conversation he asked me if you were with her when she got shot, I asked him who he was talking about, and he told me what he knew about you. I then told him I do not know a Henry James, however, I will check him out. He told me he is waiting for you to contact him so that he can keep an eye on the renovation works at a property you have just purchased.

I asked if he knew what your relationship with Amanda was, he replied by saying, I would say they were very good friends. I told him that it might be a good idea if he told you what had happened to Amanda, he said, he would take care of that the next time he sees you. That's good because I have to go and talk to the company that will do the renovations of the villa and wanted to know what José knows before going. Jeff then told Henry that a further twenty four terrorists had been arrested along with two more bomb making factories, one in France and one in Washington State. They shook hands and Jeff said, this meeting works for me so unless I feel we should change to another place I will see you the next time, keep well Henry and give my love to Victoria, I will Jeff, until next time. They parted and went their separate ways, Henry got in a cab and asked for Denver International Airport.

Henry slept most of the way back to London and Roger was waiting for him when he cleared customs, they shook hands and Roger asked, good trip sir, very good thank you Roger. I had a little time to kill in San Francisco so I finished up looking in some shops, I saw this and thought that young man of yours might like it. Thank you very much Mr James, whatever it is I am sure he will, it's nothing special Roger just a t-shirt. He will like that sir, Roger pulled up at the Penthouse and they both got out and Roger placed Henry's case at the top of the steps, Henry thanked Roger and Benson opened the door so that he could enter and asked if he had a good trip, yes thank you Benson. Once inside he had a shave and a shower, packed an over night bag and locked up the Penthouse and went down to the garage and got in his car and drove to the family home.

Henry arrived at 12:30, parked the car near the front door, picked up his overnight bag and walked inside, he was greeted by Philip who asked

if he was staying over tonight, I will be thank you Philip, please give me your bag Mr Henry so I may place it in your room, I will then take care of your car for you, thank you Philip. Do you need anything else Mr Henry, where do I find Jessie, I believe you will find her in the kitchen sir, he smiled and headed for the kitchen. He found Jessie teaching a new girl, he walked up to her from behind and placed his arms around her waist and kissed her on her cheek, good morning Jessie, good morning Henry, how are you.

I am working and trying to teach our new member of staff how to prepare this dish, so how do you think I am right now. I guess you are not happy with me, sorry Jessie, I did not realise I would be interrupting your teaching. However, in my defence, I wish to say, it is because I love you like a mother and did not stop to look what you were doing, I unreservedly apologise. You do not change Henry James, you can wriggle out of anything I feel that I should have spanked you more often when you were younger, too late now Jessie, and who is your pupil.

Henry please meet Anne our new employee, Anne this is Lord and Lady James son, you can call him Mr Henry, pleased to meet you Anne, pleased to meet you Mr Henry. When you have a chance Jessie, is it possible to have a coffee and maybe a slice of cake, I will see what I can do for you, I will be outside Jessie, I love you Jessie Williams, I love you to, Henry James.

He went outside and sat on the patio and just looked out at the garden and listened to the birds, he thought, I should come here more often. The new girl brought the coffee and cake and placed it on the table next to Henry, should I pour the coffee Mr Henry, that's okay Anne I will do that when I have eaten the cake, she turned to leave and he said, thank you Anne and I trust you will be happy working here, I hope so Mr Henry. When Henry had finished his coffee he got up and walked over to the Woodcutters Cottage, he knocked on the door but nobody came to answer, so he walked down to the golf course. He spotted Jasper and stopped to have a few words with him, how are you, very well Henry, how are you, fine thank you Jasper. I saw Christine about half an hour ago, I think she was looking for her mother, have a great day Jasper.

Henry walked into the office suite and headed upstairs to his mothers office, he knocked on the door and heard his mothers voice say, please come in. He opened the door and walked inside, three ladies were sitting there, sorry mother, I did not know you had company. Christine, it's been forever since I last saw you, how are you, she got up and they hugged and Henry kissed her on her cheek, you look fantastic and congratulations on your latest win, thank you Henry. He turned and said, hello mother and he went around her desk and gave her a kiss, he then turned and said to the third lady, I must say you look very similar to a friend of mine, although I think your hair looks much better than hers did, he hugged her and Victoria said, thank you Henry.

Alexandra told Henry that Christine had popped in to see her mother and just came up to say hi, Christine said, we must make a plan to play a

round of golf Henry, that would be nice Christine, I just need to find the time. I have a boy friend now Henry, that's great, do I know him, I do not think so as he is not from around here, where does he hail from, Perth, Australia, then you are correct I would not know him. He is my caddy right now, so we spend a lot of time together, that's very nice for you. I must go as my mum will be waiting for me, they all said their goodbyes and she left.

Henry sat down and looked at his mother and Victoria, you two seem to be getting on alright, how are you enjoying living at Queensberry Manor Victoria, I love it Henry, and I now understand, when you told me you had grown up in a fantastic place and you had your own cross country running track in the grounds, you said, nobody could have grown up in a better place. So have you settled in okay, perfectly, I have everything a girl could wish for when starting a new life. Alexandra, David and Jessie have all been fantastic to me and I have even started a job. That's great, where are you working, right here, I am working for your mother, Victoria has become my personal assistant, I am so pleased for both of you. From next week, I will be staying in London on Wednesday's and Thursday's when your father is working, and unless we have a major function on, I will not work on Saturdays either. I told you your life can only get better mother.

I also have some good news to share with both you, they looked at him and just sat and waited, I will be taking a holiday next week, will you be spending it here Alexandra asked, no mother. I will be spending it at The Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort, in the Kakadu and Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory of Australia. Alexandra said, that sounds exciting Henry, I hope it will be mother I am meeting Takahiro and Miyu along with two of their friends. Victoria said, you do seem to get your own way Henry, that's because I was spoilt as a child and I do not know how to take no for an answer.

I really hope you all have a great time, I am sure we will mother. Victoria said, how long will you be staying here Henry, must be home by midday tomorrow, then I will write a letter to both of them tonight, I am sure they would like that Victoria. Alexandra said, they are a lovely couple, so are their friends, Johnny and Bonnie, without both of them I may not be here now. I am going down to sit on the patio and watch who is teeing off, when do you finish ladies, Alexandra replied, whenever we feel like it, Victoria said, I need about half an hour, so you have your answer Henry, thank you mother I will wait for you.

When Henry had left her office Alexandra looked at Victoria and asked her, will Henry be spending the night in the main house or the cottage. Victoria replied, Henry and I have agreed, from now on when he stays here he will always spend the nights in the main house, he will visit me but will never sleep with me again. I am sorry for asking Victoria. I do have to agree with Henry that if I am going to embrace my new life then I must not cling on to my old life, I must move on, they both smiled and Alexandra thought, that must be hard for both of them.

When they had both finished what they had to do for the night, they

collected Henry and they all walked along the path back to the main house with Henry between them linking his arms with his mothers and Victoria's. They sat in the garden having coffee and Henry asked Victoria, so how come my mother offered you this job, before Victoria could say a word, Alexandra said to Henry, did we bring you up to have such bad manners that you would ask a question like that. Henry shook his head and replied, sorry mother I was not thinking, it is not just me you need to apologise to. I am very sorry for asking such a rude question Victoria, please accept my apology, it's okay Henry, it is not okay Victoria, he was not brought up to poke his nose into other peoples business, if you or I wish to tell him that is okay. Thank you for pointing that out to me mother, I will sit here quietly and wait for one of you to tell me.

Your father and I wanted to help Victoria start her new life, so I showed her round the estate and when I found out what she could do I thought it would be the right time to have a personal assistant. That is fantastic Victoria and no doubt, mother took you shopping, we looked in a couple of shops Henry and struggled to find much, so I need to take Victoria to London. Henry shook his head and said, you do not change mother, he then told Victoria that he thought her new hairstyle looked fantastic, thank you Henry, I am very pleased with it. Please excuse me ladies as I have to get something from the car, he got up and walked out of the room. Victoria said to Alexandra, I think you were a little hard on Henry, not at all dear, you are not his wife, girlfriend or even his lover, so he has absolutely no right to ask you a question like that, and he does know better.

When Henry returned Jessie was asking if roast beef was alright for the evening meal, yes of course Jessie, why are you asking, because Henry is home and he prefers roast lamb, well he might Jessie, however, you are preparing roast beef so roast beef is what he will get, you spoil him far too much Jessie. Jessie smiled and turned to leave and found Henry standing there, I like roast beef as well Jessie, I am pleased Henry. Henry gave Victoria a packet and said to her, I got you these when I was in San Francisco, she took the packet and said, thank you Henry. Inside she found two beautiful blouses and a very smart skirt, why Henry that is so kind of you and she gave him a kiss, he smiled and told her he thought he should get them because he did not believe his mother would find anything for you in Oxford. Alexandra said, they do look very nice Henry but where is the underwear to go with them.

This is where you are very wrong mother, do tell me Henry, it would not be correct for me or any other man for that matter, to give a lady items of clothing to wear that might make her feel she had to strip off her blouse and skirt to show what she looked like with the underwear on. You are quite right and I am very sorry Henry, I did not think before asking you, that is okay mother you are not the only one to make that mistake.

Victoria got up and said, she was going to the cottage to take a shower and try on her new clothes, please give me forty five minutes, Henry stood up and said, I think you will want to read this and he gave her the envelope

from Joe. When she had gone Henry and his mother had another coffee and chatted, she told him that Victoria was picking the job up very quickly and she is very pleased she offered her the position. So am I Henry said, and I am sure father is as well, he is very happy, especially when I told him I will spend two nights each week in London with him.

When Victoria returned the three of them went through to the dining room to eat dinner, the roast beef was done to perfection and afterwards they had rice pudding. During coffee Victoria told Henry she had finished a letter for her dad and tonight I will write to Takahiro and Miyu, and Johnny and Bonnie and give them to you tomorrow morning. Henry felt rather tired so he had an early night and said, he would be leaving around 09:30 in the morning and would not be back for at least three weeks.

He got up at 07:30 and found his mother and Victoria sitting in the breakfast room drinking coffee and talking about the things they were going to do today, Henry kissed them both and sat down and poured himself a coffee. Jessie brought the breakfast in, omelets for the ladies and a smoothie for Henry, they all said, thank you Jessie. After they had finished they said their goodbyes, Alexandra and Victoria headed for the office, Henry picked up the letters that Victoria had given him and went up to his bedroom to pick up his case. When he returned he went into the kitchen and kissed Jessie goodbye and told her he would not be back for maybe a month, she said, we will see you when we see you, in the mean time take care of yourself, you to Jessie. He got in his car and drove back to his Penthouse.

He made good time as there were no hold ups on the road and parked the car at 11:05, he collected his post from Parker and once inside he unpacked and sat in his office going over the latest contracts. Lydia arrived at 11:50 and told Henry she had changed his appointments for next week so that he could take a well earned holiday. She said, now, this week is overflowing, not enough days left to fit in all the appointments that I had made for you, so I have to make some changes. She told him what she had arranged and asked him, which of these appointments can we change without losing business. Not sure Lydia, however, I am sorry to spring this on you but I must go to Nicaragua tomorrow if possible. She smiled and looked at him and asked if it has anything to do with the Spanish Colonial, everything he replied, okay, then that moves to the top priority spot.

I will be able to get you an overnight to Mexico City with an onward flight to Managua, now how long do you need to spend in Nicaragua, one day should be more than enough. I know you think I am very good at my job Henry, however, I cannot work miracles, I will need time to sort this out for you. You need to go to Nicaragua tomorrow spending one day there, then be in Darwin on Saturday, that is correct Lydia, go and make us both a coffee and let me sort this out. When Henry returned with the coffee's Lydia told him the best she could do for him, overnight to Mexico City, onward to Managua, I can only give you six hours to do your business in Nicaragua. You must be back on a flight to Los Angeles at 18:30, then at 23:45 you fly to Brisbane to see a new client on Friday afternoon, flying

to Darwin Saturday morning arriving at 12:10, can you do this, I will make it work Lydia, then let me make the bookings.

While Lydia was making the changes to his schedule, Henry removed the quotations from his desk draw for the renovations to the Spanish Colonial, he started to make notes on some changes he wanted. Lydia put down the phone and turned to Henry and said, all fixed Henry, he smiled and told her she is the smartest investment manager in London. Is London the best you can come up with Henry James, and they both burst out laughing. If you would like to see some images of the Spanish Colonial you will need to sit at my desk, Lydia jumped up and said, I thought you would never ask, Henry just smiled. When Lydia had sat down at Henry's desk he started the slide show in the small town of Puerto Morrito, on Lake Nicaragua, when she had finished she turned to Henry and said, I hope you have chosen a good builder because it needs a lot of tender loving care. I do hope so Lydia, and I also have a man by the name of José that is going to oversee the work for me, he will report to me on a weekly basis so that I do not have to keep flying to Nicaragua to check on how the work is going.

That is very good news Henry and I am sure it will save you a lot of frustration. Would you like to see the plans for the work and an artists impression of what it will look like once it is finished, do not keep me in suspense Henry. He placed the plans in front of Lydia and explained the changes he wanted, it was only to the master bedroom as he was more than happy with what they had come up with for the rest of the property. When Lydia had looked at everything, she sat back and said, it will look better than it did when it was built in the 1530's, that is what I am aiming for Lydia. You do need to find a wife before showing her this property Henry, because some ladies would take advantage of you, Henry smiled and told Lydia that he is trying, she looked up at him and said, just try a little harder.

Roger picked Henry up at 17:55 for his overnight flight to Mexico City, both flights were on time and Henry arrived at Managua airport at 09:45. He hired a car and drove to Granada and met up with José at the Hotel Spa Granada at 11:15. Would you like a coffee before we go to see the builders José, as this would give me time to show you the plans, that would be very nice Henry as I have something else I need to talk to you about. Henry ordered two coffees and they sat down, Henry placed the builders quotations on the table and said, you mentioned you have something to talk to me about, so you talk and then I will show you the quotations.

The coffee's arrived and Henry waited for José, I am not sure how to ask you this question so if it comes out a little wrong please forgive me. I got the impression that you and Amanda were a little more than good friends Henry, that would be about right José. Having said that, we both know that because of the very different life styles we lead, we will never become more than good friends. Do you know what has happened to her Henry, what do you mean, happened to her. I am guessing that she has gone on an assignment, because her house phone has been disconnected

and her mobile just goes to voice mail. When did you last see her, I think it was the week after we were here.

I meet her in New York, why do you ask José. I am sorry to be the one to tell you this, but Amanda has been killed. Henry just stared at José and did not say anything at all, his mind was racing because he did not wish to start a string of lies. How did she die, she was gunned down by Al Qaeda, well the Al-Husseini family put out a fatwa on her and she was spotted in Miami. I will make a point of getting in touch with Joe next time I am in New York. José asked, who is Joe, Joe is Amanda's father and apart from being a very nice man, he will now be alone as he lost his wife last year to cancer and I need to see him and make sure he is coping alright. The only other thing I need to tell you is, I now report to the Miami bureau, I was only reporting to Amanda because she was the one that placed me here. I trust you are getting on okay with your new boss, yes, he is a good man and I have known him for several years, so I am sure we will get on just fine, thank you for asking.

Henry stood up and excused himself and walked a little distance in the garden away from José, José watched him while he stood under a Jacaranda tree facing away from him and wondered what was going through his mind. Henry stood there for five minutes and thought that was about long enough for this to sink in, he turned and walked back to José and asked if he would like to see the plans the builder had given him. That would be great to see what they had come up with, Henry spread the plans out on the table and proceeded to explain to José what he will be agreeing to today, as he will be asking for a change to the master bedroom. He also has many things to add for the grounds. José was impressed and said to Henry, I just hope I can make this work for you, I have it on good authority that you are the man in Nicaragua, so I have no concern about that, they both smiled at each other and Henry rolled the plans back up and they headed to the first of the builders.

They arrived at the first builders and Henry told them that he had chosen them to make the renovations to the inside and outside of the main villa. All other work on the property would be given to another building company. They thanked Henry for having faith in them and assured him they would not let him down. He then showed them the changes he wanted to the master bedroom and asked them if there would be an additional charge. They looked at the plan and talked amongst themselves and said, we will need to price the extra items that are needed to make this change. But we think there would be an increase for the work of about \$20,000. I would be happy with that amount, however, I would need that in writing.

I would also need an updated plan, along with a copy for José. We will have that ready within two days, that sounds more than acceptable, however, I have two questions for you. How long will the renovations take to complete, more talk between themselves and finally they said, 9 months. Henry asked, are you absolutely sure you can complete in 9 months, yes Mr James, we will work everyday on your property.

Henry looked at them for a couple of minutes and then said the following, I expect you to put that in writing. I in turn will send you a contract for your signatures, my contract will state, the amount of money you have quoted plus the amount of the changes I want you to make. The agreed length of time for completion will be 9 months and I will allow a further 3 months for any delays that maybe beyond your control. If the work is not completed within the twelve month period then I will deduct 5% for every month over the 12 months it takes you to finish. If you agree with those terms we have a deal.

José translated what Henry had just said, a big smile came to their faces when they found out Henry had not wanted to reduce their quotation. Henry extended his hand and they all shook on the deal. My second question is, after the signed contract how long will it take you to start the work, maximum of one week. I will get my barrister to draw up the documents immediately. Once you have started the work please deal with José for the day to day queries you may have.

Henry and José drove to the second builder and went through a similar process with them, Henry told them he had selected them for all external work that is not related to the renovation of the villa. He also told them of the additional work he wanted doing, a two story building complete with all external features the same as the Villa, this building should be 12m x 10m. The ground floor will be a garage, which must have three, 3m wide doors on the front. A section on the rear needs to be walled off with a door to the rear, the size should be 4m x 4m, this room could be for storage or a gardeners room for equipment for now, the door must be no smaller than 1.2m wide.

Once I decide what work area I will need I will come back to you for benches and cupboards. Once José translated and Henry gave them a sketch he had drawn up, they looked at it and then spoke between themselves, they then said, no problem Mr James, where do you want this to be built, about 50m to the right of the Villa in the clearing by the trees. The second floor will be a three bedroomed apartment for the housekeeper. Will you want this to be a basic finish Mr James, no, it must be build to the same quality as the renovations in the Villa.

They looked at each other and raised their eyebrows. I wish you to build a larger septic tank than the one you have in your quotation, and also I wish to have solar panels for electricity, both of these need to be positioned out of sight. The septic tank needs to be far enough from the house that the smell would not be smelt if it was being worked on. The next item I need is a jetty, it must be long enough to be able to moor a forty foot yacht, and close by the jetty I would need a boat shed for a small runabout. A paved driveway with some magnificent gates, the driveway must run down to the garage and then paving all around this building and also to the Villa.

A fence around a large part of the property, you will need to quote on a fence length per five metres, that way I would know what it will cost me, and I will come back to you regarding how much fencing I wish you to do.

They looked at the plans and talked together, then they said, we think the price for these additional buildings and driveway and pathways would be \$80,000, Henry asked what time frame are we talking about, total time for the work would be 6 months, plus the fence work.

I agree to \$80,000, as long as you agree to my terms. I will send you a contract for your signatures, my contract will state, the amount of money you have quoted plus the amount for the changes I want you to make, the agreed length of time for completion will be 6 months and I will allow a further 3 months for any delays that maybe beyond your control. If the work is not completed within a 9 month period, then I will deduct 5% for every month over the 9 months it takes you to finish. If you agree with those terms we have a deal, José translated what Henry had just said, they shook hands and said, we have a deal Mr James. Henry then asked if planning permission would be a problem and after José had translated they laughed and explained that this is Nicaragua and not England, there would not be a problem.

Henry then told them the same as the first builder, please deal with José for the day to day queries you may have. They all shook hands again and Henry and José drove away. Henry dropped José off at the hotel and he got back to the airport in good time for his flight. The flight to Los Angeles was on time and he also had a nice meal on this flight, he boarded the Qantas flight to Brisbane and as per normal, he settled down to sleep. He woke up at 08:35 just one hour before landing in Sydney, he had a one and a half hour wait for his connecting flight to Brisbane, landing in Brisbane at 01:30.

As Henry came out of customs he spotted a driver holding up a board with his name on it, he introduced himself and the driver said I will get a trolley sir, because Henry was taking a weeks holiday and then business in The Philippines, New Zealand and America before returning home, so this time he had two large suit cases and not just one. The driver loaded the cases in his boot and said to Henry, Hilton sir, I do believe that is where I am booked in. Is this your first time to Australia sir, no, however, it is my first time in Brisbane, are you here on holiday sir, no, this is a business trip, I trust you will have a fruitful meeting, thank you. They had the rest of the journey in silence. Henry checked in and once in his room he had a shave and a shower and thought, that's a great power shower.

He went down to the restaurant and ordered a chicken salad and started to read the file that Lydia had given him on the prospective new client. He arrived ten minutes early for his meeting at 15:30. He was shown into the boardroom and found eight people waiting for him, he found them all to be very pleasant and they asked many direct question's that Henry was more than able to answer, after one and a half hours he was asked to please give them the room so that they could discuss his proposal and make a decision. The CEO showed him into the outer office and the secretary asked if he would like a coffee, that would be very nice thank you.

He had just finished his coffee when the door opened and he was

invited back in, they were all standing and they told him, he had his first client in Brisbane, he thanked them for their business and he explain that Lydia his personal assistant would send the contract, they shook hands and Henry left them. Due to the traffic he only got back to his hotel at 18:30, he went up to his room and decided Lydia would have just got to work so he phoned her. Good morning Henry, how are you, I am very well thank you Lydia, and how are you, I am great, because I am not going to be bothered with any requests for at least a week from you.

He just smiled and said, thank you for all you do for me Lydia I am very grateful you know, she smiled and replied, I know you are Henry. How did your trip to Nicaragua go, very well thank you, met up with José and spoke to both the builders and they agreed to my terms, so I must phone Sir Randolph to draw up contracts for them when we have finished. Oh, before I forget, we have our first client in Brisbane, congratulations Henry, it's not just me Lydia, it is all the information you put together in the files you give me, lets say we make a good team Henry. Now, make sure you have a great holiday with your sister and her friends and you can tell me all about it when you return, I love you Lydia and I love you Henry, I will see you in about three weeks.

Mary answered the phone and said, hello Henry, where are you phoning from today, Brisbane Mary, you do far too much travelling Henry, I am guessing you wish to speak to your Godfather, Henry smiled and said, yes please Mary. How are you my boy, very well Sir Randolph and how are you, could not be better my boy, I have just won a murder case so I may take tomorrow off, now, what can I do for you Henry. Henry told Sir Randolph the discussions he had with the builders and asked him to draw up the contracts, I will do that straight away and they will be given to the courier before midday, thank you Sir Randolph, not to mention my boy, and do not leave it so long before you come and see us next time, I will try.

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he Australian couple

The Qantas flight to Darwin would take four hours so Henry did a little work for Lydia which passed the time away and before he knew it the captain was asking the crew to take their seats for landing. Henry put away his laptop and looked out of the window as he had never been to Darwin before, he cleared the airport very quickly and found a taxi, where to mate, The Seven Spirit Bay Eco-Wilderness Resort thank you. On holiday mate, yes I am and looking forward to meeting up with some old friends and family, it's a fantastic resort so you should have a great time, I do hope so. It was 17:45 when Henry checked in, he asked if his friends had arrived and the receptionist told him they had been here since this morning and I think you will find them by the pool, thank you. A porter took Henry's suit cases to his villa and Henry locked his laptop, passport and wallet in the safe, he then headed for the pool.

They had a nice pool and the area around the pool had sunbeds with umbrellas along one side and Jacaranda trees along the other, he spotted Takahiro sitting at a table with another man, Henry guessed that must be Johnny, he headed towards them. When Henry got within ten yards of them, Takahiro saw him and jumped up and moved towards Henry, they hugged and Takahiro said, it's been far too long since we last saw you, I know you are right my friend, we must make a plan to see each other more than once a year.

Please forgive my bad manners Johnny, this is my very good friend and brother-in law, Henry James, Johnny Weston and his wife Bonnie are our only Australian friends. Johnny stood up and shook Henry's hand and said, nice to meet you Henry, likewise Henry replied. So you are Miyu's brother, guilty as charged and I must tell you that I have heard what a wonderful man you are. Well that's not quite true, I was told you are a wonderful couple, I understand Henry as I have heard a few things about you from Takahiro and Miyu. Well I hope most of it was good, as for the rest just take it with a pinch of salt. Where is your sexy wife Takahiro, Miyu and Bonnie have gone to the toilet, the same the world over, they have to go in pairs, the three of them laughed. A voice from two tables away shouted, Henry, he turned and found Miyu running towards him, she almost jumped in his arms, they hugged and kissed and she scolded him for not coming to see them before. Bonnie said, I take it, this young man is Henry James, Henry let go of Miyu and Takahiro said, please meet my brother-in law and my best friend. Henry James, Henry this is Johnny's wife Bonnie. Henry put his hand out to shake Bonnie's hand, but Bonnie said, I think I know enough about you Henry to get a hug. Henry smiled and stepped forward and hugged Bonnie and kissed her on her cheek. What would you like to drink Henry, just water thank you, as it is a little early for anything else.

When they all had a drink they sat talking about what they should do this week, Bonnie had a list of all the activities and started to go through them, you are the one that got us all here Henry, so you should have first choice. I am so happy to be sitting here with two of my best friends in the world and two people that I hope will become very good friends, I am taking my first days off since Christmas, so I will go along with whatever you want to do. Bonnie said, your first days off since the two weeks you have at Christmas every year, and it is only for one week Henry. No wonder Miyu said you are working yourself to death. Bonnie continued, where did you go last year Henry, I did not have a mid year break last year. Since Christmas I have been working most days, I get a couple off here and there. But you get every weekend off Johnny said. I wish, most times I am flying on Saturday or Sunday so I can meet the client on Monday morning, you are pulling our legs Johnny replied. Henry just smiled, and replied, I am not touching anybody's leg never mind pulling it.

What I am having a major problem with Henry, so I ask you to please explain to me why in the world did you ask this young lady a second time to marry you. She asked for more time, and I gave her more time, and she has again asked for more time, and you being the perfect gentleman agreed. If it was anybody else asking I would tell them to mind their own business, but I cannot say that to you Miyu. I know Henry and that is why I can take some liberties, he just smiled, what you need to do, is to forget all about her, just write her off and go out and find another beautiful young lady and get laid. Getting laid as you say, has never been a problem. Everybody burst out laughing, and just to point out to you, you are married to one of my best friends and you are also my sister, so you are off limits.

Victoria is a beautiful young lady, Bonnie said, Victoria is a special young lady Bonnie, so what is wrong with asking her. I feel like this is an interrogation you two are conducting and I have no way out other than to answer your questions. So let me explain to you and we can then get on with our holiday. Victoria and I met in September 2002 ten months before I met Rachele, we met on the subway in New York City, she was on her way home from the gym and I was returning to my hotel, of course, she had a very different name back then.

To cut a long story short, we met two days later while jogging in Central Park, she was with her father and I as always was on my own, we chatted as we jogged and when we got level with the Ritz Carlton I asked her if she would like to have dinner with me, she said yes, and the rest as the saying goes, is history. We had some great times together, however, we both knew back then, and we have also chatted about it a couple of weeks ago. Our friendship could never become anything more than good friends. How did Rachele feel about Victoria, Miyu asked, Rachele did not know about Victoria, however, Rachele has always made it perfectly clear that as long as we are not engaged, she is not concerned who I see and what I do. Victoria knew all about Rachele and did not have a problem with that at all.

This seems like you want to have the best of both worlds Henry, a girl in every port so to speak, you have what most married guys would think of, as the perfect life style Johnny said. I am sure that is a correct statement Johnny, however, I can assure you that flying around the world as often as I do is not as exciting as most people think it is. Let me tell you, since the last week in March I have slept in my own bed once and at the family home twice, as Miyu has said, I do far too much travelling and I would like to settle down and get married and I guess have children some day. Bonnie said, you have not told us why you cannot marry Victoria, Henry.

Victoria was the deputy chief of the New York CIA Bureau when I met her, now this is a position that you need to have a low profile. Since her new identity she needs to stay completely under the radar. At present I have a high profile job, this is because I need to maintain a high profile in my profession, Let me tell you something about my family Bonnie, as you may not know everything. I was born into an Upper Class English Family, my father, Lord David James owns Queensberry Manor just outside Wantage in Oxfordshire, England. The day my father dies, I will become Lord Henry James, I will have to move into Queensberry Manor and take over his duties, and that is a very high profile position, Victoria should definitely not become Lady James. Bonnie then said, I now understand why she cannot become your wife Henry, one after the other they all agreed.

They sat in silence for a few minutes and then Henry said, I have a letter for the four of you please excuse me and I will fetch it, he got up and walked towards his villa, his friends just watched him go. Bonnie was the first to break the silence, he works all hours God sends, I do not think he his looking forward to becoming Lord James, and I think you have judged him unfairly Johnny, his life has been set out for him since before he was born, that's got to be very hard. Henry returned with the letter that Victoria had given him, she had told him it was for all four of them, so Henry decided to place it on the table saying this is for all of you. Miyu said, I think you should read it out loud to the rest of us Bonnie, just as long as there is no address inside. Bonnie picked up the envelope and started to open it, Henry said, I will go and find out if they have a table for us for dinner tonight. Bonnie removed the single sheet of paper and smiled at her husband and their friends and then started to read.

Dear Takahiro, Johnny, Miyu and Bonnie,

I wish to thank all four of you for the kindness and the help you gave me, not one of you knew me before we met and to show a stranger so much love and kindness is very hard to find nowadays. You all put your lives on the line for me and to say, thank you, just does not seem enough, I will always be grateful to you as you are such special people, I do hope and pray we will always be friends and one day soon we will be able to meet up again under better circumstances.

Henry has found me a wonderful place to live. Henry and I will always remain friends, because of what happened we do have a special bond, however, we both know our friendship will no longer have the special

benefits we shared for so many months. I have to agree with Henry, for my new life to succeed I must let go of the old one and fully embrace the new one, it's hard to do, but it is the only way this will work.

I have started a job now, which is fantastic and everybody is so kind and nice and very polite, I am the personal assistant to one of the owners, so it is up to me to make sure my life moves forward.

The next time I see Henry I will ask him what's the best way for me to send you letters. I do hope you all have a fantastic holiday and I am sure that Johnny and Bonnie will also become close friends with Henry, he really is a great guy and I know I may never find another man as kind, considerate, thoughtful and generous as Henry, he really is one in a million. I will write to you again after I have spoken to Henry.

Just one request for Johnny, please thank Squadron Leader Jessica Wilson for me, Jessica was very helpful and considerate to me. I do not know if she has spoken to you regarding an incident at the Berlin Air Show. Jessica and I went out for a meal and as we were getting into the taxi to return, two guys tried to pick us up, one guy got a little verbal and threw a punch, I explained very nicely to him that this was not going to work out for him. Anyway, when we got back to our Portacabin Jessica thanked me and said, she wished she could defend herself like that. I told her to speak with you because I am sure you could arrange some self defence classes.

If the worlds best Air Force cannot manage to do that, just come and pick me up and I will give the classes myself.

All my love,
Victoria,
xxx

Bonnie folded the sheet of paper and placed it back in the envelope, they looked at each other, and Miyu said, you just do not realise what sacrifices they have had to make. I bet she would give the classes if she could, and I wonder if one of them will ever tell us where she lives, Johnny said to no one in particular. Once more they sat in silence with just their own thoughts. Henry came back and told them he had made a reservation for 20:30, they looked up at him and Takahiro said, that's in twenty two minutes Henry, so we can make our way to the restaurant.

They took their seats at a round table in the outside part of the restaurant, Miyu made sure she put Henry between herself and Bonnie, they all placed their food and drinks orders and sat and waited. Henry said, now that I can get a word in I would like to start by thanking all of you for helping Victoria, you two especially because you did not know either myself or Victoria, which tells me the four of you are very close friends. I hope that you might consider adding me to your circle. Bonnie said, that is under consideration Henry, and it is looking positively good. Still a little way to go yet mate, Johnny said.

They all laughed and Henry continued, I would like to know what I can do for the four of you, as a thank you, absolutely nothing, Takahiro said. You are my brother in-law and one of my best friends and it was a

pleasure for Miyu and I to give something small back to you. Takahiro you have never owed my family or myself anything. Oh yes we have Henry, and Miyu threw her arms around Henry and said, we are Japanese and honour is a major part of our lives, never try to take that away from us Henry. I would never try to do that Miyu, however, you should also realise that honour is also a big part of my life. If I give you my word you do not need to put anything in writing, as I am a man of my word and I would call that, honour. She hugged him and agreed he is an honourable man.

So back to my question, what can I do or get for the four of you, and do not say, nothing because that is unacceptable. Johnny said, sorry Henry but I agree with Takahiro, we do not want anything, other than you are now in our debt. You just shout when you wish me to repay my debt, that's fair Henry and we will if we feel you can help us. Henry stood up and shook the hands of Takahiro and Johnny, he then bent down and kissed Miyu and Bonnie and said, sealed with a kiss. Now, unrelated to Victoria, I could help you two right now.

Apart from several sports, one of the only things I am good at is making money, I have done it everyday since I left universality and joined this small investment bank, I do not know anything else, unlike you guys, I cannot fly a military jet. The food arrived so Henry stopped speaking and waited for everybody to start their meal, once the waiter had left. Bonnie looked at Henry and said, we are all waiting patiently to hear what you want to offer us. I know I can make you a lot of money, surely we need a lot of money to make a lot of money Johnny said. Well, it is true that the more you start with the more I can make for you. Johnny said, I know nothing about investments so I would not know what to do.

That's my point, everyone to his own, you would not have to do anything, I would make the investments. How much would we need to invest for you to make us money, Bonnie asked. You tell me what amount you would be happy to invest, we do have some money saved and we try to add to that every month, we plan to build up a nest egg for when Johnny retires. How sure are you that we would not loose it. 100% sure Henry replied, Bonnie said, nobody can be 100% sure Henry. Well, I can, because I will guarantee that you will not loose one penny, no investment banker gives a guarantee Henry. If you were a client of mine I would never give you a guarantee, however, you are not a client, you are my potential friends, so I give you my word that you will not loose even one penny. I have been doing this job for four years now and not one of my clients have lost any money, that is unheard of in investment banking and the reason is simply the way I work. I do not make dodgy investments.

I would plan to make the same investments that I make with my own money, and over the last four years I have increased my investments by 8% the first year, 19% the second, 38% the third and I am on target to surpass that figure this year. Henry looked around the table and then said, you should all close your mouths, as you look like you have seen an extraterrestrial. Miyu and Bonnie squeezed his arm and they all smiled. Do not make a decision today, talk about it and most definitely sleep on it, that

is my offer, if you wish to take me up on it, it will be my pleasure to make money for you. They finished their meals without another word being spoken.

They had coffee after the meal, Takahiro and Johnny had a brandy, do you drink Henry, I have a red wine now and again Bonnie, me too. I am thinking that Johnny and I are going to think about your offer tonight and I am sure we will give you our answer tomorrow morning. That is more than acceptable Bonnie, shall we meet up by the pool tomorrow morning, they all agreed, Henry said he was tired so he was going to call it a night. He shook Takahiro and Johnny's hand and kissed the girls goodnight, he turned and headed for his villa. Johnny asked Takahiro if he is confident that Henry will keep his word, absolutely. Henry is an honourable man and you can rest assured that you will not lose one penny, that's what he said, and I believe him. They finished their drinks and Johnny and Bonnie kissed their friends goodnight and left.

At 07:00 Sunday morning the four of them found Henry swimming all on his own, they sat down and watched Henry doing another length, just before he made his turn they all said, good morning Henry, he never made the turn, he looked up and said, what a glorious morning it is. You swim a lot Henry, not really, I swim when I get the chance, it's usually in a hotel swimming pool. Johnny removed his shorts and T-shirt and said, lets see how good a swimmer you are Henry, Johnny dived in and swam off. Henry pulled himself up and sat on the side of the pool watching Johnny. When he came back Johnny said, best of twenty lengths Henry, is that a challenge Johnny, you bet it is and I am on my third length already. Bonnie said, that's not fair Johnny.

Henry stood up and said to Bonnie not to worry, I do like a challenge, he dived in and when Johnny had completed ten lengths Henry was two yards behind him, he then kicked his speed up a notch and passed Johnny and started to pull away. Henry completed the twenty lengths as Johnny was finishing his eighteenth, that was very impressive Henry and if you get out of the pool I have a prize for the winner, Miyu said. Henry got out and offered Johnny his hand and helped him out of the pool. Miyu and Bonnie walked up to Henry and gave him a big hug and a kiss, when they stepped back their blouses were very wet and Henry asked if this was the wet T-shirt completion. They looked at each other and giggled like school girls. You are very fit Henry, I did not think you would catch me let alone beat me by two lengths, you should not have made it a challenge Johnny. How many lengths had you swam before we arrived, no idea as I was not counting. They dried off and Henry said, I am just going to take a shower and then it will be time for breakfast when I return, he walked off to his room.

As the couple sitting two tables away walked past them, the man said, thirty five, Takahiro asked the guy, thirty five what, the number of lengths your friend had swam before he took up the challenge. My God Johnny said, he is a different kind of man your Henry, I told you so, Miyu replied, he is the best of the best. Johnny said, I had better get the chlorine washed

off and put on some dry cloths before breakfast.

Henry came out of his villa at the same time that Johnny came out of his, as they walked along the path towards the restaurant Johnny said, Takahiro told us you are a very competitive person. Henry threw up his hands and replied, guilty as charged, and would you take on any challenge, pretty much. When you say pretty much, are there some challenges you would not accept because you would obviously loose the challenge. Henry smiled and replied, the reason I would not accept is not because I may loose the challenge, it would be because I know I would make such an ass of myself. Johnny burst out laughing as he understood nobody wants to look like an ass.

When they got in the restaurant the others were waiting, sorry to keep you waiting Henry said. They all went to the buffet and got their breakfast and sat down and started to eat. Johnny looked at Henry and told him that he and Bonnie would very much like to take him up on his offer. That's great Johnny, I just wish to know how much you wish to invest. We have come up with the same amount Johnny said, Henry waited then Bonnie said, I hope our amount is not too little for you but it is all we can invest at present, we can come up with \$50k US dollars Bonnie said. That's more than enough for me to make you a nest egg over the next five to ten years. Do you want me to make a contract between you and myself, do not insult us Henry, we will take you at your word, just tell us how we give you the money. I apologise Johnny.

I will open a bank account in your names in a bank in Singapore, you can then deposit funds into your account. I will ask the bank to enclose a document for you to sign, this will give me the power to invest your money. I will make up a balance of your account the first or second week of December each year, you would then be able to see the percentage your balance had increased by. If this is acceptable to you, all I will need is your full names and address so that I can arrange with the bank manager. He stood up and said, once you shake my hand we have a deal and that deal I will stand by. They stood up and Johnny shook his hand, Bonnie kissed him, so we have sealed the deal with a kiss, they all smiled and sat down to eat.

What do you want to do Henry, I am happy to go with the flow, I am on holiday and enjoying every minute of it, so you pick. Bonnie said, I would like to go to a wild life park, everybody agreed, so Johnny went to reception to enquire. Johnny returned and told them that they can go to the Charles Darwin National Park as it is only a short distance away, they all got in the vehicle that Johnny had arranged and the driver drove them all around the park and they spent the day looking at wet lands and mango swamps and the WWII Display. The area was part of a network of military sites established during the development of Darwin as Australia's World War II northern defence line. The bunkers and shelters in the Park were used for storage between 1944 and the mid 1980's.

After that they went to The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens which they all found very interesting, they also saw a pair of Rufous Owls

there. On Monday they went to the Territory Wildlife Park, where they saw Water Monitors, Fresh Water Crocodiles, Wallabies, Cormorants, Pelicans and even Jabiru. At Ooloo Sandbar they saw Whipray's and Spitting Archerfish, they had another tiring day and when they got back they spent an hour in the pool. They showered and had a great meal and decided to have an early night.

Tuesday Bonnie spotted Johnnie talking to a group of ladies and she was sure she had seen one of them on the base. When Johnny returned he told them he had bumped into Corporal Dixon, I am sure I have seen her on the base Johnny, you may have, she is one of our military police officers. She collects money for a battered wives charity and it is their annual dinner of the Northern Territory branch Friday night. Are you up for another challenge Henry, because after the defeat I suffered in the pool I would like the chance to get my pride back. What challenge did you have in mind Johnny. A dancing challenge, that is as long as you feel you will not make an ass of yourself, and they both laughed.

I will take up your challenge just as long as I can find a dance partner, that's fair Henry. I have found three judges so this would be done professionally. Where did you find the judges Johnny, lets just say I have my ear to the ground, we will be judged on three dances. So it would be up to each of us to pick the dances we feel gives us the best chance.

I will look for a partner and let you know if I am able to accept your challenge, I look forward to making amends. Just one thing Henry, the judges are more than happy to offer their services at a cost, there is always a catch Johnny, the looser must pay \$250 Australian dollars into their charity. I just hope you are happy to pay that amount Johnny, you must be joking Henry, I intend to win this one, so do I mate.

They had another great lunch and they had their coffees sitting by the pool, a couple walked past and Henry said I think I will do a few lengths in the pool, are you going to join me Johnny, not today Henry, Bonnie and I have something to talk about, is that what it is called now a days Miyu said, and started to laugh. Henry got up and went to his villa to change into his swimming trunks. When he returned Johnny and Bonnie had left, he smiled at Takahiro and Miyu and dived into the pool and set about doing a few lengths. Henry had put in twenty two lengths and decided that was enough for one day and got out. Takahiro asked him if he would like another drink, not right now thank you, I am going to take a shower, however, I will take you up on your offer when I return.

He left and headed for his villa, thirty minutes later he returned and Takahiro was sitting on his own. Henry said, I am looking for Miyu as I need to ask her if she would be my dance partner, Bonnie came and said she wanted to talk to her and they both left, no doubt some girlie thing. I am sure they are in our villa Henry. I will wait, that is not necessary as I am sure they must be finished by now, they left a couple of minutes after you, just go and find them Henry. If you think it is nothing important I will.

Henry knocked on the door of Takahiro's villa and Miyu answered the

door, hello Henry please come in, thank you Miyu I need to talk to you. He followed Miyu and once inside he saw Bonnie, I am sorry for interrupting you ladies but I need to ask you a question Miyu. Please sit down Henry, would you like a drink, that red wine you ladies are drinking looks good to me. Miyu got up and fetched a glass and poured the wine for Henry, thank you Miyu. He held up his glass and said, good health ladies they both replied, good health to you Henry. We are so pleased you suggested this holiday and it has been very nice to get to know you a little Henry, you too Bonnie, I am really enjoying this week. Now, what did you come to ask me Henry.

I wish to know if you would consider being my partner for Johnny's dance challenge. Well if you cannot find another partner I will, however, because you are my brother I must be very honest with you. Ballroom is my kind of dance, Latin is not. We have time to practice Miyu, it is not that Henry, I am just far too Japanese to dance a hot sultry dance in front of a room full of people. I could dance a smoking hot Latin number if we were on our own. I am sorry Henry, I know I would not help you to win the challenge. Do not worry Miyu, I totally understand so let me look for another partner.

I do know a fantastic Latin dancer who I am sure would be more than willing to partner you. Where do I find this lady so I can ask her. She is sitting next to you, you mean Bonnie, yes Henry, I mean Bonnie. I am sure Bonnie will be Johnny's partner, I thought that as well Henry, I am sorry Bonnie, I do not understand why Johnny would not want you as his partner especially if you dance a smoking hot Latin number.

He has asked a top Australia professional dancer to be his partner, she is with Corporal Dixon's group. I do not see why you would suggest he ask another dancer if you two dance very well together, he must be desperate to win this challenge. He is very desperate Henry, he does not like to loose, especially to an Englishman. However, to answer your question, I did not suggest he should ask her, he asked her before he told me, and to tell you the truth. I am bloody annoyed he did not speak with me first. I can assure you he will pay for that indiscretion.

Henry looked from Bonnie to Miyu and back to Bonnie, he said, will you do me the honour of being my dance partner Bonnie. Right now nothing would give me more pleasure than to be your dance partner Henry, thank you very much Bonnie. I do think I am a very lucky guy, as long as you are happy to win this challenge. We had better win Henry as I wish to whip his ass. Glad to see you are taking this challenge seriously, very seriously Henry, then is there anywhere we can go and practice. I am sure we would be able to go to Bayside Dance Centre, I do know them as Johnny and I have been to dances there over the years. That's great Bonnie, can you make arrangements with them, when do you wish to go, as soon as possible, also do you know where we can get some dance clothes.

I am sure you have a suit with you Henry, you do not need to spend any money on clothes. I do have more than one suit with me, however, they would not be right for a smoking hot Latin number, and I always

think a man looks better dancing the waltz, foxtrot or quickstep in tails. Do you have a proper pair of dance shoes with you Bonnie, I do not Henry, and I am guessing you do not have an evening dress or a very sexy one to dance a Latin number in your suitcase. Bonnie shook her head, she then said, and I do not think Johnny would be happy with me buying one. I will be the one accepting Johnny's challenge, so all costs are mine.

Bonnie started to object, so Henry waved his hands in front of her, it stopped her dead in her tracks. Henry then told her, if you are going to be my partner you will have to enter my world. Whatever I do I always do it to the best of my ability. For us to win this we must start off looking our very best, providing we can find the right dance wear we will go out onto the dance floor dressed to blow our opposition away. Henry, I should remind you, it will be a lot of money just for three dances. Both Miyu and Henry burst out laughing, Bonnie had a shocked look on her face and asked, why are you laughing at me.

Do not worry about the cost Bonnie, you are more than worth whatever it might cost me. Henry then asked her if she would make the arrangements to use the dance floor at Bayside and think about where we will go for the dance wear. I will happily do that. I will try for tomorrow, that's perfect. Henry stood up and said, now I have a dance partner and we have sorted the practice and hopefully the clothes, I should go and tell Johnny that I accept his challenge. I would love to see his face when you tell him I am going to be your dance partner. Henry sat down again. I will not be telling him that. I will let him think that Miyu has accepted and I would suggest that you leave him in the dark as well.

But how will we be able to go to Darwin on our own if we do not tell him. My dear Bonnie, if Miyu was going to be my partner would you have a problem with going to Darwin with the two of us to help your friend, absolutely not, Bonnie said. So you think I should tell him a little lie. No, not at all, you just tell him the three of us are going to Darwin to get a little practice in before Friday, that's all you need to say and I would not expect him to question you.

I guess he will not because at the moment he gets a frosty reception from me. May I make a suggestion to you Bonnie, sure Henry, stop the frosty reception. I am not saying tear his clothes off and make mad passionate love to him, that can wait until after we win. It may take a lot longer than that Henry, do not say that Bonnie, I am very upset with him Miyu, I feel I have been passed over for a younger version and I am far from happy about it. I now understand a little more about being married Henry said, both girls just smiled at him. I will tell you what to do if you wish to not only win this challenge but to also make Johnny think very long and hard about ever doing anything like that again.

Please Do Tell. Stop being unfriendly towards him as being unfriendly will not help you relax and fully concentrate on what we must do. Be pleasant without being over friendly. He will then think you are coming round to accepting what he did and he will relax thinking he has this in the bag. I guarantee you his mouth will drop open when you and I step

onto the dance floor, and that will give us the advantage we need to neutralise him having a professional dancer as his partner.

You are very devious Henry, I like to win, however, I have to win fairly and what I have suggested is not unfair. Bonnie smiled and said, he deserves what he is going to get. Once you are on your own with him after we have won, tear his clothes off, take control and tell him. If he ever does anything like that again, this is what he will miss out on Forever. You can then, as they say, screw his brains out. Oh Henry, I do like the way you think, one small point, we do have to win first. He stood up and kissed and hugged both of them and said, I will see you ladies later. He turned and headed for the door.

Your brother is a fast thinker, Johnny would say, he thinks on his feet, I really do like him Miyu and I can see why you speak so highly of him, he is a gentleman. I am still worried about the cost of this challenge though, please stop worrying Bonnie. I believe whatever it costs, Henry will be more than happy to pay. I am sure Henry has personally made a small fortune for himself, he is far more than just comfortable. His Penthouse must have cost him a lot of money and I do mean several million pounds. Mother told me, Henry had a loan from his father and Sir Randolph for his Penthouse and he paid them back within the same year. I also know that Henry has purchased an apartment in London and three tracks of land. When I asked him if he was going into property development he told me, not at all. I have purchased these three tracks as an investment and I will wait for one of the oil companies to make me an offer.

Where is this land Miyu. 660ft down on the seabed in the South China Sea. Bonnie's mouth dropped open. I am guessing he paid several million pounds for them, so if he can afford to leave it for several years, then purchasing your dresses and shoes will not be a problem for Henry. I have first hand experience of shopping with Henry. When you go out with Henry James he must always pay, it is the way he was brought up, he feels he must always have the best and I think he pretty much does He never expects anybody else to pay. You must come and see our family home and then maybe you will understand a little more about my brother. Miyu then told Bonnie that it would not matter to Henry if it was for only one dance, he would still purchase the best clothes. In Henry's world you not only have to play the part, you have to look the part so you can play the part properly as well. He not only talks the talk, he also walks the walk, they both smiled and Bonnie said, I think you are very lucky to have a family like them.

If Johnny can get off at Christmas please think about joining us for the Christmas holidays, I am sure mother and father would be happy to welcome you in their home. You mean spend Christmas in England, I do not know what Johnny would think of that Miyu. Well if I know Johnny half as well as I think I do, he would jump at the chance to learn a little more about Henry James. You know, you could be right on the money Miyu. I will ask mother if it is alright if I ask my friends to spend Christmas with us at Queensberry Manor before you ask Johnny. Henry

lives in an English Manor House, no Bonnie, Henry lives in London in his Penthouse, that is when he is at home. He was born in the Manor House like our father before him. I have the kindest family anybody could have and I would like my friends to meet them. I do love you Miyu and I know Johnny feels the same way, we love you both very much Bonnie.

Shall we join our men folk, let me make a call to the Bayside Dance Centre and see if we can get in tomorrow. Once Bonnie told them who she was they told her she was welcome to come anytime after 10:00, we will see you tomorrow then and she closed her mobile phone, lets go and tell Henry he can practice tomorrow.

Henry found Takahiro and Johnny at the bar, he walked up to them and put out his hand to Johnny and said, I accept your dance challenge. That's good Henry, shall we discuss the rules Johnny. Certainly, I found out that in Corporal Dixon's party there are three dance judges and they are prepared to judge the dance challenge. They suggested three dances over a forty minute period, this will give us time to take a break between dances. Again they would like to see either two Ballroom and one Latin or one Ballroom and two Latin. That would be up to each of us to decide what we wish to dance, that's fair enough Johnny. Anything else, just the donation of \$250 to the battered wives charity. I will take care of that, we can split it Henry.

If you win you can decide, however, you are not going to win so it will be my decision. Johnny burst out laughing and just said, not this one mate. The ladies and I will be going into Darwin after breakfast tomorrow as we need to practice, that's a good idea mate as you are going to need it. Then we had better arrange to go the day after as well, that's good thinking Henry, I do like a man that takes things seriously. The ladies joined them and Henry asked them if they would like a drink, they both had a wine. I have accepted Johnny's challenge, and also explained to him that we will be going to Darwin tomorrow and the next day to practice our dance moves, and he kissed Miyu and squeezed Bonnie. They went into the dinning room and had a great meal of fillet steak. Henry squeezed Bonnie's hand and just said, relax young lady.

After breakfast Henry ordered a taxi and Bonnie told the driver to please take us to the Nightcliff Shopping Centre. There are a couple of little boutiques in here and I am sure we will find something that you will be happy for me to wear on the dance floor. I do hope so Bonnie. They found a really nice ballroom gown in a pale blue, it just needed a slight alteration and the girl promised them it would be ready tomorrow after lunch.

Are you happy with this one Bonnie, I think it is magnificent Henry, I really feel like a million dollar lady while wearing it. You look every bit of that. We will take this one young lady providing the alteration will be finished tomorrow. The girl just said, guaranteed. She then explained about the dress.

This exquisite long blue gown, featuring a corset style, off the shoulder bodice, trimmed with a lavish tulle ruffle and delicate beaded butterfly

accents. That represent your transformation to a crown-worthy Princess. A Basque waistline elongates your torso and minimizes your waist to create a flattering silhouette. This dress was designed with a two-toned layered tulle skirt that is fabulous and full with radiant sequins scattered throughout to add the perfect touch of sparkle. You're sure to be the belle of the ball in this magnificent gown. Oh Bonnie you do look like a Princess in this, thank you Miyu. I will need to get a blue tails to match this dress, I think I might be able to help you with that sir.

If you are happy to keep this dress on for a little while we can go and see if we have something that will make you a matching pair. I am happy to keep it on, Bonnie said. The girl took Henry through to the men's side of the shop, Bonnie and Miyu followed, she told Henry I have just one that may fit the ticket. She showed him a pale blue Ballroom Dancing Tail Suit, if it fits I will take it.

He stepped into the changing room and started to undress, do you need any help sir, Joy asked Only if your hands are clean, all three ladies burst out laughing. Henry stepped out of the changing room and moved over to Bonnie's side. Miyu just looked and a big smile came across her face. Bonnie was looking in the full length mirror and said, when we step out on that dance floor it will be a jaw dropping experience for Johnny.

As you said Henry, this will give us an advantage. He hugged her and gave her a kiss, let me get out of this dress, not so fast partner, Bonnie turned and looked, just waiting for Henry to speak. You need a pair of dancing shoes, I could dance in these and she picked the dress up about 12 inches and put out her foot. Not worth taking the chance that you could slip and possibly lose a shoe, you definitely need proper dance shoes, ones that have a double strap.

You are quite right sir and I do have a blue pair, they are not exactly the same colour as the dress, however, they will be close enough that it should not matter. She brought out a box, opened it and gave Bonnie one of the shoes, as you can see they have double straps. When she had them both on she twirled around the shop, and the only words to come out of her mouth was, yes please Henry. So up to now young lady we will take the dress, the suit and that pair of sandals and I will need a dress shirt and bow-tie. Is that all sir, he shook his head, not by a long way. I need a pair of dance shoes do you have a matching pair. These are very pale blue but I only have one size, Miyu said, lets hope that one size fits all, laughter by everyone, however, they were Henry's size.

We now need a hot little Latin dress, can you recommend one young lady, indeed I can, we will wait for you to remove the gown Bonnie. Bonnie looked at Joy and asked if she has a wrap she can use instead of getting dressed again. On the rail over there just help yourself. Bonnie picked up one and headed for the changing room. She returned with the wrap around her and still wearing the sandals. This way please, all three of them followed. She stopped by a rail with Latin dresses, turned to Bonnie and asked, it really depends on how daring you want to go, very daring, even touching on a little slutty. Henry and Miyu just looked at each other.

What Latino dance are you going to dance, that's a good point Bonnie, we have not decided if we are doing two Ballroom and one Latin or two Latin and one ballroom. I am a better Latin dancer than ballroom. What about you Henry, well, I like them both for very different reasons. I have danced far more Latin than Ballroom, you have brother, he smiled and told them about his clients wives in Acapulco.

Then it's Latin Bonnie said, Tango, Salsa or Samba Henry asked. A Tango and a Samba, any reason you picked those Bonnie, oh yes Henry. The Tango is a hot sultry dance whereas the Samba usually has a much smaller costume and far more of me will be on show in one of those. Miyu said, Bonnie how could you, very easily, if you feel good and you and your partner are dancing well together, it makes you want to flash a little bit more skin.

You can be a naughty girl Henry said, you have no idea Henry. Right now Johnny is playing with fire. Well Bonnie if you do not mind having a little more on show, then I would suggest exchanging the Samba for the Salsa. What is your reason Henry. Simply the Samba is more of a dance you perform away from your partner. The Salsa you dance together all of the time. You do several twirls and lifts and believe me if you want your body on display and look very sexy then trust me, with the right dress you should dance the Salsa. You know how to get the best out of a girl Henry, he smiled and said, that may be true Bonnie but I will not get to see the show.

Henry turned to Joy and said, we need a very hot sultry Tango dress and a revealing Salsa one. The girl smiled and picked up a Tango dress at the far end of the rail. This Hot, Sexy Vintage 50's style wrap over Argentine Tango dress was in Red and Black Jersey. Accented with rhinestone detailing. Gold/Nude colour inserts accent the neck details. Wide cut off the shoulder with plunging V front and back, gives a true hourglass figure. Tulip curved hemline at wrap-over with a dramatic thigh high opening allowing for dramatic kicks and dips. It has a centre back zip, and you can wear a body stocking or bra and panties. Let me try that on please.

Miyu went into the changing room with Bonnie. She looks fantastic in this dress Henry, she does indeed Miyu. Bonnie stepped forward hugged and kissed Henry and then said, maybe we should do two Tango dances because this dress will really turn heads. I would then not need another dress. Listen sexy kitten, we are here to make sure we are dressed to give as stunning a look as possible. So we need to do two different Latin dances. You have made your decision, with a suggestion from you Henry. You look fantastic in this dress for our Tango, we now need a sexy dress for Salsa.

I am sure you will look gorgeous in this black and gold Salsa dress Joy said, while holding it up. It features a pleated wrap waist part, sheer mesh top with embellished detail, sleeveless and trimmed plunging back down to the waist. From the waist at the front, the right side wraps over the left and both sides of the dress split from mid thigh finishing six inches above

the knee. You can wear a small black pair of shorts, because when you are lifted and held prone on your back the wrap will part from the waist so whatever underwear you are wearing will be on show.

Bonnie just beamed and told Joy, no shorts just a pair of black or gold panties as small as you have. I have several types, Bikini, V String, Low Cut Tie sided Thongs, Crotchless Tie Side G-String. Just far too many to name, just give me an idea what you are looking for, or what show you want to put on. You have to decide how daring you wish to go.

Bonnie explained to Joy all about Johnny's challenge to Henry, and the reason she was Henry dance partner. Joy said, I now understand and if it was me I would wear the Low Cut Tie Sided Thong. This will give the most dramatic look. The first time you do a lift that is followed into a roll, your dress will drop open at your waist and if your Thong is gold then people will not be sure if you have any panties on. The watching audience will be riveted, just waiting for the next lift and roll so they can check you out, all eyes will be on your crotch area for the rest of your dance. I think I will go with the gold.

I think you should give Bonnie a pair of each, just in case she feels she has taken the wrong one, if she has them all she can always make a change. You are quite smart Henry, are you saying that just because I am a man. We need a pair of black dance shoes for both of us. I would suggest you have a double strap with or without closed toes, you can not afford to slip. I have them both in black and gold they have two buckles and swede soles. Bonnie tried them on and walked up to Henry and took his hand in a dance position and then raised her right leg up so it was pressing on his hip, he held her leg. What do you think Henry. I think you look fantastic in everything, thank you. Henry said to Joy, better give Bonnie a gold pair as well as she may want the gold to match the gold on the dress. Bonnie looked at Miyu and shook her head.

Is that all sir, not quite I need a pair of black trousers and two tops, one a shirt type top for dancing the Tango and the other an open front for the Salsa. Please follow me, I am guessing you would want your shirt to match the colour of the Tango dress. I think that would be very nice, she pulled out a red shirt and holding it against Bonnie's dress it was a perfect match. Now I have a black with gold lace slightly open shirt that would look fantastic with this Salsa dress. She got Henry to stand next to Bonnie and she then held it in front of him. Miyu said, perfect Henry. Then please add these to our bag.

Bonnie went to remove the dress. We will also want a couple of practice garments, Bonnie said, all we need is a T-shirt and for me a pair of leggings, I am sure the trousers you have on will work okay for practice. Joy picked up four T-shirts, two for each of them and a couple of leggings for Bonnie. Do not forget the bra and panties. I think you should include a selection of panties for Bonnie and it would be nice if you gave her a full choice of panties, in red, black, gold and blue. Bonnie again looked at Miyu, Miyu smiled and without speaking too loud said, I told you what he is like.

Is there anything else we need Bonnie, not that I can think of Henry, however, I do not need all these panties and definitely not in blue as I can wear any colour under that dress as they will never be seen. Do not be so sure of that, I might just get a peek while we are changing. All three girls burst out laughing. But Henry you want me to have five pairs of each colour. Well, it is not very often that a single man gets to purchase panties for a married lady. Johnny might get very upset and want me to leave him. I do not believe he is a stupid man and any man that would want you out of his life because I have given you panties, then he is not worthy of your love.

Lets pay this wonderful young lady and go and start our practice, good idea Henry. Where and when do you take up the challenge, Bayside Friday night. That's great because my friends and I always go there on a Friday. Henry paid and they thanked Joy for all her help. What time do you want us to come back tomorrow, any time after midday. I think it would be a good idea if we can leave all the dresses and my suit, trousers and shirts and collect on Friday afternoon, would that be okay young lady, no problem at all. We just need to take T-shirts, leggings and shoes.

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Chapter 19

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he Practice

Just before you leave, I have a suggestion for you, if you really want to go wild and blow your husband away. Please tell us Bonnie said. If you finish your Salsa with a lift from a sitting position on the floor, so that your legs finish up either side of Henry's head resting on his shoulders, this will place your crotch on Henry's mouth. Miyu took in a very noisy intake of breath, Henry just smiled as this move sounded spectacular. Bonnie said, wow, I'm game if you are Henry, before Henry could reply, Joy said, I have not finished yet. There's more for this sexy move, a much bigger step if you are game. Pray tell Bonnie said.

While you have your crotch resting on Henry's mouth your body should be level. Straight as you can make it. Hands to your sides, while Henry is supporting you with one hand in the centre of your back and his other hand pointing straight out at about 45 degrees from his front. While he twirls around the dance floor or spins on the spot, with you in that position. You need to undo the bows on your Thong.

Henry should then lower you so that your head is going straight down towards the floor. With a quick flip Henry will have you standing up facing him, at this point your dress will have fallen down covering your backside. If Henry has got it right, he should be left with your Thong in his mouth. Now, I have only ever seen this done by one couple that live on the Gold Coast.

All three of them were staring at Joy, Henry spoke first, well, for somebody that looks like butter would not melt in her mouth, your idea's make you a wild child. I guess it's the old saying, you cannot judge a book by it's cover. All three girls burst out laughing. Joy said, it would be up to you whether you finish in each others arms or Henry spins you around so you end up sitting on the floor in front of him. What do you think partner, are you still game now you know how this move ends. You can definitely count me in to give it a try in practise. It should be a whole lot of fun practising Henry said. The girls once again burst out laughing, and Miyu said, we could not try that if I had been your partner Henry. I am so glad I am his partner Miyu, more laughter. Henry turned to Joy and asked if she could get them a taxi to take them to Bayside, sure thing Henry. They walked out of the shop and Joy said, I will see you on Friday afternoon. They got in the taxi and headed off to start practising.

When they arrived at Bayside it was already 13:30. Bonnie introduced Miyu and Henry to Penelope one of the dance teachers, she was a very nice no nonsense teacher. Please explain this dance challenge you are going to do. Bonnie sat down and explained how it happen and why she was upset with Johnny. Penelope smiled a wicked smile and said, I will be here on Friday evening and I cannot wait to see the look on Johnny's face when he finds out you are partnering Henry.

Friday is the night that this venue is open to the public and is usually packed out. We also bring our students here to give them a feel of what dancing is like for most people. So it will definitely be good for all the students to watch. Henry and Miyu were having a Waltz while waiting for Bonnie and Penelope. Bonnie said please follow me and she showed them to the changing rooms. Henry went into the gents and Bonnie and Miyu headed for the ladies. When they came out on to the dance floor, Henry pointed out that on Friday night we need a room of our own. Otherwise Johnny will not get a surprise when we step onto the dance floor. I will speak to Penelope and see what she can come up with.

I think that we should start by deciding whether we should dance a Waltz, Foxtrot or Quickstep. So do you have any preferences Bonnie. I prefer Latin so it does not make too much difference which one you choose. Then I would go with the Waltz because it looks so graceful. Lets try one and see how we get on. The next dance on the CD player was a Waltz, Henry and Bonnie walked onto the dance floor and assumed the dance position. On the correct beat Henry lead Bonnie away and they danced really well considering that Henry had not danced the Waltz in six years. When the dance came to an end, Bonnie felt that they had a very good start and they should crack this one within the hour.

Henry gave her a kiss on her cheek and told her, she looks very fetching in her leggings. A big smile came to her face and she said, we are going to have a lot of fun over these two days. I must admit it started well this morning, we got the clothes we wanted and now we seem to have got off to a good start on the practise. They danced three more dances and felt good.

Penelope came over and said, just a little advise, Henry, hold yourself up at all times and your fingers must be an extension of your hand. Bonnie, you need to point your feet out straight in the direction you are going, other than that, I feel it is a very good start. A Waltz will play after two more tracks so you can try again.

When they danced again it flowed and they both felt very good with their performance. Penelope and her students clapped as they walked off the floor. You two make corrections very quickly, I would suggest you move onto your next dance and just dance the Waltz one more time before leaving today. What is your next one Henry, we wish to dance the Tango. That is my favourite dance, let me change this CD and the first four are Tango. Henry asked are you ready partner, as ready as I will ever be, they walked onto the floor and immediately the expression on their faces changed. Henry lead Bonnie into a passionate routine and when they had finished Penelope stopped the music.

A good start, however, if you are going to dance a Tango you can only do that if you are not worried what Johnny may think. What do you mean, you are dancing way to far apart, press your chest into Henry's, this is meant to be a passionate dance Bonnie. Now get a lot closer, he will not bite you. Also you need to twine your legs around Henry's a lot quicker, when you snap your head it needs to be held a little higher. Your feet need

to just touch as you glide from one move to the next. I will wait to see Bonnie make her corrections before saying anything about your performance Henry. It looks very polished, so once Bonnie makes those changes I may not have anything to say to you.

They danced again and when they had finished Penelope just said, much better Bonnie just your feet. They danced again and after that dance they got a round of applause. Once more then move on to your third dance. When the dance was over Henry just said, wow Bonnie, you know how to turn a man on. She laughed and said, just wait until after the Salsa, you are a naughty girl Bonnie Weston, I do know that Henry James. I feel we should practise the Salsa without our final move, are you chickening out Henry.

Not at all, once we have perfected our Salsa it will be easy to add that move. If we start with it in I am sure it will be very difficult to dance again. Bonnie burst out laughing, I guess you are right as we would both be concentrating on just that move. Lets get started then. Do you dance the Salsa as much as the Tango Henry, when I am in Acapulco we dance Tango, Salsa or Cha-Cha-Cha. So I dance them about the same as each other, although we do dance the Tango a little more because all three ladies I partner love the Tango.

Henry talked Bonnie through the Salsa dance that he liked to do, it had lots of lifts and aerials that placed his partner around his shoulders and rolling her down his body. She liked the sound of it and said, lets try slowly, just one question, have you ever dropped your partner, never. Having said that, I do need a partner that trusts me, because if you do not trust me then your weight will not be in the correct place at the right time. They started to dance and Henry was talking all the time explaining what was coming next. When they had gone through every move he asked Bonnie what she thought. I think if I can pick this up quickly we can turn this dance into something special.

After six attempts Bonnie felt she was improving and Henry told her it was getting easier for him so she must be getting her balance right. Penelope pointed out a couple of things which made Bonnie feel much safer. Henry was then able to throw her around his body and move her head closer to the floor, this made their dance far more dramatic and Bonnie just loved it. A lot of these moves we are doing are new to me, however, they will allow the dress to show far more than any others I own. Are you okay with that Bonnie, more than okay Henry.

I think we should dance our Waltz and Tango before trying to add the final lift that will end our Salsa, That's good Henry because I am getting a little tired. When they had finished the Waltz and Tango, Penelope told them, that for none professionals and the first time dancing with each other those were brilliant. We are now going to try to add one more move that we would like to do to end our Salsa. Penelope just looked and thought, I wonder why they did not do this before dancing their other two. Henry told Bonnie that they did not need to dance all of the dance we can start one lift before. He again walked her through the manoeuvre where

he picked her up from the floor and put her on his shoulders and then supported her body with one hand. He then dropped her down and when her head got level with his knees he flipped her over so she was facing him and they finished in a hug. Lets try at the right speed and two things need to improve. I need to place you where you need to be, you mean so your face is in my crotch, exactly, and you need to make your body a lot straighter. I am ready Henry.

They then danced to music at the right tempo and Henry effortlessly collected Bonnie from a sitting position and in one movement had her exactly where he wanted her. He supported her with one hand and did three spins with his arm and fingers perfectly straight. He then let her fall down his body and again flipped her over finishing with Bonnie in his arms looking into each others eyes. She told him his breath is very hot on her crotch, I am sorry Bonnie, do not be, however, I can only try this one more time today because it is such a turn on.

We should then dance from the beginning of the dance, agreed. Just make sure you will be able to get my Thong in your mouth. They danced all the manoeuvres as good as they could only this time Bonnie felt Henry's teeth gently pressing against her crotch, after he flipped her over he twirled her onto the floor so that the dance ended with Bonnie sitting in front of him. Those are the two options to end the dance, which one do you fancy. I like finishing in your arms gazing into your eyes.

It would tell the story that you have seduced me and I am totally yours and ready to be carried away. It would also be easier for you to retrieve your Thong. Oh Henry, I am excited to get out on this dance floor and show everybody just what we can do. This Salsa will once and for all make Johnny understand just what I am capable of. He will show me more respect in future. I am so turned on Henry, me to, I can see that. If we finish in each others arms you will have to accept, that you will feel how turned on I will be. I am looking forward to that Henry, you naughty young lady. I know, however, I also know it will never happen again, because Johnny will make sure of that.

Are we done for today, we are. They walked up to Penelope and Miyu, Miyu told them all their dances looked great and you still have one more day to practise. Penelope smiled and said, I did not understand when you went back onto the floor to add a further movement at the end of your Salsa. However, having watched I now understand very well, you must be very turned on. We are Henry replied. Do you think Johnny will see what you have just done. When he sees my Thong in Henry's mouth he most definitely will understand. You mean you are going to, and she stopped. That will be the hottest thing I have ever seen on a dance floor.

We still have to practise to make sure I can untie the bows without a problem. I believe Henry will not have a problem biting them off me. They all laughed. About tomorrow Penelope, we collect my dresses and Henry's suit and trousers and tops and need somewhere to leave them. You can leave them in the office and you can also use the office to change during the challenge. Otherwise you will be changing in the same room as

Johnny and his partner will be using. They both said, thank you Penelope. As they walked outside to find a taxi, Henry said, I am sorry we ignored you Miyu, we just got carried away, and I am sure you must be starving.

I must confess, I do feel like eating something. I must say to you both, I am pleased I am not your partner Henry, because I could never dance like Bonnie does. You make your corrections very quickly and I know I could not do that. You really do make a fantastic dance couple. Thank you very much, if you give me that bag you are holding Bonnie I will wash out your leggings for you as that will make both men believe I am Henry's dance partner. You are a very devious sister dear, I think I have only become that since I joined your family Henry. I do love you Miyu, and I you Henry.

When they got back to the Eco-Wilderness Resort they spotted Takahiro and Johnnie sitting by the pool having a drink, they had both changed ready for dinner. The girls waved and headed for their rooms, Henry walked up to Takahiro and Johnny, shook their hands and apologised for being a little late. I guess you needed more practise than you thought Henry, you are not wrong Johnny. It might be appreciated if you did not ask questions, we can do that Henry. Okay then, I will get changed and join you. Henry took his time and when he came out of his room both ladies were waiting. That is kind of you to wait for me, they just smiled and Miyu said, we thought it would be better to wait for you so we can all walk up together. It's not a problem, you will not get any questions tonight.

Over the meal Henry asked, did you do anything of interest today guys, a little swimming, a little drinking and a lot of relaxation, that's good Henry replied. Not much conversation went on, it just seemed everybody was in a world of their own. Henry and the two girls finished off two bottles of red wine and at 22:00 they all decided it was time for bed. I will see you ladies for breakfast, you will indeed Henry, he kissed them goodnight and went to his room. Once in bed he was asleep within ten minutes, it was half that time for Bonnie.

Henry got up at 07:00 and went straight to the pool and did ten lengths and returned to his room for a shave and a shower. He walked into the restaurant and Bonnie was already drinking a coffee, he lent over and kissed her good morning. Did you have a good sleep my naughty partner. She beamed and replied, fantastic thank you, what about you, I slept like a log and felt very good when I woke up, so I did ten lengths in the pool. Should we wait or start, no, lets start Bonnie replied. When they returned to the table Henry asked is everything alright between you and Johnny. Not at present Henry, however, that is the way I wish to keep it.

He needs to understand I am pissed off with him, calm down Bonnie. Oh Henry, I am very calm, you taught me to be calm. It is Johnny that thinks I am still wound up and that's the way I wish it to stay until after we win his challenge. You are a devious naughty young lady and you are the perfect gentleman. I do not know about that, I am not married yet so I cannot say how that will affect me. Bonnie smiled and told Henry he will

be alright once he finds the right woman.

They had finished their breakfast before Takahiro and Miyu arrived, good morning Henry said, then it was kisses and handshakes all round and some big smiles. By the time Takahiro and Miyu had finished their breakfast Johnny had still not arrived. What time do you wish to go Henry, I do not think we need to be in any rush Bonnie Did you want to go and find Johnny, not at all Henry, he's a big boy he makes decisions on his own. Takahiro just looked and Henry thought, you devious little monkey I bet you only said that so it will get back to him. Just then Johnny arrived, I hope you guys have not been waiting for me.

Do not flatter yourself Air Vice Marshal. If Johnny was in any doubt before, he was no longer, because when Bonnie was really pissed with him she always said, Air Vice Marshal. Henry stood up and said, it is about time we got going as today is our last day to practise. Miyu hugged and kissed Takahiro and kissed Johnny goodbye, Henry shook their hands and said, see you tonight gents. Have a good one, Johnny said.

Lets stop off at the dress shop on the way to Bayside Henry said, they may just have finished, that's a good idea, it will save us a trip. They walked into the shop and Joy said, good morning, glad you stopped by, she must have finished it last night as I found it here this morning. Come on young lady lets get you out of your clothes. That seems a nice way to start our day Bonnie, a big smile came over her face, she turned and was gone. How are you and Takahiro, we are fine thank you Henry, what did he say when you told him about yesterday. I did not tell him anything, Henry raised his eyebrow, I asked him to please not ask me any questions. He looked at me and was just about to say something when I told him, it would all be clear at 20:00 on Friday. He said, okay I understand and we then made mad passionate love, you did not need to tell me that sister. Oh yes I did, you need to understand what you did to me yesterday, Henry just smiled.

Bonnie came out of the changing room and Miyu said, you look like a million dollars, I will be very proud when we walk out onto the dance floor, you look like a princess. Bonnie just said, thank you Henry. They went back into the changing room, Joy came back holding the dress. Henry asked her if they could have some zip up garment bags to keep the dust off, no need to ask Henry, all dresses and suits come with bags. Bonnie joined them and looked at Henry and asked if he was ready to remove her Thong. I am always ready to do that, I am a full blooded Englishman.

Joy asked how did your practise go, very well Bonnie replied, however, today we must have a practise run the way I will be dressed tomorrow. Excited Henry, you bet I am Joy. I really hope you will be able to get it right, as I am dying to watch you tomorrow night. Bonnie said, it is going to happen so if necessary we will keep practising until we get it right. They thanked Joy for everything and said, we will see you tomorrow. As they walked back to the waiting taxi Henry said to Miyu, if we need to practise more than once then I am guessing you will not be sleeping tonight sister dear.

You can count on that Henry, I will probably be screwing his brains

out. My, my Miyu, I take it you got turned on yesterday, Bonnie said. Damn right I did, I do not know how you two kept your hands off each other, it was not easy Bonnie replied. I suppose in your case Henry it's because you are a gentleman. You are correct sister, however, if Bonnie was not married we would only be ordering breakfast about now. The two ladies burst out laughing. The taxi driver opened the boot and Henry laid the dresses down.

They walked into Bayside and they were greeted by Penelope, how are you guys, we are well thank you, just hope to hear the same from you, she smiled and nodded. I take it you are going to practise all your dances Bonnie, damn right we are. I bet you are looking forward to that Henry, I am indeed. They were shown to the office so that they could place their bags there, Penelope had put a portable dress rack in the office so they were able to hang the dresses, suit and trousers. I will wait outside for you two, why Miyu asked. Well I only need to change my shoes whereas Bonnie needs to change into her leggings. What has happened to you brother, you are going to remove her Tong with your teeth but you feel you should not stay here while Bonnie changes.

I do not have a problem Miyu, however, it would be Bonnie's decision. Well Henry, tomorrow we will both have to change in here and I am sure I will be removing more clothes then. I do not have a problem with you being here as I feel a gentleman's word is a guarantee. Then I will stay and be very happy with whatever I may see, I am sure you will. Henry removed his shoes and Bonnie removed her shorts and put her leggings on, she then removed her top and put a T-shirt on. Which dance are we doing first Henry, I think we should practise them in the order we will be performing them. They both put the shoes on for dancing the Tango.

They walked back to the dance floor, Penelope told Bonnie that her students finish at 14:30 so if they will practise your Salsa after that, Bonnie smiled and said certainly. Henry asked Miyu if she would sit on the front seat over there, you do not want me talking brother, it is not that Miyu. I need to be able to spot you so that I can always perform the most important moves while facing you. He wants to make sure that Johnny gets a perfect view, so we will practise to make sure that happens. Miyu walked over to the other side of the dance floor and sat down.

Penelope signalled that a Tango will becoming on next. Henry squeezed Bonnie's hand and asked if she was relaxed, I think so, I hope so. The music finished and Henry said, we are up. They walked onto the floor and took up their stance and their faces changed to match the dance. They waited for the music to start. Once it did they strutted away from each other towards Miyu, they turned and Henry strutted half way towards Bonnie and waited for her to do the same. She met him and their bodies twined together and they made it a very passionate dance, spotting Miyu on every turn. When they had finished everybody in the room applauded, Bonnie threw her arms around Henry's neck and kissed him, just saying, thank you that was fantastic.

Penelope told them, once they are happy then they should do one

dance in their costumes. They headed for the office, however, Miyu stayed behind. I see my helper is not joining us so would you do me the honours Henry. Certainly, I do not think I need to change my underwear just remove my leggings. While Bonnie was doing that Henry slipped out of his trousers and shirt and put on his costume trousers, my you do look dashing Henry. I must say you look ravishing in that outfit Bonnie. She turned around and Henry zipped her up. He stepped back and she spun around and he said, fantastic and they walked back to the dance floor. They did exactly the same routine and it felt flawless, again the applause came. Okay, lets change back to our practise kit. They went off and this time Miyu came as well. What did you think Miyu, words fail me, it looked perfect. They changed back and returned to the dance floor, once again Penelope gave a signal and Henry lead Bonnie onto the floor.

They glided across the floor and went through all the moves effortlessly. Penelope bowed and clapped her hands, time to turn you into a princess young lady, Bonnie squeezed Henry's arm and they returned to the office. While Miyu helped Bonnie, Henry undressed from his practise clothes and started to get dressed into his blue Tail Suit, after he had put his trousers on he looked over at Bonnie. She was just stepping into her dress, I think that is okay today, however, you should wear a blue pair tomorrow. I agree with you Henry. I will feel a lot better if I change all my clothes making sure that everything I wear is of matching colours. It goes without saying, but if you are running a little late getting dressed and you need help, you can count on my services. Miyu burst out laughing and Bonnie said, I bet I can. When they were both dressed, Miyu stood back and looked at them, I have never seen any dance couple look better. They headed for the dance floor.

All the students looked and Bonnie heard lots of them making comments about how nice she looked. Penelope got all the students to leave the floor, sit down and learn. Henry walked onto the floor holding Bonnie's hand. They turned and faced each other and he stepped forward and held Bonnie in the correct hold. The music started, Henry squeezed her hand just a little and he glided her across the floor. It looked to most of the students that because they were so light on their feet, they seemed to be dancing on air. Henry felt he had got the dance as good as he was going to. The spins and half turns, full turns every move just seemed to flow and he felt very good. They finished and he held Bonnie close and kissed her, she responded and then thanked him. They heard the applause and all the students were standing and clapping. Henry looked at Bonnie and said, now if this lot were the judges, we would have just won. Lets go and change, they headed back to the office.

Miyu told them you both looked fantastic in your costumes, Bonnie said, thank you Miyu. Henry then told her he thinks something should be added, what is that Bonnie asked, not to worry your pretty little head we will sort it out when we have finished for the day, both girls just looked at each other. Miyu hung the dress back up and covered it with the bag, Bonnie once again put her leggings and T-shirt on. Henry placed his suit

in the bag and hung it up on the rail. I have just realised that you did not put your shirt and bow tie on Miyu said. Well if I had then it would need washing and ironing and that's not possible. When they had put their practise clothes back on, Bonnie looked at Henry and asked him if he was ready. As ready as I will ever be. We have to wait until the students have left before we can come back and change into our costumes for the final practise. It's not a problem for me, me neither Bonnie replied. They headed back downstairs.

Penelope had let the students off early and told them she will add this time onto Monday, they were happy and left. So this is your last practise for the Salsa, it is indeed Bonnie answered, are you excited Penelope asked Henry. Very excited, I do like a challenge and removing my partners Thong on a dance floor with possibly hundreds of eyes watching is definitely a challenge. Because we are not married or even lovers we will only be getting one chance to practise this dance. The move does not allow you to conceal your feeling. What Henry is trying to say, it is the hottest dance we have ever danced and when it is over and I am in Henry's arms believe me, we will be, as hot as hell, you will just want to rip each others clothes off. We understand that Miyu, Henry just smiled at her.

The music started and they went straight into their routine, executing the moves to perfection. Miyu was looking very closely and felt a little sad that she could not bring herself to do these Latin dances like Bonnie, she was just too shy. When they had finished their practise Miyu asked Penelope what she thought of their dancing. In one word, fantastic, I think Johnny has his work cut out to beat this pair. They headed back up to the office to once again get changed. Henry said, I am going to keep my T-shirt on otherwise this will need washing and ironing. Both girls said, okay.

Henry started removing his trousers while Bonnie removed her leggings. As Henry was stepping into his costume Bonnie walked up to him in just her bra and panties and asked. Do you have a preference, she was holding three Thongs, black, red or blue. Lets go with black you naughty, sexy little lady. Thank you partner. When they were dressed Henry told Bonnie she looked fantastic, she smiled and said to them both, lets go and find out how good you are at removing a girls Thong with just your teeth, they all laughed.

Miyu and Penelope went over and sat in the seats the judges will be sitting in, Henry noted where they were. All four of them were only thinking about the final move. Henry squeezed Bonnie and said, I am finding this very difficult to concentrate on the dance, I can only think about the last move we make. You are not alone as that is all I am thinking about, I just hope I have not tied the bows too tight, guess we are about to find out. He gave her a hug and a kiss and said, lets do this sexy little move. They stepped onto the dance floor and waited for the music.

They went straight into their routine and it was a good job their moves had become automatic because both Henry and Bonnie only had one thing on their minds. They got through to the last move and Henry placed Bonnie hard against his mouth hurting his lip, he saw her dress slip away

and right in front of him was a black low cut thong and he had his mouth firmly against it. He thought Johnny is not going to like this. As he did three spins Bonnie untied the bows and she felt a sigh of relief as they untied without a problem. She was then very aware that Henry had his mouth on her crotch and she was getting very worked up. He dropped her down and flipped her over and they went into a close embrace as the music stopped. She removed her Thong from Henry's mouth and hugged him as hard as she could. He kissed her and told her she was fantastic and apologised and hoped he did not hurt her too much. I did not even notice.

Miyu gave them both a hug and said, that was outstanding. Penelope said, you need to slow it down just a fraction Henry, because your steps moved in front of the beat. I am guessing it was because the last move was on your mind, very much so. Now you have got that out of the way I am sure you will settle down a little by tomorrow. If you are wearing a gold Thong Bonnie I do not think everybody will spot the removal. People start arriving at 19:00 tomorrow so I would think you should get here about half an hour later.

That would give you enough time to settle down and also Henry and Johnny must shake hands and toss a coin to decide who will be going first. They got changed and again Miyu picked up the bag with Bonnie's leggings in, they thanked Penelope and walked outside. Henry spoke to the taxi driver and they got in. Bonnie told Henry the driver was going the wrong way, it's okay we are making a stop on the way. The girls were talking away and Henry was sitting in the front with the driver, not long and he pulled up outside a jewellery shop. Okay ladies lets go and take a look.

They got out and Bonnie asked, what are we doing here Henry. With that magnificent ballroom gown being strapless you need to wear a necklace just to finish it off. Oh Henry you cannot spend anymore money on me. Why ever not Bonnie. Miyu had a big smile on her face and Bonnie said, it's alright for you Miyu, then why not for you Bonnie, because he is your brother not mine. Let me ask you a question Bonnie, do you feel a necklace would finish this gown off, I know you are right Henry. Well let me explain something to you. When you accepted my request to be my partner, you then have to accept what goes with that, so there is nothing to talk about. They walked into the shop. The sales assistant asked how she may help them. We are looking for a necklace, do you have anything in mind.

Your decision Bonnie, however, I would think you need a blue gem stone, I think that would be right Henry as it would match the dress. So young lady what can you offer us. Do you want a single stone or several smaller ones. You should show us what you have Henry said. The girl went into cabinets behind her and brought out three boxes. She placed a blue single stone Swiss Blue Topaz hanging from a gold chain. The next was a Tanzanite with a stone of about 20mm in length and five very small ones on each side, again mounted on a gold chain. The last was a single stone Sapphire of about 25mm in length mounted on a gold chain.

Bonnie was overwhelmed and just asked, how much are these. Henry

stopped the sales girl answering and said, that information is only available to the gentleman. The girl smiled and asked Bonnie do you like any of these. They are all very nice pieces, however, the Sapphire and the Tanzanite are too dark to wear with that dress Henry. Bonnie picked up the Topaz and laid it on her hand. Is this the only ones you have Miyu asked. I do have a Larimar, you will need to show us because I have never heard of that.

She went into another cabinet and came back and placed the open box in front of Bonnie. The girl then explained that a Larimar is a rare blue variety of pectolite found only in the Dominican Republic. It is popular because of its delicate blue colour. It must be used with care because it is fragile and will fade with long exposure to bright light. They all agreed that this one would go perfectly with the ballgown. I think you should try it on to make sure it comes down your neck far enough. Bonnie tried it on and fell in love with it once she looked in the mirror. Right sister dear, this is not the normal way I would do this, however, this is how it must be done today.

What can I get you for a present. What do you want to get me, anything Miyu, whatever you would like. Do you have a Ruby, sorry we do not, however, we do have a very nice Rhodolite Garnet. The girl went to fetch it and placed the open box in front of Miyu. That is beautiful Henry said, may I try it on Miyu asked. The sales girl came from behind the counter and placed it around Miyu's neck. She stepped forward and looked in the mirror. Oh Henry it is beautiful. We will take these two pieces young lady, do you want them gift wrapped, no thank you, they have both seen them. I will place them in two bags for you, thank you.

They kissed Henry and thanked him. Miyu said, I am going to feel special wearing that tomorrow night Henry. I am sorry to disappoint you Miyu, because I will only be giving it to you after the challenge has finished. This present will be for all the help you have given my partner, so I cannot give it to you now. I understand Henry. Under normal circumstances, I would have purchased both of these necklaces without either of you knowing. However, this is not normal.

Henry kept hold of both packets and they got back in the taxi and headed back to the Resort. Please try and be a little more friendly towards Johnny, Bonnie just looked at him. So he said, I do not mean for you to go wild, just tone your performance down a little. I would like to say, I love you Henry James, there's nothing wrong with you saying that, nothing at all. In fact if you feel like it, you could also mean it. Because I love you Bonnie Weston. They walked towards the pool area and found the men folk sitting and talking. Have you had a good day so far, very relaxing Takahiro replied.

Have you finished your practise Henry, afraid so, we feel if we have not got it right by now it will not help us to stay any longer. I am going to take a shower and get changed, both girls said, that's a good idea Henry we will join you. That sounds like the best offer I have had all week. Figuratively speaking Bonnie said. You take all the fun out of life young

lady. The three of them walked to their rooms with Henry between them with his arms around their shoulders. Your brother-in law does have a way about him Takahiro, he does indeed Johnny. However, I can say this to you, he is a genuine person and would never take advantage of you. You believe that Takahiro, with all my heart Johnny.

Henry returned and sat at the table with Johnny and Takahiro, would you like a drink Henry, thank you Johnny, a red wine would be nice. Maybe I should order two bottles like last night. Just then the girls arrived and Johnny asked them if they would be joining Henry on the red. They both said, yes please Johnny, as he turned to go to the bar, he had a smile on his face because he was thinking, she is warming to me.

They had a little small talk with Johnny being extra nice and Bonnie thought, your trying, that's good, just wait until tomorrow, we are going to blow you away. Takahiro and Miyu seemed to be sitting a little closer and she kept squeezing his arm or leg. Henry thought aren't you the lucky one tonight. Henry asked if everybody wanted an early night and apart from Johnny everyone said yes. They went through to the dinning room and ordered. During the meal Henry asked what are we going to do tomorrow. Johnny said, have you forgotten Henry, that's the day this Australian beats you fair and square. Well Johnny, that just might be what happens, however, I have always thought it best, to never count your chickens before they are hatched. Did you practise at all Johnny, no mate, I am fully relaxed and intend to blow you away. Is this where I say, fair dinkum and everybody burst out laughing. Bonnie stood up, she picked up her glass and said, may the best couple win. The others joined her standing, raising their glasses and bringing them together with a clink, everybody said, to the best couple.

After the meal they all had coffee and then Miyu and Takahiro stood up and asked to be excused, Miyu went around the table kissing everyone good night. Takahiro kissed Bonnie and shook Henry's hand and moved around to shake Johnny's hand. Bonnie got up and said, goodnight I am also going to bed, she turned and left. Johnny ordered a scotch and Henry had another glass of wine. As you can see Henry I am in the dog box. She is very pissed off with you Johnny, did she say something. Sorry Johnny, I do not do piggy in the middle. Whatever Bonnie may or may not have said about you, I have nothing to say to you or anybody else for that matter. So we could say you are an Englishman that does not kiss and tell. You could indeed Johnny, I respect that Henry.

When do you fly out and where are you going, I leave Saturday at 15:00 flying to Manila, I think. Do you go back to London from there Henry. Again I think I go to New Zealand, Sydney or Perth, Singapore and then back home. You do far more flying than I have ever done and I am in the air-force, they smiled at each other. I have enjoyed meeting you Henry and I do hope the feeling is mutual, very much so Johnny. Mind you at the end of tomorrow evening you may not think the same. I still believe I am going to win, however, if by some miracle you manage to pull it off, I will have to accept it. When they had finished their drinks they headed for their

rooms.

They all met for breakfast and Henry stood next to Miyu waiting to pour some orange juice, he said, looks like you had another great night. Oh Henry I just cannot help myself, you and Bonnie get me so turned on, just wait for tonight then. Henry, I feel by watching you two I have changed, I am now happy for Takahiro to do with me whatever he wants to. I am sure he is very happy and it is all for the better sister. They smiled and joined the others at the table. How about I take you all to Pee Wee's at the Point for lunch, Henry asked. I have heard they have good food Johnny said. So is that a date, they all said, thank you Henry.

They sat around the pool and Henry did twenty lengths without any challenges being suggested. Bonnie and Miyu joined him in the pool Takahiro and Johnny sat on the loungers and watched. Henry found a ball and the three of them threw it backwards and forwards to each other. The three of them went back to their rooms to shower and change. When Henry came out of his room the two girls were waiting for him. You both look good enough to eat, do not say things you will never do. Just the thought of it gets my mind going, I am sure it does brother. He put his arms around their shoulders and they walked back to find the two men.

They got out of the taxi and walked into Pee Wee's at the Point, this looks very nice Miyu said. Good afternoon Mr James, I have put you at this table because it has one of the best views in the house, thank you Henry said. He turned to Bonnie, I am going to have a fat juicy steak. Need the protein and do not need a possible upset stomach if the fish is a little off. Good idea I will join you. Johnny and Takahiro went for the lobster and Miyu the crab. Henry stayed with water while Bonnie had one glass of wine. The meal was fantastic and they left just before 15:00. Bonnie and Miyu said, they were going for a lay down, Henry said that's a good idea I will join you, figuratively speaking and they all laughed. We will see you at Bayside around 19:30 Johnny, okay Henry.

C **hapter 20**

The dance challenge

When the four of them arrived at Bayside the place was packed out and they had to look closely to find an empty seat. They found Penelope all dressed up and Henry said to her, you clean up very nicely Penelope, she laughed and just said, thank you Henry. I have placed a table on either side of the judges platform so that you four can sit on one side and Johnny and his partner along with a possible helper can sit on the other side. Just a little more professional. I would recommend you sit on this side as it will be easy for you to use those steps and Johnny to use the steps on the other side. Once you are both here and seated, at about 20:00 our compère will introduce you and Johnny and explain what is going to happen tonight.

They spotted Johnny arriving and Bonnie said, his partner looks very sexy Henry. She does indeed, however, she is not anywhere near as sexy as my partner. He gave her a big hug. Penelope was obviously explaining to them what was going to happen tonight.

At 20:05 the music stopped and the compère said. Tonight we have something special for all you dancers to witness and enjoy. One of Australia's military men, Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston of the Royal Australian Air Force at Base Tindal. Just down the road from here. Has challenged Henry James an Investment Banker from London, England, quite a long way from here, to a dance competition. Would you two gentlemen please step forward so I can introduce you to the audience. Henry stood up and walked across the room to the compère, Johnny walked from the other side and they shook hands.

The compère said, I understand you are on holiday in Darwin gentlemen, he turned and said, how are you liking our country Henry. I think it is a great country, some beautiful places and the people are really friendly, I am having a great time thank you. These gentlemen together with their partners have to dance three dances tonight and they get to choose whether they want to dance two Ballroom and one Latin or one Ballroom and two Latin. Their dances will be judged by our three professional Judges.

Please welcome Bill Turner, Kate Jackson and Maria Chavez, everybody clapped and the judges nodded and said, thank you. How will you be judging these two Maria. Each judge will give them a mark out of ten for each dance. We will be looking for the way they execute their moves and how they hold themselves. I have been told the partners that these gentlemen will be dancing with tonight are definitely not their normal partners. In fact Johnny has never danced with his partner before tonight. So we feel because they are not professionals we should take that into account. However, I do wish to warn both Henry and Johnny that not much lee-way will be given. Both men said, we understand and thank you.

Before you return to your partners we do have the small point of who

will be dancing first. I have a coin which I will toss up in the air, catch it and hold it on the back of my hand still covered. One of you will then have to call heads or tails. Because you made the challenge Johnny, I think we should give the call to Henry. He flicked the coin up in the air and caught it in his right hand and quickly transferred it to the back of his left hand while keeping his right hand in place covering the coin. Heads or Tails Henry, I call Tails. Tails it is, Henry wins the call. Now Henry, you get to choose if you or Johnny will be dancing first. I will be dancing first, good luck to both of you.

They returned to their tables and Bonnie asked, why did you not make Johnny dance first Henry. We want maximum advantage and if he danced first we would be giving him the chance to dance his first dance without knowing you are my partner. Any advantage we may get would only be for the next two dances. We would not get any advantage from our Salsa. We need to dance before Johnny to get the full advantage of all three of our dances. We want him to be thinking about you and I dancing together, and the more dances we do the better our chances are of him getting upset and making a mistake. You seem to have thought this through Henry, I am a competitive person so I always look to see how I can get an advantage.

Henry then said, I am just going to give this to the compère, he headed across the floor. However, people were dancing a Waltz so Henry had to walk around the edge of the floor. Can I help you Henry, I have some information for you to read out as we are walking down the steps for our first dance. That would help me Henry. I do not want this information to be given out until just before we start our first dance. The compère had a strange look on his face, but took the paper from Henry and read through it. A big smile came to his face, I take it Johnny does not know who your partner is. He thinks I am dancing with my sister. I do like this Henry. I also have the music I would like played and Henry gave him another sheet of paper with the names of the music on. I will see the band gets this, thank you. Henry returned and said, I think we should get ready, Takahiro kissed Miyu and shook Henry's hand and wished them well.

In the office they removed their new dance wear from the plastic bags. Bonnie told Henry, because she got on so well with the Low Cut Thong while practising the Salsa I will wear the same for all the dances. While Bonnie was still just wearing her underwear she made up her face and put a couple of clips in her hair. She always felt she should dance the Tango with her hair up and not down onto her shoulders. Once they were ready she blew Henry a kiss and he bent his head and kissed her on her forehead. They left the office and headed for the door, Henry looked over the railing at the top of the stairs and noted a Foxtrot had just started. He returned to the girls and told them it would be about five minutes. Henry saw the compère wave his hand and Henry waved back. Lets show them how an Englishman and an Australian lady can work together. They moved and stood at the top of the stairs and waited as the dance floor emptied.

I would like you all to put your hands together for Henry James and his partner, Mrs Bonnie Weston. Henry and Bonnie started to walk down

the stairs. Henry and Bonnie have chosen to dance two Latin and one Ballroom. They are starting with the Argentine Tango and the music they have chosen is *Quien Le Puede Importar*. Johnny could not really believe what the compère had just said, and looked at Patty his dance partner, what's wrong Johnny, they told me Miyu was Henry's partner, why would they lie to you. On recollection, they did not, I just assumed she would be Henry's partner. Bonnie must be really pissed with me, never mind Johnny you can sort that out later, Patty had a worried look on her face.

Henry and Bonnie walked onto the dance floor and they stopped about one third of the way across the floor. They parted with Bonnie going to the left and Henry walking to the right at a forty five degree angle so they finished in the middle of the floor. As they turned to face each other the look on their faces changed to that perfect look of Tango dancers, hot and sultry for her and aloof and a little arrogant for him. The music started and Henry walked half way towards Bonnie and stopped and stared at her, she walked towards him and for a split second they stared into each others eyes.

As Henry takes hold of her petite frame, bringing her close in an embrace, the pair slot together like perfect puzzle pieces and Bonnie relinquishes control. She looks utterly contented yet empowered; completely in the moment, she glided with the music. Henry might be leading, but with every deliberate move he makes, Bonnie's body subtly and instinctively responds to the stimulus. He walks, she moves, her feet flirting with his. Their chests pressed tightly together, their bodies move easily and fluidly as one, as they glide like skaters on ice. Their bodies are doing the talking, and this, like every dance, is a new conversation.

Johnny was paying very close attention and he became annoyed with himself because this beautiful woman dancing a perfect Tango is, his wife. He realises he should be dancing with her and now understood why she had made the toast, to the best couple. My wife is a devious sexy lady he thought.

Henry used his free foot to sweep Bonnie's free foot along the floor. She then starts running her free foot lightly up the outside edge of Henry's leg. He holds her thigh while in a close embrace her dress has split from her upper thigh and she holds herself in a sultry pose. They seemed to take turns where their legs hook around each others, they moved from one side of their partners body to the other. The audience clapped whenever the move changes and they hold their look and posture perfectly. It's fast-paced, full of dramatic dynamic variations, huge bursts of explosive speed, and sudden, unpredictable changes of direction. The dance comes to and end with Henry and Bonnie in a very close embrace. Everyone is on their feet clapping and shouting.

The compère waits for the clapping to stop and asks Henry to please come over to the judges. They bow to the judges and acknowledge the audience and take there place in front of the judges. One at a time the judges are asked to give their marks. Each judge gives a ten and the compère tells them you cannot do better than that, you have made a

perfect start. They return to the table so they can drink some water, hugs and kisses from Takahiro and Miyu. That was a perfect Tango Miyu said. Lets get you out of these clothes and into your next outfit.

I see that you and your sister can keep a secret Henry and I see you have been very happy with the change in your wife Takahiro. Indeed I have Henry, is there anything you do not notice, not much. You are dancing very well Henry, it's all to do with the challenge.

When Henry returned to the office to get changed Bonnie was just finishing up her make up and only had her Bra and Thong on. What are you trying to do to me, what do you mean Henry. It's hard enough to keep my hands off you without pushing the boat out by standing there with only the smallest Bra and Thong on. Both girls burst out laughing. Bonnie told Henry she would be removing the bra just now as the Ballroom Gown has a built in bra. He turned and removed his trousers and shirt, Bonnie said, and you talk about me. Henry thought it best to ignore her comment. Henry got dressed into his tails and while he was doing that Miyu helped Bonnie to get into her gown. You really do look like a princess, however, lets finish it off. He reached into his bag and making sure he had picked up the right necklace he opened the box and offered it to Bonnie. She removed it from the box and said, thank you Henry. Miyu said, let me help you with that. You look stunning.

We should stand on the balcony so we can watch Johnny. What dances do you think he has chosen Bonnie. If he goes for two ballroom then I would think he will pick the Foxtrot and Quickstep. If he goes for two Latin then Tango and Cha-Cha-Cha. He may decide after seeing our Tango to drop his and go with the Jive. Why do you think he would drop his Tango, if that is what he had picked to dance. Because he knows he cannot match our Tango. Miyu said, it looks like Johnny will be dancing after the floor clears. Henry stood between the ladies with his arms around their shoulders.

The floor cleared and the compère said, I would like you all to put your hands together for Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston and his partner Patty Broadhurst. Johnny and Patty started to walk down the steps on their side of the room. Johnny and Patty have chosen to dance two Ballroom and one Latin and they will be starting with a Foxtrot. Henry squeezed Bonnie's shoulder and said, you know your man. Johnny and Patty walked onto the floor and stood in the dance position waiting for the music.

Johnny made the mistake of looking up and he saw Henry and Bonnie looking down at him. The music started and Johnny led Patty into a routine, half way through Johnny made a slight mistake but Patty made a quick recovery. Once the clapping died down the compère asked them to come over to the judges.

Bill Turner, told Johnny that he was not sharp enough and he did have a slight problem about halfway through. Because you are not a professional I am only deducting one mark. Kate Jackson said, I agree with Bill, so a nine from me. Maria Chavez told Johnny it looks like you did not do very much practising for this, however, this is not even a competition

so I can be a little more forgiving, nine from me. Johnny thought, I need to put Henry and Bonnie out of my mind. Patty said, lets go back to the room and go through some moves.

We are looking in good shape Henry, do not get over confident Bonnie, Johnny may get top marks for his next dance and we could drop three. I am sure Patty will be giving him a talk right now. Lets concentrate on our remaining dances. Two more dances passed and the compère again waved to Henry, they walked to the top of the stairs and waited. The compère said, please put your hands together for Henry and Bonnie, they will be dancing a Waltz, their chosen music is. Do You Know Where Your Man Is.

Henry and Bonnie started down the steps. Johnny thought that's suppose to piss me off. They got to the bottom and as they walked onto the floor the audience were on their feet and clapping like crazy. Johnny thought, I wonder who Bonnie borrowed these dresses from.

The music started and they glided across the floor, they went through every move for the Waltz, from the Box step, Chasse, Double reverse spin and the Fleckerl, they used all the moves they could and they looked spectacular. This time they finished with Henry sliding Bonnie onto the floor and with Henry down on one knee looking down into her eyes. Again people were on their feet clapping, from the balcony Johnny and Patty clapped their hands and she said to Johnny, your wife is very good.

They skipped across the floor and stood and waited for the Judges remarks. All three said, ten. Maria Chavez said, how did you find such fantastic costumes at such short notice. Henry replied, I will tell you when we have finished, thank you Maria said.

More water at the table with Takahiro, Miyu said, lets get you out of this dress. As they climbed the stairs everybody again started to clap. Once in the office the three of them hugged and kissed. Henry removed his tails and hung them up on the rail, by that time Bonnie was out of her dress and Miyu was hanging it up. Bonnie was changing her make up again. Why do you keep changing your make up. The Tango as you know comes from the darker side of Buenos Aires in the 1930's and 40's, ladies would have worn heavy make up. The Waltz needed a lot less make up and this Salsa, I feel I need more to really look hot and sexy. You look hot and sexy without make up, you are just saying that Henry James, he smiled and turned round to start putting his Salsa costume on. As he started to put his trousers on Miyu handed Bonnie the gold Thong and Bra, Bonnie changed them over and Henry did not see a thing.

Once they had finished changing they looked at each other and Henry said, this is the one that will make or break our perfect score. They stood on the balcony and watched as Johnny was already half way through a Quickstep. This looks very good Henry said. It is his best dance. When they had finished all three Judges gave ten marks. Johnny looked up and Henry and Bonnie were clapping and they both said, well done. Not that Johnny could hear them over the clapping.

Again when the floor had cleared the compère said, I would like you all

to put your hands together again for Henry and Bonnie's last dance of this challenge. They are going to dance the Salsa and the music they have chosen is, I Will Survive. Henry led Bonnie down the steps to more clapping and Bonnie looked and felt hot and sexy.

They stepped onto the floor and when the music started their sexy embrace started, into the twirls, lifts along with a lot of hip action. At least 50% of their Salsa dance was Acrobatic. Bonnie was either spinning round like the propeller on an aircraft or was being thrown above Henry's head and being caught as she got level with his waist, going straight into the next move. She would be sliding between his legs or moving around his body and then thrown above his head again laying straight out across his shoulders. Henry held her with one hand on her thigh while Bonnie had one hand on Henry's shoulder concentrating on being as straight as she could be.

They looked spectacular, and the audience were clapping after every move they made. Miyu was worried they would not hear the beat of the music. Bonnie's dress was dropping open and her thong could plainly be seen, she was becoming like a woman possessed. Henry and Bonnie had just clicked and they looked like they had been doing this dance for months.

Henry picked Bonnie up for their last move flipping her over and putting her legs each side of his head. His mouth was firmly pressing against her crotch. Bonnie concentrated on making her body as straight as she could while keeping her hands resting at her sides on her hips. Henry had his left hand supporting her and his right arm out stretched. As Henry did three spins on the same spot Bonnie untied the bows on her thong.

Henry then released Bonnie so she fell down head first towards the floor with her front facing the judges. He then flipped her over and she was facing him. As the music came to an end they finished up in a very close embrace. With her left hand she removed her thong from Henry's mouth. The audience along with the three judges jumped to their feet and went wild, the clapping and shouting was deafening. Henry squeezed Bonnie a little harder and said in her ear, I am pretty sure we cracked that Salsa. I can understand why Miyu keeps telling you she loves you.

Johnny was clapping as hard as he could because he realised he had blown it and although Henry had his mouth on Bonnie's crotch and it looked like he had ripped her Thong off with his teeth. Johnny appreciated the dance they had just done and must admit that took a lot of guts.

They stood before the Judges who were still standing and clapping, when they finally sat down. Bill Turner, said, if this was a completion, I would deduct marks from you because you did far too much aerobatics. However, because it is not a completion I will give you ten marks. Kate Jackson told them ten marks from her. Your dance was flawless. You must have a lot of faith in this man Bonnie. Bonnie had a big smile on her face and squeezed Henry's hand. Maria Chavez just looked at them before saying.

In all my years of dancing and judging I have never seen anybody dance

where the end of the dance finishes like that. Very naughty and very, very hot. I just hope that Johnny and you Henry will still be friends after tonight. Johnny and Patty stood up and walked to where Henry and Bonnie were and said, may we join you?

Certainly, Johnny and Patty walked onto the floor and he said, we cannot win so the challenge is over. He turned to Henry and shook his hand and said congratulations you are a worthy winner. He turned to Bonnie and gave her a kiss telling her she was fantastic and I am very sorry. I would like to thank my partner Patty and apologise for not being up to the job, he then gave her a kiss.

The mike was then given to Henry, where do I start. I would like to say to Johnny and Patty, hard lines and thank you for being so generous with your remarks. He shook Johnny's hand and kissed Patty, she said to Henry, the next time you are in Darwin you can dance that Salsa with me. He smiled and gave her another kiss.

He turned back to the judges and thanked them along with the compère. He then said, please put your hands together for the hottest, sexiest and best dancer here tonight, my friend and partner Bonnie Weston. The room erupted as everybody got to their feet and clapped, Bonnie came close to Henry and said, please hold me, he put his arm around her and squeezed her tight.

We have three more people to thank and a couple of things to say before leaving you all in peace. Henry kept hold of Bonnie because he could feel her shaking. We would like to thank Penelope for allowing us the use of this venue to practise on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning. We are sure it made all the difference to our dancing, thank you so much.

Joy from the little Boutique along the road, she has some fantastic costumes along with being very helpful. Please stand up Joy, Maria wanted to know where we purchased our costumes. Joy stood up and waved her hand. I should also tell you something else about Joy, she is the one that suggested we add that final move to our Salsa.

Again everybody clapped and shouted well done Joy. Last but not least we have a little present for my sister, please join us on the floor and bring your husband. When Miyu arrived Henry kissed and thanked her for all she had done to help Bonnie. Takahiro put his hand in his pocket and removed the little box and gave it to Henry. As a thank you for all your help we have got you a little something from both of us. He gave her the box and another kiss. She thanked him and then moved to Bonnie and thanked her with a kiss.

The compère said, I am sure everybody would like to know what your brother and your friend gave you. Miyu felt a little embarrassed but opened the box and looked up at Henry and said thank you. Johnny stepped forward and offered to put it on for her, thank you Johnny. She turned round and Johnny placed it around her neck and closed the clasp.

The compère asked Miyu if she would step forward and show everybody. She walked over to him and he told everybody what a beautiful

necklace this is, it looks like a Ruby to me. Miyu politely corrected him and taking hold of the mike, told everybody I believe it is a Larimar. Larimar is a rare blue variety of pectolite found only in the Dominican Republic. It is beautiful and I wish to thank Henry and Bonnie for my present. The room came back to life as people clapped and told her she is a lucky girl. She returned to stand by Bonnie's side, and she noticed that Bonnie was still holding onto Henry.

The last thing before we pack up and leave. The Judges offered to give up their time this evening to come here and judge our dances. They hoped we would make a donation to their charity. The Battered Wives Charity. As I won your challenge Johnny it is for me to make the payment. So Judges if you would be kind enough to give me your bank details I will transfer funds tonight. I will make sure it becomes a yearly donation. Everybody clapped again. Maria Chavez stepped down from the platform and handed Henry a piece of paper, thank you Henry. This charity is a very worthy charity, I know this because my mother has set up one in Oxford in England. So, if all you good folk feel you had a great time tonight, I would ask you to consider giving a donation. It will be much appreciated and will not only help battered wives themselves, it also helps the children. If Penelope can arrange for a couple of boxes to be passed round I am sure these good Australian's will fill them up.

The boxes came out and were being passed around tables and as far as Henry could see everybody was taking their wallets out and putting one or two notes into the boxes. I think it is time we went up to get changed. Johnny said to Takahiro, are you coming back with us, yes I can do. He then turned to Henry and said, see you guys back at the resort. Henry led Bonnie up the steps and thought Miyu was following them. Miyu was showing Takahiro her necklace, it is a very nice necklace Miyu, it is indeed. She sat down and told Takahiro when she first walked up to the compère she felt very embarrassed and she was sure her face turned bright red. However when she took the microphone and started talking her embarrassment vanished. I now feel I can stand up in front of people without a problem, as Henry always tells me. I can do whatever I want to do. I had better go and help Bonnie.

When Henry and Bonnie got back in the office, Henry said, no Miyu, that's okay Henry as I need to talk to you. Why are you shaking Bonnie, when we were standing and you were thanking people and Johnny came and kissed me and told me I was fantastic. I suddenly had a terrible thought, I had gone way too far and Johnny will want to divorce me or worse. I do not think Jonny will want a divorce. What do you mean by worse. He might want to turn me into a whore, Henry laughed and squeezed her harder. If he wants to do that then I will pay him and take you away. What for Henry, you have never done anything wrong, he looked into her eyes and kissed her.

Suddenly their tongues started to play. Henry stopped and held her tight and apologised for doing that. She smiled and said, you do not have to apologise to me, with what we did on that dance floor kissing me is

nothing. He hugged her tight and told her to stop worrying, I am sure Johnny is okay with this. I think he realises what he did was a major mistake and when you take control of him tonight all your misgivings will disappear. She looked at him and said, I hope so. Trust me I am a pretty good judge of people.

Miyu walked through the door and said, I expected you two would have changed by now. Just talking about our dances and wondered how turned on you are. Very turned on, I could definitely skip tonight's meal, and perform all night long. She gave them both a hug. So does this mean I will be eating on my own. Not at all Henry, Johnny and I will be eating with you, we will be leaving after you and I have finished a bottle of red. They got changed and collected all their clothes and walked down the steps to Takahiro.

Henry went off and asked Penelope if she would phone for a taxi for them. I will also tell Maria that they can now use the office to count the money. The taxi arrived and the girls kissed Penelope and thanked her once again. Henry picked up most of the bags and just left the shoes for the girls.

When they got back to the lodge Johnny and Takahiro had not yet returned. They went into Bonnie's room and Henry placed the bags on the bed for her. He checked to make sure he was taking the right bags and he picked his two bags up and headed for his room. I will take a shower and meet you near the restaurant. They all had showers and came out of their rooms at the same time. Henry walked between them and placed his arms around their shoulders.

Johnny and Takahiro arrived and said, we will take a shower and join you. Henry ordered a bottle of red so that the girls could both get a good start, he drank half a bottle of water before having his first glass of wine. The two men joined them and they all ordered a big fat steak.

What time do you leave Henry, Miyu asked, well I thought it was in the afternoon but I have just checked and I fly out at 11:45. So I guess I should leave no later than 09:00. So you may not see me sister dear, I will try. Now, I hope you two will consider a holiday in London and if you can all get off at the same time you can bring your wives and stay with me. I have plenty of room so it is not a problem. We will see what we can come up with.

Johnny went to the toilet and Henry lent over to Bonnie kissed her on her cheek and told her it was time to take Johnny to bed. Do it right and he will be like butter in your hands. I know what you mean Henry, however, I would rather he was like a rod of iron. You naughty lady.

Johnny returned and before he could sit down Bonnie stood up and said, time for you and I to retire. She gave Takahiro a kiss and Miyu a hug and a kiss and said, thank you for all your help over the last three days. I love you both and we will see you in the morning. Johnny shook Henry's hand and told him they will see him for breakfast, that would be nice.

Bonnie hugged and kissed Henry and thanked him for everything, thank you young lady, you were fantastic. They turned and left holding

Henry James

hands. I suppose you two will be leaving me as well. If that is okay with you, of course it is, I am also tired so it will not be long before I also retire.

C

Chapter 21

B

ack to work

Henry got up at 06:30 and went straight to the pool, at 07:00 he thought it was about time to go and shower. On his way back to his room he wondered if both the girls would be having breakfast. When he was dressed he packed his cases so they were ready he then headed for breakfast. He checked to see if anybody was waiting for him, still alone so he decided to settle his account.

The girl at the desk gave him his account to check. He asked her to please make up his brother-in-law's account and Johnny Weston's account and he will pay theirs as well. The girl told him that they would not be leaving until this evening so she could not make their accounts up. Henry told her, never refuse money when somebody offers it. Surely I can pay their accounts up to this morning. That would be fine Mr James. She came up with an amount to cover all three, Henry paid with his credit card and then gave her two envelopes and asked her if she would please give hand these out when they come to settle their accounts. The girl looked at the names and told him she would take care of it.

He headed for the restaurant and found all four of them sitting drinking orange juice. Good morning to you all, I trust you all had a great night. The girls jumped up and Miyu hugged and kissed him and said quietly in his ear, the best night I have ever had in my life. I am so pleased Miyu. Bonnie kissed him and asked, are you always right, mostly. Why do you ask, she smiled and just said, I love you Henry James, and I love you Bonnie Weston. He shook Takahiro and Johnny's hand and said, let's eat as I am starving. They all went to the buffet and dished up what they fancied.

Do you still have to pack Henry, I did that after I went swimming this morning and I have also checked out. I see you are a very efficient man Johnny said, I try to be Johnny. I am serious about you guys visiting me, however, if you do not wish to go to London we can always meet up in some other country. Everybody agreed that it would be fantastic. So I will leave that to you two ladies to sort out, you can indeed brother and I will be taking Sir Randolph's advice and speaking to Lydia. Henry smiled, I guess it is about time for me to leave as I ordered my taxi for 08:45.

They all got up and walked with him to his room to collect his cases. While he opened the safe and removed his passport and wallet Takahiro and Johnny each took a case. They got to the taxi and everybody just stood and looked at each other. Henry gave Takahiro a hug and turned to Johnny and did the same thing. He lifted Miyu up and kissed her saying, make it soon Miyu, we will Henry. He turned to Bonnie and she placed her arms around his neck and kissed him, she told him this was one of the best holidays they had ever had and you just come and see us soon. He got into the taxi and he was gone.

They went back to the pool and decided to have a swim before lunch. After lunch they sat around and the girls drank a bottle of wine between them and Johnny only had coffee as he was driving later. At 16:00 Takahiro said he was going to settle his account, Johnny said that's a good idea I will join you. At the desk they asked for their accounts and the girl made them up and handed the account to each of them. Johnny said, this cannot be correct you only have today's drinks on my account. My account does not have anything on, Takahiro replied. The girl gave them each an envelope and told them, Mr James settled your accounts this morning and he said something about a challenge. Johnny paid for the drinks on his account and they walked back to join their wives.

Miyu asked, what is wrong as you both have a strange look on your. It's your brother Johnny said, he has settled our accounts. Miyu laughed and told them I understand why he settled our account. Takahiro said, the girl told Johnny Henry said something about a challenge. Takahiro opened his envelope and removed the single sheet of paper and proceeded to read. Dear Takahiro, I trust you will not be upset with me because you are one of my best friends and you are also my brother-in law so it is my duty to take care of you and Miyu. Do not be cross with me. I love you, Henry.

Johnny started to open his envelope and Takahiro said, please hang on while I tell you a little story. A few months before we got married Henry asked me what he could get us for a wedding present, I told him not to be silly he does not need to get us anything. Look at all the money your mother and father have spent on Miyu and they are still spending for this wedding.

He told me that has got absolutely nothing to do with him. I asked how he could say that, easy he replied, they did not ask me for any money, so whatever they spend on you has nothing to do with me. He then asked if he could give us a honeymoon for a present, I told him no, that is the grooms job. He agreed with me and then asked if he could pay for the airfare, I agreed to give him the name of the country once I had booked. A month later I told Henry and he just said, I will take care of all your travel arrangements, are you returning home after your wedding, I said, yes Henry.

While Henry and I was standing waiting for the bride and her father to walk up the isle. Henry said to me, just tell me about thirty minutes before you are ready to leave. The wedding was an unbelievable experience, anyway, the time came for us to leave and I told Henry. About twenty minutes later a helicopter landed on the lawn and shut the engines down. Once we had finished saying our goodbyes Henry escorted us to the helicopter and said, hello John to the pilot and we hugged and he helped Miyu into her seat. He returned to the family and we took off and circled around the house and flew over the heads of the guests at about 100ft. The pilot told us that was Henry's request.

From there on I thought we would be going to Heathrow but we landed at Biggin Hill and we were shown onto a private Gulfstream G550. Miyu said, nobody would tell me where we were going and I did not know

until we landed. Once we had taken off the pilot came back and handed me an envelope, just like today. The pilot told us Henry had asked him to give us this once airborne.

Takahiro opened this envelope which was address to both of us and he read it out.

This is your wedding present, the flight you are on as well as the one back to Tokyo is just because I love you both. I intend to make money for you, so I have opened an account at a bank in Singapore, by the time you get home you will receive the bank details. Just sign the paper that allows me to invest your money for you and return it to the bank. I would ask you to please try and not spend any of this money before five years, ten if possible.

If you do need money for anything at all come to me and I will loan you the money at 0% interest for however long you need it. He did not tell us in this letter how much he had deposited and we did not think about it. We had a great honeymoon and flew home first class on Japanese airlines.

When we got home sure enough we found the documents from the bank and we signed the paper and put it in the self addressed envelope. It was only then did we see how much Henry had given us for a wedding present. Johnny and Bonnie were just so engrossed in Takahiro story. He had deposited £250k, both Johnny and Bonnie just said, wow.

When they had time to let this sink in Johnnie said, so your brother has a shilling or two Miyu. He does indeed and I am also sure he has made it himself. I say this because a few weeks before we got married I went to the family home for a couple of weeks to help mother finalise all the arrangements. Anyway, while I was there mother told me she should explain to me what happens when father dies.

On his death Henry becomes Lord James and automatically inherits Queensberry Manor. Father's will would first make provisions for all staff members. Mother has to move out and Henry will move in to Queensberry Manor. If Henry wished to keep any of the staff that would be a good time to employ them before they leave. Jessie would move with mother. The remainder of fathers will would then have been split between mother and Henry. However, now I am their daughter Henry's share would be split between Henry and myself. Father said, that is not how it will be divided now.

Father told me because Henry has become a self-made multi millionaire he will only receive Queensberry Manor because he does not need his father's fortune, so I will receive Henry's share. I was not happy when he told me this so he said to me. The only reason that the dividing of his fortune would change would be if for some strange reason Henry lost all his money, it would then go back to the originally w was drawn up.

You did not tell me anything about this conversation Miyu. I did not know how to bring it up Takahiro, however, this seemed like a good chance. When they had thought about everything that Miyu had just told them, all Bonnie said was, I do not care how rich you become just as long

as you stay my friend. I will always be your friend Bonnie.

Johnny picked up his envelope and opened it, he removed the single sheet of paper and started to read.

Dear Johnny, I have really enjoyed our week together and I do hope we will become good friends. I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for all you did for one of my friends, Victoria. You may well be upset with me for settling your account. However, before you start complaining that I am trying to buy your friendship, I can assure you that is not the case.

You challenged me twice and without rubbing it in, you lost both times. Now, in my world when you win a challenge you get to decide how things are going to be from there on. Your first challenge you cheated by swimming two lengths before making that challenge. I decided that gave me the right to settle your account.

Now, if you are still unhappy, that's life, get over it. Miyu said, this is Henry James getting his own way. Because I am putting pen to paper I can pretty much say what I want to, by that I mean you cannot shout me down because I am not there.

I understand why you made the choice you did for your second challenge. You are a military man and because of your rank you would have to make choices from time to time. When you looked at your options you went with what you thought was your best chance. Unfortunately for you, Miyu told me that she could not dance a sultry hot Latin dance in front of a room full of people. She then told me to ask Bonnie.

I do not need to say anything about what Bonnie thought of your decision, because I am sure she has told you many times herself. Bonnie agreed to be my partner and that became your downfall. In becoming my partner she entered my world, so we both had to look the part, hence all the costumes. She is over the moon with hers and I am very happy with mine. I hope that by now you have patched up any differences you had with Bonnie.

She is a fantastic lady, never forget that Johnny. This phone number is my personal phone number, I hope you will both put it in your phones, maybe even on speed dial. Please do not forget to sign the form from the bank so that I can start making you some money. Lastly, if you feel I can help you with anything at all at any time in the future. Just dial that number and ask. I hope that you both become the next two on my short list of friends. Love to you both, Henry.

He tells it like it is and I have to say he is 100% correct Johnny said. Do you know how many friends Henry has Takahiro, the ones I know of are. Theodore Anderson the 2nd who he met at Oxford University in 1996. Theodore is in the US Navy. He is the (XO) on the USS Jimmy Carter, a Seawolf Class nuclear powered submarine. His other friend is, Squadron Leader John Ackerman stationed at RAF Brize Norton, flying C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft,. They met at Magdalen College School in Oxford. Where they both played on the cricket team. The three of them met me at Oxford and we became the Oxford four, we did everything together. The only other friend I know of is Victoria.

Johnny looked at Bonnie and said that he would very much like to go on Henry's list of friends. He is without doubt the most genuine Englishman I have ever met. Bonnie got up and kissed Johnny saying, sealed with a kiss. We are both on Henry's list.

Henry landed in Manila and then boarded the private chartered flights of Island Transvoyager, on a 50-seater ATR plane to Lio Airport in El Nido, Palawan. From there, he had to take a speed boat to Pangulasian Island. He checked into the Pangulasian Island Resort and after checking in he went for a swim. While sitting around the pool he thought, this is a very nice hotel and the setting is very romantic, not so good on my own. He made a mental note to explain to Lydia that if I was married it would be the perfect place. After a fantastic evening meal of crab Henry went to bed and slept like a baby.

After breakfast Henry took a stroll around the resort and then had another swim. He phoned his sister, hello brother how are you, I am very well Miyu, how about you and my friend. We have never been happier, I am so pleased Miyu. I just want to thank you for a fantastic week we spent together, we all enjoyed the week Henry, Bonnie and I will be making plans for another holiday together. You need to get a wife Henry, I am trying Miyu, not hard enough Henry. If this girl has turned you down drop her and move on, there are plenty of fish in the sea. Is my friend sleeping, he is in his office checking how everything ran while we were away, give him a big hug from me, I will, now you take care.

He had just finished a coffee and his phone rang, he did not recognise the number so he just said, good morning. Morning my friend, how are you Johnny, we are great Henry. I just wanted to tell you we wish to be on your list of friends. I am so pleased Johnny and I hope you were not too upset with me. Well, to tell you the truth, I was boiling when I first read it, however when I got to the end I had to admit you were 100% correct and I calmed down and thought just maybe you are an Englishman I would like to stay friends with.

My wife definitely wants to stay friends with you. I have never seen anybody that could get a Sheila so worked up and then send her home to sort her husband out. You are a gentleman Henry and I respect you. Thank you Johnny. I have to go because this wife of mine wants to speak to you. Hello Henry, hello Bonnie how are you, we are fantastic thank you, and let me tell you something. You swept into our lives and shook us both up and made us realise that not all Englishmen are complainers, one or two are genuine and we are proud that you want us to be your friend, and we love you and cannot wait for our next holiday together. You spiced our lives up and we will love you forever.

Go and find a wife, I told you I am trying. Take a little Australian advice. Dump the bitch and move on, stop being a gentleman where she is concerned.

He had to take the speed boat then the flight back to Manila everyday for the six days he worked in the Philippines. He left there with contracts of £50m in his pocket. He flew to Singapore for one week and had the

same success.

C

Chapter 22

J

Joe fly's to RAF Mildenhall

When Henry returned to London he stayed at the family home for three days and managed two rounds of golf and a couple of rides on Sultan. For some reason he could not explain he felt a little blessed. He contacted John and asked if they could get together, John said, I am here all day tomorrow as I only have a nighttime training flight. They arranged to meet at The Chequers for lunch.

They shook hands and hugged each other, after they had ordered Henry asked what he could do for him and Kate, nothing Henry. That is not acceptable John, you and Kate did me a very big favour which I will never forget. We were very happy to help Victoria and I would do it all again for you Henry. We have been friends since we played cricket and if I thought you could help me I would ask you. That is what friends do for each other Henry.

Okay John, but what can I do for Kate, she was not my friend, in fact I do not think I had ever seen her before. I do not know what to say to you, he paused and then asked, how much do you wish to spend on her, whatever she needs John. Well, her mother has just died and she has been left the house, however, she will have to sell it to pay the death duties.

That is an immoral tax John. I am more than happy to pay the tax for her, you do not know how much it is Henry. I do not care John, if paying the tax would help Kate then she can consider it paid. The funeral is in three days will you join us, I will be out of the country by then. Please give her a big hug and ask her for her solicitors name and please let me know and I will arrange with Sir Randolph to sort it out. She will be very relieved because she does not want to loose her family home, it is where she grew up and she loves the house.

Henry drove back to London and spent the best part of the next day at home before Lydia told him, I need you to go back to New York, actually Washington DC first and then New York. Roger will pick you up at 20:30 for your overnight to Dulles International.

Lydia had booked him into the Inter Continental which was a beautiful old building as she knew Henry loved old buildings. He spent some time looking around all the rooms that he could go into. He went to his room and showered and changed before heading out to his only appointment in Constitution Avenue. He was going to see a Senator. He was shown in and spent fifty five minutes with the Senator, when they had finished he asked Henry where are you staying, the Inter Continental, that's a beautiful old building Henry. They shook hands and Henry walked around before heading back to his hotel.

He spotted a taxi rank and was walking towards the first taxi in the line when two men walked up to him and asked, would you be Henry James Sir, I am. We are part of the first Ladies secret service detail and they

showed Henry their badges. The first lady has asked if you will come to the White House as she wishes to talk to you. I would love to, however, I leave early tomorrow morning. She meant straight away Mr James, then lead on. When they had gone through the security checks Henry was shown into a room and asked to please wait here.

Within minutes Laura Bush walked in and gave Henry a big hug, he responded, she turned and told the agent, it is okay Henry is a friend, yes ma'am. I thought you were going to leave without calling me Henry. I do not have very much time this trip that is why I did not call and apart from that, I do not think the White House switchboard would take me seriously if I asked to speak with you Laura. She laughed and said, you are quite right, I do forget sometimes, you need my secretary's number. Please put this in your phone right now, she gave him a number and a name and told him he can call that number anytime as I will tell Jane who you are. I was hoping you could come for a meal tomorrow night, I am sorry Laura, tomorrow night I will be on my way back to London. Never mind Henry we will make it one day. If you ever need a favour please ask me and I will try to help you.

My friend the Senator is very happy with what you have offered him. I wondered how you knew I was here. I do have one question, please ask Henry, how difficult is it to get somebody a ride on Air Force One, well that depends on who would like a ride. Joe Garcia, Joe is the head of the New York FBI bureau, now why would you be asking a favour for a top FBI agent. It's a little complicated to explain in the short time we have. I am guessing you do not mean a ride anywhere Henry, no Laura, almost any country outside of America. You will need to give me some information Henry. I was a friend of Joe's daughter, Amanda, that is how I know Joe, according to everything you can find out, Amanda was killed by the Al-Husseini family in late April. This sounds very secretive Henry, do not tell me anymore today. I think I understand what I need to do. Leave that with me and I will let you know what I can do for you, thank you Laura, they hugged and she gave Henry a peck on his cheek. They walked out of the room and she asked the agent who was waiting to make sure Henry get's to wherever he wishes to go, yes ma'am, please give my regards to the President, I most certainly will Henry and I hope to see you soon.

The agent asked Henry where he would like to go to, back to my hotel please. I can arrange that Mr James and they walked to the transport area, she walked up to a driver and asked him to please take Mr James to the Inter Continental. He opened the door and Henry got in, this driver never asked any questions and just drove him to the hotel.

The next day Henry went to New York where he had two appointments both turned into signed contracts. He boarded his BA flight back to Heathrow and arrived at 06:20 the next morning. Roger was waiting to drive him to the Penthouse, he thanked Roger and climbed the steps where Parker opened the door and welcomed him home. After sorting his washing out he sat in his office opening his post and drinking a coffee.

His mobile rang and Henry looked at the screen and said, good morning Jane, good morning, am I speaking to Henry James, you most certainly are. The First Lady has asked me to ask you which of the following countries would your friend prefer to get to. England, France, Germany or Turkey. England would be the easiest for me because we could travel by yacht to anywhere else. If you are happy with that then Joe will be travelling on Air Force Two which will be landing at RAF Mildenhall on Friday. I will be there to pick him up. Then show proof of identity at the main gate and you will be directed to an American check point they will tell you where to go from there. Do you have any idea of what time they will land, ETA is down for 11:00. Thank you Jane and please tell Laura, oh sorry, lets start again. Please thank the First Lady for her help, I will certainly do that Mr James, and she also told me to tell you, not to leave it so long before returning. Thank you for your time and trouble Jane. No trouble at all.

On Wednesday evening Joe Garcia heard a knock on the front door of his home, Joe opened the door and two men stood there, one asked, are you Joe Garcia FBI director. Who's asking, they showed Joe their secret service identification. Joe said please come inside, once inside they declined his offer of a drink and they all sat down. Why would the secret service come to my home, they smiled and told Joe that he had been seconded to the secret service. What in the world for, I do not know that Sir, however, I might think the request came from the First Lady. This file is for you, Joe picked the file up and opened it and read the contents.

You have been seconded to the secret service detail of the First Lady for the foreseeable future, as from 23:59 Wednesday you are no longer the FBI director in New York. All necessary documentation has been given to the FBI. A car will pick you up at 14:25 Thursday afternoon please have your suitcase packed for three to four weeks. He looked at the agents and one said, before you ask sir, we have no idea where you will be going. I can only say a couple of suits and shirts and casual clothes. Joe just said, thank you.

At 14:25 on Thursday a car pulled up outside Joe's house, the driver got out and walked to the front door, Joe opened the door and the driver showed Joe his badge. I can take your case sir, Joe handed it over and followed him back to the car, the driver opened the rear door and Joe got in. Sitting in the rear was Richard King, he shook Joe's hand and welcomed him to the team, I thought you applied to work for the secret service, however, your name was put forward by the First Lady. Believe me when I tell you nobody wants to upset this First Lady because she is one of the nicest and kindest First Ladies we have ever had the privilege of serving, she is a very polite person. Because she is like she is everybody bends over backwards to help her. I had to do a thorough search in to your background Joe and this is why you were seconded. You will need this and he gave Joe his secret service badge. I do not understand Joe replied, I have never met the First Lady so why would she ask for me, we have no idea. You must know someone in a position of power Joe. Maybe one day

it will all become clear. Now where are you taking me, we are going to JFK, where you will board a flight to Andrews Airforce Base. Joe just looked at him.

You will board a C-32, what is a C-32 Joe asked. The Boeing C-32 is a military passenger transportation version of the Boeing 757 for the United States Air Force. The C-32 provides transportation for United States leaders to locations around the world. The primary users are the Vice President of the United States, using the distinctive call sign "Air Force Two", the First Lady and the Secretary of State. Will the First Lady be on board, not this trip Joe it will be the Secretary of State. Do you know where we will be flying to, they are going to England, France, Germany and Turkey. I am a FBI agent I do not know how the secret service works. You are just observing on this trip and will go through training on your return, any other questions Joe, who do I report to, not sure who's in charge this trip, but do not worry you will be told.

Joe shook hands with Richard and boarded the private jet to fly to Andrews. On arriving he walked up to the C-32 where three people were standing at the bottom of the steps. Identity please, Joe showed his badge, good afternoon agent Garcia, good afternoon ma'am. One of the ladies said, please follow me and she climbed the steps, Joe followed. Just inside the aircraft two more agents were standing, this is agent Garcia on special assignment, thank you ma'am. She led Joe to an empty lounge and said, please sit down. My name is Jane and I am the private secretary to the First Lady, Joe said, pleased to meet you, like wise Joe. She opened a folder and gave Joe his diplomatic passport, he opened the passport and then just looked at her without saying a word. You are on a special assignment for the First Lady, under no circumstances do you tell anybody what your assignment is, that will not be a problem Joe replied. She then gave Joe a letter, I suggest you read this before any other agents arrive, thank you Jane. She said, have a good trip Joe, he smiled and she got up and walked back to the steps and descended.

Joe opened the envelope and removed a single sheet of A4 paper and he proceeded to read.

Dear agent Garcia,

A friend of mine asked me to do him a favour so I had agent King look into your life to make sure you are the right person for this type of assignment. I think I understand why my friend asked for my help. When agent King gave me the findings of your life I pulled rank and had you seconded to my secret service detail, you have become the agent for special assignments, this means that nobody will be asking you any questions, of course, it does mean you will have to stay a loner.

The flight you are now on will make it's first stop in England at RAF Mildenhall, this is where you will get off. You will make your way to a waiting area where my friend will collect you. I do not know where you will be going from RAF Mildenhall to complete your assignment.

You can take four weeks for this assignment and when you have finished, phone Jane and she will arrange for your return. On your return

I will expect a verbal report, nothing in writing.

Please give my friend my best wishes.

Laura Bush, First lady.

Joe read it again, I wonder who her friend is and what he has in store for me.

The C-32 landed and taxied to the holding point, all agents were on their feet and moving around the aircraft. The steps were put in place and Joe heard Colin Powell's voice asking if we are all ready. Joe waited another twenty minutes before headed for the steps, at the bottom he walked the short distance to the building and noticed marines everywhere. He was asked for his ID and he showed his passport, he was pointed towards a baggage collection point, his case was the only one there, again he was asked for ID. The marine looked at a computer screen and said, please follow me sir. He was shown into a room and told to please wait here, he helped himself to water out of the cooler and stood looking out of the window.

He spotted a Mercedes sports car approaching, it parked and a man got out and walked towards the building. Joe then found out who the First Lady's friend was, Henry walked through the door and said, good morning Joe, good morning Henry and they hugged each other. Do you only have one case Joe, that's all I thought I needed Henry, then lets get on the road.

They walked out to the car and Henry placed Joe's case in the boot. Henry drove towards the American check point. May I see some identification please, Henry handed his and Joe's passports over to the guard, he looked at them and looked at each man in turn, once he was satisfied he raised the barricade and allowed them through. Henry drove on to the RAF guards at the main gate, this gate had four armed guards along with steel poles that raised up and down from the ground. They showed their passports and they were allowed through.

Once on the road Henry asked Joe how long had he managed to get off work, Joe replied by asking Henry how he knew the First Lady. My mother and father have known the President and First Lady for several years, I only met them at my sisters wedding, they attended your sisters wedding Henry, they did Joe. For a young investment banker you seem to know people in powerful places, Henry smiled. So how long are you on holiday, let me read you this letter and then you will see how my life has changed over the last two days. Joe read the letter from the First Lady, when he had finished Henry said, thank you for passing on my friends best wishes, Joe just smiled. So Amanda is living in England Henry, when I was contacted by Jane she told me the Secretary of State will be travelling to four countries, I told her England would be easier for me because we can take a yacht to almost anywhere. So I guess that is why I have been given four weeks.

My friend did not tell me how she would help me, or if she could, she simply said. Leave that with me and I will let you know what I can do for you. I think she made a smart move for you, you get to see your daughter and nobody can ask any questions, it sounds perfect Henry. It does indeed,

I was still wondering how I was going to be able to talk to you again. Thank you for making a plan for me Henry, I did not, I only asked my friend, she must like you Henry, we made a perfect couple on the dance floor Joe.

So where do we sail from, we do not sail anywhere Joe, but you said, I only said what was possible Joe, I did not say where you needed to get to. You play your cards close to your chest Henry, your daughters life could depend on that Joe. Joe just nodded. We have a three hour drive and I know this might be hard for you, however, your daughter is dead I am taking you to meet a beautiful young lady by the name of Victoria Santiago. Jeff got her new identity and all her papers, she is now Spanish. I am sure with four weeks together she will explain everything to you. Thank you for everything you have done Henry, it was my pleasure Joe.

They made good time and two and a half hours later Henry turned into Queensberry Manor using the rear gate. As they drove down the little lane towards the Woodcutters cottage, Joe asked, where are we Henry. Henry pulled up outside the cottage and said, we are at my family home, you live here Henry, no, Victoria lives here, with your mother and father, not really Joe. My mother and father live in the main house, Victoria lives here alone. I would think Victoria is at work, so we can go and find her, she works here, yes she works for my mother. They got out of the car and Henry checked the door to the cottage and found it locked, as I thought she must be at work. Lets go this way and Henry pointed Joe to the other path. They walked around 200 yards and turned to the right and there stood Queensberry Manor House, my god Henry, this is your family home. It is indeed Joe, what a magnificent building, I do love it here Joe, just then Henry spotted Jessie, I must introduce you to my favourite person.

Henry hugged Jessie and she said, you did not tell us you were coming home Henry. I wish to introduce a friend of mine, this is Joe Garcia, Joe please meet the most important person on this property, this is Jessie Williams and whatever you need you just ask Jessie. They both said, pleased to meet you and shook hands, will you be staying over tonight Joe, Joe will be staying for four weeks Jessie. I will make a room up for you, Joe will be staying with Victoria, then I do not need to do anything as I am sure Victoria has taken care of that. Henry smiled and told Jessie, Victoria does not know Joe was coming, then I will make sure the bed is made up in the Woodcutters cottage, thank you Jessie. Lets head to the offices Joe. As they walked along the path Henry said to Joe, you had better put my number in your phone as it would look a little strange if my friend asked you to phone me and you did not have my number. She might think that is strange not having his friends number, they just smiled and they exchanged phone numbers.

They walked up the flight of stairs to Alexandra's office, just stand to the side so they cannot see you, Joe moved to the left. Henry knocked on the door and Alexandra said, please come in, Henry opened the door and said, good afternoon ladies. Oh Henry why did you not let us know you were coming home, I did not know when I was coming mother, you expect me to believe that Henry James, come and give us both a hug,

before I do that mother I have a friend I wish to introduce to both of you. Alexandra and Victoria's face lit up, Victoria said, do not hide the young lady away Henry, he smiled. Please come in and meet my mother Lady James, Joe stepped inside and Henry said, this young lady is Victoria Santiago, Joe would like to stay in the woodcutters cottage, if that's alright with you. Victoria regained her composure and jumped up and just said, oh daddy. She ran to him and threw her arms around his neck, they hugged and they both had tears running down their cheeks.

Alexandra moved around her desk and hugged and kissed Henry, you are truly a wonderful son. When Joe and Victoria had got over the initial shock, Victoria turned to Henry and hugged and kissed him and said, thank you Henry, Alexandra hugged Joe, saying, please call me Alexandra. Victoria said, I do not know how you did this Henry, but thank you very much, lets just say I had a little help from a friend. Off you go young lady and take Joe back home, I will just tidy my desk up, just go, I will sort it out.

The three of them walked back to the cottage arm in arm, Henry got Joe's case out of his boot and gave it to Joe, as they were walking to the front door Jessie came out with one of the maids. Jessie please meet, Joe and I have already met Victoria,

That is why we came to make the bed up for Joe. Thank you Jessie, you are welcome, see you both later for supper, and she left. Let me show you to your room as I am sure you would like to take a shower. I will see you two later and Henry walked back to the main house. He found Jessie and asked for a coffee. Jessie returned with two coffee's and some cake. Victoria's father seems like a very nice man Henry, Joe is a lovely man and we had to let him think his daughter had been killed just in case he was being watched. That must have been very hard for him, I am sure it was. How long are you staying for Henry, I must leave tomorrow Jessie as Lydia tells me she has a new country for me to go to, where are you going Henry, I have no idea Jessie.

Joe had a shave and shower and got changed into smart casual, Victoria asked, coffee daddy, that sound good to me. She made the coffee and sat down next to Joe and they held hands, who is going first Joe asked, you can. Joe started to tell Victoria what had happened from the first time he was told she had been killed. I found it very hard as I was all alone and had nobody to share my grief with. I am sorry that we could not tell you and I felt very bad that you had to suffer. That is not a problem any longer, although I think we have to come up with what we are to each other. You cannot be my daughter because she was killed, you could be a niece from your mothers side of the family. Or better still a friend of my daughters from school days, you did go on a school trip to Spain so you could have met there. That is a very good cover story, so you must decide if you are going to call me uncle Joe or just Joe. I would say just Joe, however, thinking back to my time in Spain I am sure children would call adults uncle even though they are no relation to each other. That's settled then, uncle Joe it is, she lent over and kissed him and said, hello uncle Joe, he

gave her a squeeze and said, hello Victoria.

Victoria then told Joe what happened from the time she and Henry were in the restaurant, he listened without interrupting her. When she had finished he asked her, how many people know you were not killed. Jeff, his secretary and four agents from the Miami office and the head man, John Russo. Major General Takahiro Yoshino and his wife Miyu, she is Henry's sister. Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston and his wife Bonnie. Squadron Leader John Ackerman and his loadmaster Kate Bolton. Henry's mother and father, Jessie and Philip the butler.

Of course, Henry. I am guessing that if the First Lady does not know she will once you report back. I would think that the Japanese and Australian couples along with everybody in this house we do not have to ever worry about. I just hope the six people from the CIA never give you up. Do they know where you now live, only the people here, that's good. So we have a lot to thank Henry for, we do uncle Joe. That feels funny, however, if that's what I have to call you it's a small price to pay. They hugged and Victoria said, lets go and see what Jessie has made for us to eat.

Over dinner Joe told Alexandra and Henry what he and Victoria had decided for a cover story. Victoria will call me uncle, he also explained how we know each other. That is a good story that would be very difficult to dispute Henry said. Now Victoria, I have decided that I am going to tell Jeff that they must forget about opening an account for you. I will open an account for you, that way there can never be any form of paper trail back to you. I cannot accept anything else from you Henry. Alexandra told Victoria not to be silly, it will be safer for you and Henry can certainly afford it, end of story young lady.

The next morning Henry said his goodbyes and Joe hugged him and thanked him for everything, I do not know when I will get back, however, I will make sure it is before you leave, I do hope so Henry. Henry got in his car and drove back to London.

Late afternoon Henry phoned Daniel Knox and arranged to open an account for Victoria in sterling putting £350k into her New account. He used Queensberry Manor as the address, thank you Daniel, I hope to get back to see you soon. That would be very nice Henry as I have a couple of properties for you to look at, I will be in touch.

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enry meets Annika

The second week in July 2004 Henry had to go to Stockholm, as a potential new client had called and wanted an appointment. He was referred to Henry by a friend in America and he wanted the same deal. Henry had never been to Sweden since he started university, so he made his appointment for Wednesday 7th which would give him two days to sort the business out and then he would get the weekend to look around before having to return on Monday morning. His appointment was for 08:30 Thursday morning and by 16:30 that afternoon he had a signed contract in his briefcase, he was very pleased with himself because this gave him an extra day to look around. He went back to his hotel and took a shower and finished up the loose ends on the contract and at 19:00 he went out to grab a bite to eat.

He received a message from John giving him the name of Kate's solicitors, the rest of the message just said, keep well Henry and hope to see you soon. He phoned Sir Randolph at home and Martha answered the phone, he took a deep breath and said, hello Martha. Hello Henry and I bet that took a bit of doing dropping the lady, how are you Henry, very well thank you and I trust you are keeping well. I am a lot better now I have got you to change a little, I am guessing you are looking for Randolph. Hello my boy how are you, I am well thank you Sir Randolph. I put the phone on speaker Henry because I was willing to bet that you had not dropped the Sir. I cannot do that Martha because Sir Randolph has not told me to do that. You are old enough to drop the Sir and Lady Henry and I do know you have a lot of respect for both of us. Let us agree that you will only use the titles when needed, which I am sure you know what I am talking about. Thank you Randolph, it does not seem quite right though, they all laughed.

What can I do for you my boy. I have a friend John Ackerman, yes I know John you were at school with him. That is correct Randolph. Kate's mother has just died and she has been left the family home in her mother's will. Kate is one of John's crew. She is unable to pay the immoral tax and I wish to pay it for her. Henry gave Kate Bolton's name along with her solicitors names. Leave that with me my boy and I will let you know just as soon as it has been paid, thank you Randolph..

Henry then sat down to write to Kate, he used the hotels stationary and quickly penned a short letter saying sorry to hear of her bereavement and apologised for not being able to attend her mother's funeral to give her a little support. He finished the letter by telling her that Sir Randolph will be getting in touch with her solicitors and the death duty will be taken care of. Thank you for helping a friend of mine, love Henry xxx

It had started to rain so he took a cab and asked the driver if he could

suggest a quiet little restaurant, I know just the place, Jerntorgiths Café, it's a small place but the food is fantastic and the staff are very friendly, that sounds like my sort of place Henry said. He walked in and the place was full, some kind of party going on so he turned to leave and a waiter touched him on the arm and said, do not leave sir I will find you a table. All your tables seem to be taken, do not worry sir just follow me.

He stopped at a table in the back of the room here a very attractive young lady was sitting by herself, he spoke to her in Swedish and she looked Henry up and down and said, sure you can sit at this table I will find another café and she got up. Henry said, please stop, I cannot turn you out, the waiter told me he had a table in the back, he did not tell me that you had to leave so that he could give me this table. She said, he knows you will spend more than I will, so he would rather have you sitting at this table.

Henry said, I will look for another café, or, you can let me join you here. She smiled and said I would be happy to do that as I am tired and I just need a coffee. My name is Henry, I am Annika pleased to meet you. They sat down and Henry said, the taxi driver recommended this place, do you know if the food is any good, it is very good and I can recommend the meat balls, he asked will you join me. She said sorry I only came for coffee, I have just lost my job so I should not be spending money. I am sorry you have lost your job but I could not let you pay even if you had not lost your job, please join me and tell me why you lost your job.

Simple really, my boss decided that if I needed to stay at his company I must accept his sexual advances whenever he feels like it, I told him to stick his job where the sun never shines and walked out. He said to me, I hope you realise jobs are hard to come by, and I am sure you will be back, I just walked out. Mind you that was two weeks ago and I have not found a job as yet. However, I have an interview for the position of Sous Chef next Wednesday so we will see. You are a chef Henry asked, not a certificated one but I can hold my own in the kitchen, that's very interesting Henry thought. I will not stop looking though because I may not get this job, are you from Stockholm. Just outside, I was born in Torsvik and I still live in the house I was born in with my mother.

I have a job for you for the next three days if you are interested, what is the job and she smiled at Henry. The waiter arrived and asked if they were ready to order, yes we are, and I think we are going with the meat balls and salad, and for drinks he asked, Henry asked is red wine okay for you Annika, she nodded her head and can we also have a bottle of still water thank you. Henry turned back to Annika and told her it is a long time since I visited Sweden and I have finished my business today and I am here until Sunday midday so I have a good chance to look around the city. However, I need somebody that knows this area, that way I feel you always learn more about the place. Oh, I thought you wanted to take advantage of my situation that is why I smiled and was ready to say, all men are the same no matter what country they come from. I am sorry to disappoint you Annika, but I am not like most men and would never take

advantage of you or anybody else in your position.

Annika said, I am sorry for thinking that all men are the same, now what do you want to see, as much as possible but first we must fix a price for a guide for three days so please give me your charges. She thought about it for a little while and then said, is 1200 Krona per day acceptable to you Henry, yes, but only if food and all other expenses are on top, Annika said, are you sure, absolutely. Now give me a time and you can come and pick me up at my hotel, I am staying at the Grand. Is 08:00 okay with you she asked, that's fine with me. The waiter arrived with their meal and Henry said, if this tastes as good as it looks we are in for a real treat. The rest of the evening was taken up by Annika asking questions about what Henry liked and disliked so that she could get an impression of where to take him for the next three days.

By ten o'clock they had finished eating and after talking all evening they had learnt a little about each other and both felt the time spent had been very pleasant and they were looking forward to tomorrow. Henry asked if it is easy to get a taxi and Annika said very, he went to the desk to pay and they walked out of the restaurant together. They walked to the end of the street and found a taxi, if he drops me off at the Grand he can then take you home if that is alright with you, she spoke to the driver in Swedish and within a few minutes they had arrived at the Grand. Henry asked the driver for the total charge once he has dropped Annika off, 60 Krona. Henry paid the driver and asked him to please wait as I wish to give Annika something from the hotel, the driver said, okay. They walked into the lobby and Henry asked the Concierge to please make a copy of his passport, he did so and gave Henry back his passport and the copy along with his room key, thank you, if there is a charge please put it on the bill, no charge Mr James. Henry gave the copy of his passport to Annika along with his business card, just in case you want to leave this with your mother so she knows who I am, I am not a baby Henry, I am twenty five years old. He smiled and asked her if you feel it would be easier to use a taxi tomorrow just arrive in one and I will reimburse you, he then gave Annika a peck on the cheek and said, I have really enjoyed this evening and I will see you tomorrow morning, and I will be over there drinking coffee. He then walked Annika back to the taxi and said goodnight, turned and went back inside the hotel.

At 07:45 on Thursday morning Annika walked into the Grand Hotel and saw Henry over in the corner with his back to her, he was drinking coffee and looking out of the window, as she got closer she said, good morning Henry he stood up and turned around, good morning to you Annika, she smiled and came close and gave him a kiss on his cheek, that's a great way to start the day he told her. Would you like a coffee before we get started, yes please, he ordered another coffee and they sat down and Annika started to tell him what she had planned for him. Just take me wherever you think will be interesting, she smiled and said, alright I will not tell you what I have planned I will just take you places where I think you should go to see the things I think are important and interesting, is

that okay. That would be fantastic to have somebody else in charge for the day, no Henry, three days not one that was our agreement was it not, you are so right and so beautiful with the morning sun shining on your face, thank you, and you are very kind.

They saw Viking ships, Museums, Palaces, the Town Hall, and many places of interest and views of the city and yachts in the little harbour. I want to purchase a sailing ship one day Henry told her, do you know how to sail she asked, yes, but I need my own to get better at it, I know what you mean as my father had a Nordic Folkboat and we used to go sailing most weekends in the summer. He would let me take the helm and I really enjoyed my time sailing, sadly my father passed away two years ago and my mother had to sell it because we could not afford the upkeep. Oh that is so sad, she just smiled at Henry and asked if we had done enough for one day. Yes, but will you join me for dinner tonight. I would like that but I promised to cook for my mother tonight, but you are welcome to join us, if you like. That is very kind of you Annika, but perhaps you should ask your mother first. I am old enough to invite you for a meal without having to ask my mamma first, he smiled and asked, what time and where. 20:00 and she wrote down her address and handed it to Henry. Must I wear a suit or is casual okay, I only ask because I am meeting your mother and it is always good to give the mother a good first impression, she just laughed at his joke, casual is fine.

The receptionist at the Grand ordered a taxi for 19:30 that evening and it took Henry to Annika's house in Torsvik, he knocked on the front door and Annika let him in and said, come through and meet my mother, this is Henry, the man I am working as his tour guide for the next three days, this is Fredrika my mother. Fredrika looked about two inches taller than Annika and also had the high cheek bones that made her look just as stunning as her daughter, in fact, she looked more like an older sister than her mother. Henry extended his arm and shook Fredrika's hand and said, I am very pleased to meet you, like wise she said. Would you like a drink, that would be nice, we are drinking red wine is that alright for you Henry, yes thank you. Annika needed to go back into the kitchen and on the way she said, I need about thirty minutes can I leave you two alone to chat? They both looked at her and smiled.

Fredrika asked is this your first visit to Stockholm Henry, no it's not my first visit to Stockholm, but it has been many years since I was here last. How are you liking Sweden so far. I have to say I like it pretty good so far, I have already signed my first contract and spent today with Annika and she has shown me so many things of interest that I would never have found out on my own. She is a very good guide and could certainly do that job for a living. Fredrika laughed a little and said to Henry, that is funny because the first day she walked out from that pig of a man I told her she could set up her own business as a guide because she knows a lot about Stockholm and she speaks several languages.

She did not tell me that, what languages does she speak, Norwegian, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish that I know of. That is quite

impressive, not really Henry, here in Scandinavia most people speak several languages, I speak all Scandinavian languages along with French, German, Spanish and everybody speaks English, what about you Henry, how many foreign languages do you speak. Not as many as I would like to and certainly not as many as Annika, I speak a little French, and a little Spanish. Having said that I am sure I do not speak them as well as you do, they both smiled and laughed and Fredrika said. English people do not seem to be interested in learning foreign languages, Henry said, sadly that is very true.

Annika walked into the room and asked, are you guys ready to eat, I am sure we are. Shall we go through to the dinning room Henry, and do you need a hand Annika her mother asked, no thank you, I need to impress you both with my cooking skills. Henry was shown to the head of the table and waited for Fredrika to move round the table and to sit in her place and then Henry sat down. Seating Henry at the head of the table told Annika that her mother liked this man which was very strange because she had only just met him, however, she had never been wrong in her judgement of people. Annika brought all the dishes containing the food and placed them on the buffet ready to be served and she smiled a knowing smile at her mother who smiled back.

This looks fantastic Annika and lamb is my favourite roast Henry said, Fredrika said, if I am not mistaken we are in for a real treat tonight, maybe you should have invited the owner of the restaurant. They all laughed and Annika asked if they were ready for her to serve them or did they want to help themselves, Henry said, at formal dinners he gets served, but you told me to come casual. Fredrika said, I think you should serve us as that will give us a better impression of your skills, do you agree Henry, well if you are trying to impress us then most definitely you should serve. She took each dish and served Henry and then Fredrika, do not forget yourself, you do not need to worry about that. When she had finished she sat down and smiled and said, I hope it is to your liking, they both said, I am sure it is.

They started to eat in silence and it was not long before Henry said, I think this is the best leg of lamb I have ever tasted. There was small talk during the meal and when they had finished Annika cleared away refusing any help. She then brought out the dessert and Henry said, wow, what is that, I have never seen anything like it before. It is a Spettekakka Fredrika answered and it is a traditional Swedish dessert. Henry said, it seems such a shame to destroy it, and mother and daughter said, if we do not then you will not taste this traditional dessert. When the meal was finish Annika asked if they would like to retire to the lounge and have coffee, that would be very acceptable Henry said, and they moved to the lounge. Annika brought in the coffee pot and poured a cup for all of them.

They sat drinking their coffee and Annika asked her mother for her comments about her meal. She said, we have known for many years that you can cook, but tonight's meal was exceptional and if this man does not employ you he is crazy. Annika turned to face Henry and asked for his opinion, from the start the presentation was very attractive and the taste

of the whole meal without a doubt was as Fredrika said, exceptional. Would you employ me if you owned a restaurant, I do not own a restaurant but I will employ you in a slightly different position if you are interested. She burst out laughing as she remembered what happened in the restaurant on the first night they met. Yes, I know because you told me on Thursday night that you are not like most men and would not take advantage of me, Fredrika raised her eyebrows and just looked at both of them, would one of you care to explain.

When we first met I told Henry that I had lost my job and he asked me why, so I told him about my boss. Henry then said, I have a job for you for three days if you are interested. I thought here we go again all men are the same, Henry then told me he is not like most men and he would not take advantage of me or anybody else in my position. That is why I laughed mamma, I was not being rude and I am sure Henry realised that, he just nodded. Well Annika, are you going to ask Henry to tell us what the job is, or are you not interested. She looked at Henry and said, please explain this new job Henry.

I have been looking for a Housekeeper for several months now and I cannot find anybody that is suitable. Annika asked him, why are they not suitable. Lydia has only found two that she thought would be alright, but one was not interested in working weekends at all and the other did not like flexible working. Please tell me about this job Henry. As I said, I need to employ a housekeeper, I live on my own in a large property, I am not married and I do not have any children. What I need is a smart lady that can take charge of the house and organise herself, I do not wish to be telling her what to do on a daily basis, she must just be able to organise herself.

Keep the Penthouse clean and tidy, attend to the washing and ironing and she also needs to be able to cook. What do you mean by flexible, I go away regularly, in fact I think without checking that I am away about two weeks per month and that can change at any time so you would not need to work when I am away. However, when I am at home I would want you to work weekends, living on your own is not all it is cracked up to be, so I eat out a lot more than I want to. I love home made food and the meal you produced tonight tells me you are the young lady for the job. What else must I do, I do not understand your question, well if you live on your own, the washing, ironing and cleaning would not take up much time, cooking is relative depending what you want me to cook, so I would be sitting around just waiting for you to arrive home.

Let me explain in a little more detail about myself and the job I do and what I need and expect from my housekeeper. I am a junior partner of a small firm of Investment Bankers and I have been doing this job for the same firm since I left Oxford University four years ago. I cover the Americas, South East Asia and now maybe Scandinavia, this means I can go away at a days notice and may be away for a week. My housekeeper must be able to handle that and organise herself accordingly, like wise if I am in London and tell her I will not be back until late tonight, she does

not need to wait around. Also I do not need to see her before I start working in my office in the morning. Once you know how long it takes you to do what is needed to be done that day you would arrive accordingly, whatever time you thought to start, or start early and leave early depending on what is needed to be done that day.

I have never been a clock watcher and I do not wish to have a clock watcher working for me. I do work from home when I am in London, Lydia and I work as a team, she makes all my appointments, books flights and hotels and keeps her eye on the investments we have made. She is the investment manager and works out of the office in the Penthouse five days a week, whether I am there or not. The other point about my work, I would need you to sign a Non Discloser Agreement, this means that whatever you see or hear regarding my work you cannot repeat to anybody or you could be prosecuted. So if you are interested we can talk about salary.

Yes, I am intrigued to say the least, Fredrika said, it sounded like you both thought you had the job already and they all laughed. Henry then explained, I live in a five bedroomed Penthouse in Hyde Park Gardens in London, it is one street from the north side of Hyde Park and you have a clear view across the park, it is a very nice property. I am a reasonably tidy person so the cleaning would be very minimal. I believe that rents are very expensive in London Annika said, that is true but it would not be a problem for you. Then do you wish me to live in your Penthouse with you, not really, you could if you wanted to, but I have a two bedroomed apartment in Basil Street in Knightsbridge, which is on the south side of Hyde Park and you can live there as part of you salary. I purchased this property in December last year just for this reason, and I have renovated it so it is very clean and everything inside is brand new. I cannot see what you would dislike about it, or for that matter the area, it is just down the road from Harrods Departmental Store. This is around two miles south straight across Hyde Park from my Penthouse.

Is it okay to discuss salary in front of your mother, Oh yes, because I would discuss it with her later if she was not here, I understand but I had to ask. I am thinking of a starting figure of £1000.00 per month, on top of that you have full use of the flat which will be fully furnished, the only restriction would be that you cannot sublet. You will receive a monthly underground ticket, this lets you travel anywhere on the underground as often as you like. I would give this so that you can travel to purchase whatever you need in the line of your duties, of course, you can use it for personal use whenever you wish to. You will also receive a debit card for all purchases you need to make to run the household, your food would also be included so you would never need to purchase from your own money. I would hope you would wish to eat with me whenever I am at home, but if you do not want to do that then you could take your meal to your apartment or you would need to make your own when you return. Either way the cost of your food would be covered. I would expect you to use your debit card for everything you need to purchase, so apart from

entertainment you would not need to use your salary for anything else. If the weather is bad you can take the tube, it means that you have to take three trains and it takes about thirty minutes, when the weather is nice you can walk across Hyde Park if you wish to.

I love Hyde Park and go running most days I am at home, I go first thing in the morning. Now, If you accept my offer then we can go into things in more detail, I did say I need a smart lady, I guess I should have said, I need an intelligent, honest lady.

Henry then asked Annika. Are you that person. She looked at her mother and Fredrika smiled and nodded, can you tell me something about the area Henry. I can do better than that, I suggest that you come back to London with me and stay a few days so you can take a look around before giving me your final answer. If you would also like to come and see where Annika would be working and living Fredrika, you are more than welcome. That is very kind of you Henry and I would feel a lot happier seeing for myself, I understand and that is why I am asking you. Is Sunday good for both you ladies and how long do you want to stay and look around, at least two days, three would be better as London is a very big city Annika said. What about staying until the following Sunday as that would give me time to show you a couple of places.

If you get your passports I will phone Lydia and she will make the arrangements, they fetched their passports and Henry was talking to Lydia when they returned, she asked him how is he getting on in the land of the Vikings, he told her things are going really well, I have a signed contract and I hopefully have found a housekeeper. That is fantastic Henry, what do you need from me, I think it is best if Annika checks out the properties and understand what the job entails before making a final decision. I agree Lydia said, her mother will be coming with her so she can put her mind at ease that her daughter can live safely in London and work for me. They can take a look around, so please be kind enough to book them on the same flight as I return on and they will stay until the following Sunday. Would Annika be able to start straight away, because if she can then I would make her ticket an open one, that sounds about the right thing to do, I will now pass you over to Annika and she will give you their passport details, thank you Lydia and I will see you on Monday and again, I am sorry to contact you out of hours, you know that is not a problem Henry.

He handed the phone to Annika and she gave Lydia their details, when they had finished talking about the flight details Lydia said, I do not think you will be disappointed if you decide to work for Henry as he is a genuine guy, I would trust him with my life, and believe me, your mother does not need to worry about him at all. We share an office in Henry's Penthouse and believe me, I would not do that if I thought Henry would take advantage. I look forward to meeting you and your mother next week, Annika said, thank you Lydia, and she gave Henry his phone back. They both looked at Henry and Fredrika said, thank you Henry I really do appreciate this, you are more than welcome, as I said, I do understand that being a mother you would have some concerns especially as I live in

another country. I would like to assure you both, that I will never do anything against your wishes and I will only treat you with respect and dignity and I would never put you in a compromising position Annika, I will treat you like I treat my sister, I would not let anything bad happen to you, I hope you understand what I am trying to say.

So are you going to pick me up at the Grand again tomorrow Henry asked, yes, as that seems to work out fine and I get a coffee before we start, is 08:30 alright for you. That's fine with me, would you like to join us Fredrika, depends on where you are going as I have an appointment at four o'clock tomorrow. You can sort that out with the tour guide when I have left as I see it is 23:00 and I should be going, will you call me a taxi please. The taxi arrived within ten minutes, both mother and daughter hugged Henry and he gave them a kiss on their cheeks. Thank you for a wonderful meal Annika it really was delicious, you are very welcome, he turned and headed for the taxi, Annika stood at the door and waved him off. When she returned to the lounge Fredrika asked, what she had planned for tomorrow and would you be happy if I tag along, I do not have a problem with that, I was planning to visit the old town as it is easy to get to and there is a lot to see all within walking distance. That sounds good to me, so if you do not mind me being there I will join you and Henry.

I must say that I like this man and if he is as genuine as he seems to be, then you are lucky to have found him, this kind of job is usually to look after three or four kid's and a spoilt wife. It seems you will have many days in the month when you can please yourself what you do. He must be a very thoughtful man to offer to take me so that I can see for myself, yes, that was very kind of him to make that offer mamma.

At 08:20 mother and daughter walked into the Grand Hotel and found Henry sitting looking out of the window in the same chair as he was sitting in yesterday. They walked up behind him and both leaned down over the chair and kissed him on his cheeks, Annika on the left and Fredrika on his right. He smiled, stood up, turned around and said what did I do to deserve these good morning kisses, they both just gave a little laugh. Has my guide made a plan for today, yes, she has Fredrika said. He ordered two coffees for them and they talked about things in general. When they had finished their coffee Annika asked are you two ready to check out the sights, most definitely Henry said with a smile.

They walked into the old town and visited every place of interest along with many that were not on any tourist map. It was a fabulous morning and they walked along the wide areas with Henry in the middle and Annika and Fredrika on each side of him with their arms linked through his, or they just walked along holding hands. It just seemed the right thing to do for all of them, at one point Henry brought their hands up to his mouth at the same time and kissed them both and said, I feel like I have known you two for ever, they both laughed and Annika said, me to. At 14:00 they walked into a little out of the way café and had a snack and a glass of red wine, one and a half hours later they walked out and Fredrika phoned for a taxi so she could go to her appointment, they all hugged and kissed

goodbye and the taxi sped away.

Henry asked if there was a tourist boat they could take as he felt he had walked enough for one day, Annika laughed and asked him, is it because you are getting old and I am wearing you out, he said, maybe. They found a two hour boat ride and settled down in the back seat and sailed passed places that Annika had shown Henry yesterday, he really enjoyed the day and at 18:00 they took a taxi which dropped Henry off at the Grand, he thanked Annika for another wonderful day gave her a hug and a kiss and said I expect to see you and Fredrika around 20:00 tonight, my treat, she smiled and said, that would be a nice way to finish off the day and we can talk about what to do tomorrow. He got out and gave the taxi driver a 100 Kroner note and asked if that covered the total fare, Annika told the driver where to go next and he said to Henry, more than enough. Henry waved her off and walked into the Grand and went straight up to his room and jumped into the shower.

At 19:45 Annika and Fredrika walked into the Grand Hotel and asked the receptionist for Henry James, he is waiting for you at the bar, Annika thanked her and they found Henry sitting at the bar. They gave him a kiss and Henry asked if they would like a drink before going through to the restaurant, they both said, they were fine, so they went straight through and waited for the Maître d to seat them. They looked at the menu and they all ordered fish, Annika and Fredrika ordered Lobster and Henry said, I think I will try this Swedish dish, Varmrokt Lax (Smoked Salmon). The ladies looked at him and Fredrika said, it's great that you try different foods, he also ordered a bottle of dry white wine. While waiting for the meal Fredrika said, I am told you needed a rest this afternoon, Henry smiled and said I think your daughter was trying to walk me to death so I thought it was time for a ride, they all laughed and it was not long before the meal arrived. The food was very good and not much talking was taking place, just a little small talk here and there, then, they all had Ostkaka which is a Swedish Cheesecake for dessert.

Afterwards they sat and drank coffee and talked about Henry's last day in Sweden. Annika said, I think we will need to go farther afield to find more Viking artefacts. Henry replied by telling her he had another idea and Annika burst out laughing, Henry looked at her and said, one day I may mean it that way, but not today. Henry excused himself and headed for the toilets, when he had gone Fredrika laughed and said, I read somewhere that the English lord of the Manor, puts his housekeeper over his knee and spans her bare bottom if he is not happy with her or her work, so unless you want to be spanked you had better be careful. Annika said, mamma, do not say that and they both laughed.

When Henry returned they both looked at him and Annika said, pray tell what is your other idea, he smiled and said, I told you that I was interested in purchasing a sailing yacht, and if it's possible can we go and look around Malö Yachts, as I think they are one of the best in Sweden. Fredrika said, yes, that is true, but they are on the other coast and that must be at least five hours by car. Then we will go by helicopter, are you

sure you want to do that Henry, absolutely. If you make sure they will be open tomorrow Annika, I will organise the helicopter.

They both got out their mobile phones, Annika made a couple of calls and spoke to Märten Karlsson who said, he will be at the yard tomorrow because he is showing an owner the progress of his order, so he will be free after 11:30, she thanked him and told him we will see you in the morning. Henry looked at Annika and asked what time can we go there, after 11:30 she told him, the voice on the other end of Henry's phone said, in that case we should leave at 09:00, he looked at Fredrika, I hope you are coming with us, yes she said, I have heard many good things about Malö Yachts but I have never been there. Henry told the pilot there will be three of us, see you tomorrow at 09:00 and thank you for your time and trouble, no trouble at all, the guy said. We should have a great day tomorrow ladies, that would be very nice Fredrika said. They agreed to pick Henry up at 08:00 and then take a taxi to the airport. Big hugs and kisses all round and Annika and Fredrika got in a taxi to take them home.

They got to the airport at 08:30 and the pilot had done all his checks and was waiting for them. Henry sorted out the paperwork and they lifted off at 08:45. It was a very clear day and Henry thought the scenery is magnificent in this part of the world, Fredrika or Annika would lean over and touch Henry's arm and point out places of interest, along with herds of Reindeer. At 11:05 they landed in a field next to Malö Yachts, as they were early they walked along the road and stood around looking at moored yachts. Ten minutes later a voice behind them asked, are you Henry James. They turned around and Henry shook the hand of Märten Karlsson and introduced Annika and her mother Fredrika Olsson. Märten said, anybody that takes a helicopter ride to get here on a Sunday must be seriously interested in Malö Yachts, yes, I am, Henry answered. I would appreciate it if you would show us around your works explaining why you feel Malö Yachts are the worlds finest. Afterwards if you have any second-hand yachts for sale please show them to us. Märten Karlsson said, that would be my pleasure.

He showed them how their yachts are designed and then went right through the building process until the owner receives their yacht. When the tour had finished Henry said, I now understand why your yachts are world class, you put so much thought and love into them. Märten Karlsson just smiled and asked if they were ready to see the range of second hand yachts they have. Lead the way, he showed them all the second hand yachts they had, from a 32ft up to a 61ft, they were not all Malö yachts. All three of them really liked the Malö 36, especially after he asked Annika if she would like to check out the owners cabin with him, she smiled and after removing her decks she climbed onto the bed with him, they cuddled a little, kissed and laughed before getting off. Märten Karlsson explained that it was a new yacht that the owner seemed unable to make the final payment, and he has now been given a further two weeks to complete the sale or the yacht would be offered for sale to somebody else. Henry gave Märten Karlsson his card and asked if they would contact him if the

owner did not come up with the final payment, because he was very interested in this yacht. Märten Karlsson said, he will most definitely do that and he also pointed out to Henry that nobody else has seen this yacht as yet so that means you have the first refusal. They all thanked him and flew back to Stockholm.

Henry asked if they needed feeding because it was now 15:00 and I am sorry I got so carried away with that yacht I forgot I should have asked you before we left. They both smiled and Henry said, what about we go to Jerntorgiths Café as it was a good place for me and the food was also very good. Fredrika said, how about you come back to my place and I will knock something up for us, he looked at Annika she nodded and he said, that sounds absolutely fantastic. When they got to Fredrika's house Annika put on the coffee pot and they talked about their day. Fredrika said, it was one of the most memorable days in my life, she got up and said to them, I will go to the kitchen and prepare something to eat, on the way passed Henry she bent down and thanked him for including her today and kissed him lightly on his lips. He smiled at her and said, you are more than welcome. When he was on his own with Annika he said to her, I want to thank you for these fantastic three days, you truly are a wonderful person, she said, please stop, you are embarrassing me.

He then removed an envelope from his wallet and placed it on the coffee table in front of her and said, this is your payment for the three days as my tour guide and he went back to his chair and sat down. She said, that is not necessary, because we had a great time and you paid for everything else, so please take it back, he smiled and told her, that was the agreement they made and you do not know me very well or you would not ask me to do that. She asked what do you mean, when you make a deal with me, verbally or in writing it is sacred and cannot be broken, so I will not take it back, a deal is a deal. She got up and walked over to him bent down and kissed him on his lips, it lasted a lot longer than her mothers kiss had. She then said, thank you very much, you are the best, he pulled her down to sit on his lap and she picked up her legs and curled up. They sat just cuddling for a couple of minutes and he asked her, even if you do not take up my offer of being my housekeeper, would you consider being my crew member because I cannot sail that Malö 36 on my own. She looked up at him and asked him, does that mean I cannot be your crew member if I am your housekeeper. He laughed and said, if you become my housekeeper I will expect you to be my crew/ships cock. I am only asking you in case you turn down my offer of the housekeeping position.

She replied, then I accept your offer whatever it is, at that time Fredrika came back into the room, looked at Annika curled up on Henry's lap and said, should I ask what offer you are talking about. They were both laughing and turned to look up at Fredrika, Henry wants me to be his crew/ships cock if he manages to get the Malö 36. Well, in that case if you need a further crew member I would like to apply for the position. Henry jokingly said, of course if we need a further crew member then we would consider your application, however, only after we check out your

full credentials, would you be considered and they all burst out laughing. Fredrika led the way to the dinning room where she had made a large bowl of salad and there was already a pork chop on each of the plates, where would you like us to sit Henry asked, the same place as Friday. After they had dished up Henry asked if they would like to come by the hotel and collect him on the way to the airport, they both thought that would be best. After Henry left to return to his hotel, Annika opened the envelope that he had given her, she found a hand written note wrapped around 10,000 Krona. It read, Hello Annika, the enclosed is for three days work as my tour guide, I have also enclosed a small tip in gratitude of a job well done. She showed her mother and asked her, if this man is for real, Fredrika said, just be grateful for small mercies. I do believe he is the real deal and everything that has happened over the last three days makes me think you are going to be very happy working for Henry. However, lets not jump to the acceptance speech before we have checked him out in London.

C

Chapter 23

A

Annika fly's to London

They collected Henry in plenty of time for the BA flight, Henry handed his passport to the girl behind the desk and said to her, that she should have tickets for Annika and Fredrika Olsson as they are accompanying him. Could we please have seats together. Yes sir, I do have their tickets, she asked for their passports, after she had checked them in she gave Henry the passports and boarding passes and said, have a good flight. I am sure we will thank you.

They boarded the aircraft and Annika said, you do not need to keep impressing me Henry, you did not need to book us in business class. I am not trying to impress you, when you fly as much as I do, I only fly first class, however, as this flight does not have a first class section, it has to be business. Anyway, if you sat in the back how could we talk during the flight. She just smiled and said, I guess you are right, he then said, of course, if you do not accept my offer you can always fly back in coach if you feel more comfortable, and they just smiled at each other.

When they came out of customs Henry spotted Roger the company driver, welcome back Mr James, I trust you had a good time sir. Thank you Roger, I most certainly did, this is Annika and Fredrika Olsson and they will be staying with me until next Sunday, welcome to London ladies, I guess Lydia will get you to drive them back to the airport, that will be my pleasure sir. As you can see ladies the weather is not as good as it has been in Sweden, it looks like it is going to rain.

If it is not a problem Roger, can we go back through Hyde Park, certainly, it should not be a problem at this time of the day. The Park looked very nice at this time of the year, mothers with children, older couples walking hand in hand and a couple of joggers. Annika asked if they could go jogging in the park some time. Most certainly Henry answered, I try to go jogging on most days when I am at home but I do not always make it, as now I do not like going when it is pouring down with rain.

They arrived at Henry's Penthouse and Roger said, he would carry the ladies cases up for them, thank you Roger that would be very kind of you. Annika and Fredrika both said, that it is not necessary for you to do that, Roger, he smiled and said, sorry ladies but this is my job and Mr James would not be happy with me if I let you take your own cases up to the Penthouse. Henry walked into through the doors and was greeted by Benson the on duty desk clerk, welcome home Mr James I trust you had a very good trip, yes thank you Benson, I had more than a good trip it was fantastic. This is Benson ladies and nobody gets into this building without going through Benson, this is Annika and Fredrika Olsson, Benson said, pleased to meet you ladies and welcome to our city. It is the policy of the

building management that everybody that enters must be recorded. The first time Benson will need to see proof of identity and there after he will remember you and he will just log you in, he will then phone the Penthouse and announce who has arrived and ask if he can let them enter. In my case certain people can be let in, they are my Mother, Father, Lydia, Sir Randolph and lady Martha. He would still phone and let me know my mother and father were on their way up. Because Lydia works out of the office she gets to come up without any further checks.

If you accept the job offer you will be on that list, he turned to Benson and told him that Annika is here to check out the housekeeping position, so by the end of the week I will let you know if you must put her on my list. Annika would be the same as Lydia, you would not need to phone me. I do hope you take the job Miss Olsson, we will see Benson, and he asked if he could see some form of identity, they gave him their passports and he took down their particulars, Henry then walked towards the lifts and they rode up to the top floor. Roger had already left their luggage outside the front door.

Henry unlocked the door and showed them inside and said, shall we have a coffee first and then I will show you around, that sounds very good to me Fredrika answered. Henry went into the kitchen and put on the coffee, he had a Tassimo Coffee maker, the one that uses the little disks. Annika and Fredrika looked around the kitchen while Henry made the coffee, you should not have a problem for work space in this kitchen Fredrika said, and they both smiled at Henry.

Henry said to them, next to the chair in the laundry is a cupboard, and in that cupboard you will find space on the shelves for your shoes, the two pairs of ladies slippers are my mothers and Lydia's, I am sure they will not mind you using them if they fit you. Because all the rooms from the kitchen are carpeted with very good quality carpets, and all the bedrooms are cream coloured. I made two rules when I moved in here, absolutely no smoking anywhere inside the Penthouse and no shoes past the kitchen. Mother and daughter looked at each other and both had a little smile on their faces. You will need to purchase a couple of pairs of slippers the first time you go shopping, so that you have one for Fredrika when she visits.

When the coffee was ready Henry picked up two cups and said, if you follow me ladies we can sit in the lounge.

They walked into the largest lounge they had ever seen in a private home, and it showed on their faces. Henry put the cups down and went back to the kitchen to pick up the last one, he put that on another table by his chair. He walked to the window and said, we get a very nice view of the park from here, they joined him and both looked out of the window and had to agree that it was a very nice view. Henry showed them to the settee and he sat in his chair and they drank their coffee, it is a decent size but it is easy to keep clean, when they had finished he said, I think it would be better if I show you around then I can answer any questions you might have.

The first room they went into after leaving the lounge was the dining

room, it had a magnificent table with fourteen chairs around it. A large sideboard and a buffet server, also a large cupboard which covered the whole wall on one end of the room. Fredrika said, this is a beautiful table Henry, yes, it is Fredrika, my mother and father gave this dinning room suite to me as a present when I moved in here in 2001. My mother found it and had it lovingly restored, it was made in the 1750's and it is a magnificent piece. You have a lot of paintings in this room Henry, this is the Royal room, all the paintings are of Kings and Queens.

The next room was Henry's office which he had converted from a bedroom. Who are the three guys with you in this photo Henry, this was an A3 size photo that Henry had framed to hang on the wall. They are my friends from Oxford University he replied, on the left is John Ackerman then Theodore Anderson and Miyu's husband, Takahiro Yoshino is on the right. That is Sultan my horse and the others are people and places I know and like. The mounted cricket bat was the last game I played as captain at Magdalen College School and I got it signed by both teams.

Where do you keep your horse Henry, he is stabled at the family home in Oxfordshire, I am sad to say that I do not get to ride him as often as I would like to. On a cupboard at one end of the room several photos were on display. Annika picked up a photo and asked Henry, is this your mother and father, yes, and if my mother comes up to London this week you will get to meet them both, if not you will just meet my father. Your mother does not live in London Henry, no, she lives and runs the family estate in Oxfordshire. My father works in the city doing the same job as I do and stays in an apartment during the week, which is not far from where you will be staying Annika. He goes home on a Friday night for the weekend, my mother tries to come up on a Wednesday and goes back home Thursday. Annika pointed to a couple of other photos and asked Henry if these are your sisters.

The photo on the right is Rachelle, she is the lady I hope will be my wife one day. Mother and daughter just looked at each other. The wedding photo is my sister Miyu and her husband Takahiro, Annika asked, if I accept this position will I get to meet Rachelle before I start work, I do not not think so as she has never been here. You want to marry her and she has never visited you, I find that very strange Annika said. I have asked her twice now and both times she says she needs more time, so maybe third time lucky. Why has she never visited you Henry, she lives on a horse ranch in California and as far as I know she has never been to England, I see Annika said.

I see this one is President George W Bush and his wife Laura, standing with you, are you friends of the American President Henry. Not really, I met them at my sisters wedding along with many more people I had never met before. This one is Laura Bush and I dancing. In that draw is a copy of Miyu's wedding album, if you wish to take a look through the album, I am sure you will find some people that you may also know. I see you already have a yacht Henry, that was my mothers Annika, however, she does not have it anymore. What made her sell it Henry. Once I left home

she decided to get rid of it because my father does not like sailing and she cannot go on her own. During my time at Oxford the five of us had some good times.

This room had his chair behind a very nice desk and two chairs on the other side of the desk also a two seater settee along one of the walls, a table with two more chairs which had three files with lots of papers in them. There was a second desk also with a computer on it and only one chair behind the desk, nothing on the other side, Annika said, I guess that is for Lydia, yes, that is Lydia's desk, she will be here tomorrow morning.

Shall we continue ladies, the next room had a large TV in it, two, two seater settees and two easy chairs, obviously the TV room. Then it was the three bedrooms and they all looked about the same size and they all had fitted wardrobes and en-suite bathrooms. The last bedroom was Henry's, and it was much bigger than the other three, not only was it en-suite but it had a walk-in wardrobe and also a recessed area with a two seater settee and coffee table, his bed was a four poster with the same material around the canopy as the curtains. This is a very nice room Henry and the four poster looks magnificent. Henry said, well that's all of it as you saw the laundry where you removed your shoes, what do you think Annika. You have a truly beautiful home Henry, and most unusual for a man living on his own, it is very clean and tidy, I just hope that I do not break anything, I am sure you will not and it would not be the end of the world if you have an accident.

Because the flat in Basil Street is not furnished yet you will have to stay here this week, that's okay Annika said, we can look for furnishings later in the week if you accept the position. For now it is up to both of you whether you have a bedroom each or share one, all beds are king size so it would not be a problem to share if you wanted to. Is there anything else you need me to explain before I go into my office. I do not think so Annika replied. He told them that he is going to take a shower and get changed and will see them in about twenty minutes. Please make yourselves at home and have a good look around so that you know where things are and use whatever you need.

When he had showered he went into his office and opened the safe and took out a key for the front door and gave it to Annika, just in case you go out while you are here. He then pointed to a container in the kitchen and said, in there you will find some money, I keep it in there in case I want to pop to the shop and I do not have any money on me, so take whatever you need, if you wish to get a snack, we can go out later for a meal. He kissed them both and said to Annika, I am glad you are here as this feels right. Over there is a pen and paper so if you have any question for me just jot them down and I will do my best to answer them when I have finished.

When Henry was in his office they talked about the house and furnishings, they were very impressed with the furniture and he had some magnificent paintings in several of the rooms, the property was really nice and very large, Annika felt very lucky to have met Henry. She said, I

wonder why Rachelle does not want to marry him, Fredrika replied, maybe it is the fact that she does not want to live in England and prefers to stay in California, maybe Annika answered.

They first decided that they will sleep in the same room as that way they can talk about the day when they are alone at night, they selected the bedroom next to Henry's office and unpacked their cases. Afterwards, they checked out all the rooms and cupboards to see what was kept where, everything was immaculately kept and stored in what seemed to be a sensible place. Annika took a little longer looking around Henry's bedroom and was very impressed with the way he keeps his clothes, all neat and tidy, and she noticed that in his dressing room he used the right side of the walk-in wardrobe, the left side was completely empty, she just stood and looked and thought, this man is very well organised, I just hope I can reach his level of perfection. Henry was still in his office when they walked back to the kitchen, however, they could hear him talking on the phone.

As they walked into the kitchen Fredrika asked Annika, which of those chairs do you think Henry will use when he pulls you over his lap and spansks you. Annika looked at her mother who was now laughing and said, it does not matter which one he uses, you will never know, because that will be something that will remain between Henry and myself.

When Henry walked into the lounge he asked if everything is alright for them, Annika said, yes Henry, everything is great and I have looked in all your draws and cupboards to find out where you keep your things and it looks like everything is in the place I would expect it to be. Your home is very beautiful and I love it, all your pieces of furniture are of a very good quality and it fits in the rooms perfectly, there is not one single item that looks out of place, your choice of all your furniture looks perfect for this property. Thank you, you are very kind. I did not look in any of the draws or cupboards in your office because apart from a coffee I did not think I would be putting anything else in that room.

He smiled and said, that would be about right. Fredrika asked him if he plays the grand piano in the lounge, yes, but not as well as I would like to, do you play Fredrika, very badly I am afraid and it is a long time since I tried to play. What about we give it a try now, she laughed and said, okay. They walked into the lounge and Henry said, sit down and lets see what you can play for us, she sat and made sure she was comfortable and started to play a piece by Mozart, very gingerly. When she had finished Henry and Annika clapped and they both said, that was very good, you are both just being kind to me, I hope your neighbours will not complain, they will not hear anything as these places are very well insulated. Henry then sat down next to Fredrika and played the ABBA song, SOS, they both said, that is a very nice song and you play very well, do you sing, only when I am on my own.

He asked if they would like to go across the park to see his two bedroom apartment in Basil Street, they both nodded so Henry suggested they walk across the Hyde Park, this is a very nice park Annika said, you

could spend a lot of time here. They walked with Henry in the middle and they held hands, he pointed out things along the way and all too soon they reached the other side and within ten minutes they were walking along Basil street. Henry said, it is about half way along, and is about 200 yards from Harrods Departmental Store. I have heard about Harrods Annika said, I think most people have and anybody that goes in the department store usually buys something small just to be able to say that they got it from Harrods. They entered the building after Henry had unlocked the door, he said, sorry but no Benson here. They entered the lift and went up to the top floor, they walked out of the lift and turned left, along the passage to the last door, Henry unlocked the door and stood aside for the ladies to enter first. There was a smell of new paint and Henry opened a couple of windows in the lounge. This is very nice Henry and much bigger than I expected, they walked from room to room and Henry said, once you decide to accept the housekeeping position we will start looking for furniture. I say that because if you are going to stay here I would make sure the furniture is of the best quality. If I finish up renting it out, I have the option of renting it out furnished or unfurnished. Annika and Fredrika looked at everything, well as much as you can in a property with no furniture.

If you have seen everything then we can get something to eat, Annika asked if they should go back to Henry's house and she can make something. There are two things wrong with that Annika, first of all, because I have been away there is not too much in the fridge and secondly as you do not officially work for me I cannot expect you to do that tonight. Tomorrow is okay once we have done a grocery shop but tonight we will go next door to The Capital. They walked into the restaurant of the Capital Hotel and they were greeted with, good evening Mr James, I did not see your name on the reservation list, you are quite right George, I do not have a reservation, can you please find a table for the three of us. I am sure I can find one for you sir, please follow me, there was one empty table at the end and George pulled out the chair for Fredrika and Henry did the same for Annika, George gave them each a menu and said, I will return in a little while. The food is very good here Henry said, and I see everybody knows you Annika smiled, I told you I eat out far too much.

Nobody wanted a starter and for the main course Annika and Fredrika had the Mackerel & Crab, with Fennel & Crab Dressing while Henry had the Venison, Chicory, Parsnip & Pickled Walnut Sauce. You were correct Henry, that was very nice, now, is this the type of food I must make every day. Heavens, no, this is okay for something a little special, most days please give me everyday food, like what, oh, I do not know but I am sure you will work it out. It worries me if I do not feed you properly and you complain at me, I will not do that, if you give me something I do not like, then I would ask you not to give it to me again, I certainly would not complain, please do not worry about that. George returned and asked if they would like any desserts, Henry said, may I order for you ladies, why not Annika said, I am betting you know of something very good. George,

can we please have three, Dark Chocolate Mousse, Pistachios & Raspberries, coming up sir. When the desserts had arrived and they had tasted them Fredrika said, this is really special I am so pleased we let you order the dessert. After coffee they took a leisurely stroll back through Hyde Park.

When they got to Henry's Penthouse, Parker was on duty, good evening Mr James nice to see you back and Benson has told me about the ladies, he turned to them and said, good evening Mrs and Miss Olsson, they both replied, good evening Parker and they headed for the lift. Once inside the Penthouse, Henry said, who is making the coffee or do you want something a little stronger. Annika said she would make the coffee and Fredrika asked if she could have a whiskey, certainly, I will sort your mother out and leave you to the coffee's. They sat in the lounge and Henry asked if they have any questions for him. What do you want us to do tomorrow, that is entirely up to you, Henry said. I will be working from home tomorrow and Lydia will arrive about 09:30 so we will be able to take the tube in the morning so that I can show you a couple of places near by.

I will start the computer so that you can order some groceries and they will be delivered tomorrow after 12:30. Henry and Annika went to his office and left Fredrika in the lounge, he started his computer and entered his password and brought up the M&S online shop, he clicked a couple of times and showed Annika what he had ordered previously. You look around the site and order whatever you want, you do not have to order the same as I did, it does not matter what you order as I will try anything. You just need to decide whether to order for a week or for a month. While you do that I will start work on these files, they both smiled and Henry walked over to the table and picked up the first folder and started to go through the papers.

He picked up a yellow highlighter pen and a pencil from the top draw of his desk and started highlighting words, sentences and even a complete paragraph, he would then write next to what he had highlighted. When he had finished with the first file he picked up the second and started on that one, he was doing exactly the same as the first file. He did not notice that Annika had swivelled round in his chair and sat watching him, he only noticed when he went back to his desk to pick up his calculator.

I see you are spying on me and you have not signed that none disclosure contract, they laughed and he asked her if she had finished the online ordering. She said, I may not have ordered enough to last the month but we should not run short. However, I will still need to get fresh fruit and veg so you will have to show me where to go for that, we can do that tomorrow morning. He then moved the chair so that she was facing the side and he leaned over her and clicked on, check out, it asked him to sign in so he clicked on his documents folder and scrolled down to login, he opened that and scrolled down again to M&S, opened the text document and copied the password and signed in to his account at M&S. He paid with his credit card and looked down at her and said, is there anything else

you need to order food wise, only fruit and veg. He bent down and said, if you have nothing else to do what about making a coffee and please bring me a glass of water from the little tap the water out of this tap goes through a filter. He went back to the table and started work again, Annika smiled and got up and went to the kitchen.

She came back with the coffee and water and asked where must she place them, he opened a draw in the table and picked up a coaster and put them down to the right side of the files, she placed the glass of water on the coaster and the coffee cup next to the glass, he said, thank you very much Annika. I am going to be at least an hour working on these so if you and your mother wish to watch the TV please do so, or whatever you want to do. He went back to his files and finished them forty five minutes later, he then went looking for the girls, he found them looking at a film on the TV, do either of you want another drink. Fredrika asked if she could have another whiskey, sure and she gave him her glass, Annika asked for a red wine and Henry said, I think I will join you. He went to the lounge and poured the whiskey and opened a bottle of red wine and poured two glasses and returned to the TV room. He handed Fredrika her whiskey and placed both wine glasses on the little table between the settees and sat down on the empty settee, picked up his glass and said **Skål!** They turned and said **Skål!** and touched glasses, how did you know that, just something somebody once told me. They settled down and watched the film. When it had finished Henry said I think I must go to bed, they all seemed to agree it was time. Henry said, we should get an early start around 08:00, Annika asked him what does he have for breakfast, he smiled and said a smoothie of some description, she said, okay shall we say 07:15 then, that would give us time to have a bite before leaving, that sounds great, he gave each of them a kiss and said goodnight, he then went around and turned the lights off.

The next morning they had breakfast together and Henry said, I will show you the little vegetable shop I use, but bare in mind that you have to take cash to this shop as I do not think you can use a debit card, and in any case I do not purchase very much at a time so it is not fair for the owners of the shop to have to pay the card charges. Just see how you go, if it is not much take the cash out of the container or you may prefer another shop, it will be your choice. As they walked to the little vegetable shop Henry said, I would like to book us on a couple of sailing courses before we get the Malö 36 so would this weekend be alright with you to take the course, that would be great. Where do you want to take the courses Henry, the south coast would be a lot easier for me as they would be given in English. If we take a Swedish course we would have to make it just for the two of us or it would be given in Swedish. Annika said, it does not matter to me which country or which language we take the courses in. So if I can get us on a course this weekend would you be happy with that, absolutely. Okay I will start looking later today.

We just have time to take in one attraction before I must return for Lydia, so lets take the tube from Lancaster Gate and we will go to the

Tower of London, they changed at Liverpool Street and arrived at Tower Hill thirty two minutes later. Henry sorted out the tickets and they looked at everything there, They really liked the Crown Jewels and the Royal Mint. When Annika found out that Queen Anne Boleyn had been beheaded in the tower she said, and you English think that Vikings were violent people and they all laughed out loud. Henry suggested that they get a snack before leaving so they walked into one of the cafés on site and they ordered a baked potato each.

They got back to Henry's penthouse at 14:15 and Henry introduced everybody to each other. How about a nice cup of coffee Henry said. Lydia asked if they had seen anything since they arrived. Annika and Fredrika told Lydia about the Tower of London and thought it was a fantastic attraction. Well, now that you see how easy it is to get around London I will suggest a couple of places for you to visit tomorrow on your own, because I have a lot of work to do for the next couple of days. I will see what I can find out about sailing courses before I start work.

Annika said, I am going to take a walk to the little vegetable shop to get us veg for our meal tonight, do not forget to take money out of the container. Henry went to his office and started to search for sailing courses. Henry and Lydia finished at 16:45 and when they walked into the kitchen with the dirty coffee cups Annika was packing away the M&S delivery. Henry asked where is Fredrika, she is reading in the lounge. Lydia said to Annika, if there is anything you need whatsoever, please just ask me and it will be my pleasure to help you, thank you Lydia you have been so kind. I have not done anything yet. She then said, goodnight and I will see you in the morning Henry, they all said goodnight Lydia.

What time do you want your dinner Henry, any time to suit you Annika, she said, how about 19:30, that sounds good to me. Her mother asked if she needed a hand, no thank you mamma I need to get used to this kitchen, so Fredrika went back to reading her book. At 18:30 Henry came through to get another glass of water and said, something smells very good, Annika smiled and said, thank you Henry. He drank the water and placed the glass in the dishwasher, she smiled at him and said, this job is going to be very easy because you are such a tidy man. He replied, I am just going to close my computer down and tidy the papers and then I will take a shower, as he walked past her he gave her a peck on her head.

Just as he was about to walk out of the kitchen the phone rang, Henry answered and said hello Lydia, she said, you are not going to be happy with me. What is the problem Lydia, I have just received a call from a Mr Nielsen in Denmark, he is friends with Mr Christerson who signed your contract last week, he told him what a great deal you gave him and he wants the same deal. The problem is that he is going away for four weeks on Friday and wants to sign before he goes away. He is in Copenhagen so what do you want me to do. I know we cannot turn down possible contracts, but hell Lydia, this has not come at a good time for me, I know Henry and it is your decision.

Is there an early flight out in the morning, I have checked and there is

one leaving Heathrow at 04:10 and then the next one is not until 06:40. Please book me on the 06:40 and you had better book the hotel, he turned and asked, do you know a very good hotel in Copenhagen Annika, you can try the Copenhagen Plaza, I believe it is very good. Did you hear that Lydia, I did and I will phone them and make a booking for you for one night only, yes please Lydia.

He put the phone down and said, Oh shit, sorry but this means I must leave you on your own with your mother. It is not a problem Henry I have been alone with her before and they both laughed, Henry said, you know what I mean. I will carry on and take a shower and he walked out of the kitchen. When he came back Annika told him Lydia had phoned and confirmed your flight details and the hotel, she also told me that Roger will be waiting outside at 04:25, he gave her a hug and said, thank you.

You see, this is how I live, it can change from day to day and I really wanted to show you some of the sights, I am very sorry Annika. We are big girls Henry and we are more than capable of finding our way around, please do not worry about us. They had dinner and Fredrika said, I will clear away while you make the coffee Annika, thank you mamma and she headed for the Bosh Tassimo and made three coffees. Henry was already in the TV room looking for a movie, Annika sat down next to Henry on one of the two seater settees, and asked did you find something to watch or do you just want to talk, we can do both if you want to. Copenhagen is a beautiful city and it is a pity you are not going to stay longer Henry, we will visit there one day I promise you, I will hold you to that.

First the good news, I have made a booking for both of us, for The RYA Day Skipper Practical Course at Hamble School of Yachting, it starts this Sunday and finishes next Friday. Now I hope it will not be a problem for Fredrika, it will not I promise you, and Fredrika walked in and asked what problem. Henry explained that he has booked a 5 day sailing course and it starts on Sunday but I will make arrangements for you to get back to Heathrow, that is just fine Henry it will not be a problem, thank you Fredrika. The bad news Annika, I need you to make the hotel booking for us because I do not want to leave it until I return just in case we cannot find decent rooms, she said I can do that Henry. He gave her the details along with one of his credit cards.

Also, can you do a search and find some Dry Suits, boots and anything else you feel we need on board a sailing vessel. We must get the gear before we go out on the water or we will finish up cold and wet. Please phone them and ask if they can guarantee that they will arrive by Saturday at the latest, because if they cannot then go to another shop. Just make sure you order the best products you can find and do not shop on price, I will write the address down before I leave. Now lets have that coffee, after they had finished their coffee they settled down to watch a movie and it was not long and Annika was curled up against Henry, her mother just smiled to herself.

At one of the breaks Fredrika said, I am not enjoying this movie so I will go into the lounge and read my book, better still I will go to bed and

read it there. Before Henry could move she leaned down and kissed him goodnight. She said, I hope you have a good trip and we will see you when you return. Goodnight Fredrika and she walked out of the room.

When the movie had finished, Annika asked what time do you want your breakfast tomorrow morning, I will only have a coffee before I leave as I may pick up something at the airport. I will make us a coffee before you leave in the morning, you really do not need to do that rather stay in bed and get up when you feel like it. I feel like having a coffee with you before you leave, if that is alright with you, that would be very kind of you and I will look forward to sitting with you for a few minutes. I need to go to the toilet first and then I want to talk to you, okay, I will wait patiently for your return.

When she returned she stood in front of Henry and said to him, I have decided that I want to take your offer of the position of housekeeper, are you sure, I am absolutely sure. He took hold of her hands and pulled her down so that he could kiss her, she put one knee on either side of his legs and sat facing him on his lap. He hugged her and told her he was so happy and she just hugged him back, they sat like that for a few minutes and then he made her sit upright so they were looking into each others eyes.

He then said, we will need to sort a few things out, but we can do that when I return. I will need to get a debit card for you. We must also get a contract of employment. Do not forget the none disclosure document I must sign. I will contact Sir Randolph and he will sort that out for us, we must also see the company accountant to make sure of the best way for you to be paid. We must get your apartment sorted out but that will have to wait until we return from our sailing course.

Do we have to do that Henry, well it would be a lot more beneficial for you but do not worry about that the accountant will sort everything out. I am not talking about that, oh, what do you mean then. You said, to sort the apartment out, that's right, but when you offered me this position I asked you if you expected me to live with you, and you said, I can if I want to, yes, that is true I do remember saying that, do you want to live here then. I would love to live here, but only if you are happy to have me living under the same roof as you. I would be more than happy, however, you do realise that you would work more if you live here, I am sure it would just happen that way not because I would make you, just because you live here. The other important point for you to understand, if you live here I would not be happy with you bringing people back here if I was not here, and you could not have anybody sleeping over without asking me. Where as, in the apartment you could do exactly as you wanted to do, with the only restriction being, no subletting.

Is Fredrika happy if you live here instead of in the apartment, I have not told my mother that I will be accepting your offer as yet, because it really has nothing to do with her. I am twenty five years of age and more than capable of making my own decisions. She only came because you invited her, which I thought was very kind of you, as you did not have to do that. I have made my mind up and it will not matter what she thinks or

says, I do believe she will be happy though. She then fell into his arms hugged and kissed him on the lips and pulling herself closer to him so that their bodies were touching. It was a semi passionate kiss and he pulled away and blew a little air, he looked into her eyes and said, this could get out of control if we do not stop now. She asked him if he wanted to stop and he answered that he had made a promise to both her and her mother that he would not take advantage of her and he would only treat her with respect. You are not taking advantage of me and you are certainly treating me with respect, so it is your call what you do next.

It does not feel right especially as your mother is in the same house, oh, I had forgotten all about her, well I had not. If I were to tear your clothes off and make mad passionate love to you, you would become my live in lover and not my housekeeper. I do not think we have known each other long enough to move to the next level in a relationship, I guess you are right Henry. I just got carried away. You are a very sexy beautiful young lady Annika, and I am worried that taking things too fast could spoil our relationship and I am sure neither of us want to do that. Right now I want to carry you to my bedroom and throw you onto my bed and make love to you, you have got me so turned on Annika, I know, I can feel how turned on you are, oh god, we have got into a little situation and we need to not lose sight of the big picture. If I sit still will that help or should I move, a little further back on your lap, or just sit next to you, right now I am finding it very difficult to keep my hands off you.

Because my mother is here, I think it is better if I sit next to you and we just cuddle, she moved off his lap and just slid next to him in a single movement, he squeezed her and said, I am so sorry but I do not want this relationship to go south before we get to know each other, they both smiled. She looked up at him and told him she understood and also wanted a perfect relationship with him. I think the best is for me to treat you as if you were my sister, that way we will still have a lot of fun together, hug and talk about anything and everything, go sailing and cuddle up together and for now, it must not lead to sex.

If that should happen one day it will be because we know each other a lot better and we are ready to move our relationship to the next level. That sounds very sensible Henry, not as exciting as getting my clothes ripped off, but I do understand and I can wait for the right moment, thank you Annika for your understanding, I cannot be involved in any form of sexual activities with an employee, it just would not be the right thing to do. After a few minutes Henry said, I think we should go to bed and cool off, they hugged and gave each other a goodnight kiss.

When Annika walked into the kitchen at 03:45 Henry was already there and he was writing down the address, phone number and his sizes. He looked up and said, good morning my Viking Goddess, a big smile broke out on her face and she said, it was well worth getting up at this time just to be called that and they hugged and Henry lifted her off her feet and spun her round. They sat in the kitchen and he asked her if she had any questions, I do not think so, I am sure I know what you want me to do

and I will do those jobs before going out with my mother.

Henry then asked her if it was alright if he asked his mother and father for dinner on Friday night, that would be up to you, I work for you so I will do whatever you want me to do, and a big smile came over her face. Of course it is fine if you are happy for them to meet me so soon, I want them to meet you and see what a wonderful person you are, what do you want me to prepare, a nice leg of lamb because it is my favourite and the one I tasted at Fredrika's was to die for. I hope they will be happy that I am working and living here with their son, believe me, they will love you, especially my mother, why do you say that, oh, you will see on Friday. Henry looked at his watch and it was 04:15 so he said, I must go, he gave her a big hug and a kiss and said I will see you on Thursday evening. Take care, and phone me if you need anything at all.

When he got outside Roger was waiting and they said good-morning to each other, Roger placed the suite case and brief case in the boot and Henry got in the front passenger seat. They had a little small talk during the trip and Henry told Roger that Lydia will arrange for him to collect Fredrika to take her to Heathrow on Sunday, that will be my pleasure Mr James, thank you Roger. The roads had very little traffic at this time of the morning so they arrived in plenty of time, Roger placed Henry's case on the pavement and handed him his brief case. I am not sure what time I return on Thursday but I am sure Lydia will arrange for you to pick me up, thank you for your time Roger, you are more than welcome sir, and I will see you when you return and I trust you have a fruitful trip, Henry smiled, turned and walked into the airport building.

He headed for one of the food outlets and picked up some fruit and a bottle of water, found a table and waited for the check-in gate to open. It was not a long wait and he boarded the aircraft and he settled down in his seat and turned off his phone and waited for all passengers to board and the flight got under way. Once airborne he asked for a bottle of water and settled down to read the information about the prospective customer that Lydia had prepared for him, it all looked very good and the plane arrived a few minutes early.

He cleared customs and spotted his name on a board that a driver was holding up, I am Henry James and the driver said, welcome to Copenhagen, thank you and the driver took his suite case and led the way to the car. Do you wish to go to your hotel first Mr James, no thank you, straight to see Mr Nielsen, they arrived at 08:50 and the driver showed him through to reception and told the girl on the desk this is Mr James, she asked Henry to take a seat and then made a call, within a few minutes an older lady arrived and asked Henry to please follow her, Mr Nielsen is waiting in his office for you, thank you Henry replied.

Henry was shown into Carl Nielsen's office and they shook hands and when asked Henry said, coffee would be nice. Carl Nielsen told Henry that his friend Boris Christerson from Stockholm was very happy with the deal he had made with you and I want the same deal that you did for him, so please show me where I sign. Henry smiled and told Carl Nielsen that is

not how I do business, I need to know quite a lot about your business, what you make or sell, how much money you wish to invest and what your expectations are. The deal I made with Boris may not be the best deal for you, only when I have all your information can I decide the best line to take, what works for one company may not be the best for another. So let me ask you a lot of question and only then will I know what to offer you.

They spent five hours going through all aspects of the business, during that time Henry also spoke to the company accountant and when he had all the information he needed he asked if the driver could take him to his hotel and he would work on a deal and he would return tomorrow morning and go through it with Carl. They agreed, shook hands and Carl picked up the phone and asked his secretary to arrange for the driver to take Mr James to his hotel, just tell my secretary what time you want collecting tomorrow and the driver will come back for you, they shook hands and Henry said, thank you and I will see you tomorrow.

The driver drove him to the Copenhagen Plaza and said, I will collect you tomorrow at 10:30, thank you, and he turned and entered the hotel. He checked in and asked the receptionist could he get something to eat, she pointed him to the restaurant and he asked if his suite case could be taken to his room, certainly Mr James, he headed for the restaurant. After eating a light meal he went up to his room and started on Carl Nielsen's proposal.

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hapter 24

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nnika meets David and Alexandra

Annika and her mother got up at 07:00 and sat in the kitchen eating breakfast and drinking coffee, so did you see Henry off this morning or not, of course I did, I told him I would. I also told him last night that I accept his offer of the position of housekeeper, that is fantastic, I am so pleased because I do not think an offer like this comes along very often and I am sure you will be very happy, I do hope so mamma. Did he say how long it will take to get the apartment sorted out, that is not going to happen because I told him I wanted to live here. Wow, the way you two look at each other that could lead to you being more than his housekeeper.

I can assure you it will not, you can never say never Annika. I can about this, because if I had got my way last night I would have slept in Henry's bed as we were so turned on. How come you did not get your way, because Henry is one in a million, he does not believe in sexual activities with an employee, to him that is something that must never happen. He told me he wanted to but if he did I would then become his live-in lover and not his housekeeper and he thinks we have not known each other long enough to take that step. I have to agree, Fredrika said. The only way it will work now is if he treats me as though I was his sister. I said to him, that being treated like his sister does not sound like much fun, he replied that I will get all the fun I can handle, we can still kiss, cuddle and talk about anything and everything just let's get to know each other better first.

I am very happy and I feel very lucky to have found this man, and I do not want to jeopardise this relationship. That is very wise Annika and I am very happy that Henry has a lot more self control than you do. They smiled at each other and Annika said, before we go out today Henry has asked me to find some Dry Suits, boots and anything else I feel we will need to go on this sailing course, and he told me not to buy on price I must order the best, and when I have done that I must make the hotel bookings. I think at the end of the month you will owe Henry money for all the things he is buying for you, do not be silly mamma, I do not have to pay for anything that Henry buys me it is all part of my package, as you said, I am very lucky. I had better get started.

Annika searched the web and found several different makes from a couple of suppliers, she then phoned each of them and discussed what she needed to start with and the fact that this first order was a rush order, they both promised her that they could guarantee next day delivery but that would cost an extra £12.50. She thought that would not be a problem, and as the prices were the same within £5.00 she decided to go with the man that was the most helpful. She placed her order and gave him Henry's card details and he said to her, not to worry Mrs James the package will be with you by tomorrow afternoon, she thanked him and said to him, as

long as Henry is happy with your products we will come back to order additional items, that would be much appreciated and they said goodbye to each other. She then searched for hotels in the area of Hamble Sailing and found many from self catering to 4 star, she booked at the Chilworth Manor as this looked like the best hotel and she managed to get a twin bedroom. When she had finished she found her mother looking out of the lounge window watching people in Hyde Park, all done she told her mother and I could get used to shopping like this, why is that Fredrika asked. Because I did not have to worry about how much things cost, and should we stay at this hotel or should I look for one charging less per room. It must be the perfect way to live.

They left telling Benson they would be out most of the day, he smiled at them and told them he hoped they had a great day. They started off going to Buckingham Palace and then they visited Madam Tussauds and finally The British Museum. The day was over far too quickly but they had seen such a lot and realised it would take a long time to see all the attractions in London. Fredrika said, I will make the supper tonight. They had an early night and talked about all the things they had seen and decided that they would visit the National Gallery and the History Museum tomorrow.

The BA flight from Copenhagen landed at Heathrow at 16:15 and when Henry had cleared customs he found Roger waiting for him, they shook hands and Roger took the case and headed for the car. Henry said I will sit in the back as I wish to finish some paper work and save a little time tonight, Roger opened the rear door and Henry got in and had a file out before Roger had moved out of the parking bay. It was 17:45 when they arrived at Henry's Penthouse, he thanked Roger and headed for the door. Parker saw him and opened the door to the building before he got to the top of the steps, good evening Parker, good evening Mr James. Henry opened the front door of his Penthouse and found Annika and her mother drinking coffee in the lounge, he walked in and said, good evening ladies. Annika jumped up and gave him a hug and a kiss and said, it's good to see you home so early, he replied that Lydia had managed to change his flight, she asked if he wanted a coffee, yes please and also a glass of water.

He turned and asked Fredrika if she has enjoyed the last two days without him, you know it has been wonderful just spending time with Annika, I am sure it has, I am just going to take off my jacket and use the toilet and I will be back and you can tell me where you have been. He returned and sat in his chair and picked up his coffee and Annika started to tell him where they had been and all the things they had seen, it sounds like you had a good time, and they both agreed it was fantastic. Fredrika asked what time do you wish to eat Henry, any time to suit you ladies, then I will make something to eat for us as Annika wants to show you the sailing gear.

Henry drank his coffee and also the glass of water and Annika said, the package arrived this morning while we were out sightseeing, I have put it in your office, did you check if it fits you, no, I thought I would wait for

you. okay, lets go and fit on our suits. They walked into Henry's office and sitting on the floor was a box, he said, I have a little knife in my desk draw to cut the tape and he opened a draw and picked up the knife and cut the masking tape that the box had been sealed with. These look very nice Annika, the dry suits were both a dark blue and Henry's had orange flashes on his sleeves and Annika's had bright florescent pink on hers. We will not miss you with that colour Annika, and they both laughed. We had better try them on to see if they fit. Do you want to take yours into your bedroom, why would I do that when we are booked into the same bedroom at the hotel and on board there will be very little privacy so I am stripping off right here, me to, and they both stripped down to their underwear, and naturally had more than a glance at each other. They fitted on their dry suits and both of them fitted perfectly, they smiled and hugged each other, Henry said, I think we are going to have a good time on this course. Annika said, I really do hope so. The boots were also a good fit and Annika had asked for some gloves, at the bottom of the box Henry found a waterproof bag which will hold all their sailing gear. This is great that you thought of a bag to keep our clothes dry, when they had everything on they went to show Fredrika, she smiled and said, you both look great and supper is almost ready.

They went back to Henry's office and stripped off again, Annika made sure she folded her suit up before getting dressed. Are you checking out my ass Henry James. Damn right I am Henry answered, you have the most perfect ass I have ever seen, if you do not mind me saying so. I certainly do not mind what you say, and are you happy for me to look, more than happy for you to look whenever you want to look and for as long as you want to look. I think we should get dressed before your mother comes looking for us, they stood in their underwear and hugged each other. After supper they watched a movie and went to bed around 23:00. When Henry walked into the kitchen at 06:00 Annika was already there with his breakfast waiting for him, while he drank his smoothie Annika made the coffee and sat down with him. What time are your parents arriving, 19:30 for 20:00 he answered, I will have everything ready for them. I am sure you will and I must get started because I have a lot to do today as I am not in next week at all, you better not be, he gave her a hug and a kiss and said, thank you, he turned and walked into his office.

Lydia arrived at 08:45 and she said to Henry, so you could not wait for me, he just smiled and said, good morning Lydia. They worked all day only stopping for a quick lunch, at 18:30, they decided that was enough and called it a day. Lydia said, good night to everybody and I will see you a week on Monday. She turned to Fredrika and told her it was very nice to have met her and do not worry about Annika, she will be just fine. Henry told Annika he will go and take a shower and get changed, he went to his bedroom.

He came back at 19:15 and asked Fredrika if she wanted a drink, would it be better if we waited for your parents, absolutely not, this is my house and not theirs, now what would you like to drink. A red wine would go

down very nicely thank you, and for you Annika, the same thank you, I will make that three then and he opened his beautiful drinks cabinet. It was a French walnut cabinet dating from the 1780's he poured three glasses of red wine and said, good health to you both and thank you for accepting the position of Housekeeper Annika. I am very happy you are here, and it has been a pleasure to have you in my home Fredrika. She said, it is I that thanks you Henry for inviting me. The phone in the kitchen rang and Henry said, that will be Parker informing me that my parents are on their way up, please be seated ladies and I will let them in. He opened the front door before they could ring the bell, hello mother and he hugged and kissed her, he turned to his father they hugged and he said, good to see you father, you too my boy, please come in as I have somebody I wish to introduce you to.

Henry stepped aside for his mother and father to enter the Penthouse, they both went into the laundry to remove their shoes and then walked into the lounge, Annika and her mother stood up and Henry said, this is my mother and father, Lord and Lady James, and this is my housekeeper and her mother, Annika and Fredrika Olsson. Alexandra smiled from ear to ear and held out her hand towards Fredrika and they shook hands, while they did that David shook hands with Annika and said, I am very pleased to meet you young lady. Henry's mother then turned to Annika to greet her while David moved to shake hands with Fredrika, Alexandra started to speak in Swedish to Annika and she also hugged her, she then gestured for them to sit down on the settee and she sat in the middle of them and held their hands, Annika on her right and Fredrika on her left.

Can I get you a drink mother, yes please, red will be very nice thank you Henry. He then turned to his father and asked if he wanted a whiskey, that would be very nice my boy, Henry poured the drinks and handed the whiskey to his father and placed his mothers wine on the coffee table and pushed the table a little closer so that she would be able to reach her drink without having to stretch too far. Where did you find these beautiful women Henry, in Stockholm when I went there on business last week, Swedish women are very warm and friendly as you know first hand, Henry just smiled at his father. What is your mother telling them, well, not 100% sure but I think she has just told them to call the two of you, David and Alexandra, that is just like your mother, she likes to do things her way and they both smiled and sat looking at the three of them talking away as though they had known each other for years.

Alexandra looked at Henry and said to him, why did you not tell me about this Stunning young Lady, if I had, you would have called round just to check her out, that is a little harsh Henry, it may well be mother, but I believe it is very close to the truth, and everybody laughed. It is a mothers job to make sure their child is in good hands, Fredrika told Henry. My mother has been here ten minutes and it looks like both of you are ganging up on me. The three ladies laughed and Annika stood up and said, please excuse me I need to check on our dinner, Alexandra asked if she could help and Annika said, that would be nice to have your company and if I

cannot find anything for you to do we can always talk. That is fantastic, we are going to get on very well indeed Alexandra said.

They disappeared into the kitchen and David asked Fredrika where she lived in Stockholm, I do not live in Stockholm, I live in the little town of Torsvik, I think that is north east of Stockholm, you are correct David, have you ever been there, no, but I am sure I remember seeing a sign when driving up north. Where does Alexandra come from, the town of Luleå in the north east of Sweden, not far from the Finish border. It was not long and Alexandra walked into the lounge and asked, are you ready to eat, Henry said, I am pretty sure we are mother, then can you all come through to the dinning room. Henry showed Fredrika to the first chair on the right of the table and his father next to her, he placed his mother opposite Fredrika with Annika next to her making her opposite his father and Henry would be sitting at the head of the table as normal. Henry carved the joint while Annika placed the serving dishes in the middle of the table. This looks absolutely fantastic David said, I do hope you like it Mr James, wow, Alexandra said, I did tell you and your mother to call us David and Alexandra and definitely not, Mr and Mrs James. I am sorry, I just felt a little awkward it being the first time, not at all my dear, you just call me what you are happy with, if its not David today maybe it will be so tomorrow, thank you, Annika said. Anyway, I do hope you like the meal David, and they all laughed and that took away the awkward situation.

They had a great meal and talked about where all three ladies came from and then Alexandra asked Annika would she like to go shopping with her next week. I am so sorry but I will not be here next week, but I would love to go the week after if that is alright with you, Alexandra said, just as soon as you return from Sweden, is Thursday okay for you. Thursday will be perfect for me but I am not going to Sweden, oh, I am sorry, I just thought you would be gong back with your mother. No, I have only just started this job and I am sure my boss would not allow me time off just so that I can go back to Sweden so soon, and she burst out laughing. I am sorry Alexandra, I could not resist that, she looked at Henry and he shook his head.

Henry and I are going on a sailing course so we can brush up on all aspects of sailing, we leave on Saturday and mamma goes home on Sunday. That is fantastic and I am so pleased that you two are going to do that as we all need to keep up to date with the new things going on. Also you will be taking time away from your work Henry, you do need to get him to do that more often Annika, I will try but he is the boss, not me, just smile that perfect smile of yours and he will melt and give you anything you ask for. Annika said, please excuse me while I clear away and bring in the dessert, Alexandra and Fredrika got up and said they would clear away.

You do realise my boy, that this shopping trip that your mother is planning is going to cost you an arm and a leg, I do father, it seems mother only knows the best shops in London to purchase from. When the table had been cleared Annika returned from the kitchen and placed the dessert

on the table, oh my, it is a long time since I had any Spettekakka and it looks absolutely magnificent, Alexandra said. You do know Henry that you have found the perfect Viking lady and she squeezed his hand. By the time the dessert was finished along with the coffee and liquors and lots more talk had taken place it was 23:45 and David said, I think it is about time we made a move Alexandra, when you are enjoying yourself you do not notice the time. They got up and Henry went to fetch their coats, when he returned they were saying their goodbyes and Alexandra hugged and squeezed Annika and thanked her for a fantastic meal. I will phone you in ten days to make arrangements for our shopping trip and we will spend the day doing whatever we want to do, and if that means there is no meal for Henry when he gets home he will have to make do.

Henry held his mothers coat out for her and she turned and slipped it on, as they were going out of the lounge Alexandra turned and blew a kiss and left. Henry opened the front door and walked them to the lift, he shook his fathers hand and hugged him, he then turned to his mother and said, I can see that I do not have to ask you what you think of my housekeeper, as it is pretty obvious. I think she is the perfect lady for you, and all I can say to you is, you made a wonderful choice and whatever you do, do not let this young lady slip away from you. Are you saying what I think you are saying mother, you know what Henry, when it come to girls, you are far too much of a gentleman, you would do better not to be so much like your father. I am going in now mother and you do know I love you very much.

The lifts door closed and he turned and walked back to the lounge, he asked if either of you ladies require anything else, I am asking as I am going to have a coffee, then I will join you Henry, and Fredrika said, no thank you I have had more than enough, and please excuse me, as I am going to bed, they kissed each other goodnight and Fredrika said, I think your mother and father are very nice people Henry, yes, they are. Henry went and made two coffees and carried them back to the lounge and put one cup by his chair and the other on the coffee table by the settee. They sat down and Henry asked Annika what she thought of his parents, they are both wonderful, especially your mother, I think we will get on like a house on fire and she smiled and laughed out loud. Why did you not tell us your mother is Swedish, I thought it would be a nice surprise for you, and it was the same for my mother, I did not tell her you are Swedish either, but I think it worked out alright.

I will check with the bank manager tomorrow to make sure that your debit card will arrive before you spend the day with my mother, and I do know, my mother knows how to shop so I had better increase your limit. Is that a problem Henry, it would be a problem if you hit your limit and your card was declined. I believe my mother would never forgive me and the next time she saw me, she would do more than blow her top. Because that has never happened in our family and for it to happen while she is in the shop, well believe me, it would be like world war three had started. However, you do not need to worry about anything like that happening as

I will make sure you cannot ever get to your limit and then you can go shopping with my mother. When he had finished his coffee he put the cup down, got up and moved over to the settee and sat next to Annika, he held her hand and said, that was a fantastic meal you put on tonight, I am so proud of you, you were the perfect hostess. I was not the hostess Henry, you are the host, I am the housekeeper, technically, you are correct, but you know very well what I mean, yes, I do know, and thank you for the complement. You are more than welcome my Viking Lady, I do like that. I will help you tidy up the kitchen before we go to bed, there is nothing to tidy up, I have done it all, I just need to empty the dishwasher, but I will do that tomorrow morning. They got up and she carried the cups to the kitchen and swilled them out and left them on the side ready to go in the dishwasher. They walked along the passage and stopped at Annika's bedroom door and Henry hugged her and said, goodnight and thank you once again for making this evening so special, you are more than welcome, goodnight Henry.

As it was Saturday Henry got up at 07:00 and put on his tracksuit and walked into the kitchen to make a coffee. Annika was already there and had just about finished emptying the dishwasher, they both said, good morning and Henry moved to her and gave her a kiss on the cheek. Looks like you are going for a run Henry, yes, just around the park, would you like a running partner or are you a loner. I am a loner in most things I do, however, that is purely because I do not have anybody to share my life with. Well, you have me now and if you would like me to be your running partner I will go and get changed, I would like that, she disappeared and left Henry drinking his coffee. She came back dressed in a blue and grey tracksuit, she put on a pair of Nike running shoes and Henry put on his Karhu Finnish running shoes, if you are ready, lets go. Henry picked up his key and they headed for the lifts. Benson was on duty and they all said good morning and Henry said, I am pleased to inform you Benson, that Miss Annika has accepted the position of housekeeper so please amend your records accordingly, certainly sir, and I am so pleased Miss Annika.

Also, while I think about it, Annika and I will be leaving later today but Mrs Olsson will only be leaving on Sunday, sorry but I do not remember the time, however, Roger will be picking her up to drive her to Heathrow for her flight home, thank you for letting me know sir. They left and crossed Bayswater Road and entered Hyde Park and started to jog, Henry tested Annika a couple of times by speeding up but she just matched his pace, so he asked her if this pace is okay for her, it's fine Henry but if you want to make it a little faster that would also be good, of course, if you want to talk then you need to slow down a bit, he smiled and said okay we talk a little later for now we pick up pace, they stayed like this for twenty minutes until they were on, what Henry called the homeward leg, and they slowed their pace so that they could cool down a little. He asked if she liked that and she replied, it was good as it has been a while since I went jogging, Henry said, I am sorry I did not think to ask, please forgive me, you are fine Henry, I am really enjoying this and feel I need to start doing

it on a regular basis. He said I try to make it on days I am here, so we can make that a date if you like, I like she answered. They crossed Bayswater Road and returned to the Penthouse.

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Chapter 25

Malö 36

At 15:00 Henry and Annika said their goodbyes to Fredrika who had a little tear in her eye, Henry told her they would phone her once they had checked into the hotel just to let her know they arrived safely. He also said, please use whatever you need because my housekeeper will replenish stocks when she returns, and please leave the key on the side in the kitchen as the front door has a dead lock on it, just make sure you do not leave anything inside and need to get back in. They all hugged and kissed and Henry picked up their cases and headed out to take the lift.

To get to the garage underneath the building you have to change lifts in the reception and take the lift down to the garage. Most residents like this because anybody that gets into the garage cannot just take a lift to the apartments, they have to go through the reception and if they are not suppose to be there, Benson or Parker would soon end their journey. Good afternoon Mr James and Good afternoon Miss Olsson, they both said, good afternoon Parker, Henry told him they would be away until next Sunday and Mrs Olsson will be leaving tomorrow, the lift arrived and they got in and descended to the car park. All parking spaces were numbered and Henry's was two cars to the right, he was allotted three spaces for his penthouse but only used one. The car in the space was enclosed with a silver waterproof cover, not that it needed to be waterproof but it was the only cover that Henry could get.

Annika just looked at him and wondered what car was underneath this cover. He said, a penny for your thoughts, she smiled and said, I am wondering what car you have under that cover, lets see if you can guess, and he stopped removing the cover, okay, I am pretty sure it is a sports car, you have that correct, and I think from what I have seen of you so far you would only have the best, the problem is that leaves a number of top quality cars to choose from, he smiled. It has to be one of the following, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati or a Mercedes, you do not think it may be a Jaguar, Jaguar's may be nice, but I do not think it is as good a car as the four I mentioned, and Henry said, I agree with your assessment so far. However, I am an Englishman and I may want an English car, noway Henry, you would want the best regardless if it was English or not. You are sure about that, absolutely. You know more about me than I realise, she smiled and said, I am going for the Mercedes, why have you picked that one, because the other three although questionable better cars are more flashy and apart from that, you do not use your car very often.

You are spot on, now can you come up with the model and colour, top of the range which I think is an SL600, and I am going to say black or dark blue. He hugged her and said to her, you worry me, I have only just met you and you know more about me than almost anyone, I did not know I am such an open book. You like the best things in life Henry, so you are

easy to read, as he removed the cover he said, the SL600 used to be the top of the range Mercedes Sports Roadster, but that has been surpassed, and he totally removed the cover and before her was an immaculate black Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster. Because Mercedes Benz owns 40% of McLaren, this model was built in Portsmouth, so I technically own an English car, Annika looked at him and said, technically. He folded up the cover and placed it in a cupboard that was attached to the wall, I keep this on because of the birds, she looked at him and laughed, so he said, the feathered variety.

He placed their cases and the waterproof bag with their sailing gear in the boot and opened the passenger door for Annika, thank you, and she slipped into the seat. Henry got in and started the engine which was very quiet and very smooth, just as I thought, the perfect car for you, he smiled at her and drove towards the exit gates, he stopped next to a pole and lent over and opened the glove box and removed a card and inserted it into the machine on top of the pole and tapped in a four digit number, his card came back and he removed it and placed it back in the glove box, closed the lid and drove out of the gates that had now opened.

He turned right on Bayswater road and then made several left and right turns until he got to the M4, a few miles later they were on the M25 and then the M23 heading for Southampton. It was a beautiful day and the car effortlessly sped along at 85 miles per hour, this is a very nice car Henry, yes, I do love driving it, this is the first car I have ever purchased, I got it last year and it has only got just over 2000 miles on the clock. It was not long and they were turning off the A27 and had less than a mile to reach the hotel, just before the last bend Henry said, we will see what kind of hotel you have booked us in, the best one I could find, as they turned into the driveway Henry said, it looks like a great choice you have made, why thank you kind Sir.

They checked in and Henry explained that they were going on a sailing course at Hamble School of Sailing and we have to do an all night sailing and at this time they do not know which night that would be. I should know tomorrow so I can tell you tomorrow night. The receptionist told them that is not a problem and it is not necessary to tell us. The porter carried their cases up to their room and he placed them down and Henry gave him a tip, thank you sir, and he left. Shall we eat downstairs or go out and look for a restaurant Henry asked Annika, that's up to you, then we will see what the food is like here, that sounds good to me. They both used the toilet and then went downstairs and walked around the gardens, this is a very nice hotel you chose Annika, even the gardens are beautiful, they most certainly are and I did not ask about the gardens so this is a bonus. They sat on a bench and Henry took out his phone and gave it to Annika, we promised to phone your mother, I forgot all about my mother, you seem to forget about her on a regular basis and they both burst out laughing.

She took the phone and said, I guess I look for home in the contacts, you are the smartest person I know, I am very lucky to have found you.

You are absolutely correct, however, I know you are taking the mickey out of me now, but I will get my own back on you, I am sure you will. She phoned home, and Fredrika answered by saying hello Henry, it is Henry's phone but this is your loving daughter speaking, you have arrived safely, yes we have, and we are now walking around the gardens and they are really beautiful. Please phone this mobile when you arrive home tomorrow mamma so that we know you are back home safe and sound, I will and you have a good time on your course and try to have a little more self control, I will try, love you mamma, and she stopped the call and gave the phone back to Henry. Is she alright, I guess so as she did not say otherwise. Henry took her by the hand and they walked around for about an hour and then they went inside to find the restaurant.

The restaurant was a large room and the décor was beautiful, the ceiling was about five metres high and it had three large chandeliers and the moulding around the edges was really very nice, everything in this room was perfect. If the food is as good as the room then you have excelled yourself Annika, she smiled and squeezed his arm. They were seated by a large window, however, they were not going to see much of the garden as it was almost dark. They both ordered the chefs special which was sea bass with the chefs sauce, vegetables cooked just right and Henry said, I am in heaven with these vegetables, I will remember how you like them Annika said. After the meal they moved to the lounge and sat close to the open fire and drank their coffees, there was only one other guest sitting in the room and she was reading a book. We must have a good look around at this company's facilities to see if they are organised and the mooring is good and as long as we are happy with them I will ask if they have mooring for the Malö 36. You seem pretty sure you are going to get it Henry, it seems to me that if the guy could not come up with the final payment, then an additional two weeks would not be enough time for that to change. I am guessing that the two weeks is the legal requirement that the company must give the purchaser, so I am confident that we will get the Malö 36.

I do hope so Henry as that would be absolutely fantastic, also your mother would encourage you to take time off work to go sailing. Oh, my mother, I do love her, but if you give her half a chance she will take over the running of your life, believe me on that. They headed up to their room and Henry asked, which bed is yours, I do not mind which one you give me, then you can have the one by the window. As you are the lady you can use the bathroom first, why, thank you my Lord, sorry to disappoint you, but I am not a Lord yet, okay, kind sir, and they both laughed. Annika disappeared into the bathroom and Henry sorted out a pair of tracksuit bottoms to put on after he had taken his shower, he then sat down and waited for his turn in the bathroom.

Henry woke up at 06:00 and when he looked across at Annika she was sitting up in bed looking at him, good morning Henry, did you sleep well, yes thank you, how about you, I almost jumped into your bed and raped you I was so turned on, I know what you mean and I am finding it very hard to not take it to the next level. I just hope this course takes our minds

off sex, I will try harder Henry, I know I have not been helping you, in fact, just the opposite, I feel I would like to take it to the next level, but I respect your wishes and I will play my part in future and help us to not do that, that is until we are really ready, thank you Annika.

Who is using the bathroom first, you can if you like Henry, he jumped out of bed and headed for the bathroom, when he had used the toilet he cleaned his teeth, shaved and showered, fixed a bath towel round him and returned to the bedroom, all yours. On her way past Henry, Annika stopped and they had a good morning kiss and a cuddle, while she was in the bathroom Henry got dressed and waited for Annika to return. When she did he asked her if she wanted him to leave the room while she got dressed.

She said, this is silly, so please let us use some common sense here, when you get dressed I will turn the other way and try very hard not to look, it is up to you what you do when I get dressed and undressed, does that sound sensible to you. He smiled and nodded, she said, okay, now that we have that out of the way, I will get dressed, Henry turned and went to the window and looked out, he could not see very far as it was still dark. When Annika was dressed she walked up to Henry and asked him if her outfit was alright, he turned and looked her up and down and said, you look great to me and I am sure every other male will not be able to take their eyes of you, she grinned and squeezed his arm. They headed down to the dinning room to have breakfast, they both had yogurt and fruit and finished off with coffee, when they had finished their coffee they headed for the car. It was 07:30 and that gave them 30 minutes to drive the eleven miles to Hamble School of Yachting, Henry said, I think we are okay for time. On the way Annika asked, are you excited about the Malö 36 Henry, yes, are you, I am over the moon and cannot wait to go and fetch it, that makes it very important we do well on this course then. I will try very hard and I am sure you will do the same, he squeezed her leg and said, I know we will.

They arrived at 07:50, parked the car and walked through the office door, they were greeted by Bill Western the trainer for their course, although shorter than Henry, bill is a stocky chap with a weathered face. Another couple entered and gave their names as Gordon and Jane Hampton, Bill said, we did have another couple but they had to cancel due to illness, so it will only be the five of us this week. Bill said, lets start by finding out what each of you know about sailing. Ladies first, Jane, what have you done, just small dingies on rivers and lakes. Annika, I used to sail with my mother and father in the Swedish and Norwegian Fjords, very interesting Annika, how many years did you go sailing with your parents, from before I can remember until three years ago, what yacht does your father own. Unfortunately my father passed away two years ago, but he owned a Swedish Folkboat, I think they are a fantastic yacht and I would say you are a lucky girl to have spent so many happy years sailing, I think so, Annika said.

What about you Gordon, mainly like Jane, but I have been with a friend

a couple of times off the Isle of Wight, that leaves you Henry.

I have sailed with my mother in the North Sea and the Norwegian Fjords, not as many years as Annika because my father is not keen on sailing, so my mother stopped when she reached forty three, but we had twelve good years sailing. But I have not been on the water for six years now and wish to get back out there, I am sure you do Henry.

This course is designed to give you all you need to get out on the water and I think that it is the same as driving, once you pass your test you can then go and learn how to sail, in other words, you will be given the basic skills of sailing. What you can do and most definitely what you should not do. Everybody happy, and they all replied in the affirmative. We will have today in the classroom and if you are sure with what you have learnt then we will be heading out to the marina tomorrow to start the practical. Tuesday and Wednesday we head to the Solent and Thursday for an overnight sail. Henry squeezed Annika's arm and she smiled at him. Bill said the toilets are over there if you need them and please follow me into the classroom so we can get started. It was a small room but would hold about eight students comfortably, so with only four it was very nice, Bill showed them the material he expected them to get through before going out on the water, and said, if you are all ready lets get started.

They learnt briefly about how boats are built and what materials can be used, they then moved on to all the things on a sailing yacht and the terminology, which they all seemed happy with. They broke for coffee and Bill asked if anybody wished to use the "head" as it would be a good time to do so. After coffee Bill carried on with everything that could be covered in a classroom, lunch was a sandwich and they finished the day at 17:00. Henry and Annika drove back to Chilworth Manor and sat in the lounge by the open fire and had a glass of red wine, you do look stunning with the fire light flickering on your face my Viking Lady, she smiled at him and said, why thank you kind Sir.

They had an early dinner of roast duck with cranberry sauce followed with a bread and butter pudding and during coffee, they spoke about the course, Bill and the other couple Gordon and Jane. They both liked Bill and thought the way he gave the course kept you interested, and they both thought that Gordon and Jane were not a couple they wanted to become friends with, he tried to give the impression that he knows everything and she is far too wishy washy.

Henry's phone rang and he answered by saying, good evening Fredrika, do I take it you have arrived safe and sound, I certainly have Henry, in fact I arrived four hours ago but thought I should wait because you would still be on your course, that is thoughtful of you Fredrika, I will pass you over to your daughter. Before you do that I wish to thank you once again for last week, you are so kind Henry, you are more than welcome Fredrika, and he passed the phone to Annika and said to her, I am going to the bathroom.

Hello mamma are you alright, I am very happy and I hope you are using some self control, just about mamma, it is not easy but I am trying

really hard, we have come to an agreement on how we manage while we are in the same bedroom or on board the yacht. I had to change or I think I would have gone too far by now, that is very good news to hear. If this relationship develops into more than his housekeeper then it needs to be when Henry is sure you are the one, and not feel that you pushed him. I understand mamma and thank you for phoning and I will talk to you when we get home, love you, and she ended the call. They finished the evening sitting by the fire, at 22:00 they retired to their bedroom, Annika entered the bathroom to take a shower and Henry waited for his turn.

His phone rang and he answered it hoping it was not a work problem, the voice at the other end said, hello Henry, sorry I am calling you on a Sunday evening but I have to go away tonight and will not be back until Friday. I just wanted to tell you the Malö 36 is yours if you are still interested, I definitely am Märten, Henry answered. One small problem though, we are away on a sailing course and only get back next weekend, so it may be difficult to make the financial arrangements until tomorrow week.

That is not a problem Henry, I will expect to hear from you by Tuesday, you most certainly will if I am unable to make arrangements before, thank you Märten, you are more than welcome Henry, they said their goodbyes and the call ended. Annika came out of the bathroom and Henry asked if she had left him any hot water, she smiled and said, maybe, she looked very sexy with her wet hair wrapped in a hand towel and her body wrapped in a bath towel. He looked at her and she had a big smile on her face and she said, penny for your thoughts, he looked her up and down and said, I have something to tell you which could change your life, her face changed as she had heard him talking on the phone, not that she heard what he was saying, but like most people she thought the worst and was not sure what to expect.

She turned slightly so that she was not facing him and waited for him to speak again, we had better pass this course with flying colours because we are going to own a Malö 36, she turned back to him and threw her arms around his neck, and in doing that so quickly her towel slipped from her breasts, they hugged and kissed which was a lot longer than you would kiss your sister. He broke off and squeezed her to him, and she said, that is fantastic news Henry, and she wished she could have stayed in that position a lot longer, but she knew she had to tell him her towel was on the floor.

I have something to tell you Henry, he looked down at her and tried to step back a little so that he could look into her eyes, but she said no, do not do that. He asked what is the matter, she told him her towel had slipped off and was on the floor, I know as I can see you in the mirror, she turned her head and saw the full length mirror on the wall behind her and they were hugging and she was naked. When were you going to tell me about the mirror, not sure, but maybe never. Henry, I thought you are a gentleman, I do try to be, but you did tell me I could look at your ass for as long as I wanted and that view is hard to look away from.

Sorry to scold you, just tell me when you have finished looking, I have to take a shower as this is getting harder and harder for me to keep my hands off you, I do know you are getting harder and they both laughed, he turned and headed to the bathroom and on the way said, when you have replaced your towel please give me my tracksuit and toiletry bag from the bed. She picked up her towel and re-fixed it, and then picked up the things for Henry and took them to the bathroom and handed them to him, he said, thank you and closed the door. When he came out of the bathroom Annika was sitting up in bed with a big grin on her face, Oh Henry, when will we be able to go and fetch her, not quite sure because I have to first transfer the finances, make sure I have it insured and then find a mooring before we can collect it. I am so excited Henry I do not think I will sleep tonight, Henry said, come and sit with me and let's watch a movie. She jumped out of bed and climbed into Henry's bed and he put his arm around her and said, let's see what movie we can find, it does not matter, anything will do, just do not let me go, he smiled and told her, I promise I will never let you go.

The next day was spent in the marina and they found out that the other couple had left the course due to family problems. Henry and Annika felt sorry for them but also felt that having Bill to themselves would be great and they should learn a lot more. They learnt everything that they could without going out on the water, and Bill felt they had both understood everything that he explained to them and they could also answer any question he asked them straight away. Their navigational skills on dry land were exceptional and there was nothing to choose between them, Bill always looks at his students and puts them in order, but he felt he could not separate these two and this made him very happy.

He said, I think we can call it a day as you seem to have got everything I have thrown at you today, it was 15:45 and that meant they were finishing one hour, forty five minutes early. They said, goodnight and see you in the morning and turned to leave, just as they got to the door Bill said, I think we will get out on the water tomorrow as you have nothing more to learn here, They had big smiles as they headed for the car. That is fantastic Henry said, as he drove away towards Chilworth Manor, Annika squeezed his leg and said, this means we will get an extra day on the water, we are lucky that Gordon and Jane dropped out. Do you want to eat in or out Henry asked, I do not mind if you wish to try somewhere else but I think the food here is very good, then we will eat in.

They arrived at 16:35 and headed for the lounge, the fire had just been made up and was burning just perfectly, they got the same chairs as they had last night, each side of the fire and they sat down feeling very happy. A waiter arrived and asked if he could get them anything and they both asked for a red wine, Henry also asked for a bottle of still water, they sat and looked into the flames and waited for their drinks to arrive.

Henry took out his phone and made a call, it was answered straight away and Henry asked the girl if he could speak with Daniel Knox, may I ask who's calling, Henry James, just one moment Mr James. Henry smiled

at Annika and she wondered who Daniel Knox was, hello Henry how are you, very well Daniel, I trust you are also well, on top of the world Henry, now what can I do for you. Will you please transfer the equivalent of 3.5m Swedish Kroner into the bank account of Malö Yachts, marked for the attention of Mårten Karlsson, certainly Henry, is there anything else I can do for you, Not at present thank you Daniel. Henry then made another call and asked to speak to Charles Spencer. Hello Henry how are you, very well Charles thank you, what can I do for you Henry, I need you to set up another account for me and send me a debit card in the name of Annika Olsson, what amount do you want in this account, ten should be okay Charles, I take it that is ten thousand Henry, yes, and please make sure that as soon as it gets down to three please transfer funds to put it back up to ten. This is important Charles because Annika is going shopping with my mother next week, in that case do you think ten is enough Henry, Charles and Henry both laughed, Henry said, better make it twenty, leave that to me and I will also express the card, thank you Charles, and he put his phone back in his pocket.

While Henry was on the phone the waiter had brought the drinks and he asked Annika to sign for them. I take it, Daniel Knox and Charles Spencer are your bank managers, that is correct Annika and you will get to meet them both one day. I think you need to meet Charles just in case you need to speak with him and I am not at home. By tomorrow the Malö 36 will legally be ours, and when we return home there should be a debit card in your name waiting for you so that you can go and spend some of my money. A big smile broke out on Annika's face and she said, thank you kind Sir, I will try not to spend too much, he burst out laughing and said, I cannot see that happening, as you are going shopping with my mother, and believe me, she knows how to spend money. They stood up and he gave her a big hug and a kiss and said to her, never worry about the amount of money you spend on the household items or clothes and accessories for yourself, I would be very happy to see you dressed in the finest of clothes money can buy. She squeezed him harder and looked up at him and said, I love you Henry James.

They went through to the restaurant and decided they would have the chefs special again, the waiter told them tonight's special is fillet steak with the chefs Black Pepper and Rockford sauce, Henry and Annika both ordered medium to rare which came with carrots, broccoli and a little salad. When it had arrived and they had started eating, not much talking took place. This is fantastic, Henry said, and once again complimented Annika on selecting such a fantastic hotel. In fact I think that every time we need to stay in a hotel in the future you should be the one to make the booking, she smiled and told him that would be my pleasure to take that job on, because it is easy to find the very best when money is not a problem. After dinner they retired to their bedroom, took turns in the shower and got into bed and again watched a movie.

When they arrived at Hamble School of Yachting, Bill was waiting for them and told them he had loaded the yacht and was ready to head out to

the Solent. Smiles all round, Bill led the way and they boarded a Sun Odyssey 35, we use this one for most of the training, it is a pretty good all-rounder and I feel it is the one to start on. They slipped the mooring and entered the Hamble River and headed down to the Solent. Once on the Solent and around five miles out, Bill started giving them orders on what he wanted them to change as he needed to see how they reacted. He gave Annika a map reference, and told her to plot a course, she headed down to the map table to carry out this job. He told Henry to raise all sails and see what speed we can get out of this lady. When Annika returned she informed Henry that they are heading in the wrong direction, so they worked together quickly and efficiently bringing the Sun Odyssey round on to the right course. Bill just sat in the cockpit not saying another word and watched them to see how they got on and if Annika would get them to the correct map reference.

Every several minutes she would check their progress and forty two minutes later she asked Henry to start reducing the sails and another ten minutes she dropped anchor and told Bill we are at the map reference you asked for, he checked and said, well done that is spot on. He then gave Henry several map references and said, your turn to see if you can impress your lady, you only need to drop anchor at the final reference. Henry headed below to the map table and fifteen minutes later came back up and he said, once I have raised the anchor you can hoist all sails Annika, once the yacht got under way Henry turned eleven degrees starboard and told her at this speed we will stay on this course for eighteen minutes and then reduce sails to just leave the main sail, we will then make a nineteen degree change to port. I will then decide what sails we will be able to handle, Annika said, aye, aye skipper, Bill smiled and thought, these two are working very well together and are more precise than anybody I have taken training before. Please start reducing the sail area Annika, she smiled at him and quickly took down two sails. Henry said, all hands please be aware we are turning to port, he turned the wheel bringing the yacht round nineteen degrees. Bill made a note, Henry asked for one more sail please, they cut through some choppy water and maintained this course for a further twenty one minutes.

He then asked for the main to be reduced and a further four minutes later he said, we are making an eight degree turn to port and he brought the yacht around and asked Annika to raise all sails, she did so and they started moving at maximum speed, Bill made more notes. They travelled on this course for twenty six minutes and Henry asked for all sails except the jib to be reduced, Annika shouted to him all done skipper. He then told Annika we are making a turn of seven degrees to starboard, please keep rigging as is, they carried on for ten more minutes and Henry dropped the anchor, turned to Bill and said, we have arrived at your destination sir.

Bill just shook his head, that was absolutely to the degree, I am very impressed with both of you and I think we should have a little break, a sandwich and a drink, good idea, Henry said. Bill had a beer and Henry

and Annika had water, when they had finished Bill said to Annika, here are your map references, thank you Bill and she headed downstairs to the map table. When she returned she told Henry they are returning to Hamble School of Yachting via a dog leg, again her two points of reference were spot on and when they reached Hamble river Bill took over to take them into their mooring. They off loaded the gear and put it down in the office, Bill turned to them and said, I believe I do not need to give you two a final test, I have never seen anybody make turns so precisely as you two did today.

We will do an over night tomorrow so you can arrive at about 15:00 because we can dispense with the morning, getting to know the gear, as I do not think you need to do that. Thank you Bill, we will see you tomorrow, oh, before we go we were wondering if you have a mooring to rent out, we only have the one, it is next to the Sun Odyssey right at the end. You can get a 60 footer in there at a pinch, what do you want to moor. We have just bought a Malö 36 and wish to fetch it in the next week or two, it would be our pleasure to rent you the mooring Henry and we can sort out payment tomorrow.

They returned to Chilworth Manor and Henry asked if they are staying with the chef's special, Annika replied aye, aye skipper. They entered the restaurant and the head waiter asked, table for two sir, yes please Henry answered and they were shown to a table with only two chairs, we are going with the chef's special whatever it is Henry told the waiter when he offered them the menu's. To drink sir, a bottle of your finest red please, while they waited they talked about the day and what Bill had got them to do. I must say you sorted all your map references out very quickly Henry, I have always found map reading very easy and I had a challenge to meet. You mean you wanted to make sure you did it quicker than me, no, not close, the challenge was to make sure I could still work with map references as it has been a long time since I last did that. I am very pleased that you performed so brilliantly, you truly are the perfect Viking Lady.

After another fantastic meal, this time, Spicy Garlic Cashew Chicken, they retired to their bedroom, showered and watched another movie. They again sat up in Henry's bed because his bed is opposite the TV, they cuddled while watching the movie. Henry woke up at 06:30 still cuddling Annika and the TV still on, he immediately checked to see that he was still wearing his tracksuit bottoms, he kissed her on her forehead and said, good morning sleepy head how did you sleep. She opened her eyes and just like Henry could not believe they had spent the night in the same bed and she still had her night clothes on. I slept very well thank you sir, but it looks like I really am your sister, no, not at all, you are my Viking Goddess, she smiled and pecked him on his cheek and jumped out of bed and on the way to the bathroom said, I claim first turn, he just smiled after her, got up and did some stretching as his body ached a little.

After breakfast they got in the car and headed to Portsmouth, we have time to spare before 15:00 so I am taking you to Portsmouth and we will see the time when England was a great seafaring nation and was also an

empire. He took her to see HMS Victory and then they went to Portsmouth Historical Dockyard, there was so much to see and Annika said, I think we need more time, you are so right and we must come again, but right now we need to grab a bite to eat and then head back to Hamble School.

They found a little café and both ordered a pasta dish and at 14:15 they started the car and headed out of Portsmouth, they both felt very happy with the day so far and they were looking forward to the over night sailing. Henry pulled the car into the car park and Bill was already loading the yacht, Bill said, I have a quote for you in the office Henry and they followed him. I think you would be looking for an annual price Henry, that is correct Bill, well, the best deal I can give you is £2750.00 for the year starting at the beginning of any calendar month, we will take that from April Bill. You can charge my credit card right now if you want to, if you are happy to do that now Henry, please step up to the counter, Henry gave Bill his card and when the transaction was finished Bill gave Henry his receipt and card back, they shook hands and Bill said, now you know where we are and which mooring is yours, just bring your Malö 36 when you are ready and I trust you will be happy here, I am sure we will Bill.

Bill said, you are going to be skipper for the first four hours Annika and then Henry will change places with you, you will alternate every four hours unless the weather changes and a storm blows in, then I would suggest you skipper together so that you can check each others judgements. That way if one of you think the decision the other is making, is not a good one, then you can talk it over. Hopefully you will come up with an agreed plan. Unless you feel out of your depth and need my advise, as far as you are concerned I am not here. I want you to sail down the coast passing between Milford on Sea and Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, once you have passed the Needles then you can follow the map references that are waiting for you on the map table.

You will have plenty of time to check them out once we are under way Annika. Bill shook their hands and said, good luck skippers and no pressure, but I am expecting both of you to excel at this night sailing part of your course. Henry hugged Annika and said, when you are ready skipper. They slipped the mooring at 16:00 under engine power and once they were in the wider channel of Hamble river she ordered the main sail to be raised and she cut the engine. Once they reached the Solent she turned to starboard and the wind was behind them so she asked for all sails to be raised, the yacht jumped forward as the speed increased and they were in their element. The weather looked like it could change as the sky looked a lot darker the way they were heading, at present she thought she could see at least ten miles so she asked Henry to take the wheel while she went downstairs to check out the map references that Bill had left for her.

When she got there she found four envelopes marked with start times, next to the envelopes was a note which read. Dear Henry and Annika, you do not need to stop at any of the map references, you just need to pass as

closely as possible to them and proceed to the next reference, these references are not a time trial, but they must be completed during the hours of darkness, all the best, Bill.

She picked up the one marked 16:00 and she opened it, it read, when you round the Needles head to map reference **Lat 50° 39' 33.2706" Long -1° 35' 37.3338"** then proceed to the next reference and so on until you reach the final reference. **Lat 50° 35' 50.2362" Long: -1° 26' 27.333"**, your next, **Lat: 50° 32' 16.7058" Long: -1° 10' 30.6984"** When you reach this reference it should then be getting close to 20:00 and you can hand the yacht over to Henry.

Sure enough when she made the third reference point it was 19:50, she said to Henry, it's your turn to be skipper. Henry said thank you, however, before I take over I will have a look in my envelope and he headed downstairs to the map table, on his way he looked at the sky and there was not a star in sight and he estimated the temperature had dropped around six to eight degrees in the last thirty minutes, it would be a safe bet that we are in for a storm very soon. He read the note Bill had left and he picked up the envelope marked 20:00, it had three references inside, **Lat: 50° 19' 18.2568" Long: -1° 49' 35.3166"**, **Lat: 50° 17' 49.8474" Long: -0° 41' 21.8112"**, **Lat: 50° 14' 52.9002" Long: 0° 3' 7.866"** after the three references Bill had written, due to the oncoming storm you may not make the last reference by midnight, if the storm turns severe I would like Annika to join you so that you can check each others decisions. If the storm is not too severe then carry on to your last reference point and then hand over.

They got to the first point and Henry turned the wheel to port and headed to the next reference point, the wind was getting stronger, the temperature had dropped further and you could now feel the rain starting.

This course would take them past the centre of the English Channel and much closer to the French coast, the English Channel is one of the busiest waterways in the world, Henry thought, this is good that Bill is testing us to the limit. He asked Annika to reduce another sail and just leave the main sail and hopefully they will be able to outrun the storm as it was heading away from their direction. Around half way towards the next reference point the wind changed direction and turned into a force nine gale, Henry called to Annika to please bring the safety lines, and they attached them to each other.

He then asked Annika to take down the main sail and raise the jib only, she did that very quickly and came back to the cockpit and asked Henry if he wanted her to join him, he replied he was okay for now and she should get below and keep warm and maybe a little sleep, I will definitely call you if I need you. She squeezed his arm and entered the cabin, Bill asked is everything okay, I think so, it is just wild and wet out there and he now only has the jib raised, that's good and what about you, he sent me down here to keep warm and also suggested I try to get a little sleep, that is excellent and you should take that advice because if he needs you, you will be a lot fresher than Henry will be, she crawled onto a bunk and found it

easy to fall asleep.

By the time he got to the second reference point it was already 00:15 and he turned the wheel to port and headed towards the next reference point. Immediately he turned onto the new heading he knew life was going to improve, he called down for Annika and she arrived by his side and connected her safety line and said, yes skipper, how are we doing. He told her we are at least one and a half hours behind, he then asked her to please raise one extra sail which she did and the yacht rode a lot better on the water. At 02:25 they got to the last reference point and he again called to Annika, she again stood by his side and asked what he wanted her to do. You need to look at the next envelope and then take over as the skipper, she smiled, aye, aye skipper, she went back down to the cabin and opened the envelope marked midnight, she found another three references.

Lat: 50° 42' 21.495" Long: -0° 10' 3.1506", Lat: 50° 17' 49.8474" Long: -0° 41' 21.8112", Lat: 50° 26' 24.4212" Long: -1° 15' 7.5522" She went back up to the cockpit and told Henry she is ready to take over, he replied, you have the helm, she smiled and made a small turn of the wheel to port and then turned to Henry, lets try another sail and see if it will stand it, okay, and he headed to raise the sail, they did pick up speed and also got more spray over them. Are you happy with that or do you want it taken down, you can leave it for now and you can go and warm up a little and try to get some shut eye, he smiled at her and said, aye, aye skipper and disappeared below. One and a half hours later she reached her first reference point and called to Henry, he arrived and asked what she wanted him to do, just be ready and she turned the wheel to port and the yacht came around 270 degrees and they stopped taking on spray, she told Henry that's good, I am sorry to have called you, you should not be and he put his arms around her and gave her a peck on her very wet cheek, he just stood behind her holding her.

Ten minutes later she said you should try for a sleep, okay and he went downstairs into the cabin, Bill asked him if everything is going according to plan, I think it is much better now we are on a new heading, we are flying along, Bill smiled and told Henry he is very happy with both of them so far. At the next reference point she called for Henry and when he arrived she told him I am taking a ninety degree turn to starboard and I think we will need to reduce a sail, Henry clipped his safety line on and waited, once the turn was completed it was very plain the sails had to be reduced as the wind had changed direction once again. The yacht was now rigged with a small sail and the jib and sea water was again breaking over the bow and every time that happened the spray was all over Annika. She got to her last reference point at 05:55 and she told Henry to check the last envelope.

He did that and found four reference points, **Lat: 50° 45' 2.0262" Long: -0° 53' 6.3096", Lat: 50° 44' 8.844" Long: -1° 6' 42.0444", Lat: 50° 47' 0.8478" Long: -1° 17' 34.6308", Lat: 50° 50' 42.7698" Long: -1° 18' 58.3698"** Henry headed back to the cockpit and Annika said, you have control, he smiled and said, I have control, he gave her a hug and

asked if she thought they were in an aircraft, it would be a lot dryer than it is here. Henry made a ninety two degree turn to starboard and told Annika to leave the rigging as it is because I do not think we can take any more. He then told Annika to go below and get a hot drink and to please return in twenty minutes because the weather is getting worse and we are about to cross a very busy shipping lane and I would appreciate another pair of eyes on deck, especially ones as beautiful as yours.

She smiled and went below to get a hot chocolate. Bill asked, how do you think this test is going, so it is a test then, he just smiled and waited for her reply. I think we are doing very well, the weather as been pretty awful with the force nine gale and then it dropped to force six which was a lot easier. However, it has just picked up again and Henry has asked me to go top side when I have finished my drink because we will be crossing a very busy shipping lane. Bill said, I am very pleased he did that.

She joined Henry in the cockpit and he said, it looks like a couple of large vessels are heading this way, we should get passed the first one before it gets here but we will have to tack to port so that we sail between the two of them and then we can return to our course after it has passed by. She squeezed his arm and said to him, I like your plan, I will keep my beautiful eyes on the radar and they both burst out laughing. When they had crossed the shipping lane Henry thanked Annika and told her that she could go below and get out of this foul weather for a while and he will call her at the next point, she ducked below and made another hot drink and sat and waited, Henry rounded the next reference point by turning one hundred and ten degrees to port.

The wind was now behind them and they picked up a little speed, he called Annika and asked her to raise another sail and they really started to motor, she said, it looks like you want to get back quickly, you are right about that. Please stay as we will be crossing another shipping lane, it was now day light but it was raining so hard that you could not see more than two boat lengths so they were still relying on the radar. They got to the next reference point without seeing any other vessel and Henry made a thirty eight degree turn to starboard and he asked for a sail to be reduced, Annika quickly did that but they were still getting buffeted around. It was not long and they left the Solent and entered Southampton Water, please tell Bill we are almost at the final reference and I am guessing he wants us to return to the school. She asked Bill and he replied by saying, that would be alright unless you want to go round again, she smiled and said, I will tell him and see what his reply is.

When she got back to Henry's side she told him what Bill had said, he just smiled at her and said, we have just passed the last reference, she said, I am very pleased and cannot wait to get in a hot shower. They came into the mooring under power and made a perfect docking, Annika jumped off and tied the yacht up. Bill emerged from the cabin and said, that was a pleasant warm trip maybe we should do it again some time and burst out laughing. He disembarked and shook hands with both of them. They tidied the yacht and when they got in the office Bill said, we still have

Friday so if you think of anything you wish to ask or anything you wish to do just let me know. Henry asked if they could do a little first aide on Friday, Bill said, that's a great idea, see you around 08:00 then, they thanked him and got in the car to return to Chilworth Manor.

When they got to the hotel they asked for room service and both took a long time in the shower, having the water temperature turned as high as they could stand. They hugged and Henry told Annika he was very proud of her the way she handled the yacht, you truly are my Viking Lady. After they had eaten they got into bed and slept for five hours. Henry woke up just before Annika and he sat up in bed watching her, she opened her eyes and smiled at him and said, good morning skipper, he replied with, good morning my Viking Lady, do you want to get up and hit the night life or do you want to stay as we are and order more room service.

I am not ready to go out dancing and in any case I do not have clothes to do that, so I would plumb for more room service and watch a movie, they did that and fell asleep again around 23:00. At 06:00 Annika woke up and found she was curled up leaning against Henry's chest and the TV was still on, she said, I see I am getting more like your sister every day, he opened his eyes and said, my beautiful sister and he laughed. They showered and got dressed and went downstairs to have breakfast. Henry asked the receptionist if they could leave their cases while they had breakfast. Certainly Mr James, and would you have my bill ready when we return, I most certainly will. They had yogurt and fruit followed by a coffee and sat talking about the first aide course, Henry said, he knows absolutely nothing about first aide, what about you Annika. I know a little, enough that if you needed help with a cut I could take care of you, he laughed and said, I am sure you would.

They got to the school at Hamble at 07:45 and Bill was just crossing the car park, did you two have a good rest he asked them, we sure did Henry replied, that's good, lets go to the classroom because we can do this in three hours as you are the only ones here. He showed them how to deal with somebody that has a large cut and what to do if they are unconscious, how to deal with a crew member that has been overboard and is not breathing due to all the water they have swallowed. He told them that most of the incidents they may have to deal with, will be simple cuts and bruises, the main thing to remember is you must first make sure your vessel is safe before you start to look after the injured crew member, it is no use you attending to an injured person and leaving the vessel unattended and it is turned over in the storm, or worse still, you run aground on some rocks. Because both of those would be far worse than leaving the crew member untreated until you have made the vessel safe.

When they had finished, Bill asked if they have any question, Henry asked what first aide kit do you recommend we carry, Bill asked if their Malö 36 is a new vessel or second hand. Its brand new Henry replied, then you have absolutely nothing else to get because Malö Yachts have a very comprehensive first aide kit, in fact I would go as far as saying, one of the best from any yacht builder in the world. If you do not have anything else

to ask we would like to present you with your diplomas, he opened the door to an inner office and two ladies came out and shook Henry and Annika's hands and said, well done, they were each given a diploma stating what the course was and their names.

One of the ladies said to Annika, we thought it would be better to put your maiden name on the diploma, however, if you want your married name I can make a new one. Annika burst out laughing and Henry just smiled, the ladies looked embarrassed so Henry said, it is just fine with Annika's maiden name. Bill then gave Henry the mooring certificate and shook his hand again and said, I wish to tell both of you that I have never had any other student that has performed like you two have over the last week, so to have two at the same time is unbelievable, you out performed my wildest expectations it has been my privilege to train you. If you are ever short of a crew member just give me a call. They collected their things and went to the car, waved goodbye and drove out of the car park.

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chapter 26

The celebration dinner

They were soon on the M27 heading towards London, turning off onto the M3 and with not too much traffic the Mercedes-Benz silently purred along at eighty five mph, Henry loved this car and just wished he could get to drive it more often. They talked about the course and they both felt that they had found it easier than they thought they would, Annika felt very proud that Bill said, they were the best students he had ever had, and Henry told her she had found the first aide course a lot easier than he had. So my Viking Lady, that makes you the star pupil of the week, I will wine and dine you tonight to celebrate, she had a big smile on her face and squeezed his arm. Henry's mobile rang and he answered it using the Blue tooth. Hello Henry, hello Mårten how are you, I am very well Henry, how did your course go, it went very well indeed Mårten, in fact Bill told us we are the best students he has ever had and because Annika did better than I did with the first aide course, she is the supper star. I am so pleased, do give her a big hug from me, I will certainly do that Mårten.

This call is just to let you know we have received your payment so I need to know when do you wish the hand over to take place, so that I can get it on the water and make sure it has been polished and ready for you. I will phone you on Monday once I know what my work scheduled is likely to be next week, I would like to say Friday but being away this week things could have changed, as I said, I will phone you Monday. Just before you go Henry, are you still happy with the name you mentioned for the vessel the last time we spoke, yes, I am very happy with that name Mårten, then I will get onto that today, they both said, thank you, and rang off.

What name are you calling the Malö Annika asked, I seem to have forgotten what I asked for, you are telling lies Henry James, he smiled at her and told her she will just have to wait and see for herself. When he had parked the car he emptied the boot and they set off for the lift, Annika asked, did you forget to put the cover on, no I cannot put the cover on until it has been washed and polished especially as it has been parked near the sea for a week, I will help you wash it tomorrow, he smiled and said, I have a pensioner that will come tomorrow to do that, he needs the money and it saves me having to do it.

They changed lifts at the reception and Parker said, good afternoon Mr James, he nodded at Annika and said, Miss Olsson, they both replied, good afternoon Parker and they got into the lift and Annika pressed the button with a P on it. Henry opened the front door and stood aside for Annika to enter, she said, thank you and then suggested he leaves the cases here and she will unpack them and sort out the washing, that's a good idea, while you do that I will make the coffee. When the coffee was ready he told Annika he is taking it to the lounge, he did so and sat down and waited for her. After they had finished their coffee Henry said, I am going to my

office to phone Lydia to find out how next week looks.

I will use my mobile so you can use the house phone to speak with your mother, he smiled and said, I am only telling you that in case you have forgotten about her. Annika picked up a cushion and threw it at Henry, and said, why thank you kind Sir. Henry found out that he has to go to Sweden the week after next to see a Mr Erik Lindström in Göteborg, Lydia told him she would phone him back with a day once she had spoken with Henry, this is great Henry told Lydia, see if he is happy with Wednesday or Thursday I would prefer Wednesday at 08:00 as that gives us more time, once he confirms you can book the flights, I think a late flight the day before so I am nice and fresh to start, you can use Annika's return ticket for her flight and only book me a one way because we will return with the yacht I have purchased. I will ask Annika if she can recommend a good hotel. Lydia just smiled to herself and thought, it will not be long before Annika is more than your housekeeper, and that would be something I would be very happy about.

When he had finished talking to Lydia he returned to the lounge and found Annika talking to her mother 10 to the dozen, he waved his hand and she looked at him, while still talking, he asked her to please say Hi, to Fredrika, she said, Henry says Hi, she then said to him, mamma says hello Henry and she hopes you are well, yes thank you Fredrika, and he walked back to his office. He sat down and picked up his mobile and selected Mat, when his call was answered he said, hello Matthew, it's Henry James how are you keeping, I am very well thank you Henry and how are you keeping, absolutely fantastic thank you. Are you looking to have your car cleaned, yes please because I have been at the coast all this week, then I will also give the underside a spray, that would be great Matthew and I will leave your envelope with Benson or Parker, whichever one is on duty, thank you Henry and I will be around tomorrow afternoon, thank you and he rang off.

He then looked for the invoice of the company that Annika had ordered their dry suits from, he phoned the number on the invoice and it was answered within seconds, Henry told them his name and gave them his customer number, hello Mr James I am John and I was the one that sold your wife the dry suits, as I did not hear from you I take it they were to your satisfaction. They are great and they arrived as promised, we used them on Wednesday evening through to midday Thursday and from about 21:00 Wednesday through to 01:00 Thursday we had a force 9 gale which did reduced to a force 6 for the rest of our time on the water, so the suits you sold us were great.

Now, I am looking for more items, do you know what you want, we need some good quality underwear, thinking about long-john's and tee shirt type underwear, also jackets, socks and top quality watches. You have our sizes so if you send six pairs of underwear each and very good quality jackets. I tell you what I will do Mr James, please call me Henry, okay Henry, I will send you what I think are the best products for you, but they will only go out tomorrow so they should be with you on Monday. You

have a look at them and keep what you want, send back anything you do not like, we will then sort out the payment, that is very good of you John, not at all Henry, you get to know who you can trust and who you should not.

Now what colour do you want the jackets to be, I have a very nice raspberry one for your wife, that sounds good to me, I will send a navy blue one for yourself and is navy blue for your underwear, okay, and maybe light blue for your wife, that all sounds good. Alright Henry, you phone me once you receive the parcel, Henry told John that he would be away all next week so I will only get your parcel next weekend, that's okay Henry. He walked back into the lounge and Annika was still talking to her mother, so he walked to his bedroom and had a shave and shower and changed into very smart casual clothes then returned to the lounge.

Annika looked at him and then said, we had better say goodbye mamma, and she stood up and felt Henry's face and said to her mother, Henry has finished what he was doing and he has also had a shave, and a shower and he is dressed very smart and he smells simply divine. Henry is taking me out tonight to wine and dine me, bye, bye mamma, love you.

Do you want a drink Annika, I think I had better go and get ready, she left and Henry poured himself a red wine and made a phone call. It's Henry James and I would like to book a table for two for 20:00 tonight, certainly Mr James, and we look forward to seeing you at 20:00. When she returned Annika asked is the drink still on offer, of course it is, then can I join you with a red wine, he poured the wine and placed it on a table and sat down.

I must say you look very ravishing young lady, she had on a little black number and Henry noted she did not have a necklace, and wondered was that because she did not have one or because she did not like them, he decided it must be the first. I have booked a table for 20:00, I will phone for a taxi to pick us up at 19:45 that gives us fifteen minutes. He poured her a red wine and told her while she was talking to her mother he ordered a present for her, that's very kind of you Henry, is that because I did better than you on our courses, no, not at all, wining and dinning you tonight is because you did very well on the course, the present that I ordered is just because I wanted to. Are you going to tell me what it is or are you going to make me wait until it arrives, if you want me to tell you I will, yes please. I ordered you some underwear, wow, that is a special present Henry and very personal, well, I hope you will model it for me, I most certainly will, you do not know what it looks like, you may change your mind once you see them. When I tell you I will do something for you Henry, I will not change my mind.

He smiled and just at the same time the intercom phone rang in the kitchen, that will be Parker telling us our taxi has arrived, she got up and took the glasses to the dishwasher and Henry answered the phone, hello Parker, your taxi has arrived Mr James, thank you, we are on our way down.

Good evening Mr James, where to, Green's Steakhouses please, that's in Southgate Mr James, that's correct. Henry turned to Annika and told

her that Green's do some fantastic steaks and the staff are always friendly, it was not long and they arrived at Green's, Henry paid the driver and asked him for a card so that he can phone when they are ready to leave, they got out of the taxi and headed for the door.

Once seated the waiter asked if they were ready to order or do they need more time, I am ready what about you Annika, I like steak so I will let you order for me, then we will have Fillet Steak with blue cheese dressing, and to drink sir, a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon please. Henry then told Annika we are going to Sweden a week on Wednesday or Thursday as I have a new client to see in Göteborg, Lydia will find out which day would suit him, when I have finished with him we will then go to collect the Malö 36.

She beamed from ear to ear, now, do you want to fly to Stockholm so that you can see your mother and then join me at Malö Yachts, or do you want to come with me to Göteborg. She said, I want to go with you to Göteborg, however, the train does not run anywhere near Malö Yachts so how do you want to get there, then we will take a taxi Henry replied.

Do you know of a good hotel in Göteborg, the Radisson Blu Scandinavia Hotel is probably the best, then just as soon as Lydia lets me know what day we are going, you can make the booking, if that is okay with you, more than happy to do that, in fact you can just add Scandinavia hotel bookings to my job as your crew member. That is very kind of you, so I will tell Lydia that all hotel bookings in Scandinavia in the future you will take care of, and please also organise the taxi to get to Malö Yachts. We will take a late flight the day before and I will try and finish with the client the same day, if I manage to do that, it would be late in the afternoon. We will then get an early start the next day.

When their steaks arrived Henry said, I told you this is a great place and just look at those steaks one and a half inches thick, just how I like my steaks, Annika noted his comments. As Henry had told her this place does a fantastic steak, and they also managed a second bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon before the meal had finished. For desert they went with a Sweet Pecan Pie drizzled in fresh cream, followed by a nice cup of coffee. Henry phoned the taxi and when they got in the driver asked if their meal was up to the mark, it was absolutely fantastic, you can always be assured of a great steak at Green's Henry said.

On their way past Parker, he said, I trust you had a good evening sir, very good thank you Parker and they got in the lift and just smiled at each other. When they got in the Penthouse Henry said, do you fancy another coffee Annika, that would be nice thank you, she then asked if it was too late for a movie, we can if you want to. While Henry made the coffee Annika searched for a movie, but she could only find ones that she knew they had seen, while the coffee was making Henry went to the toilet and also removed his jacket and tie, he picked up the coffee's and headed for the TV room and he sat next to Annika, they drank their coffee's and spoke about the evening meal, after they had finished their coffee's they settled down to watch, Dances With Wolves, they had both seen it before

but it seemed to be, the best of the rest. Annika was leaning on Henry which seemed to be the position she always took up when watching a movie on the television, and it was not long before they had both fallen asleep.

Henry woke up at 03:30, the movie had long finished and he had a stiff neck, he sat upright and Annika just slipped onto his lap, he smiled and stroked her hair and then picked her up and carried her to her bedroom. He managed to throw the duvet back without dropping her and he then lowered her onto the bed, he looked at her and thought, I cannot leave you with your dress on, so he unzipped it and removed it and quickly pulled the duvet over her. He bent down and gave her a kiss on her cheek, she stirred and he thought she was going to wake up, but she did not, he picked up her dress and opened her wardrobe and found a hanger which he put the dress on. Looking at the dress in his hand he thought I cannot hang this dress back in the wardrobe because she may not want to do that, so he walked into the bathroom and hung it over the shower door, he walked out leaving the bedroom door open and went to his own bedroom got undressed and slipped into bed.

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hapter 27

Annika becomes Henry's housekeeper

He woke up on Saturday morning just after 07:00 and he could hear the rain beating against the window, he picked up a remote and pressed number 8 and the curtains opened and he looked out at the rain, it was blowing so hard the rain was almost horizontal, he thought what a horrible day to wake up to, I will not be going jogging today, There was a tap on the bedroom door and a head popped around and Annika asked if he would like a coffee, yes please. When she returned and gave him his coffee, she asked if she may sit on the edge of his bed, you can if you want to. She moved to the bottom of the bed and picked up the corner of the duvet so that she could sit on the bed, he just looked at her and she told him that her momma had always told her not to sit on the duvet, he smiled and said, mine to.

About last night, what about last night, you put me to bed and removed my dress and hung it over the shower door. I did that because I did not want to hang it back in the wardrobe and I did not know what else to do with it.

I felt I could not put you to bed and leave you in that beautiful little black number, because it would have got all screwed up, so I am sorry if I upset you. She burst out laughing and told him, I am not upset with you at all, I just wanted to apologise to you, for what, he asked, for falling asleep on you and then you having to put me to bed, my mother would not be very happy with me, I am not your mother Annika, you are not my lover either. At present, that is true, I woke up at 03:30 with a stiff neck and I felt I must go to bed, it just seemed natural to pick you up and put you into your bed, if you feel I should not do that again then just tell me what you want me to do with you. I am asking because I am sure it will happen again. It just seems strange that you can do that and then walk away, it was not an easy thing to do Annika. However, when I had covered you up I did bend down and kiss your cheek before leaving your bedroom. You are something else Henry James.

I have never met anybody like you before, and you probably never will again, I like to think I am one of a kind and I do have some very high morals and I would hope that never changes. My mother just loves you and she is sure you could never do anything wrong. I really do like your mother, however, I am more interested in what you think of me than what your mother thinks of me. I told you the other day, I love you, and I thought you were joking, no Henry I am not joking, I fell in love with you back in Stockholm, way before I knew anything about you. Oh dear me, what am I going to do with you, this is very hard and I do feel we need more time, I know Henry and I am trying very hard not to push you over the edge. Thank you my Viking Lady, you are very welcome kind sir. Now

what are we going to do today with such terrible weather out there, well, I have washing to sort out so that is my first job, that sound sensible, not very exciting though, I am going to take a shower and I have some reading I need to catch up on, so I will do that. Before you slip away young lady you did not tell me what you want me to do with you when you use me as a pillow again, do I just leave you where you are or put you to bed, she just looked at him and said, you will work it out and I am sure you will do what you think you should do anyway, she disappeared.

When Henry had finished in the bathroom he put on a track suit and went to his office and sorted through some paperwork, selected a folder and sat in his chair and opened a file and started to read. He found his highlighter and started to highlight sentences or just the odd word here and there, when he had finished the first one he started on the second file and so on. Annika walked in and asked if he was ready for breakfast, that sounds good I will be there in five minutes.

He finished the page he was on and put the file down and headed for the kitchen, are you sure you want a smoothie everyday Henry, I am happy with that but if you wish to suggest something else for another day please do so. He finished his smoothie and started to drink his coffee, when the phone rang he picked it up and said, good morning Lydia how are you on this diabolical day, I am as well as you might expect me to be after getting drenched this morning, he smiled and told her he was sorry she had got wet, not just wet Henry, I got drenched. I am phoning you because I have three things to tell you, and you may not be happy with at least one of them.

Fire away Lydia, give me your worst. I have made your appointment with Erik Lindström for Wednesday week at 07:30, that's great, and I have made five appointments for you next week, they are all in New York and your flight is booked for 16:30 Sunday, returning on Saturday morning at 11:45. The third thing Lydia, Sir Randolph phoned yesterday and asked if you and Annika would be kind enough to pop into his chambers between 16:00 and 17:00 today, I am sure we can do that, she finished by saying, I will see you a week on Monday. Roger will pick you up at 13:00 tomorrow, thank you Lydia. He put the phone down and looked at Annika, she asked him if we go on Tuesday or Wednesday, we go on Tuesday week, however, that is not all she has for me, I leave tomorrow at 16:30, returning on Saturday morning at 11:45. I have three appointments so I would not be able to get back before next weekend. She just looked at him and said, and I was getting used to having you around, and they both burst out laughing. One other thing, Sir Randolph wants to see us this afternoon. The intercom rang and Henry picked it up and said, good morning, Parker here sir, you have a courier from the bank and she needs a signature, can I send her up, certainly Parker and he put the phone down. The door bell rang and Henry opened it and a young lady said, Mr James, yes I am Henry James, Mr Charles Spencer asked me to deliver this package, please sign here, he did so and took the package from her and thanked her.

He walked into the kitchen but Annika was not there so he looked in

the lounge not there either so he walked into his office and opened the package that Charles had sent him, Annika walked past and asked if he wanted a coffee, that would go down very nicely but first I have something for you. She walked into his office and Henry said to her that Charles Spencer has sent your debit card, and he handed it to her, she thanked him and he then gave her a piece of paper with the pin number on, I would suggest that you change that number at your earliest convenience, pick a number that you will remember then you will not have a paper trail to the card.

Thank you Henry, I will make sure I keep it safe. They both returned to their jobs and Henry finished at 11:30, and he walked into the lounge and looked out of the window, the weather was just as bad as when he woke up. Annika walked into the lounge and said, I have made a tuna salad, and we can eat a larger meal later, that's fine Henry replied. They had both finished what they had planned to do so they sat down to eat the tuna salad and finished with a coffee, by the time they had finished eating it was 13:30 so they had two and a half hours before they had to be at Sir Randolph's chambers. Henry said I had better phone Mårten Karlsson at Malö Yachts and tell him when we will collect.

Hello Mårten, it is Henry James, how are you, very well Henry how are you, also good thank you. I have a date to collect the Malö 36, it will be on Thursday week, I just cannot get there before, I have to go to New York all next week so that is why we cannot get there before the following week, it is not a problem for me Henry, I am in all week so when you arrive I will be ready to hand your yacht over to you, thank you Mårten, see you a week on Thursday, and he put the phone down. I am going to watch a little TV, do you want a drink Henry, just water please, she fetched the water and they sat down and passed a couple of hours watching an old movie and talking.

They walked into Sir Randolph's chambers at 16:05, he shook Henry's hand and turned to Annika and said, so this is the young lady that everybody is talking about, he then put his left arm around her shoulders and said, I am very pleased to meet you Annika and led her to a chair by his desk. You can sit in the outer office Henry, Mary will take care of you.

I have two documents which need your signature Annika, to make them legal. One is the Non Discloser Agreement, and he gave her a copy. Basically, this agreement means that whatever you see or hear regarding Henry's work you cannot tell anybody else or you could be prosecuted. She asked where do I sign, Sir Randolph pointed and also the date please, he took that one back and gave her a copy and asked her to please sign and date it, that one is yours to keep.

The second document is your employment contract, and he placed it in front of her, now there is a lot more to go through on this one, I will go through it with you and point out the most important clauses. It starts with stating who you will be working for and where the employment takes place, so let us look down the page paragraph by paragraph and if you do not understand anything then just stop me and we will deal with it straight

away.

Employment Contract for Housekeeper.

Henry James residing at The Penthouse in Hyde Park Gardens London, offers, Annika Olsson of Torsvik Sweden the position of Housekeeper.

You are on a one month trial and during that month either you or Henry can decide that the job is not for you. This can take place without any penalty, however, if Henry terminates your contract after you have worked for twenty one days or more, then he must give you one full months notice, on top of what he owes you for time served.

Your salary will be £1000.00 per calendar month with a 20% increase per annum, after three months you will receive an increase of 50% and Henry has to then give you three months notice if he wishes to terminate your employment. After six month employment the notice that Henry has to give you would change to six months and yours to three months, this length of notice would remain for however long you are employed by Henry. You will be paid a minimum annual bonus of three months salary, Henry may pay you any amount over the minimum if he so chooses. All bonuses in Henry's line of work are paid around Christmas, so I expect him to pay yours around the same time, however, this bonus must be paid to you by the last day of December at the absolute latest.

On top of your salary, all your clothes, whether they are for work or personal use, Henry will pay for. Food is the same. I believe he has given you or will give you a debit card which you will use for anything you purchase, whether it is related to you personally or needed for the Penthouse.

It is very difficult to state the number of hours you are expected to work, I do know that Henry is out of the country for about two weeks in any calendar month so I do not think that would ever be a problem for you, so they are left as "open". Having said that, if you feel you would like me add a clause I can do that, just advise me what you would like to be put in the clause.

I understand that you are going to live in the Penthouse with Henry, having turned down the use of the two bedroomed apartment in Basil Street, Knightsbridge. Because of that I have had to add a clause. You have a bedroom which is for your sole use, however, you are not permitted to bring anybody else into the Penthouse without Henry's permission.

Illegal drugs, Henry does have a problem with anybody that uses illegal drugs, so this clause would be a harsh one if you were a drug user. If Henry discovered that you are a drug user then your employment would be terminated immediately, with one months salary plus days worked. If you ever took illegal drugs into the Penthouse then the police would be called and again immediate termination of employment. Henry will never stand for the use of illegal dugs under any circumstances.

That is the basis of the contract so do you have any questions Annika. Yes Sir Randolph, I do have one, I am very pleased you do, as I am not happy when people do not ask any questions, it is almost like they do not

care. What can I explain to you my dear. You are Henry's Legal Adviser, that is correct my dear, in fact I am more than that, I have known Henry from the day he was born and I am also his God Father. Then I really do not understand this at all, you have written an employment contract that looks like my legal adviser wrote it for me, why is that.

Sir Randolph burst out laughing, well my dear, I have put in the contract exactly what Henry asked me to put in, even after I gave him my professional advice against several of the things he wanted in there. There is a very old and true saying, you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. That my dear, sums up Henry James, if he likes you, you will get the world, if not, Beware. He so obviously likes you my dear, and having met you I can understand why. Please just sign and date here, unless you wish me to add a clause regarding your hours, not at all Sir Randolph. Okay, lets go and find Henry.

Henry was talking to Mary, Sir Randolph's secretary, he looked up as they approached and asked, is everything acceptable to you Annika, she just smiled and replied, yes Henry, everything is fine thank you. They shook hands and Sir Randolph said, do not be so scarce Henry, it seems months since I last saw you, I will try Sir Randolph, and they left his chambers and climbed into the waiting taxi, back home please, Henry said. The weather was just as foul as when they woke up, in fact Henry thought it was getting worse if that was possible.

When they got into the Penthouse Henry asked Annika if she would like to go out for a meal tonight, to celebrate her officially becoming his Housekeeper, I think the weather is not good enough to go out again when we do not have to, so can I take a rain check, no pun intended, you certainly can. I am happy to make something, you just tell me what you would like. A pasta dish and a movie please, I will be about twenty minutes. Henry went into the TV room to search for a movie, he went back into the kitchen and asked if she wanted a glass of wine, yes please. As they both preferred red, he did not ask, he just poured two glasses and returned to the TV room. Annika popped her head around the door and asked if he wanted it in the dinning room or here, here is fine.

Thank you, then I will dish up for us. They talked about what she would be doing next week and she admitted she was excited about the shopping trip with Alexandra, but also a little worried, why are you worried to go shopping with my mother, I know she is a Viking, but that does not mean she will run her sword through you.

They both laughed and Annika said, I heard your father telling you that it will cost you an arm and a leg, that is correct he did say that and I do know that he will be right, as my mother only shops at the finest of boutiques in London. Well, I am worried that it might cost you a lot of money, he burst out laughing and put his arm around her and just hugged her, he then told her, do not ever worry about spending my money, if I was worried then I would not have given you your own debit card, or put in your contract that all your clothes whether they are for work or personal use, I will pay for. I do not have a problem with you purchasing whatever

clothes you want to, just go and enjoy yourself, I promise you, you will not bankrupt me, however much you spend. Go and enjoy, and come back looking like a million dollar lady, he smiled at her and gave her another squeeze. You are such a lovely young lady you deserve the best that money can buy.

Again Henry woke up with a stiff neck at 01:30 with the television playing to itself, and Annika was using him as her pillow. He decided that he would put her to bed again, and he would just have to listen to her complain at him in the morning, he picked her up and carried her to her bedroom and moved the duvet down and lowered her into her bed, he felt that the smart black trousers and the beautiful burgundy blouse were not meant to sleep in, so he proceeded to remove her blouse which revealed a matching low cut burgundy bra. He laid the blouse over a chair and went back for the trousers, when he had them half way over her hips, he realised this is just not as easy as removing her dress, he just thought, if she wakes up, she wakes up. He started once more pulling them down and to his horror her panties started to move as well, he thought, Oh god, I have got myself into a bit of a fix here, he decided that he was not going to carry on removing her trousers and needed her help.

He sat down on the bed and picked the top half of her body up so that he was holding her around her shoulders in his arms. He then whispered into her ear that he needed her help, it took a few minutes and she opened her eyes, Henry you are sitting on my bed hugging me, what help do you need from me. I need you to remove your trousers as I cannot carry on removing them on my own, why not, you did a good job with my dress and it seems my blouse has also been removed. The dress and the blouse, well, they were easy, but if I pull the trousers down your panties go with them and I have a problem with that. I see you have got yourself into a bit of a bind, you want to undress me, but you cannot handle the outcome, you are teasing me and you seem to be really enjoying it, you are right, I am enjoying putting you on the spot.

I will help you remove my trousers once you have let me go, he lowered her back on the bed and stood up telling her he will leave now. Oh no, that is not how this is going to play out Henry, I am helping you so how can you leave before the job is finished, he just smiled and said you are playing with me, and she laughed. She removed her trousers, pulled the duvet over her and then pulled her panties up and handed her trousers to Henry, asking him, to please place them on the chair. He folded them very neatly and placed them on the back of the chair, turned and walked back to her bed, may I sit on your bed, why do you ask me, you did not ask me before, you were asleep and I did not think you would mind. I do not mind in the slightest.

She pulled the duvet back and patted the bed, he sat down and asked her, if she thought she would fall asleep again while using him for a pillow, would she please wear something that he can just place her in bed, kiss her goodnight and leave. If that is what you want me to do then I will make sure I do that, it will not be as exciting, but it will be easier for you. Thank

you very much, I would appreciate that, he bent down and was going to lightly kiss her on her mouth, but that turned into a passionate kiss, he broke it off when their tongues started to enjoy one another.

He held her in his arms and said, we have to stop before we just cannot stop, I am sorry I did that, never be sorry for kissing me Henry, as far as I am concerned, you can do whatever you wish to do to me and whenever you wish to. He just held her in his arms and squeezed her to him, he then placed her back on her pillow and told her he was going to bed now, and he said, goodnight Annika, goodnight Henry. As he was going out of the door she said, you are the kindest and most generous man I know, thank you for offering me this job and treating me with respect and dignity, you are welcome Annika. He turned and walked out of her bedroom.

She woke him up 07:30 with a cup of coffee, he looked at her, sat up and took the coffee from her, thank you my Viking Lady, you are welcome, are you joining me, I will fetch my coffee. When she returned she moved the duvet from the bottom corner of the bed and sat down, is the weather any better she asked, lets take a look and he picked up the remote control and pressed number 8 and the curtains silently opened, I do like that, what is the number Henry, 8 and only 8, because you might not be ready for the other numbers, and he smiled at her, who's teasing now, and she laughed.

The rain had stopped but it was still overcast, better but not great she said, I do not feel like jogging today, what about you, I was going to pass today and let you go on your own, she said, so that has worked out alright. If you are leaving at 13:00, what and when do you wish to eat, I think a light salad around 11:00 thank you, She stood up, picked up the coffee cups and said, I will go and take a shower and get dressed, me too, and she disappeared.

Sunday afternoon came around and Roger picked up Henry to take him to Heathrow for his flight to New York. Henry kissed Annika and told her to make sure she has a fantastic day shopping with his mother, you will get to see the very best boutiques in London. I guarantee you my mother will drag you around and make sure you find exactly what you are looking for. Make sure you get what you like and not just because my mother likes something, you are the one that will wear the garments, not my mother. Definitely do not worry about the money you will be spending, just go and enjoy yourself. He turned and said, see you next Saturday and headed out the door.

Lydia had made an additional flight on Henry's last day of seeing clients before returning the following day. Jeff noted that Henry James was making a four hour stop in Denver before returning to New York.

Henry walked into the Greek Amphitheatre and Jeff was waiting for him. They shook hands and Jeff asked if Victoria was doing okay, she is better than okay Jeff, she is great. She has absorbed herself in this job and she is looking well and more relaxed than I have ever seen her. I am so pleased for her Henry, do give her my love, I most certainly will. Now Jeff, this may be the penultimate time I need to come and see you. We agreed

that once she has settled in her New life the CIA would give her a retirement pay off, we did Henry.

You need to put the money in a numbered account, I do not know if John Rizzo would go for that. Well Jeff, as I see it he has two choices, open a numbered account and give me the details to pass on to her, or insist she gives you her bank details. If he goes for the latter he is going to wait a very long time because we have not jumped through all these hoops to then have her tracked down because of stupidity. I will leave that with you Jeff. Just as soon as I have managed to see him I will contact you and let you know the outcome. Do you still jog around Central Park when in New York Henry, I do Jeff, then you will find a jogging partner one day.

When Lydia arrived on Tuesday morning she told Annika that Benson had given her this parcel, she will put it on Henry's desk, unless it is for you. Henry did tell me he had ordered me a present, however, it should go on his desk as I have not been given it as yet, therefore I cannot open it. Lydia just smiled and thought, I really do like this foxy little Swedish lady and I hope this turns into something more than, Housekeeper.

As normal Lydia went into the office and switched on her computer and checked for emails, when she had done that she returned and joined Annika in the lounge for a chat and a coffee. This was their daily routine when Henry was away and if Annika had not already left to do a little sightseeing. They both enjoyed the time they spent together, they found out more about each other and the more they found out the more they liked each other.

At 20:00 on Wednesday Annika answered the phone and Jessie said, hello, I would like to speak with Annika please, speaking. I am Jessie Williams the housekeeper at Queensberry Manor. Very pleased to meet you Jessie even if it is only on the phone, I am sure we will meet in person one day, I do hope so as I have heard a lot about you. Alexandra has asked me to phone you as she has been confined to bed since Monday, she has a nasty virus and will not be able to take you on a shopping trip this Thursday. She apologises and insists I tell you she will make it up to you. Please tell her the shopping trip is not important as we can do that another day, however, it is very important she gets better as quickly as possible. Do they know what the virus is, not really but it is dragging her down and she is struggling to speak, this is why I am phoning and not Alexandra. Please give her my love Jessie and I hope she will get better very soon, I will let Henry know and I will call in a couple of days to see if she is getting better. Thank you Annika, I will give her your love and it is very nice to speak to you as I have heard so many good things about you. Alexandra is very happy you are looking after Henry and so am I.

Thursday morning Annika asked Lydia what is the best time to phone Henry, I would think any time after 21:00, by that time he should have finished his meetings. He may well have finished by 19:00, you just never know. I need to tell him that his mother is not well, Jessie phoned me last night to cancel our shopping trip today. What is the matter with her Annika, she has some virus or other and she is confined to bed. That night

Annika phoned Henry and after asking each other how they were she told him about his mother. He replied I am very sorry about your shopping trip because you would have seen the life my mother leads. I am going to phone on Friday to see how she is. Henry said, if she is no better I will call her on Saturday when I return.

Friday afternoon Annika phoned and Jessie answered and told her that there is definitely an improvement in Alexandra's condition. She got up today and sat in the garden for an hour so it is looking like she is on the road to recovery. Thank you Jessie, thank you for phoning Annika, Alexandra will be pleased.

Henry walked into the Penthouse at 06:55, Annika was in the kitchen and she hugged him and gave him a kiss, she told him she had missed him, that's nice. Have you had a good week, well Lydia and I get on very well, we always have a chat over coffee before she starts work in the mornings. I am so pleased you two are getting on, she is a lovely lady Henry. Your mother is getting better, and you should phone her, I will later on, I am going for a shower and then maybe we can have a little breakfast. What do you fancy, for some reason I fancy a chop. We have, however, they are frozen, guess it will have to be a smoothie then. Or I could take you out to a restaurant kind sir, that would be nice, lets do that. Any suggestions Henry, if the Island Grill and Bar just around the corner from Lancaster Gate underground station opens for breakfast we can go there.

After breakfast Henry phoned his mother, his father answered the phone and David told him his mother is improving and she looks a lot better everyday, you do not have to worry about her Henry. She has just got in the shower so I am sure she will phone you later on, I will be in for most of the day father. Henry went into his office and started working on the contracts for Lydia, he also checked the stock market.

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Chapter 28

Collect Malö 36

He saw the package and guessed it was from John so he called Annika and asked her would she like to open this box as I am pretty sure it is for you. She came into the office looking very excited, Henry handed her a small knife to cut the tape that was securing the box. This she did very carefully and then gave him the knife back, she opened the box and found jackets, this is not just for me Henry James. I am impressed you are so observant Annika Olsson, however, please look a little deeper in the box before complaining at me. She picked up the first jacket and this one was for her, I do love this colour Henry and she slipped it on, picked up the second jacket and gave it to Henry saying, here is your boring coloured jacket.

He smiled at her and tried his on, both were a perfect fit. She found the watches next, they are really nice especially when you consider they are waterproof working watches. They put their watches on and agreed they were very nice. Next the socks, dark blue for Henry and a light blue for Annika. Once more she looked into the box and found the underwear all in separate plastic packets. She ripped one open with a light blue pair in and removed it.

So this is the sexy underwear you want me to model for you, absolutely. She removed the jacket, her slippers and then took off her jeans. She was being very careful not to let her thong slip down too far as she slid her jeans off her legs. She slowly stepped into the long-john's making sure Henry got a good look at her burgundy thong. Walking up and down the office, she asked, how do I look kind sir and did I remove enough for you to make a judgement. You look fantastic you sexy little vixen. A big smile came to her face and she jumped into Henry's arms wrapping her legs around his waist. Thank you for my presents I love them all, they are designed to keep you warm, I know they are.

Do we have everything we need to go to the Viking country and claim our yacht. I have washed all our sailing clothes that we used when we went to Hamble, so I could pack one case with all those clothes along with the new ones ready for the yacht. I think that is a good idea Annika, however, it would mean that we have to share a case for all our other clothes we will use before collecting the yacht. It is not a problem for me Henry. It would be a first for me to have a young ladies clothes in my case. Have you never shared a case before Henry, never. She looked at him and just shook her head. Not only a case, I have never shared a house and until we went to Hamble, I had never shared a car. You have never brought a lady back here Henry, never Annika.

Her mouth dropped open, not counting my mother, your mother and Lydia, you are the first young lady that has been in this Penthouse since Miyu spent a night here on her way to Queensberry. We returned from

Singapore late at night and she had come for a three week stay with my mother to finalise her wedding arrangements. You will be telling me next you have never slept with a young lady. I would never do that because it would not be true. I have shared the bed in my hotel room with more than one young lady, Annika's eyes got big. Henry smiled and said, not at the same time though. I have shared young ladies beds in their homes, however, not counting Miyu, you are the first to sleep here. Do you think you will tell me who these lady's are one day Henry. No, not ever, they were all before I knew you, just like you may have shared a gentleman's bed, that was also before you knew me. I do not kiss and tell and in any case, we are not an item so there is nothing to talk about. I do like the way you look at life Henry, honest and decent, I wish more people were like that.

I will go and pack our case for the yacht so that it is ready to go Henry. I will then pack a smaller case that we will share before we collect the yacht, this will mean our underwear will be pressed together, that sounds a little sexy Annika. It would be if we were wearing the underwear.

They boarded the British airways flight to Göteborg which was just under two hours long, they checked into the Radisson Blu Scandinavia Hotel and had a light lunch. I do not know if you know anything about this city Annika. I have never been here before Henry, good because I will take you sightseeing. They headed to the Paddan which is a sightseeing tour along the city's historic canals which date back to the 1600's. How did you know about this Henry, the internet has so much information about most places now a days young lady, she just smiled at him. The trips depart from Kungssportsplatsen, from there, local tour guides will be on hand to share their knowledge of Gothenburg's history and culture as the boat makes its way around Gothenburg's waterways. Did you know that Gothenburg's harbour is the longest in Sweden and has played a major role in the development of the city over the years. This sightseeing boat will go under some 20 bridges and take in the Opera House, Eriksberg, the docks and amazing views of the harbour. One of the highlights is the 'cheese slicer' bridge, so called because it is so low.

Part way through the tour Henry said, we must get off at this stop and walk, this is Gothenburg's very oldest area. The original houses in Haga were made of wood, and are a distinctive feature which adds to the charm of the area. Do you wish to eat here or would you prefer to eat at the hotel, its a little early to eat now so I think the hotel. When the tour was over Henry said, that was very interesting indeed. They walked back to the hotel arm in arm and went straight into the restaurant. They both had seafood and it was out of this world, I suppose you expect the same quality of fish when we are at home. Absolutely young lady. Are you ready for bed Henry, I need to read the folder that Lydia made up for me. They went up to their room ordering coffee on the way, I will start reading the files while we wait for the coffee. There was not a lot in this folder at all Henry smiled as he read Lydia's remarks. He just wants to sign the same deal as his friend, you should be in and out within the hour. They sat on the bed

and watched a movie and both of them fell asleep, Annika woke up just before Henry's alarm went off. She noted that they were still in the same position as they were when they had been watching the movie. She gave Henry a kiss and he woke up and said, good morning Viking Lady, good morning Henry. I am claiming the bathroom first, please be my guest.

After breakfast Henry took a taxi for his appointment with Erik Lindström. Fifty five minutes later he walked out with a signed contract for £20m. He got back to the hotel and found Annika in the lounge drinking coffee. He walked up to her and quite naturally bent down and kissed her, she said, thank you for that, I have had two pests floating around who did not want to take my suggestion of leaving. May I share your coffee, do you want to use my cup or must I ask for a clean one, I would be happy to use your cup and he gave her a big smile. Henry noticed that a man got up out of a chair on the other side of the room and glared at him and walked out. I take it that was one of your admirers, yes that's the pest. Shall I phone the taxi and tell them we can move our time forward, that's a very good idea. They collected their cases from the room and when they returned the taxi driver was waiting at the reception. Once in the taxi Annika squeezed Henry's hand and said, lets go and collect the Malö 36. I am so excited Henry, me to.

One hour later they walked into Malö Yachts and a young lady asked, may I help you. We have come to see Märten Karlsson, your name Sir, Henry James. Please take a seat and I will call him. He walked through the door and said hello Henry and Annika, how are you, we are very well Märten how about you, yes, very good thank you. She is ready for you Henry and we are ready to take her to sea. I have taken the liberty of placing a box of provisions in the galley for you Annika, thank you Märten.

They had a coffee before heading out to take possession of their yacht, Märten asked them if they plan to take a slow cruise back to Southampton or were they going to see how quickly they can make the journey. We will not be seeing how quickly we can get to Southampton at all. We plan to sail down the Skagerrak strait towards the North Sea and lay over at Hanstholm. That's a very nice harbour and you will then be in the Jammerbugt Waters. Okay, then you need to get started as you need to get past the shipping lanes as they can get very busy. They walked along the little quay and Annika saw the name on the bow, Viking Lady. Oh Henry that is a fantastic name, I thought you might like it, Märten just smiled.

They climbed on board and Märten went through everything that came with the Malö 36 and asked if they have any questions, not that I can think of Henry replied, he looked at Annika and she shook her head. Well all I need is a signature, please also write the date and time of collection, Märten then signed on behalf of the company. He said, she's all yours enjoy her and sail safely wherever you are. Thank you for everything Märten and Henry shook his hand, he turned to Annika and she gave him a hug. They stowed their gear and Annika also stowed the provisions.

Henry started the engine and Annika cast off the lines keeping her to

the quay, Henry manoeuvred very carefully between the other yachts and out to the open water. Once out of Malö Yachts they put on some sail and they were soon in the Skagerrak Strait. Henry set a course for Skagen on the Jutland Peninsula. And they watched the coast slide by. It was a great day and the wind was great for sailing, they had full sails and the Viking Lady sliced through the water very efficiently. Annika made a salad for lunch from the provisions that Mårten had supplied.

They were having a great day in their new yacht and it was not long before the Swedish coast was too far away to make out any towns. They came up to a busy shipping lane where several ferries were coming and going into the town of Hirtshals on the Jutland peninsular. They followed the coast down to Hanstholm and moored in the harbour. After securing the Viking Lady they went to the customs office to show their passports and ask where can we find a good restaurant. They got a taxi and asked for the Montra Hotel Hanstholm, they both had fish which was beautifully presented. After coffee they headed back to the Viking Lady to spend their first night aboard.

They showered and put on their track suits, are we using different cabins young lady, I am quite happy to sleep in any cabin, it is up to you Henry. They decided to sleep in the main cabin in separate sleeping bags. It must of looked quite strange, two people on the same bed cured up in the spoons position in separate sleeping bags. They were very tired after a long day and fell asleep very quickly. Henry woke at 06:00 and thought it does not look like we moved all night. He gave Annika a peck on her cheek and got up, shaved and showered and was just finishing getting dressed when Annika said, good morning kind Sir. Good morning to you Viking lady. Maybe you should give me another name now you have named the Malö, Viking Lady. Maybe, I will give it some thought, I am going topside to take a look. I will jump in the shower.

When Henry got into the cockpit area he noticed two more yachts had arrived over night, one with a Finish flag and the other a Danish one. He went back down to the galley and put on the coffee, as the pot finished brewing a head poked out of the cabin and said, that smells good. I will be out in a couple of minutes. Henry poured two coffees and Annika picked up one and said, thank you. What's the weather like today, looks fine just a little stronger wind than yesterday, we also have a couple of neighbours.

Lets get out to sea before having breakfast, if that's what you want skipper I am ready. I think today you should be the skipper, you want everything Henry James, you want me to be the skipper and I am guessing I must also be ships cook. Well you do a much better job than I would do in the galley, I will settle for a kiss, he smiled, picked her up and carried her into the cockpit. She started the engine and asked Henry to please cast off. Annika manoeuvred out of the harbour and onto open water before asking for all sails to be raised, as the first one unfurled she cut the engine and set the auto pilot on a course for Amsterdam. I will see what I can find for breakfast so I am giving control back to you. I have control Henry

said, oh Henry, it's not a fighter plane. Not long and Annika returned with two bacon rolls and two mugs of coffee and sat down. She looked at Henry and said, I have control. He burst out laughing and said, you are very lovable Viking Lady, I know, you should try sometime. After he had finished his bacon roll he looked at her and said, this yacht could be my downfall. She just smiled and checked there were no other vessels close by. When she had finished her coffee, she looked at Henry and said, I am sure you can manage the washing up, I am sure I can.

They saw a lot of other types of shipping from small yachts and ferries to large navy ships. They got as far as the isle of Vlieland and moored for the night at Oost-Vlieland. They showered and changed and walked the short distance to the Hotel Zeezicht. They both decided to go with a big fat steak and two bottles of red. They got back on board at 23:30 a little worse for wear, climbed on the bed and fell asleep.

The next day they set off and stayed between the islands and the coast and cut through the channel by Den Helder. The wind had picked up a little more and they were flying along under full sail, the spinnaker had that perfect shape when it is filled with the wind. They made Zeebrugge in Belgium. Are we having a rerun of last night Henry, maybe we should stop at one bottle of red and not get carried away. They ate at the Hotel Atlas, Annika having the chicken and Henry the lamb chops along with one bottle of red. It was a good meal and they got back to the yacht at 23:00 and managed to take their clothes off before curling up and falling asleep.

Are you ready to cast off skipper, yes thank you. Over some toast and coffee Annika asked, are we trying to make Hamble tonight Henry. We are not in a rush so we will see how we get on. As they entered the English Channel Henry pointed out the White cliffs of Dover. As they sailed past Eastbourne the weather turned, squalls of rain started and it looked like it was going to get worse. Henry suggested to his skipper that they should find some shelter for the night. That sounds like a good idea Henry, would you like to have a look on the map, he turned and disappeared. When he returned he told Annika they could try Newhaven Marina. After showering Henry found a taxi and asked for a good restaurant. I think the best is the Padella D'oro Restaurant, then we will try that. They had a fantastic Italian meal with a bottle and a half of red wine. When they got back on board Henry said, it looks like the weather is breaking. They slept like logs.

They sailed up Southampton water and into Hamble river and manoeuvred into their berth at Hamble School of Yachting. As they were securing the Viking Lady a voice said, I like the name. They turned and saw Bill walking towards them they shook hands and Bill asked what they had thought of the sailing characteristics of the Malö 36. Very happy with her, Henry replied, it handles very nicely. Annika said, it slices through the water and the bow does not come out of the water and bang back down, it really is great to sail in.

Henry phoned the Private Jet Charter company and arranged for them to be picked up. He then phoned Lydia and asked if Roger could pick us

up from Biggin Hill. They unpacked the Viking Lady and then they washed all the salt off her deck and cockpit area. Made sure all sails were packed away and put the cover on. Henry asked Bill, what is the procedure for emptying the sewage tank. We empty on a weekly basis so I will just add yours to our list, thank you Bill. They heard the helicopter arriving and watched as it landed in the field across the road. Henry waved at John and they walked to the helicopter with their cases. They shook hands and climbed aboard and was up and away in less than ten minutes from touch down. They landed at the Private Jet Charter landing pad where Roger was waiting. They thanked John and said hello to Roger, forty minutes later they walked into the Penthouse. Lydia and Annika kissed each other and Henry asked if everything was okay.

Are you happy with your yacht they both replied, yes, very happy. I have twelve appointments lined up for you Henry. Where are you sending me, Singapore, Sydney and Brisbane and then onto New York. Roger will pick you up at 21:30 tomorrow, thank you Lydia. How about a coffee young lady, she looked at him and smiled, I guess I am back at work now so that would be my job. All three of them laughed and Henry said I need to phone Sir Randolph. When he was put through he heard the friendly voice say, hello my boy how are you. I am very well thank you Randolph, and I am very pleased you have managed to drop the Sir. What can I do for you Henry, can you please see if we can get a geological survey done for Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd. I think that is a good move Henry as you would then know what the potential was for a sale, please give my love to Martha.

Annika made a salad for dinner and then they watched a movie. After showering Annika decided to put on her track suit bottoms just in case she fell asleep. She almost stayed awake and Henry picked her up and placed her in her bed, giving her a kiss on her lips. He smiled and walked out of her bedroom. She woke Henry up with a cup of coffee at 07:30, good morning Henry, good morning Annika. Do you have anything planned for today Henry. I thought we could have an easy day today, how about I take you to the National Gallery. I would like that Henry, I have started the washing so I guess I should start the breakfast, what do you fancy. Just a green smoothie please, it will be ready in ten. He put on a T shirt and track suit bottoms and joined Annika in the kitchen.

When they had finished their coffee they both headed to their bedrooms to shower and get dressed. Henry checked his post that was on his desk, just bills nothing important. They headed out the door at 09:20 walking to Lancaster Gate underground station. Henry told Annika that they get off at Oxford Circus changing to the Bakerloo line getting off at Charing Cross. We now have two blocks to walk. They spent over three hours in the National Gallery and Annika thought it was a magnificent place, she would bring her mamma the next time she visited.

Its a nice day so I have something else for you to see, they headed back to Charing Cross underground station for two stops getting off at London Waterloo. What are you taking me to see, the London Eye, I have read

about this wheel, however, I cannot remember how long it takes Henry. About half an hour, Henry pointed out several land marks and Annika was surprised how far she could see. When they got off Henry said, lets take an early meal, I can make a meal when we get home Henry. I know you can but while we are out lets go to Gillray's Steakhouse & Bar. The food is good and you get a nice view of the river.

At 19:30 Henry said, we should be making our way home as Roger will be picking me up in two hours. They walked back to the underground arm in arm as it just seemed very natural, Annika was very happy and her love for Henry was getting stronger, she knew she had to be patient and felt Henry will become hers one day.

Roger came at 21:30, Henry kissed Annika and said, I will see you in two weeks, look after yourself.

C

hapter 29

S

hopping trip with Alexandra

At 09:30 on Thursday morning the 12th August, Parker buzzed and told Annika that Lady James was on her way up, thank you Parker. The three of them sat in the lounge and had a coffee, so you two are going shopping this morning. Alexandra smiled and said, I am sure it will be an all day trip. If you are ready lets get started, the two of them put on their coats and picked up their handbags and headed for the door, I hope you have a great day Annika, I hope so too Lydia. They walked outside and Steven was waiting by the car, Alexandra introduced Annika to Steven and explained that David has been kind enough to loan us Steven for the day. Where to Lady James, we are going to start at Reiss thank you Steven, as they walked in the sales girl looked up, hello Lady James how may I help you today. We are just looking around and I will call you if we see something we like Judith.

Annika found a couple of silk tops she liked the look of. A black jump suit and a fluted-sleeve Maxi dress in a mid-night blue. Do you have these in a size 8 Judith. She came back and asked if she would like to try them on, Annika smiled and just said, yes please, all items fitted perfectly. Judith then showed Annika a beautiful pair of Lyla laser-cut 4.5" high heeled sandals, I do like these. What size are you, Judith asked, a size 4, we definitely have them in a size 4 and she went away and came back with two boxes. She opened one box and showed Annika the shoes, Judith then got down to fit the shoes onto Annika's feet. They were the same colour as the dress. When she had both shoes on Judith asked how they felt? They fit perfectly and are very comfortable. She still had the dress on and stood and looked in the mirror and then walked up and down in front of Judith and Alexandra, they were nodding in approval. Annika said, yes please I will take these. Judith then opened the second box and removed the same shoes in black, if they are as comfortable as these I will take both pairs. Alexandra told her she looks very sophisticated and sexy at the same time. Annika then made her first purchase with her debit card. I do not mean to pry Annika, but I thought Henry was going to give you one of his credit cards. He gave me this debit card instead, I have just used it. Oh Annika, that is much better having one in your own name. Sorry to have been nosey I thought he had forgotten. Annika thought back to what Henry had told her, be careful, if you give my mother half a chance she will want to run your life.

Back at the car Steven took all the bags and placed them in the boot and asked, next shop Lady James, we will go to Harrods Steven. While we are here we will have a little lunch so you can go and do the same Steven and she gave him a £20 note. This is not necessary lady James as I do receive expenses. Then you should buy your daughter a little something

Steven, thank you Lady James. They walked into Harrods and Annika said, I have heard about this store, yes it is known around the world Alexandra said. Annika found a beautiful pair of soft swede over the knee 4.2" high heeled boots in a very dark green. These would look really nice with a pair of skinny jeans. They are very expensive Alexandra, it really is not a problem Annika, if Henry gave you a card without a limit on it, he does not have a problem with whatever you spend today or any day in the future. Please believe me when I tell you, whatever you spend you will not even make a dent in Henry's bank account, he can afford it. But Alexandra, they are £734.00, we will take this pair thank you, Alexandra said to the sales girl. Lets go and have a light lunch at the Ladurée while we are here, they are famous for their macaroni dishes. The meal was fantastic as Alexandra said it would be. When they were ready to leave she phoned Steven and told him they would be coming out of Harrods onto Hans Road near the Ladurée, I will be there in five minutes Lady James.

A gain Steven placed the packages in the boot, Alexandra asked Annika if she had a ballroom gown, I am afraid I do not Alexandra. We need to go to Giē Giē Boutique in Mayfair please Steven. A girl should always have at least one ballroom gown in her wardrobe just in case she is asked out to a special function at short notice. They walked into Giē Giē Boutique and Alexandra said, hello Isabella, hello Alexandra and she introduced Annika. We are looking for a fantastic ballroom gown, come my dear we are going to make heads turn. I have just received a new shipment and believe me when I say to you, with a body like yours I have the perfect gown to show you off. I would think you are a size 8, that is correct. How do you feel about the colour Burgundy my sweetheart, I do like Burgundy.

Then step into the changing room and remove your clothes just leaving your panties on, I will be two minutes. Annika was just removing her bra when Isabella returned, what do you think, it is beautiful Isabella, let me help you put it on. It is a perfect fit and you look absolutely stunning.

Isabella told Annika, this strapless full length taffeta evening gown with the fitted bodice and slight ruching at the hip creates a stunning silhouette. They have also added just a dash of beading and with a beautiful necklace you have a recipe for a fabulous night out young lady. Come, lets show Alexandra, they stepped out of the dressing room and Alexandra said, you look fantastic Annika, this dress is perfect Isabella, the style, the colour and the material makes Annika look like a Viking Goddess. You need matching shoes, I have some proper dance shoes the same colour as the dress. They are Latin Round-toe Leather Dance-shoes with a 3.3" flared heel and double ankle straps. I wish to take this beautiful dress and these very comfortable dance shoes, Isabella. Annika got dressed and her parcel was waiting for her, she pushed her card into the reader and when asked, taped in her pin number. They thanked Isabella and headed for the car. We would like to go to Agent Provocateur please Steven.

When they walked into Agent Provocateur, Amélie the French manageress greeted Alexandra with hugs and kisses. She then introduced Annika, Amélie asked Annika, are you just looking or are you looking for

something very special. Alexandra said, we are all looking for something special. Amélie guided Annika towards a rail with Corsets and Basques on display, you have a little look on this rail while I talk to Alexandra. She turned and guided Alexandra to the other side of the shop, now tell me, who is this sexy young lady. Annika works for Henry my son, works for your son, is that it, just works for your son. At present that is all, however, we would all like to see Henry taking it to the next level. Ah, I understand you would like this sexy young thing to become Mrs James. Alexandra nodded her head, then my friend it is time for you to leave my premises, mother-in-law's do not get to see or select items of underwear for their future daughter-in-law's. Go take a coffee a few doors down the street and we will let you know when we have finished. Alexandra gritted her teeth, she knew Amélie was right, but she just wanted to see what Annika would purchase.

Amélie stopped at Annika's side, smiled and said, I have sent your future mother-in-law to get herself a coffee down the street. Annika burst out laughing, Amélie said, they do not get to control you, not in my shop. I do like you Amélie, me to. Now, tell me everything you are interested in seeing, no doubt, some very sexy underwear. Annika smiled and said, yes please. Amélie showed Annika everything she could possibly want in underwear. Panties and bra's for casual wear, panties and bra's for smart formal wear, and then special items that were definitely only meant to turn the man in your life on. Or as Amélie added, maybe the woman in your life, I cater for all tastes.

They smiled at each other and Annika decided she would completely go overboard in this shop, because it is only a matter of time before Henry changes their relationship, she just has to be patient. She purchased everything she may ever want in under garments and most of the things she had in more than one colour. He called her his Viking Goddess, and that is what will be waiting for him when he decides it is time to remove her outer garments. I do expect to see you on a regular basis Annika, well, not before, and she stopped what she was going to say, and said, the next time I need new underwear, I promise you, I will only come back here.

You have gone quite daring with a couple of your Bikini's, where are you planning to wear them. On board the yacht when we are on our own. That's perfect, because a man does not want other men to think his wife is a slut. However, he will want a slut when you are alone. If you want swimwear even more daring then you should go to Wicked Weasel in Australia, they make high quality risque swimwear. They have the smallest Bikini's I have ever seen. Not only are they daring they are what risque means, bordering on indecent. Before we go to find your future mother-in-law, I must ask. Do you know how men want their women to be, pray tell me Amélie.

All men want their girlfriends to look very hot, their mothers to look sophisticated, their sisters to look cute and their wives to look very, very sultry. Never forget that, whichever category you fit into, that is what they are looking for. They may tell you they want something else, however, it

will not be what they really want. If you wish to keep your man never disappoint him. Now let us go and find Alexandra, before going out of the door Amélie stopped and placed her hand on Annika's arm, never ever show her your underwear. Annika smiled and told Amélie, that will never happen, perfect young lady.

Alexandra was just paying and when she turned around she saw Amélie and Annika standing outside waiting for her. Alexandra phoned Steven and told him that they were ready, he arrived in two minutes, then Alexandra and Annika hugged and kissed Amélie and said, goodbye to her. One of the sales girls came out with several parcels and Steven placed them in the boot. My, my somebody has found a shop she likes, I really do like Amélie and she has some spectacular garments, this is a shop I will come back to. I am so pleased you had a great day I know I did, and David will be very surprised, I never purchased one item of clothing, it must be a first, they both laughed. Anywhere else Lady James, not today Steven, please take us back to the Penthouse.

Are you coming up Alexandra, not today Annika, I must get ready as David is taking me to the ballet tonight, what are you going to see, Swan Lake, that's nice. Steven opened the boot and managed to pick most of the packages out of the boot, just leaving three for Annika. Alexandra and Annika hugged and kissed and thanked each other for a fantastic day. I will be in touch Annika said, she headed up the steps and Steven followed, Parker opened the door and said, it looks like you had a great day Miss Annika, I really did Parker. She opened the door and Steven followed her into the kitchen, please place them on the top, and thank you very much for driving us around today, it was my pleasure Miss Annika, he turned and left

Lydia had already left and Annika decided to pack her clothes away before making a coffee. She carried all her packages into her bedroom and placed them on the bed. She stood and looked at the bed full of bags and packages, then said out loud, you have let the genie out of the bottle Henry James. I have found out today, what it is like to live life as it is surely meant to be lived, and one thing is for sure, I do not want to go back.

She opened each package and packed the contents away very neatly in their new home. All the shops they had purchased from, all gave the extras. Inside the knee high boots was a pair of shoe trees, the dancing shoes both had the same. Amélie had included hangers for all items except bra's and panties. The beautiful ballroom gown not only had a hanger inside the packet it also had a large zip-up bag to protect the dress. She thought I must get another one of these bags for the navy one. She collected all the empty bags and took them to the laundry, she folded them up and placed them in a draw just in case she needed a bag. She made herself a coffee, picked up the phone and after sitting down in the lounge and taking two sips, she phoned her mother.

Is that my beautiful daughter phoning me, it is indeed mamma. How are you, I am very well thank you Annika, what about you, I have had one of the best days of my life, what did you do. I went shopping with

Alexandra, she took me into shops I would never have dreamt of going into as they are just too expensive. Did you buy anything Annika, I bought several items. Annika then went on to explain what she had bought and from where. Alexandra took me for a meal at one of the restaurants inside Harrods and she tells me there are several restaurants in that store.

I think Henry is going to be very cross with you spending his money on clothes for yourself. Oh mamma, just stop worrying. Henry gave me a debit card in my own name, he told me to go and enjoy myself and spend some of his money. Alexandra told me if Henry gave me my own card without a limit on it he is very happy for me to use it as I want to. She also said to me, however much I spend I will not even put a dent in Henry's bank account.

Henry James must think a great deal of my daughter. If he gives you a card with no limit on it, he must trust you completely.

Agent Provocateur, was the last shop we went into, Amélie the French manageress was speaking to Alexandra and Alexandra left the shop. Amélie told me, I have sent your future mother-in-law to get herself a coffee down the street. They do not get to control you, not in my shop. This shop has some of the most sexy revealing underwear I have ever seen and because Alexandra was not there, I let myself go wild. So Alexandra thinks you will become her daughter-in-law, I guess.

Do you think Henry has said something to her. I do not believe he has mamma, he would be more likely to tell Jessie than his mother, perhaps it is just what Alexandra would like to happen. You no doubt spent a lot of money Annika, several thousand mamma, oh my god Annika, it really is not a problem mamma, I do hope so. Just before I phoned you, I was thinking to myself, this is the way to live, no restrictions on what you buy or how much you spend. I never wish to go back to that life where I have to watch every ören I spend. I hope for your sake that you never have to.

Who is Jessie Annika, Jessie is Alexandra's housekeeper and she has worked for Alexandra since before Henry was born. When David and Alexandra first got married they had to travel quite a lot and Jessie was the one who brought Henry up, he looks on Jessie as his second mother. That's nice Annika, Henry tells me she is a wonderful lady and he was lucky to have Jessie to bring him up.

On Henry's last day in New York he was jogging around the pond in Central Park when Jeff came alongside him, good morning Henry how are you, very well thank you Jeff, how are you. I have spoken to John Rizzo and he is happy to open a numbered account for Victoria. However, I must be at the meeting with her, I must confirm she has been given the account details. I guess he does not trust me, he does not know you Henry and he does not wish to get caught out.

I do not know how we can work this out Henry. I can get to most countries in the world without any records of me being there so I can only say I will fit in to any plan you make. I have decided to let the CIA keep it's money and I will open an account for Victoria Santiago and deposit what I think will give her a good quality of life. We have gone to great

lengths so that Victoria can start a New life, and for the sake of saving me several hundred thousand dollars. It is just not worth taking a chance. Please thank John Rizzo for his offer, however, please explain why I have some reservations. I feel it would be better for Victoria not to travel from the safe environment she is now living in for many years. I understand your concerns Henry and I will explain to him as nicely as I possible can, Henry smiled and they shook hands knowing they may never see each other again.

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Chapter 30

geological survey

On the 20th October Henry received a call from Randolph, how are you my boy, very well thank you Randolph, trust you and Martha are keeping well. We are my boy, I have some very good news for you, I am always looking for good news Randolph. The preliminary results of the geological survey have just come in and these three tracks look like it has the potential to be one of the largest oil and gas fields in the South China Sea. I am very excited for you. What do we do now Randolph, I would suggest you do nothing. That information will get out to the oil companies and they will come looking to acquire, Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd. Just hold tight and sit and wait, I promise you that your best course of action is to do nothing. I am looking forward to negotiating the best deal I am ever likely to pull off. Please give my love to Martha, that goes without asking.

Henry phoned Miyu while he was waiting for his flight in Singapore airport and she told him that they might not make it this Christmas because the Chinese and North Korean's are massing troops along the border and a build up of naval activity in the South China Sea. It is not looking good Henry, the base is on full alert and the F-15's are flying around the clock. I guess it would not be a good time to drop in on you, I am sad to say you would not get in. Johnny and Bonnie were asking about you and was wondering when you are going to Australia again. I will be in Sydney in the morning, they are in Canberra for the week as Johnny is attending a conference. Where are you staying Henry, Park Hyatt. I will phone Bonnie and see if the three of you can make a plan to meet up. I would like that Miyu, I hope Johnny gets some time off.

Before Henry's flight had taken off his phone rang, he did not know who was phoning as their number was not in his phone book. He answered with good evening, the reply he got was, is that the English Bruce, right on mate Henry replied. How the devil are you Henry, I am fine thank you Johnny, how are the two of you. We were very well until I had to attend a conference in Canberra for the last two days and I am due to be here for five more. The problem now is, I leave tomorrow for Base Townsville in the north of Australia. Something has come up and I am likely to be there at least two weeks. That's a crapper mate, I see you are getting into our twang Henry. A mans got to try Johnny. I was hoping that we would get a chance to meet up,

Miyu told Bonnie that you are waiting in Singapore for your flight to Sydney. We were just discussing what Bonnie should do. Does she stay on her own or return to Base Tindal at the end of the week. Or return tomorrow, she does not want to do either. What's a man to do Henry. Well Johnny you do have another option, pray tell me mate because she is not

happy.

Let me take care of her for the next two weeks, Johnny burst out laughing and told Henry he did not even have to ask her as she would be over the moon. If you are happy for me to do that Johnny. I will take care of all her arrangements. I do not have a problem with her spending time with you Henry, then I will phone you back just as soon as I have a flight sorted out.

Henry phoned a travel agent he knew and booked a one way flight for Bonnie from Canberra to Sydney. He phoned Johnny back and gave him the details and asked him to tell Bonnie her flight should arrive 20 minutes before mine. So if she can wait in the arrivals hall I will meet her there. Just tell me what I owe you, just sort the taxi out to Canberra airport mate, it will be my pleasure to do the rest. You are impossible Henry James, I know Johnny, see you soon.

Henry then phoned Park Hyatt and made a booking for Bonnie, would you like me to upgrade your suite to the Opera or Sydney suite Mr James. Good god no, Bonnie is my friend not my lover, I am very sorry I just thought.

Henry cut the girl off. When you are in a hole the best advice I can give you is, to stop digging, she laughed and just said, I am sorry for my mistake. No problem young lady, now, can you give Bonnie a room similar to mine. Yes we do have one similar, the Quay suite. That will be fine thank you. I have to go my flight has just been called. Henry was whisked through and once he had taken his seat he settled down to make sure he got some sleep.

Henry woke up one hour before landing and as on all flights he headed to the toilet to clean his teeth. The customs lady said, welcome to Australia Mr James. Thank you very much, is your trip just business, mainly, however, I am also meeting a friend. Then you have a good time Mr James. He got through customs and out to the arrivals area before Bonnie was in the arrival hall. Henry found the driver and then saw Bonnie, when she saw him she hugged and kissed him and thanked him for taking her out of that hotel they had put us in. You will be my guest for the next two weeks, so just enjoy our time together. Where are we staying Henry, Park Hyatt. Do you always stay there Henry, pretty much, it's a nice hotel, the food is great and I find the staff very pleasant and the suites are out of this world.

They checked in and the bellboy had their cases on the trolley ready to take them to their rooms. I have you in the Harbour Suite as usual Mr James and I have put you in the Quay Suite Mrs Weston. Tommy will show you to your suites. When Tommy had left Bonnie said to Henry, do you always stay in hotels like this one. Not always, some are better, she punched him on the arm. What do you want to do Bonnie, I am your guest so you decide. I need to have a shave and take a shower and then we can go and grab a bite to eat and then decide. I will sit on the balcony and take in the view while waiting for you, he turned and left saying, see you in a little while.

Twenty eight minutes later Henry knocked on Bonnie's door, she opened it and he stepped inside. She told him this view is great, so much is happening on the river. Are you ready for breakfast Bonnie, I could eat a little something. We can go down to the Scarlett Restaurant or have the butler service in the room. Let go down, they both had a buffet breakfast and while enjoying it they talked. While you got ready I sent Johnny a text, he did not answer so I am guessing his phone is off, probably still in the air. Do you have to work today Henry, not until tomorrow, I then see two clients, so I will leave after breakfast and should get back around 18:00. So we can do whatever you fancy today, go sight seeing, shopping or swimming. I really do not mind it is just great to be here with you.

Lets phone Miyu, he took out his phone and she said, hello Henry how are you, I am very well thank you Miyu. Will you be going to see our friends. I have somebody here that wants to speak to you, Henry handed the phone over to Bonnie.

She told Miyu that Johnny had to fly to the north of Australia for two weeks and he agreed that I can spend my two weeks with Henry. We are in Sydney and have just finished breakfast, we must then decide what to do for the rest of the day. Go dancing as you both love that, Miyu asks if we are going dancing, we can do if that is what you want, maybe tonight. Enjoy yourself my friend and give Henry a big kiss from me. I have to give you a big kiss from Miyu, you can save it for later, they both smiled. You are the Australian so you show me what a wonderful city this is.

Have you been to The Chinese Garden of Friendship, I have not been anywhere apart from a walk around the harbour, then lets start there and see what to do after. Henry asked for a taxi and they walked out arm in arm. Henry thought this place is magic and it will not be the last time I come here. They spent almost four hours in the garden, before Bonnie asked, are you ready for the next place. How do you fancy going to Fort Denison it is a former penal site, that would be interesting to compare with Alcatraz. It is nowhere the size of Alcatraz so Henry thought he could not really compare. What do you think Henry, interesting place, lots of history and nice buildings. He gave her a hug and said, lets go back and grab our costumes and have a swim at Bondi Beach, that's a good idea Henry. I have never been to your famous Bondi beach.

Bondi beach was a little crowded for Henry's liking, but it is a famous beach so it is okay. Lets sit here and strip down to our swimwear Bonnie said. She had a very nice burgundy bikini, she saw him looking so she turned round and asked him what he thought. Very sexy young lady, that's just what Johnny said when I asked him. They sat down and Bonnie kept looking around at all the people, what are you looking for. A good looking Australian beauty to come and show you what life is all about, you need to get a wife. I do know that, you keep telling us those words but we do not see one. A mother and two children came and sat down near them, Bonnie asked Henry if he was ready for a swim, that would be good. She asked the mother if she would mind keeping her eye on their clothes while they went into the sea. No problem just move them a little bit closer.

They ran into the waves and swam around and played a little, Henry kneeled down in about four feet of water and Bonnie swam over his head, he stood up picking her up by her waist and throwing her over his head. They were having a lot of fun and realised they were taking advantage of the mother who was looking after their clothes. Henry walked behind Bonnie and she turned her head and said are you looking at my ass, you bet I am and she roared with laughter. They dried off and sat for a little while then Henry said, I have to get this salt off my body.

We can go back and shower and get changed, that's good thinking Bonnie, they folded their towels and Bonnie thanked the young mother, no problem she replied. Henry put a \$50 note in her hand and said, get the kids something and he thanked her for taking good care of their things, her mouth dropped open and Henry and Bonnie walked off the beach. I think it's better and far easier to swim in the roof top pool at the hotel. You did not tell me that Henry, you have to keep some things back, not a good idea to tell you everything up front. You are a terrible man Henry James and I love you Bonnie Weston.

They went to their rooms and showered and changed and Henry knocked on Bonnie's door, when she opened it he said, you look very fetching Bonnie, Johnny is a very lucky man. I keep telling him that. Now, are you ready for a superb meal, I am Henry, where are you taking me. Steersons Steakhouse, they have the best steaks in Sydney. As they walked in they were greeted with, good evening Mr James, welcome back to Sydney. Please follow John and he will show you to your table. the waiter showed them to a table that was laid for two and a great view of the wharf. He moved Bonnie's chair for her to sit down and then pushed Henry's as he sat down. The waiter asked Bonnie if she would like red wine, yes please. He poured a glass each and handed them each a menu.

They placed their orders, Bonnie started with Garlic Tiger Prawns served in a hot pan with smoked chilli butter, while Henry started with Witlof salad with apple, walnuts and blue cheese dressing. A little garlic bread as well please. For the main course they both went with Angus Fillet 150 Day Grain Fed. When they arrived these were at least one and a half inches thick and done to perfection. Baked potatoes drizzled with garlic butter along with carrots, broccoli and sweet potatoes.

This looks absolutely wonderful Henry, I now see why you like flying round the world. This is great when you have some one to share it with, not so great on your own. I can spoil you for two weeks. I will not want to go back home if you do that. Over dessert, which was a fantastic Banoffee Cheesecake with salted peanut brittle ice cream. Two bottles of wine and a pot of coffee and Bonnie said, I should go to my own room before I loose self control.

They got into a taxi to take them back to the Park Hyatt and Henry walked her to her door, kissed her on her cheek and said, I will be having breakfast at 07:45 if you wish to join me. If I do not see you I will get back around 18:00 tomorrow. Have a great day and be sure to spend some time around the roof top pool. Good night Henry and thank you for a

wonderful evening.

Henry was looking at the buffet to see what he was going to have when a hand appeared on his chest, good morning young lady. She squeezed him and replied good morning Henry. They selected their breakfast and found a table, I had a great day yesterday Henry, thank you so much. What are you planning to do today, I am definitely going to spend some time in and around the pool. Have you heard from Johnny, I had a reply to my text and she took her phone out of her pocket and read the text to Henry.

Sorry for delay in getting back to you, we have some big problems, sorry but I do not have time to phone you, will try later in week. I am so pleased you are with Henry as I know I do not have to worry, please thank him, love Johnny. I wonder what problems he has, it must be very serious because if it was not I would not even know he had a problem.

Henry said, I have to go, he kissed her on the top of her head as he walked by her chair, see you later, I will be waiting. He turned and walked out, he went up to his room to pick up his brief case, when he returned his taxi was waiting. He managed to get a signed contract within two hours and he walked out very happy. His second appointment did not go well at all, to start with the top man was very arrogant which put Henry's back up. He gave him a layout of what he planned and the guy said, I should try a local investment bank and see if I can get a better deal. Henry folded his note pad and placed it in his brief case while saying, that of course, is your prerogative. Just hold on mate, those notes you made are mine hand them over. Henry smiled and said, they are only yours once you agree to a contract, until then they are mine. You say you are going to see if you can get a better deal, well I am pretty sure you are only interested in the bank percentage charge for their service. So you do not need my notes. He stood up and said, thank you for your time gentlemen, he turned and walked out.

He got back to the Park Hyatt at 16:15 and after going up to his room and sending a text to Lydia he headed out to find Bonnie. She was laying on a sun bed, Henry walked up to her and said, good afternoon sexy lady. She jumped up and gave him a kiss, that's from Miyu. How are they, Takahiro is very busy and Miyu is spending a lot of time on her own, so you can imagine how happy she is. Phone her back and ask her if she would like to join us, you are not joking Henry, not at all Bonnie. I do not see my sister often enough and this would be a great excuse. I need to get out of this suit.

Miyu answered her phone saying twice in one day Bonnie what has happened, Henry has asked me to ask you if you would like to join us. That is a great idea and I will speak to Takahiro just as soon as I can get hold of him, I will phone you. Henry and Bonnie were eating when Miyu phoned Henry, good evening sister, good evening Henry. Takahiro thinks that is very kind of you to take on both Bonnie and I, are you sure you are up for this brother. I will be arriving in the morning, just take a taxi to the Park Hyatt and I will sort a room out for you. After they had finished their meal they stopped at the reception and Henry explained his sister will be arriving tomorrow morning and I need to book a room for her. The girl

checked and told Henry that she has the Cove Suite available, we will take it thank you. All suites are to be charged to my account.

Miyu arrived at 06:05 and got to Park Hyatt for 07:00 she checked in and asked for the restaurant, the receptionist told her that your brother is having breakfast, thank you. I will see that your case is taken up to your suite, thank you.

She found Henry and Bonnie choosing what they were going to eat. Good morning Henry, Miyu said and he hugged her and Bonnie did the same, join us for breakfast. They sat down and Henry said, before you two start talking I would like to know how Takahiro is. He is very tired Henry as he is working eighteen plus hours a day. They are on full alert as the North Koreans have pointed their land based missiles at Japan, and their navy are starting to mass ships which looks like they are planning an invasion. I know they have a crackpot in charge, however, I am sure it will not get to that, I do hope you are right Henry. Henry sat back and watched the two ladies while drinking his coffee, they were talking none stop. All of a sudden Bonnie stopped talking and looked at Henry and asked, are you alright because you are not saying anything. Henry smiled and replied, it is impossible to get a word in edge ways, they all laughed. Now, while you have stopped, take this card Miyu and the two of you can get out today and go shopping or whatever it is two beautiful young ladies do. Well, that is if you stop talking long enough.

He gave her the pin and she squeezed his hand and said, you are the best brother, thank you Henry. He got up and kissed them both and said, see you later. He got two signed contracts and was back in the hotel by 16:45, went straight to his room got changed into his swimming trunks and headed for the pool. He did thirty lengths before getting out and laying on a sun bed.

At 17:00 Miyu and Bonnie returned from their shopping trip with arms full of packages. Miyu asked the receptionist to please let her brother know they have returned, if they are not in their rooms he can find us by the pool. Your brother returned at least half an hour ago and I see he must be at the pool because he ordered pool service, thank you.

They went up to their suites and put their packages inside to look at later, got changed and headed to the pool. They found Henry swimming so they dived in and both grabbed hold of him, he hugged them both and asked if they had a good day. We had a great day thank you Henry and we both feel we needed this release.

Bonnie told Henry, our husbands are under a lot of pressure at present. Johnny told me he may be at base Scherger in Northern Queensland for more than two weeks as they have a security problem. He told me to give you a big kiss Henry for looking after me, they both kissed him on his cheeks.

Did you manage to find some nice things ladies, we got some fantastic outfits Henry, a lot more choice than I get in Darwin. I am in a worse place, it takes seven hours to drive to Tokyo so today has been magic Miyu said. I am so pleased that you both found something special. I think Miyu

will need to get another suitcase, you told me to go and enjoy myself Henry, I did indeed and I am very happy that you are both having a good time. Lets get a coffee as I have something to tell you. They got out of the pool and dried off and sat at one of the tables, Henry ordered coffee. My appointments for tomorrow have been cancelled, does this mean we are going to spend the day together, afraid not Miyu, as I will not be in Sydney tomorrow. I must fly to Perth just to see one client, I will spend the night there and then fly direct to Brisbane the following day. You two ladies will fly to Brisbane arriving about the same time as I do, so we will meet in the arrivals again Bonnie.

Did you know about going to Perth Henry, not Perth Bonnie but we were always going to Brisbane. You did not tell me that, I did not think it was important, it's not like I was taking you to another country. Both girls laughed and Miyu said, it's a shame because I really like this hotel. We will be staying at the Intercontinental at Sanctuary Cove. I think you will be happy.

Miyu and Bonnie wanted to show Henry what they had bought so they headed for their suites. They got to Miyu's first and Henry saw several bags on the bed, Miyu picked up each bag and removed the contents. She had silk blouses, beautiful dresses, skirts and trousers. The last bag she picked up she just opened and turned the bag towards Henry, saying this is full of underwear. I see you must of enjoyed yourself Miyu, shopping with you or just your card is a very nice way to shop. I do not have to even look at the price as that is what you told me to do in Singapore. Thank you very much Henry.

They headed for Bonnie's suite and on her bed was about half the bags that Miyu had. Where have you hidden the rest Henry asked, this is everything I bought Henry, I am your friend not your sister. I feel I cannot take advantage of you. He took her in his arms, hugged her kissed her on top of her head. My dear Bonnie, a friend is a very important person because you choose a friend, a sister is a person you get because you both share the same parents. In other words, I had no choice about Miyu, she became my sister and I am happy and I love her very much. That is not the same for you, I chose you as my friend, my choice not my parents. I love and respect you as a friend.

When I give you a credit card to go and purchase not just what you need, but what you would like if money was no object, that is what I expect you to do. Just to be clear, I gave the card to Miyu because she can prove her name is James if she was asked. The card is for both of you to get what you would love to get. She looked up at him and kissed him on his lips, thank you Henry, I will not worry if I get the chance again. Oh, I am sure you will, Miyu will see to that.

Now we have one night here where would you ladies like to eat, your choice Henry, then I know The Dinning Room is very good, where is that, right here at this hotel. Most times when I travel I eat at the hotel because it is a lot easier for me. Is 20:00 good for you ladies, that's perfect, then we will come to your suite as it will take us longer to get ready than you. When

Henry got to his suite he booked a table for three.

They had a great night laughing and talking and Bonnie said, this has been a fantastic week, you have taken our minds off the problems our husbands have, you always bring fun in our lives. Miyu asked, how can you improve on this week. I can only try sister dear. I will see you two in the arrivals hall at Brisbane airport the day after tomorrow, they hugged and kissed each other and Henry walked them to their suites.

Henry landed at Perth and closed both deals, signing contracts for £55m, he was over the moon and after a swim he ate a T-bone steak with half a bottle of red wine. He slept like a log and got the early morning flight to Brisbane and once again had to wait for the girls. More hugs and kisses and they were on their way. They checked in at the Intercontinental as they were heading up in the lift, Miyu casually said, you seem to be known everywhere you go Henry. It's a occupational hazard Miyu. Today we can spend together if you would like to, of course we would like to. From tomorrow I will only see you in the evening.

Takahiro and Johnny both called and thanked Henry for looking after their wives. Takahiro explained that the North Koreans were getting louder but everybody feels they are doing this for the domestic audience which means it is just keeping face. They will not want to take on the Americans and the Japanese. However, F-15's are still flying around the clock along with F-14's from the USS Ronald Reagan. This could go on for a few more weeks yet. Johnny told Bonnie that he was not expecting to get back to base Tindal before the 15th of next month so enjoy your time with Miyu and Henry.

How about you impress us with the sights of this Australian city Bonnie. Okay, I will take you to places that I think are interesting. We will start at the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, both Henry and Miyu loved the Koala's. They moved on to The Museum of Brisbane which Henry thought was very interesting. I Believe you were the cricket captain at school Henry, that is true, so if you have never been to this one then you will love The Brisbane Cricket Ground, commonly known as, The Gabba. There is a lot of history here Henry said, I would have loved to come and see the Ashes being played. Lets go across the road for lunch as Johnny and I have been here and the food was very good. They walked into the 1889 Enoteca restaurant. This is an Italian restaurant and as Bonnie had said, the food was very good. They spent the afternoon walking around the botanical garden. You made a good selection of interesting places Bonnie, you know your city. We should visit Miyu and she can show us around Tokyo, I would like that Henry. See if you can make a plan in the future ladies.

For the rest of the week Henry was gone before breakfast so he only saw Miyu and Bonnie when he returned and they always went to some great restaurant and talked, laughed and just enjoyed themselves. Miyu and Bonnie had bought so many clothes they each needed to buy another suitcase, they were very happy with their time with each other and loved being with Henry. They both told him, he is very welcome to visit them

anytime, he thanked them and said, this has been the best two weeks for me as I normally spend it on my own. The week went very quickly and before they knew it they were leaving for the airport. Bonnie had the shortest flight with Henry having the longest. Bonnie flew to Darwin and was collected by the air force in a private jet. Miyu flew to Tokyo and got a ride in a C-130 back to Misawa Air Base. Henry was flying to San Francisco so he slept for twelve hours.

C

Chapter 31

Henry tells Rachele what he thinks of her

Over the next three months Henry had flown around the world three more times, signed contracts to the sum of £185m and he and Annika had been able to spend six long weekends sailing in the Solent. They had sailed around the isle of Wight more than ten times and both felt that they needed some different scenery. Henry had almost taken their relationship to the next level on more than one occasion. He knew that the close proximity on board was going to be his undoing, he had to stop these trips for a while.

At the end of the second week in December Henry told Rachele that it was about time he returned to London so that he could tidy up all outstanding contracts in time for the Christmas holidays at the family home. He was looking forward to that more than ever this year as he really did like spending time at the family home. Henry had made most of his clients, whether they be companies or pension funds a lot of money this year and he will receive several millions in bonuses. He had spent as much time as possible with Rachele and had good times in JJ's company, he really did like JJ. Just before leaving Henry again asked Rachele if she would marry him, she gave him the same answer as she did in April.

Henry said to Rachele, I cannot do this any more, it is just not fair, I am now twenty seven years of age and I feel I have done all I can do to get you to realise that I am a good guy and would never hurt you. So if you do not think I am the man for you, just say so and put me out of my misery, then we can try and move on. I get on with your father as well as any son-in-law could ever hope to get on with their in-laws, and your father wants to walk you down the isle almost as much as I want to stand there and say I do. So, it has come to a show down Rachele, you have to decide today, not tomorrow or next year, but right now, agree to take me as your husband or tell me to leave you alone for ever. You are forcing me to make a decision which I do not want to make and that is not fair Henry. He got up and held her tight and gave her a long passionate kiss and then said, I have tried it your way for eighteen months and I feel I have given you more than enough time to make up your mind and get over your fear. After giving you eighteen months to make up your mind, we do not seem to be any closer to a decision. He said, the reason you gave me is fear and I could accept that the first time I asked you. I swallowed hard and accepted it the second time, however, that is not a good enough reason to accept a third time. There has to be some underlying reason that makes you say you need more time, please tell me what the reason is. She looked at him and said, I have been hoping you would not press me on that, but since you have you deserve a straight answer.

While we are not engaged I am alright with you seeing other girls,

however, if we get engaged I would insist on some big changes in your life. Henry just sat and looked at her without saying a word, as Henry was not interrupting her she continued, I would never agree with you having such a young beautiful housekeeper, so if you feel you can make that change along with several significant others, I will say, yes. Henry looked at Rachelle for several seconds before saying, so Annika is not your only reason for asking for more time. Rachelle said, no she is just one reason, having said that, she is probably my main reason, she is far too pretty to be living in the same house that you live in, sex takes place now and although I accept that, I would not after we got engaged.

Let me lay this out for you, I have never had sex with Annika. I do not believe you. Please do me the courtesy of listening to what I have to say, before jumping in. Annika is a very smart lady. She may well be, but she is far too sexy Henry. You just have to keep jumping in and not letting me say what I wish to tell you. However, you are quite right, she is a very sexy young lady. She is also a good housekeeper, a fantastic crew member on the yacht, and she is more than capable of skipping it. She has also become a very good friend. However, I am interested to know what else you are not happy with. That silly boat you have, that must go, because I would never go on it, I do not know why you would want to keep it. Also, once we get engaged you can give up that crazy job of yours, it takes you away for far too long and as you would be moving onto the ranch once we got married, you would only be working on the ranch.

Wow, where did all that come from Rachelle, it is what I have always thought, and you did ask me. I did indeed, it seems you have my life planed out for me without ever once asking me what I might want. I think what you really want is a cowboy and definitely not an investment banker. I have been sailing since I was a young boy, so my yacht stays and Annika will stay as my crew member and my housekeeper for now. I am not interested in becoming just a cowboy, I do need to slow down with my travelling around the world, however, I could not just stop and become a cowboy. We need to sit down and talk about the issues you are not happy with, it is far from correct to just tell me what you want and expect that I would fall into line because you say so. You need to ask me what I want and listen to my views, and maybe we can work things out.

I have just told you what I want, if you cannot accept that, what in the world do we have to talk about. It is what I expect of my husband, to come and live here and become my cowboy and do just what I want him to do, that would make me very happy. Another thing, that whore that is living with you, you make her sound like the perfect young lady. Just tell me the truth, did she turn you down when you asked her to marry you, is that why you asked me. That is not worthy of an answer and is a pathetic thing to say. Annika is far from a whore, she is a wonderful young lady and I now see she is a lady that you could never ever match up to in a million years. I am going to get in my car and drive out to the airport, I never wish to see or hear from you again, he turned and walked to his car.

Henry caught his flight and instead of sleeping as he does on most

flights he sat drinking water and coffee and just went over everything in his mind regarding Rachelle. He could not understand why she had told him she loved him and then just kept him waiting around. Surely she must have known from the beginning that all she wanted was a cowboy that she can control. She must have realised very early on in their relationship that he is not a man that would ever want his wife to totally control him. He did not understand how he had not seen this coming and he knew if he ever told his mother she would just say to him, it is because you are pussy struck, or words to that effect. What a waste of time I have invested in Rachelle and he sat and thought about how stupid he had been, he then told himself, everybody can make a mistake so he must put this behind him because if he does not do that, he will become a very bitter person. He decided he had better learn from this. As of today I am moving on with my life, Annika and I have a lot of sailing to do next year and we will see how that develops, before jumping in on a rebound. Now he had sorted that part of his life out he could settle down and relax, within a few minutes he drifted off to sleep.

Roger was waiting for him when he got out of customs, they shook hands and Roger said, welcome home Mr James, I trust you had a good trip, yes thank you Roger I most certainly did. Will this be the last time I will see you before the Christmas holidays, it maybe sir, however, I will be bringing Miss Lydia to your Penthouse tomorrow and then picking her up when she is ready to go home. I also have to take Miss Annika to Heathrow. That's good Roger because I have your Christmas box at home, so I will definitely see you tomorrow. He got out of the car and Roger took his cases up to the Penthouse, he shook his hand and said, thank you Roger.

C **hapter 32**

C hristmas 2004

He put his key in the lock of the front door and before he turned it Annika opened the door for him.

Welcome home Henry, thank you my Annika, they hugged and Henry asked if he could enter, well, that depends, if you are going to be nice to me, then most certainly you can. He gave her a big smile and a peck on her cheek, picked her up and carried her into the kitchen and sat her on the counter. What are you going to do with me now Henry, spank your backside if you do not feed me, good because I might just like it, they burst out laughing and Henry said, does nothing surprise you. Not at all Henry, and if you do not bring your cases in you will not get your washing done. He placed his hands on each side of her face and gave her a kiss, well that was worth waiting for. Just wait until next year young lady, is that a promise.

Supper will be ready at 21:00 Henry, would you like a drink before you change, a quick coffee would be nice, if you take a seat in the lounge I will serve you. Henry walked into the lounge and looked out of the window at the lights of what he could see of London. They sat drinking their coffee and Henry asked if she had done anything of interest while he had been away. I went to a couple of museums and the Planetarium which I thought was very interesting. I also drove down to Hamble to check on The Viking Lady, is she alright, she tells me she wants to get back out on the open water. Henry smiled and said, we will make time to go sailing on a regular bases starting in January, I will keep you to that, I trust you will.

Henry said, I have to check on some stock that we have invested a lot of our clients money in. Lydia is a little concerned and wants me to take a look. Can I watch so that I can get some idea of what it is you and Lydia do, be my guest. They sat at Henry's desk and he worked his way through pages of stocks. He went backwards and forwards from one day to the next watching several stocks and jotted down small changes that were happening over the last week, one day after the other. He did this stock watching for four major stocks and when he had finished he said, you are correct Lydia. These two are going to have a potential problem and we must move away. He picked up the phone and pressed number 9 on the keypad, the voice on the other end said, hello Lydia, sorry to disappoint you Marvin, it's Henry. How are you Henry, I was okay until Lydia pointed something out to me. We need to move some stock, Henry gave Marvin all the stock that he wished to move away from and the stock he wished to invest in. I will take care of that immediately and send a confirmation email once it is finished, thank you Marvin.

Henry stood up and walked into the kitchen and filled a glass with water. He then phoned Lydia, hello Henry, just to let you know I have checked the four stocks you are worried about and moved away from the

first two placing the investment into our safe holding stock for now, thank you Henry. The other two I feel we should run a little longer as I would expect them to come back next week, so I will keep checking to see if by Monday they are running okay, bye Henry.

He walked back into the office and found Annika looking at the pages of stocks on his computer. Are you taking up investments now young lady, maybe. Is my understanding of what you have been doing correct. He moved to her side, and she said, you started off looking at these four stocks, you then followed what they had been doing for the previous 7 days, you noted that they had gone down 1.75% over the last 7 day period. You then sold two of them and reinvested into some other stock which I have no knowledge of. Is that a correct understanding of what you have just done. It is 100% correct. Would you like me to try and write a programme for you that could help you by following the investments you have made. Wow, does this mean you are more than just a pretty face, she smiled and told him she has many strings to her bow. Please tell me what you have in mind.

When I left university I started working as a programmer for a small Swedish company, this was the guy that wanted to have sex with you, that is correct Henry. Well, in all fairness to him I can understand why he wanted to have sex with you, I mean, who wouldn't. Well, you for one, touché. Never mind that, just listen to me Henry. I wrote programmes to solve problems that his clients had. I see that this is similar, although it is far more complex and could prove costly if I did not get it right. However, it is along the same lines as what I did. If I can write a programme that would watch the stock you have invested in and let you know when that stock drops by 0.15% would that be of a help to you and Lydia. Before you answer, let me say to you it can be any % you want it to be. The simple answer is yes, it would be of a great help especially to Lydia as she is the one that mainly does the watching.

I will need to use your computer, if you prefer a laptop just purchase one. I prefer to work at a desktop as I find it easier, laptops move around, I much prefer to sit at a desk while programming. Can I use yours when you are not here, certainly. Then I do not need to get another, I will start the next time you go away. You will need to tell me from what % drop you wish to be notified and I will also need a list of the stocks you invest in. To start with lets leave it at 0.15%, Henry bent down and kissed her lightly on her lips, he then said, I will ask Lydia to forward a list of investments to The Viking IT company. You can be so silly Henry and she returned to the kitchen.

Henry opened his post that was on his desk, it was from José which just said, I thought you might like to see these, he had sent ten photos of the property, everything looked like it was finished. I must go and see him.

Something smells good, it is our Christmas meal as this is the last time we will be together before January, so it is. He smiled at her and went to take a shower and get changed. When he returned Annika had changed into a little black number and asked if he will sort out the wine. Before

Henry sat down at the table he asked if she needed any help, if you can start carving the turkey while I bring the rest of the dishes in. Henry carved and placed three good slices of turkey breast on each plate, Annika came in with a small dish of cranberry sauce, Henry looked up and said, wow, you look good enough to eat, a big smile came to her face and her reply was, do you want me on the table or do you have somewhere else in mine. I think we should not let this fantastic meal go to waste.

You are just all talk Henry James, you get a girl all excited and then you just drop her, you should stop doing that unless you wish to go through with it, because it is just not fair. You are quite right Annika, I must stop teasing you, I am sorry. You are forgiven, now tell me what you think of our Christmas meal. If looks are anything to go by, it will be another fantastic meal you have graced this table with. They started and talked about what they would be doing over Christmas. Henry explained that he would be playing golf, riding Sultan, eating far too much food, along with shooting Pheasants and sitting around talking. The other thing I always do is take a couple of cross country runs. What about you, mamma and I usually spend Christmas at home on our own since my father died, because our distant relatives live in the north of Sweden. We will walk around the shops and go out for meals and just generally hang out together, that's nice Annika, I really hope you and your mother have a great Christmas, you too Henry. Let me clear away and we can have coffee in the lounge if you want to, while you do that I will make the coffee.

They sat on one of the settees in the lounge and Annika curled up against Henry and they spoke about all the things they will do next year. You did say you took dancing lessons when you were younger. I did Henry, would you like to go dancing sometime, I would love to go dancing, can we put that on our list of things to do next year, most definitely. I want to spend less time flying around the world in 2005 and if you would like to go with me now and again, say to a few countries you have never been to before, Lydia will organise that. Oh Henry, I would love to go with you as it gets lonely and is very boring here when you are away. Okay, that's to go on our new things to do next year, I am sure that now I have started your mind thinking, you will come up with other things and places to see. I think you have opened Pandora's Box Henry. However, I must finish the programming for you first. What have you planned to do with the left over food, I have arranged to give it to Matthew. That is very thoughtful of you Annika, once you get to know me Henry James, you will see I am a very nice person. He just laughed and shook his head, he then said, I do believe you are a very nice person. She cuddled him and said, thank you Henry.

At 23:45 Henry said, we should get some sleep as I have a long day tomorrow sorting everything out with Lydia, they kissed good night and went to bed, Henry was asleep within minutes as he was so tired. Annika laid awake thinking about the conversation they had during the evening, she felt very happy with everything that was going to happen in the New Year, thirty minutes later she was sound asleep.

At 07:00 Henry walked into the kitchen and found Annika packing the

dishes away, the washing machine was almost finished it's second load and Henry thought, this lady is very organised. He looked around and asked Annika what is in those cooler boxes by the door, that is waiting for Matthew to collect at 08:30. I also purchased a couple of bottles of red wine for him, how do you know he likes red, because I asked him, that seems like a sensible thing to do, it makes me wonder why I did not think of that. She just looked at him and shook her head. She unloaded the washing machine and put the clothes that could go in the dryer and then asked what would you like for breakfast, just a coffee thank you.

They sat at the breakfast bar and drank their coffees and she asked, what time will Lydia arrive, 09:15, will she be here for lunch, I cannot see us finishing much before 13:30, then you should take a break around 11:00, that sounds good. Henry went to his office and Annika started the ironing, just before Matthew arrived Henry opened the safe and removed an envelope, it just had Matthew written on it. He walked into the kitchen and handed it to Annika saying, please be kind enough to give this to Matthew and wish him a happy Christmas from me. The intercom rang and Annika picked it up and said, good morning Benson, good morning Miss Annika, Matthew has arrived, please ask him to come up, certainly. She picked up the two cooler boxes and the card that Henry had given her and walked out of the door towards the lift, as she almost got to the doors they opened and Matthew stepped out. Good morning Matthew, good morning Annika, these are for you and your wife and this is from Henry, thank you Annika, we hope you have a good Christmas and we will see you in the New Year, thank you and the same to you and Henry.

Lydia arrived at 09:05 with an armful of files and after removing her shoes she headed for the office. I went through a lot of these last night Henry so we could get finished a little earlier, be careful or we might have you flying off to some far distant land, and they burst out laughing. At 11:00 Annika asked if they would like a coffee, they both nodded and she returned to the kitchen to make the coffee. When she returned she asked them how they were getting on, better than I thought we would Henry replied, we should be finished in a couple of hours, would you like to join us for something to eat after you finish Lydia. That's kind of you, just as long as it is something light. Is a pasta dish okay for you, that would be perfect. By 13:00 they sat down to their lunch so they would be ready for their meeting with Sir John.

They took their yearly taxi ride and walked into Sir John's office at 14:30. Come in you two and please sit down. I have some upsetting news this year, Matthew passed away in June having suffered for far too long, now Sir Malcolm is getting very frail. I am starting to worry because I cannot run this company on my own so I have to start looking at what I must do next year. You two have had another fantastic year and you keep breaking record after record.

I will start by telling you your salaries will double for 2005, this will make Lydia's £300k and your bonus for this year is £9.2m Lydia. Henry heard her intake of breath. Sir John stood up and shook Lydia's hand and

wished her a very happy Christmas, Lydia returned the wishes and left. Sir John sat down again and looked at Henry, I am very tired Henry and I see how Matthew suffered and the way Sir Malcolm is going, I am getting very concerned. I want you to think about something over Christmas. What is that Sir John. My wife wants me to sell this bank before I end up like Matthew. All the money in the world did not help him, so I have to accept that my wife is going to get her own way, she wishes me to retire.

Now Henry, I want you to go to your family home and have a great Christmas with your family. I would like you to think about this bank over the next two weeks as I have decided that I will be selling this bank one way or the other. Would you like me to break the bank up so you can own all the clients that you have signed up, or would you prefer me to sell the bank as is. This would mean that another bank would take over all of the company and you would work for them. I am giving you the option before I offer the company to somebody else. Please take a few days and come back to me with your decision, I am very happy to make a deal with you Henry. I will be giving your father the first refusal once you have made your decision. Thank you for this offer Sir John, I do appreciate that, once I have made my decision would you like me to tell my father. I would leave that to you Henry, however, I do not mind one way or the other. Do you have a figure in mind if I wish to take up your offer Sir John, I do not Henry but I can assure you I would not be looking to make a fortune out of you. I will phone you at home before Christmas Sir John. They wished each other a happy Christmas, and Henry left. Lydia and Henry got in the taxi and Henry said, I need to talk to you before you leave today Lydia, is it serious Henry, yes Lydia it is serious for both of us. They had the rest of the journey in silence. Back home they headed for the office

Annika switched the dishwasher on and went to her bedroom to pack her case, when she had finished she asked Henry if he wanted her to pack his case for him, that is very kind of you young lady, however, unless I am going to a special function while at Queensberry I do not take very much at all as I have clothes which I leave there, that must be a lot easier for you, it has been working for me since I left the family home. I need to talk with Lydia so can you give us a coffee and then a little space please, certainly Henry.

I am guessing Sir John said, something to you Henry, he did indeed Lydia. With Matthew dying and now Sir Malcolm not being very well Sir John's wife wants him to sell the bank. Lydia said, I can understand that. He has asked me if I would like him to split the company up and sell me just the part we made, all our clients would become ours. He would then sell off the rest to another bank, he wants me to think about it over the holidays and give him my answer before we start in the New Year. Are you interested Henry, maybe, it would depend on two things, how much he wants for it, I did ask if he had an amount in mind and he told me he did not, he said, I can assure you I would not be looking to make a fortune out of you. He has a figure I am sure of that, but will not give it until I have told him that I am interested.

The second thing Henry. It would depend if you were interested or not, as I would not purchase if you did not wish to stay here. I would like us to become partners, if you are interested Lydia. I would need to seriously consider that over the next few days because Ian and I have made some plans that we were hoping to start in January. If we went into a partnership with you we could not go ahead with those plans because of finances. However good a deal Sir John would make for you, he would not give it away. I am more than happy to work for you Henry, I do not need to be in partnership with you to stay working for you. I should say this to you though. I would only like to stay working for you for the next two years before stopping. Henry replied by saying, I think it would be better for you if you carried on with the plans that you and Ian have made. As long as I can count on your services for another two years I can go forward with this. If I cannot purchase from Sir John I do not think I would want to work for another company as we would not get the freedom that Sir John allows us. We will see what happens and just as soon as I have an answer, I will phone you to let you know. I would guess that it would be before Christmas Lydia.

At 15:30 they were all ready to start their Christmas holidays, the intercom rang and Annika picked it up, Benson told her that Roger has arrived, thank you Benson I am sure we will be down in a couple of minutes. Henry hugged Lydia and told her he would phone and then asked her to please give Ian my best wishes for Christmas. I will do that, now have a good holiday Henry, and this is your Christmas card Lydia. Lydia turned and said, see you downstairs and headed for the lifts. Henry put his bag on the floor and took Annika in his arms and said to her, please give your mother my love and I hope you both have a fantastic Christmas. Please ask your mother if she would like to spend next Christmas at the family home, just my mother Henry, or can I tag along as well. I am hoping you would say yes even if your mother could not come.

I think you should ask your mother and father first, I do not have to do that because they will be very happy to welcome you into their home. I make this statement because both my mother and father have asked several times if I would like to invite friends for Christmas. I have always said, I do not have anybody in mind. My father said last year, if you ever want to bring somebody to stay over you know you do not need to ask and I also mean for Christmas. I will wait until after Christmas before asking her, as you please Annika.

He removed an envelope from his bag and asked Annika to please give this present to your mother on Christmas morning. I have put your bonus in your bank account so just have a great Christmas. Do you want to put this debit card in the safe Henry, if I do that how are you going to use it. I am going on holiday so why would I need the card. Because the agreement you signed said, I pay for everything regardless as to whether it is for your job or personal. You need to keep that card with you and use it for whatever you purchase, that's our deal, is it not. I did not think you meant when I am on holiday. I mean 365 days a year whatever country you

are in. Thank you Henry, you are more than welcome Annika. We should go down, he said, I will see you next year and he kissed her which turned into a passionate kiss and Henry had to break it off. With a kiss like that I cannot wait for the new year to arrive. Henry said, it's time to go.

Roger was waiting and took Annika's case and headed for the car, while Annika wished Benson a happy Christmas Henry followed Roger to the car and shook his hand and gave him his envelope, saying have a very happy Christmas Roger, thank you Mr James. Lydia had got into the back of the car and Roger told Henry he is dropping miss Lydia off first. Henry opened the door and waited for Annika. He gave her a hug and a peck on her cheek, have a happy Christmas and give my love to Fredrika, I will, see you two next year. Roger drove off and Henry gave a wave, he climbed the steps to the reception and shook Benson's hand and wished him a happy Christmas and gave him his envelope and asked him to please give this to Parker, certainly Mr James. Henry picked up his bag and headed down to his car, and drove to the family home feeling very happy that he will be spending two weeks with his family.

Henry stopped his car as soon as he had turned the bend in the driveway, he was then looking down at Queensberry Manor, he just sat and looked at the wonderful setting of this estate. He never got tired of this view, he slowly moved forward along the almost half a mile of driveway, parking near the front door. Philip came out saying welcome home Mr Henry, hello Philip how are you, very well thank you, I will put your bag in your room, thank you Philip.

On Wednesday 22nd three days before Christmas Henry phoned Sir John and told him he was very interested and it really depended on how much you want for it. I am so pleased you have decided to take it over Henry. You are a good honest man and deserve the rewards. I am prepared to let you have all the clients you have signed up since you started, just give me one third of your bonus and I feel we will both be happy. Thank you very much Sir John, £8m is not a lot of money for what I am getting Sir John. Do you want me to ask Sir Randolph to draw up an agreement, that is acceptable Henry. I will ask him when he arrives tomorrow. I trust you will have a good Christmas, you too Sir John.

That night while having dinner, Henry told his mother and father that he had just purchased a small investment bank. They looked a little shocked, please explain my boy. Sir John is going to sell his bank and has offered me all the clients that I have signed since I started with him. He will break those away and I will purchase them from him. That is fantastic Henry, is he allowing you to purchase over a few years. I did not ask him to do that father because he is making me a very special deal, so I can pay out of this years bonus. My god Henry, you must have got it for a song. I did indeed father. We are so happy for you Henry, thank you mother, I will need Sir Randolph to draw up an agreement. This is the best Christmas we have had for a long time, such a pity your sister is not here to share in your good fortune. That is a fantastic present Sir John has given you. Would you be interested in purchasing the rest of his bank father? It would

depend on how much he wanted and any other conditions he might have.

Henry phoned Lydia and told her he has made a deal with Sir John, I am so pleased for you Henry, you deserve it. You work harder than anybody I know.

The next day Sir Randolph and Lady Martha arrived and after they had all had coffee his mother had taken Martha a walk. Henry asked Sir Randolph if he could draw up an agreement for him. What do you need Henry, Henry told him the deal he had with Sir John. When he had finished Randolph said, I will need three things from you Henry. A list of all the companies you will be taking over, the amount of your deal and if you are opening a company, I need the name and where it is registered. I can give you the list of companies once I return home, I will be paying Sir John £8m for that list. I bet that is in respect for me my boy. I would not think so father, I would guess it is because I have made him many, many, millions in the time I have worked for him. I will phone Daniel and ask him to please register a company for me, have you thought what you might call the company my boy. My first choice would be, The Henry James Investment Bank.

He phoned Daniel Knox and after some small talk asked him if he could register a company for him and gave him the name he would like if it is available. I will also need a bank account in the companies name. I will arrange that on your behalf Henry and it should be done by the New Year. I think it is about time you came to Belize again Henry, I will try Daniel. They wished each other a happy Christmas and said goodbye.

That's all taken care of, so we can enjoy our Christmas holiday, such a pity that Takahiro and Miyu along with their friends Johnny and Bonnie could not be here. I guess that's a problem when you are in the military, David said. Christmas day was quiet and after lunch everybody was just sitting around and starting to nod off.

Victoria joined them for her first Christmas in England, she knew it would be different, however, she was going to enjoy the day. She just wished her father could be here.

Henry got up and put on a coat and went outside, he walked around and then phoned Annika, a very happy Christmas Henry, the same to you my Annika, How are you and your mother, we are fine thank you Henry. We have just finished lunch and we are having a coffee, what about you. We finished lunch about an hour ago and we have all been sitting around and falling asleep. Because my sister and brother-in law are not here this year and none of us are very happy about that. Also a couple of other friends that were coming had to pull out at the last minute, so it is only the five of us. I should have asked your mother to come, what about me Henry. I guess you would of tagged along. You are terrible Henry James, I know and you are my Viking Lady Annika Olsson. I just wanted to see how you are, I am fine thank you Henry, my mother wants to speak with you.

A very happy Christmas Henry, the same to you Fredrika. Thank you very much for my Christmas present, you did not have to do that, I know,

however, it felt very good to give you a little something. You are such a kind man Henry and you gave me a lot of money. It is just a little for you to go and spoil yourself. Thank you Henry. He told Annika that he had to return to the house because it is cold outside. I will see you in the new year, hugs and kisses from both of us, see you soon.

If Henry gave me 65k Swedish Krona what in the world did he give you Annika. I have no idea mother, he just told me he had put my bonus in my bank account and I have not checked because I am sure he did as he said he had. Are you not a little bit interested in what he gave you as your bonus, not really, I know my contract says I will receive three months salary so I would think you got a little more than I did. Maybe he gave you more than he needed to.

Just stop mamma, Henry will always treat me with respect and dignity, and I am sure he will always give me more than he needs to. You can not be sure he will always, well mamma, you may be right but I know Henry James and I trust him implicitly. What you needed to ask was, you want to know what he has given me. Fredrika looked a little sheepish and Annika said we will look, however, this is the last time you will get to see how much money Henry gave me.

She went to her bedroom and switched on her computer and checked her bank account, come, take a look mamma. Fredrika saw that every month Annika's account had received £1500.00, then on the 17th of December she had received £9500.00. She also noticed there were no withdrawals. Are you happy now mamma. Yes Annika, however, I do have two questions. I will answer two questions but just remember to never ask again.

£9500.00 is more than three months salary, I think it would work out to just over six months. Your last question, how much is that in Swedish Krona, about 120k. How do you live Annika, I do not understand mamma, your account has no withdrawals. So you wanted three questions. Annika closed her computer down and picked up her handbag, she took out her debit card and handed it to her mother. Fredrika looked at the card that had Annika's name on it. Anything I want to purchase I use this card and to save you asking, I can use it 365 days a year in any country I visit. I do not need to use my salary for anything, in fact, I do not need a salary at all. Now you have come to the end of your questions about my salary and my lifestyle. never ask me again.

They returned to the lounge and talked about what they plan to do for the rest of the holiday. We can go shopping tomorrow because Henry told me to spoil myself, I have some programming to do for Henry, which I will start on the 27th. By the time Annika was due to return to London she had written most of her new programme and needed to test it which she could only do once she returned to the office. She was very pleased with herself.

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Chapter 33

T

he finished Colonial

Henry started work on Monday 5th January 2005 and the Penthouse felt a little empty as Annika only returns on Friday. He unpacked his case and phoned Lydia, she answered by saying, happy New Year Henry, the same to you Lydia and did you have a good Christmas, it was fantastic Henry and how was yours, it was okay. I was hoping you had a good rest, I guess that means you have appointments for me. Sorry Henry but I need you to fly to New York tonight, Roger will pick you up at 20:00, thank you Lydia.

Once I sign the agreement this morning we have a new company, all new clients I feel will not be a problem. All the existing ones will need to be contacted and told we have purchased all our contracts from Sir John and if they wish to stay with us they will be transferred to our new company. We will keep the same conditions so they will not have to do anything other than agree to change investment banks. At the end of the year their account will come from, The Henry James Investment Bank. I do like that Henry, me to. They will need to sign a transfer document so everything is legal. We need to get new contracts printed urgently, I will attend to that straight away.

One other thing Lydia, please find out what Sir John plans to do about Roger, if he will be going with all other staff or does he plan to terminate his employment. I like Roger, he is always very punctual, pleasant and a good man, I would like to keep him if we can. Would it not be cheaper for you to use taxi's Henry, it probably would Lydia, however, that is not the point. We have a very good person in Roger lets keep him, because I feel Sir John will only throw him on the scrap heap. He could pick you up in the mornings and take you home at night. So you wish me to work one hour more each day, I love you Lydia, I know.

Henry told Lydia he had to go to Nicaragua as soon as you can get me there. How long do you need, one day should be enough then we can do it this trip, you can go straight after you sign up the contracts. I see you are getting in early before Annika returns and talks me into going sailing, have a good flight Henry.

He phoned Annika, happy New Year was exchanged, they asked each other about their Christmas and after telling each other what they did, Henry said, I have to fly out tonight and will only be back on Wednesday next week, so you can change your ticket for Tuesday or Wednesday next week. I will change it and return Monday, that will give me two days before you return, that's fine, I will see you next Wednesday. I have some good news to tell you when I return, are you going to keep me in suspense Henry, I am indeed.

Henry signed five New clients up for a total of £195m and he was over the moon, he boarded his flight to Nicaragua and José picked him up at

the airport. They drove straight out to the Spanish Colonial, José parked the 4x4 in front of the garages. Henry got out and looked around and was very pleased with how clean and tidy the whole area was. They entered the property and the ground floor had been cleaned and all superficial work had been carried out. All rooms had been renovated to their original condition, Henry was very pleased. They climbed the impressive staircase and checked out all the bedrooms, the master bedroom was out of this world and the workmanship was very, very good. I cannot find fault with anything here José, you have excelled yourself.

They checked out the jetty and boat shed and again Henry was astounded that everything was as he wanted it to be. José told Henry that the jetty and boat shed were built out of Basralocus wood, a very hard wood that is very good for marine structures, you will never have a problem in your lifetime. They went on to check the garages, workshop and store rooms, along with the housekeepers quarters over the garage and store rooms. All finished to the same standard as the Colonial. Lastly José showed Henry the sewage treatment plant and the solar panels. The only other thing you will need to decide is if you wish to have more fencing installed. Henry thanked José and told him once he is back home he will be depositing his well earned bonus. José thanked Henry and then told him he will be leaving Nicaragua at the beginning of May, this is because I am being transferred to Mexico. Just as long as you are happy with your move. I like Mexico Henry, there is a little more going on. They shook hands and wished each other well.

Annika returned on Monday 10th and before unpacking her case she sat down and had a coffee with Lydia, they asked each other about their Christmas. Annika told Lydia that she needs to test her programme out, she is confident that it will work but knows it may need some tweaking. She started Henry's computer and installed her programme from the USB stick. She had set it to run in the background and left it to work away. She then returned to the laundry to pick up her case and then went to her bedroom to unpack. She was very happy to be back in the penthouse. Monday and Tuesday she tweaked her programme and left it running all night.

On Wednesday morning she told Lydia she thought it was working how it was meant to work. Would you like me to install it on your computer so that you can tell me if it is good for you. Yes please Annika because it will save me a lot of time. Annika explained that when a stock drops a box will appear on her screen and she will then need to decide what to do. So it is not automatic, it will not make the change. I have not programmed it to do that, however, I can if that is what you want me to do. When you click on the warning box you will get all the investments you have made for that stock. This will save you searching through your investments for that information. Lydia was excited and said, thank you very much Annika.

After lunch a warning box appeared on both computers, Lydia called Annika and told her the message in the box tells me the stock has dropped by .075% I thought you were going to make it .15%, .15% is what Henry

told me to start with, however, I decided to half that percentage as a first warning, I did this for two reasons. The first was to make sure the programme works how it should and the second was so you could see how long it takes before the second warning comes up. That's very clever of you Annika. Now, if you click on that warning box a list of investments you have in that stock will come up. Lydia clicked and sure enough a list of nine companies with the amount that each had invested in that stock. This is going to save me a lot of time, can you install it on my laptop so I can check while I am at home, certainly Lydia.

Henry returned on Wednesday evening and on entering the Penthouse he was greeted by Annika leaping into his arms and kissing him, I missed you Henry, I see that Annika, dinner will be ready at 21:00, thank you Annika, and he headed for his office. He put his brief case on the table and started to open his post that Lydia always left on his desk, some bills along with a letter. He opened this letter and it was a wedding invitation from Christine, she is getting married the last Saturday in April. She had put on Henry's invitation, plus one, he smiled and went off to find Annika. She was preparing the meal and he asked her if she would like to go to a wedding with him, that sounds very nice Henry, where and when, in Oxford, the last Saturday in April, who is getting married. Christine Davidson, she is the young lady I used to play golf with when we were juniors. She reached for her dream and turned professional she now plays on the Ladies European tour. It should be a good wedding and it will give me a chance to show you the family home were I grew up. I would love to go and see where you grew up and the wedding gives me a chance to wear my evening dress I got when I went shopping with your mother. I am pleased you are not like my mother, what in the world do you mean Henry, my mother would say, I need to go shopping for a new dress, I understand that and it makes very good sense, however, I have two that I have never worn so I cannot say that, he gave her a hug.

I need to phone Lydia and he picked up the phone, Annika returned to the kitchen. He should be home any time soon Annika, he is home already Lydia, hello Henry how are you, very well thank you Lydia, what about you guys, we are fine Henry, now what can I do for you. I am hoping you do not have anything for me before next week, nothing until next Wednesday evening Henry. That's great then we will go and check to make sure The Viking Lady is okay and then sail around the Isle of Wight a couple of times or somewhere else, whatever takes our fancy. Where am I going on Wednesday, Singapore, Philippines, Australia and San Francisco. I see we are starting the new year off very well Lydia. I am sorry Henry, but most of these wanted you in December just before Christmas.

I promised Annika that I will take her with me on a couple of trips so she can understand a little about my job, is it possible to get her on my flights Lydia. Leave that to me Henry and let me say, I fully approve, thank you Lydia. We will be back on Tuesday afternoon, have a great time Henry. Now, before you go, how did you get on with the new company name. It was no problem, I just changed the name of the investment bank and they

were all happy to sign. We now have new contracts printed so it will only be the clients you have just signed, well I am assuming you have some signed contracts, everyone of them. See you next week Henry.

Henry went to take a shower and get changed, when he returned he asked Annika if she would like to join him with a glass of wine, I would really like that Henry and dinner is ready. While you pour the wine I will take the dishes into the dining room. Henry picked up a bottle of red, opened it and went to the dining room, he asked if she needed a hand, no thank you I have it covered. She walked in with several serving dishes and started to remove the lids, this looks very good Annika, she had cut the rack of ribs in half and she placed half on each plate. During the meal Henry said, I have some good news for you, please let me hear this good news as I have been waiting patiently. We can go tomorrow morning and check out The Viking Lady, that's great Henry. We do not need to come back until late on Tuesday afternoon, the year is starting off very well. However, I fly out on Wednesday evening for several busy days, well, you cannot expect to be under my feet all the time. I have not finished yet young lady, you mean there's more, afraid so, you will need to do the washing from our sailing trip before Wednesday evening, that should not be a problem Henry, however, if you are going away surly there is no rush. Oh, but there is. We will be flying to Singapore, Philippines, Australia and San Francisco, before returning home. She jumped up and kissed him and said, I did not think you meant straight after Christmas, he hugged her and said, can we finish our meal first.

Over the meal Henry explained that he had moved companies, you have resigned Henry. Not exactly, I have purchased all the clients that I have signed up since I started working for Sir John. Providing they are all happy to stay with me they will be transferred to our new bank. She jumped up again came around the table and gave him a big kiss and said, congratulation Henry. So you are still an investment banker, that is correct, however, I now work for myself, we are, The Henry James Investment bank. I do like the sound of that Henry, me to.

Do you fancy a movie Annika, you find one while I clear away, I will bring the coffee after I have finished. He sat down in the TV room and searched for a movie, he found the Bourne Supremacy and waited for Annika, it was not long before she entered the room with the coffees. She sat down and asked, what are we watching, the Bourne Supremacy, I liked the others in the series. Now, before I put it on I need to know if I can put you to bed in what you are wearing, not quite, I see, so what are you expecting me to remove, whatever you wish to. However, you have managed before to remove my dress, so if I fall asleep, which I am not expecting to, I do not see a problem for you. Lets watch the movie shall we. The movie finished and Henry found that Annika was still asleep, he picked her up and carried her to her bedroom, threw the duvet back and almost dropped her. He laid her on the bed and found that he could remove her dress with very little effort.

He picked up the dress and found a hanger and hung it on the door,

he returned to the bed and realised he had not covered her up. He sat on the bed and picked up her upper body so that she was almost in a sitting position and he hugged her and kissed her on her forehead and said to her, you are very beautiful my Viking Lady and he laid her back down onto the pillow before covering her up, he walked out and went to his own room. As he was getting undressed he thought, this is getting harder and harder to do. Maybe it is time to make some new plans, I just do not want to jump into a new relationship so soon.

They were both up and dressed by 07:30 and had coffee together in the kitchen. They both gave breakfast a miss, picked up their bags and headed down to the car. They walked into the Copthorne hotel just off the M23 and ate a breakfast of chops, eggs, bacon and toast. This looks like a good start to our break, Henry said, Annika just smiled. Back on the motorway and it was not long before they pulled up in the car park at Hamble School of Yachting. Picked up their bags and walked along the jetty to The Viking Lady. Once on board Annika unpacked the bags while Henry started the engine. They only needed it to manoeuvre into the main body of water. They headed down Southampton water and into the Solent. A good wind was blowing so they got full sails and the spinnaker. They were travelling quite quickly and Annika asked if Henry had anywhere in mind to visit. I thought we would go and take a look at the Scilly isles, have you been there before Henry, no, never. When they got there they anchored just off shore, it was quite late so they ate on board and turned in for the night. I have put two sleeping bags in the main cabin, Henry just smiled.

Once in their separate bags they cuddled up in a spoon position. Henry said, what do you think about taking the Viking Lady to a warmer climate Annika. I am all for warmer climates it is far too cold here, it must be colder in Sweden Annika. It is Henry, however, we build our houses better and I think our winter clothes are warmer. So you would be happy if I can make a plan to moor the Viking Lady in much warmer waters, I do like the sound of that. Do you have anywhere in mind, a couple of places but wherever I decide it needs to be warm enough for you to wear a bikini. You are definitely talking my language now Henry. He squeezed her and told her he would get onto that straight away.

They slept soundly and woke up to a very nice day, so they decided to lower the dingy and visit St Mary's island. They had a nice day walking around and a great pub lunch but returned to the Viking Lady for dinner. The next day Henry was listening to the weather forecast and told Annika they should pack up and leave as the weather is starting to turn. They headed south east towards the French coast, it took them most of the day to get to a little harbour close to the Logis Hôtel les Feux des Îles in the town of Clemenceau. The rain had started and it looked like they were in for a bad night, lets see if we can get a room in the hotel. Henry asked the harbour master and he told Henry he could use the phone. He returned and told Annika he had got a room and a taxi would be coming to pick them up. Before we go, I have no idea what this hotel is like, it does not

matter Henry it makes it exciting. The taxi honked his horn, they got in and the driver said, first time here, it is indeed Henry replied. The hotel looked okay and the room was clean, as long as the food is good we will be alright. You are forgetting there is only one bed Henry, I see that, so what are you going to do. Well I have a couple of options, however, I feel the safest for me would be, for you to sleep in the bed and for me to sleep on top of the bed. She burst out laughing and said, good luck with that Henry. They showered and went down to eat, they both had the fish of the day, which was very good. They were tired and went to bed straight after their meal.

I think it will be far too cold for you to sleep on top of the bed Henry, however, I do have a suggestion for you. He smiled and said, lets hear it. I will sleep in the bed as you said, and you could sleep under the duvet but on top of the bed. He started to say something and she stopped him, you thought I was going to suggest something more daring, I did indeed. The weather was foul so they stayed in the harbour until Sunday. They set sail early on Monday morning before daylight to head back to Hamble. Henry felt they had made very good time and arrived in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Both of them felt they should sleep on board instead of driving home, they were so tired they fell asleep within ten minutes of getting into bed.

After they had sorted everything out and closed up placing the weather cover over the cockpit area, they loaded the car and drove home. They arrived just after midday, Lydia asked them if they had a good trip and Henry told her the weather was foul and they had to take shelter off the French coast. Annika said, I will start the washing and she disappeared.

Did that beautiful, sexy Scandinavian young lady, tell you what she has done. I do not have a clue what you are talking about Lydia, that young lady has made my life so much easier. She has written a computer programme which checks all the stocks we invest in. She has finished it already. Finished, checked, tweaked, checked again and installed on your computer, on mine and my laptop. It works like a dream, just then a warning box opened up on Lydia's computer. Come here and take a look Henry, the warning told them two stocks had dropped to .075%, Lydia clicked on it and a list of investments they had made and the name of the company along with the amount.

Now if these stocks drop to .15% another warning will open and then you decide what you want to do. My god she only told me just before Christmas she would write a programme to do this, that is fantastic. She is special Henry, do not loose her, I have no intention of ever losing her Lydia. He found her in her bedroom packing her case. How long are we going for Henry, two weeks I think, but it is always better to ask Lydia as she will give you an accurate answer.

Come here I want to give you a big hug and a kiss, she almost jumped into his arms, he squeezed her and the kiss was a lot longer than he intended. He sat her down on the bottom of the bed and said to her, you are not only beautiful you are one of the smartest people I know. She

pulled a face and told him, the compliment is very nice but what for. You have written your programme and installed it and I actually saw it working, Lydia is over the moon. So that brings us to payment, how much do you want for the work I commissioned you to do.

Oh Henry, I did it for you and Lydia I do not want any payment, I do not need it, you already give me more than you should. I see I am not going to get a figure out of you, so I will open a bank account in Belize for you and deposit what I feel is a fair amount for what you have produced. We will let it run for a few weeks and then I will take care of the details. Thank you Henry and thank you for my bonus, far more than our agreement. I am sure our agreement states I must give you a minimum of three months, however, I can give you any amount over that. I am going to ask Lydia if we will be gone for two weeks, she got up and walked out.

Just before Lydia left she told Henry that Sir John thought it was very kind of you to want to employ Roger. He has asked if they can keep him until he sells the bank, I told him, I am sure Henry will not have a problem with that just as long as we can still use Roger's services. While we are away can you please find out if the Viking Lady can be collected from Hamble and moved to Granada on lake Nicaragua. I take it you mean moved by ship Henry, ship and road Lydia.

C

Chapter 34

H

enry fires Annika

Annika was getting excited as they waited for their flight at Heathrow. What airline are we flying on Henry, Singapore Airlines. I feel they are the best airline, really Henry, you will make your own judgement after we arrive, however, when you have flown as many times as I have it becomes a no-brainer if you have a choice.

They were shown to their seats and the air hostess brought Henry a bottle of water and asked Annika what she would like, the same, thank you. When did you ask for the water Henry, I did not, I fly with them on a regular bases and they remember what I always have to drink. Do you watch a movie Henry, not normally I sleep, that way I am not tired when I arrive and I do not have a problem with jet lag. After thirty minutes Annika said, lets go to sleep.

Henry woke up one hour before landing, Annika was still sleeping so he woke her up and told her they are one hour out if she wants to freshen up, thank you Henry, I would like that. They checked into the Raffles Hotel and Henry said, I need a shower and then I can show you around Singapore.

They took a boat ride down the river walked around China town and a couple of shopping malls. When they got back to Raffles they had a light lunch in the Courtyard. Annika told Henry she thought this hotel was great, do you always stay here. I stay here every time I come to Singapore I stay here, I am very happy with the service, food and the history attached to this hotel, I just love coming here. Do you want to look around the shops in the hotel complex, or would you like to do that tomorrow while I am out earning a living. I tell you what we do, let us walk around and look in the windows and then you will know what they have and tomorrow you can go back to the ones you want to look at. They walked around and Annika pointed out several things she was interested in.

They walked past Elliott and Carmen the jewellers, this shop looks interesting Henry. They have some very good pieces in this shop he replied. That evening they walked along the river bank so Annika could see the lights and they ate on board one of the boats that was moored along the river bank and had been turned into a restaurant. They took their time and enjoyed the meal and the evening atmosphere. They walked along the river bank holding hands just people watching. They took a taxi back to Raffles and had coffee in the lounge before retiring to their room. Annika hugged Henry and thanked him for a perfect day, you are more than welcome Annika. They watched a movie while sitting up in bed and both fell asleep before it had finished.

After breakfast Henry kissed Annika telling her he had to leave now so that he will be in time for his first appointment, I need to go and make a living so we can have the life we want. She laughed and said, I will see you

later, he smiled and walked to his waiting taxi. He finished by 11:40 and sat drinking a coffee when he received a call from Lydia telling him that his afternoon's appointment has been cancelled due to illness, thank you Lydia, and sorry they woke you up, it's not a problem Henry. He returned to the Raffles and the receptionist gave Henry an envelope, inside was a note from Annika. She told him she had gone shopping at one of the malls they went to yesterday and would be back around 18:00 just in case he got back before her.

He went up to the room and removed his tie and jacket and opened the safe, he removed the box which had the engagement ring in. He opened the box and looked at the beautiful ring, he closed the box and put it in his pocket and closed the safe. Henry walked down to the Courtyard and noticed that Elliott and Carmen had several people inside, so he sat down at a table just outside the jewellers and drank a small bottle of water and waited for the six people inside to leave. He entered and was immediately greeted by the manager, good afternoon Mr James. Good afternoon Jean-Claude how are you, very well thank you Mr James. May I be of service to you today. I am looking for two things today Jean-Claude, pray tell me. Henry placed the box on the counter and Jean-Claude picked it up and before opening it he looked at Henry and said, is this the engagement ring you purchased in 2003 Mr James. It is Jean-Claude, you have a problem with it, yes and no. Ah, so you are undecided Mr James and he placed the little box back on the counter. There is nothing wrong with the ring, however, I wish to change it, please let me explain, Jean-Claude bowed his head and said, please do. The lady I purchased this ring for refused my proposal and the ring has never been worn, in fact it has never been taken out of this box. I am almost ready to propose to another young lady and I feel I should not give her a ring that I offered to someone else. I understand your predicament and I am more than happy to make an exchange.

Jean-Claude picked up the little box and opened it, he removed the ring and picked up his loupe, he looked at the diamond and said, just as I remember, a 4.5 carat round brilliant cut of flawless quality. Would I be correct in thinking you wish to exchange it for a larger carat, I do Jean-Claude. If I remember you paid \$95k US dollars, that is correct Jean-Claude, do you know what size you would like for the New Ring Mr James. I was thinking about a 10 carat of the same quality, we do have, however, not here Mr James. I would be prepared to allow you \$100k against the 10 carat brilliant cut square diamond ring of flawless quality. Do you have a price for me Jean-Claude, \$395k US dollars Mr James.

You say it is the same quality Jean-Claude, it is the exact same quality and cut, then I would like to take a look at it. I could not get it here before the end of next week. That is not important as I will not be here after tomorrow, if you can get it here and hold it for me I will be back next month or by March at the very latest. I am prepared to leave this one here as a good will gesture. That will not be necessary Mr James, I am happy to leave it here as I do not intend to give it to anybody. We will hold it in our

safe Mr James. You did say you are looking for two things. I did indeed Jean-Claude, I am looking for a Ruby necklace. Let me see what we have, when Jean-Claude returned he placed a beautiful diamond and ruby necklace on the bust for displaying necklaces on the counter.

This looks fantastic Jean-Claude, this diamond and ruby necklace is hand made in our own workshop. There are seventy diamonds ranging from half carat to one carat, all diamonds are flawless and the cut is brilliant. Within the diamonds are tear drop ruby's, this combination makes this necklace really come alive. This is a statement set, inspired from the look worn by Elizabeth Taylor in the sixties. Elliott and Carmen believe this is one of the best necklaces to have come out of their workshop in a very long time and it very much speaks for itself!

I think you will agree this is a fantastic necklace and only worthy of your true love. Henry smiled and said, how much are you asking for this necklace Jean-Claude. With the matching earrings I can let you have this set for \$205k US dollars. It is very beautiful and I feel I must take it off your hands. Henry placed his debit card on the counter and they completed the transaction. He thanked Jean-Claude, shook his hand and told him he would see him just as soon as he can get back. Thank you Mr James and the engagement ring will be waiting for you when you return, Henry returned to his room and placed the necklace in the safe.

He took Annika to a little dance club that evening, they had a great meal and he asked her if she would like to dance, I thought you were never going to ask. They had several dances, however, it is not the type of dances I was hoping for, me neither Annika said. Still, we are not dressed correctly for either ballroom or Latin so I will check that out next time and I will see we have the right outfits packed, Annika said..

The next morning they flew to the Philippines and Henry had asked Lydia to book them in the Pangulasian Island Resort Manila. This is a beautiful hotel Henry, have you stayed here before, yes, the last time I came I told Lydia not to book me in here again unless I am travelling with a beautiful young lady. You know how to flatter a girl and I am not complaining. The dance floor was one that people just shuffled around and not really danced, Annika was not complaining because she liked being in Henry's arms.

They had three more days in the Philippines before flying to Australia, where they checked into the Intercontinental at Sanctuary Cove, Brisbane. All hotels you stay in are very nice Henry, I consider it a perk of the job.

Welcome back Mr James, why thank you Ruth, I have put you in your normal room and Miss Olsson is on the same floor right opposite. Thank you Ruth and both rooms are for my account. They unpacked and headed out to the pool. Annika was wearing pale blue floral wrap and Henry told her she looked quite fetching. They selected two pool side beds and put their towels down and Annika removed her wrap revealing a dark blue Brazilian bikini. You look absolutely stunning Annika, thank you Henry. You do not look too bad yourself and they both laughed.

They swam and played with a tennis ball they found amongst the

shrubs and generally had a very good time. After three hours Henry asked, are you ready to go I, I think so Henry. Then lets go and get changed, that sounds like a good idea. Annika put her wrap back on and they walked back to their rooms.

Henry knocked on Annika's door and when she opened she said, just in time to zip me up. He stepped inside and she turned around and Henry looked at this beautiful blond haired goddess standing with her back to him just waiting for him to pull up the zip of her dress which started just below her waist. He wanted to rip it off, not zip it up. He had to wait as he had a plan for this gorgeous Swedish beauty and he wanted it to be perfect. You do know what a zip is Henry, I do indeed Annika, I am only asking because I am still waiting. I am sorry my mind wondered a little, as long as it was someplace good. I believe it was, he zipped her up and spun her round and hugged her. Do I look good enough for you to take to dinner Henry. You are very beautiful Annika and more than good enough to take anywhere, thank you Henry.

Over their dinner Henry told Annika that tomorrow he will not be back before 18:30 at the earliest. So that means I must entertain myself, whatever turns you on young lady and they both burst out laughing. I believe there are some places we could go ballroom dancing if you would like to, I would love to Henry. However, I do not have a proper dress to go ballroom dancing in. I am sure if you ask the reception tomorrow they will tell you where you can go to find dance wear. Did you bring your card with you, you told me to carry it at all times and my mother always told me to be a good girl and do as you are told. I cannot comment whether you are good or not, but I do think you are a naughty young lady, given half a chance I would be, Henry just smiled. Do you not think that you should put a limit on my card Henry. I do not know where you are going with this, however, let me tell you for the very last time, you will never be given a limit.

When they got back to their rooms Annika opened her door and Henry kissed her goodnight. Did you book me into a separate room because you are loosing control Henry. It is Lydia that booked the rooms, however, I do think it is a very good thing she did. She gave him a peck and told him he takes all the fun out of life, she turned to enter her room and he lightly spanked her backside. She looked over her shoulder and said, be careful I might want more. He smiled and entered his own room.

Henry just managed to grab a croissant and coffee before heading for his taxi. Annika came out of the elevator and spotted Henry getting into the taxi, she headed into the breakfast room. She had a long leisurely breakfast and was really enjoying travelling with Henry. After she had finished she stopped at the reception and asked where she could purchase ballroom dresses, the girl wrote down the name of two shops and asked if she could call a taxi for her. Yes please, the girl made a call and the concierge answered his phone and she told him where Annika wanted to go. He signalled for a taxi and when it stopped he opened the door for Annika to get in, he told the driver where she needed to go to.

The taxi stopped outside the first shop and Annika asked the driver if he was happy to wait for her and just keep the meter running, he told her he is very happy to do so. However, it is not the cheapest way, she smiled at him and told him, not to worry. She walked inside and a lady in her forties asked if she could help her, yes please. I am looking for a ballroom gown as I did not know we would be dancing on this trip, lets see what we can find for you.

They had a lot of different styles and colours but not too many in Annika's size. She was not at all excited with what she saw, so the shop assistant went off to check the store room. She returned with two, this colour is Dark Teal with a scalloped neckline that touches the tip of your shoulders and extends into embroidered three-quarter length sleeves. Extravagant beading adorns the beautiful bodice. A detailed ruffle and sash-like skirt gives this gathered gown a sophisticated look. It is very nice Annika said. If it fits I will take it, she tried it on and it fitted perfectly. Do you have shoes to match, we do. She brought a pair with 3.5 inch heels, Annika tried them on with the dress and the height was perfect.

What is the second dress you are hiding away. You will love strutting your stuff in this chic, strapless Nina Canacci creation! Beautiful patterns of tiny, colourful, sparkling accents liven up its form-fitting bodice and continue partway onto the skirt. The layers of the skirt are broken up by a high side slit. That is stunning Annika said, may I try it on, certainly. They went back into the changing room where the shop assistance helped Annika change into the second dress. Again this dress fitted perfectly and the Peach colour was very delicate, do you have shoes to go with this dress, Annika asked. Let me go and see what I can find. When she came back Annika was still looking in the mirror. Try these on dear, they are not exactly the same colour, they are a few shades darker. Annika tried them on and they felt almost like she did not have anything on her feet. What do you think about these two dresses now you have tried both on, I love them both, so you will now have to choose. I choose to purchase both of them.

Do you have Latin dance dresses, we do, however, not a very good selection. She showed Annika and not one of them stood out for her. The two dresses along with shoes were first placed in a zip dress bag and the two pairs of shoes in a large carrier bag. They were carried out to the taxi and placed in the boot, I see you found what you wanted ma'am, not everything so can we please go to the second shop, certainly.

She walked into this very modern shop which was more geared up to Latin dresses, as they had very few ballroom gowns. Annika found many tight fitting sexy dresses, they had low cut tops or were backless. Splits halfway up the thigh or splits almost as high as the waist. A sales assistance approached her and asked if she could help, yes please, I am looking for a couple of Latin dance dresses. Annika was in her element as she was shown many different styles, she tried on several and finished up purchasing four.

The first was a Unique Silk dress with lots of surprising elements. A

two layer bias cut dress, The cranberry floral silk cut chiffon is layered over a toning purple lining to give it iridescence and made the colour of the chiffon pop. A splash of the lining colour is deliberately revealed at the right hand hip high slit when dancing. Fringing at the front starts on right hand hip and drops to the hem on the left. The back fringing is horizontal and meets the longer side of the dress. Sequins run along the front fringe edge. Beaded fringing detail accents the top of the arm. The front has a v-neck and is 100% silk outer with a soft stretch satin inner lining.

The second was a beautiful Argentine Tango halter neck dress which is all stretch black lace over red shimmer. The front bust gathers in the centre to create more definition. The red and black layered fringe creates a gorgeous fiery look which dazzles during movement.

She tried the next one and just had to have this Argentine Tango performance costume in Blue burnout velvet, with black lace sleeves and back. Black fringe runs at angles down the front and across the back emphasising long legs on sweeps and kicks, great for performance. A bra is incorporated into this dress.

The fourth was a stunning Salsa Dress. Styled with a flowing silhouette, the high low designed detail makes a striking effect, sexy halter neck, ruffled front bodice, with heart-stopping Dear-Lover Sexy backless design in a beautiful plumb colour. The sales girl told Annika this is a new style this season and it is very hot. These dresses are all magnificent Annika said, I just need shoes to go with them.

She got three pairs, a black pair which would go with two of the dresses, as well as a dark blue and a plumb pair. All her purchases were bagged and Annika returned to the taxi. Where to next ma'am, I think I have spent more than enough today so please take me back to the hotel. She got out of the taxi and the concierge arranged two bell boys to help with her packages, she turned and thanked the driver for his patience and paid him and placed an extra \$100 dollar bill in his hand, he was very happy.

All the dresses that Annika had bought came with the zip up bags to keep the dust off the garments, she thought that's a nice touch. She hung them on the outside of the wardrobe doors and realized she would need another suitcase. She changed into a one piece costume and went to the pool to wait for Henry. He came about two hours later and before getting changed he went to find her, he started at the pool and saw her laying on a pool side lounger. She had her eyes closed and he bent down and kissed her, she opened her eyes and quickly threw her arms around his neck and kissed him back. Did you enjoy your shopping trip Annika. I had a great day Henry and decided that from now on I am taking your advice, you are. Yes, I am not worrying about how much I spend on this card, that's good, so are you going to show me what you bought today. She got up and put on her wrap and said, lets go.

Once inside her room she showed him all her dresses, wow Annika, these look really stunning and I do like the fact that you managed to get shoes that matched. I have been given a dance hall that is open tonight so lets start with ballroom dancing and see how we feel dancing together.

That sounds good Henry, which dress should I wear. That is absolutely your choice Annika, however, if we are only dancing ballroom that cuts your choice down. Anyway give that some thought while you get dressed as we need to make a trip to a jewellers, what for Henry, because I must finish this dress off by giving you a necklace. Oh Henry, please stop talking, we do not want to spoil the effect by leaving your neck bare, do not get me wrong, you have a beautiful neck and with the right necklace you will look even more beautiful. She quickly showered and got dressed. While Annika was changing Henry asked the receptionist for a good jeweller.

Henry asked the taxi driver to please wait as they will not be very long, no worries mate came the reply, Henry thought of Johnny with that Australian slang. They looked at several items and finished up with a Silver and Gold Emerald Necklace accompanied by 33.37 carats of Emeralds and 21.24 carats of Diamonds. Set in white Gold. Annika said, thank you Henry it is beautiful. They returned to the hotel and Henry asked, how about an early dinner. They went straight into the restaurant and both had a pasta dish, they returned to their rooms where they got dressed for an evening of dancing.

When Henry had showered he fitted on his tuxedo and knocked on Annika's door, she opened and was still wearing the hotel robe. My, you look very dashing Sir, I did not know you had brought your tuxedo, I did not, I hired this one this afternoon. Do not worry, I am almost ready and she disappeared into the bedroom. When she returned she was wearing her ballroom dress and carrying the jewellery box. Will you please zip me up and then place this necklace around my neck and do up the clasp for me. That would be my pleasure, Annika. He zipped up her dress and placed the necklace around her neck and closed the clasp. She turned around and he was visibly taken aback. Are you alright Henry, I could not be better I was stunned with your looks as you look more beautiful than I have ever seen you look before, thank you Henry. She walked back to the bed and picked up a shawl she had bought to place around her shoulders. As she walked back towards him he knew this was the night he would make a major change in their relationship.

As they got out of the taxi and climbed the steps they saw quite a lot of couples walking inside the dance hall. Henry paid the entrance fee of \$25.00 each and they found a table on the second row. How do you feel Annika as you are looking around the room, excited and frightened all at the same time. Any reason Henry asked, well, it has been a couple of years since I last danced and I do not want to embarrass you. You will not do that, I do not embarrass very easily, you are terrible Henry, I know but I do love you Annika. She just looked at the band and could not believe what Henry had just said.

Most people were not dressed like Henry and Annika, some men wore suits and the ladies were wearing very smart dresses, they were definitely in the minority. Henry and Annika just ordered water and after they had drunk a glass of water, Henry asked, will you do me the honour of dancing

with me, she smiled and took hold of his hand. He walked her onto the dance floor and they glided into the Waltz. Henry did not bring any fancy moves into the dance and Annika felt like she was floating around the floor. She was in a slight daze as she did not put a foot wrong the whole dance and when it was finished she thanked Henry and he told her, it is just like riding a bike, you never forget. She hugged him and he asked her, I wonder what the next one will be. It was a Quickstep and Henry noticed that several people had left the floor.

They danced eight dances before returning to their table where they drank another glass of water. Again they danced the Waltz, Foxtrot and Quickstep several times before returning for more water. The compare announced they are having their weekly dance competition, will all couples please take to the floor. As normal we will start with two Waltz followed by two Foxtrot and two Quickstep. The judges will be walking amongst the dancers and when a judge tapes the gentleman on his shoulder, that means you have been eliminated and it is time for you to sit down. During the six dances we should get down to six couples and from there two couples will be selected for a final dance off. I wish you all the best of luck.

Have you ever been in a competition before Henry, a couple of times when I started dancing I danced with my golf partner. You mean Christine the lady whose wedding we are going to? The same lady. When I was young my mother made me take up dancing and also piano lessons and Christine became my dance partner. Have you entered a competition since you have grown up Henry, I have never entered another competition since, however, I was challenged to a private dance competition in Darwin a few months ago, I will tell you about that sometime as we have a competition to win. As they walked onto the floor Henry asked Annika, what about you, when I was in my teens I did and I will tell you about that sometime, he squeezed her hand and said touché.

By the end of the first dance at least twenty couples had been eliminated, after the next a further ten had sat down there was more room which made it a lot easier to dance. When the Foxtrot started a lot more couples had to sit down, Henry was in his element and Annika was very excited. At the end of the six dances Henry and Annika were still on the floor. The compare told them that he will play one of each of the dances again and at the end the judges will select two couples, the very best of luck. Henry and Annika were in the final dance off. The head judge asked each couple to select a dance they would prefer to dance to and they will be judged on that dance. Henry asked Annika which dance she wanted, I think the Waltz Henry, then the Waltz it will be, the other couple also chose the Waltz.

Henry shook the mans hand and wished them well, the couple smiled and walked away, the Australian won the toss and decided to go first. Henry and Annika stood and watched and Annika said, they are very good Henry, he gave her a squeeze and told her, they are, however, they are not as good as you. Henry led Annika around the floor putting in every step

he could think of, Henry felt this lady is the best ballroom dancing partner he had ever danced with. All five judges picked Henry and Annika over the other couple, they congratulated each other and Annika was presented with a gift voucher from the dress shop she had bought her Latin outfits. The compare told Annika it is our Latin night tomorrow we do hope that you will be able to come back. Henry said, we will be back.

Henry gave her a big hug and congratulated her on a spectacular performance, thank you Henry, however, being the female I always have the easier part as you are the one that leads so if we had not won I could have blamed you. He gave her a kiss and they sat down to drink several glasses of much needed water. Would you like to return to the hotel, I would like that and also a coffee would just finish the night off. When they walked into the hotel the receptionist asked how they got on, Annika told her that they won the competition. Congratulations, may we have two coffees in the lounge please.

Over coffee Henry told Annika that he had made a decision that will change her life, she looked at him and wondered what he was going to say. If you have finished your coffee we can return to our rooms. When they got into Annika's room Henry told her I have decided to fire you as my housekeeper. She looked shocked and Henry continued, from this moment on you no longer work for me. She was caught off guard and said, the first thing that came into her head. You cannot just fire me like that Henry, you have to give me six months notice as that is what you put in my contract. It is only fair because it gives me time to find another job. I just do not know what I have done wrong to make you fire me. Before you worry about finding another job Annika, let me assure you I have complied legally with our contract. I have deposited one years salary into your bank account in Belize in Lieu of notice and one years bonus. I do not have an account in Belize Henry. You do Annika, I opened one for you today with two deposits, the first was for the computer programme you wrote and the second was your final salary and bonus. I do not understand Henry, I thought we were getting on very well.

We are getting on far too well for you to be my housekeeper any longer. I would like to take our relationship to the next level, that is if you are happy to do that. It then clicked and Annika spun round pushed him up against the wall kissing him very passionately which he responded to. They were pulling each others clothes off as quickly as they could. They stood naked on the pile of clothes and Henry picked her up and carried her into her bedroom. They made passionate love for most of the night and she curled up against his chest and went to sleep. He looked at her naked body and ran his fingers up and down her spine and realised, Annika is the most beautiful woman he has ever made love to, and without any doubt she is by far, the best lover he has ever had the pleasure of making love to. He thought he has been a really stupid person, because he could have been with this Viking Goddess for six months already. He kissed her on her head and covered her up with the sheet and fell asleep.

Henry woke up at 07:00 and found Annika lying on his lap facing him,

she smiled and said, good morning, good morning my Viking Goddess. Was last night real or was I dreaming Henry, he pulled her to him and kissed her and then said, last night was very real. I think you will miss your appointment Henry, I only have one today and that is at 14:00 so it is not a problem. Lets get dressed before we miss breakfast as I have something to talk to you about. You are a terrible man Henry James, you caught me off guard last night, I think that it turned out just fine Annika. It did indeed Henry and I am more than happy to forgive you for giving me a fright. They showered together and both dressed casually then headed down to breakfast.

Over breakfast Annika asked Henry what he wanted to talk about. Two things, would you be happy to move into my Penthouse as my girlfriend stroke lover. She just looked at him so he carried on, I mean would you be happy to move into my bed, more than anything Henry. I do not care what you call me, girlfriend or lover it does not matter. I feel I have become your lover as I have always thought I was your girlfriend, just without the perks. They burst out laughing and finished their breakfast just smiling and looking at each other.

This is our last day as we fly to Sydney tomorrow. What are we going to do before you go to work, I need to return the tuxedo and you must exchange your prize for whatever you want from that shop. I feel I must also get a Latin costume, they also sell men's at this shop Henry. After Henry had collected the tuxedo they took a taxi and returned it to the hire shop. Then they went onto the little shop Annika had been to yesterday. The sales assistance welcomed her back, why so soon, do you have a problem. Not at all, this is Henry and I have this gift voucher that we won last night. You two won the ballroom competition, we did indeed, congratulations, are you going for the Latin tonight, we are, that's fantastic. So what can I show you, Henry needs a Latin costume and maybe I should take a couple more pairs of shoes, they say, a girl can never have too many pairs of shoes.

Do you have anything in mind Henry, a costume to go with that cranberry Tango dress Annika bought yesterday. I do have a top which is open half way down your chest in the same colour, together with a black pair of trousers which would look fantastic. Henry tried them on and also needed a pair of shoes. They are great I will take the three items along with the two pairs of shoes for Annika. The best of luck for tonight, thank you. Before returning to the hotel Henry asked the driver to please stop at a luggage shop. Henry got a large suitcase and then they returned to the hotel, they picked up the suitcase and their packets and went up to Henry's room, where they again made love, Henry looked at her and before he could say anything Annika said, we have a lot of catching up to do, he burst out laughing.

Henry signed a contract so he was very happy that all the appointment he had in Brisbane had turned into New clients. They took their costumes in the bags they got them in and changed at the dance hall. They looked a very handsome couple and they won the dance off with a spectacular

Tango. Henry gave Annika a kiss and thought, you are a better dancer than Bonnie, in fact you are the best dancer I have ever danced with. Again, Annika was given a gift voucher, she looked at Henry and asked him if it was alright if she gave it away. You won it, therefore it is yours to do with as you wish, she squeezed his hand and walked over to the second place couple and said. We are leaving in the morning so please accept this gift voucher, they thanked Annika and she felt good that she had given it away.

They checked into the Park Hyatt hotel in Sydney, welcome back Mr James, we have you in your usual suite and we have put Miss Olsson in the Quay Suite. I would like to make a change to that please, certainly Mr James, what would you like to change. Miss Olsson does not need her own suite anymore as she will be joining me in the Harbour Suite. I will amend your account Sir. Annika looked around the suite and said, this is very nice Henry, so you always stay here. I do, the suites are very comfortable, the food is great and the staff are very friendly and helpful. I like it here, you do seem to like the good life Henry, I am sure when you have spent a little more time with me, you will also like it, she just beamed and felt her life was going in the right direction.

Henry had a very full schedule for the week in Sydney, he was leaving before breakfast and not getting back until 19:30 at the earliest. When Annika asked him if this was normal, Henry told her he does not have normal weeks. He can have a lot of weeks like this one and he can also have weeks needing more hours, then again he gets a few like last week. When he is working he never works less than sixty hours a week and that does not include his flying time. She understood why he gets to stay in these fantastic hotels and always fly's first class. She spent the week swimming in the pool or walking along the harbour wall and also did a little more shopping. They had some great dinners during that week, however, Henry was not just tired he was exhausted and she could see he had been doing this job for far too many years and needed to slow down before his health deteriorated. He was far too young to start having health problems, she was concerned.

The flight to San Francisco was a long fifteen hours and Annika watched Henry sleep for three hours before going to sleep herself. Henry slept for thirteen hours and felt refreshed when they arrived. As they came off the aircraft Henry realised this was the first time he had travelled to America with somebody else. They were met by an FBI agent and lead to an interview room, Annika was asked to wait and given a seat. Henry was taken into another room and asked about Annika, Henry explained that Annika was his girl friend at present. The agent replied, at present. I intend to propose to her next month, why not this week Mr James. Because I will only get the ring next month, being made for you is it, something like that Henry replied. Just then agent Jones walked into the room and greeted Henry. I have done a quick check on your friend Mr James, she is soon to be his fiancée the first agent said. That's very nice for you Mr James, anyway she checks out and I have added her to your file so that you or her do not have a problem the next time you arrive. Thank you agent Jones.

Agent Jones escorted them through the custom hall and out to the arrivals hall. Henry thanked her and she told them to have a great day. What was all that about Henry, since last year some very kind people I know have made my life a lot easier, I usually get preferential treatment going through customs in America. This was the first time I have not travelled on my own. Agent Jones has added you to my file so the next time we fly into America we should not have a problem. I think there is more to you Henry James than you let on, he just smiled at her.

Henry did not have such a full schedule for the next week and Lydia had given him more time between appointments so he was able to spend time with Annika. During one of the days he did not have any appointments he took her to North Beach the city's Italian Quarter, they had a wonderful Italian lunch. From Washington Square they took the number 39 Coit Tower bus to the top of Telegraph Hill so they could climb up Coit Tower. Here you get a 360 degree view of the city. While they were looking out over the city Annika said, you have seen a lot of the world Henry, not really Annika, I have been to several countries and know most of their airports, however, I have not seen nearly enough of the countries as I would like to. Now I have a girlfriend I plan to see a lot more places that I do not normally have time to see. She held his arm very tightly and just said, I would like that Henry.

Henry only had five appointments for the whole week so he managed to show Annika Alcatraz, the notorious former prison in the middle of San Francisco Bay. He also took her to Chinatown as he felt it was not a place for her to visit alone.

She went shopping in Union Square while Henry was working as he told her this is the place for serious shoppers. It also has the largest Bloomingdale's outside of New York. She had just called a taxi because she had so many bags that she could not go into another shop. She told the driver she needed him to take her back to the Ritz Carlton, as she was putting the bags into the taxi her phone rang. The driver said, let me do this while you answer your phone. Hello mamma, how are you Annika, I am very well but I have not heard from you for some time and I was starting to get worried, Annika sat on a bench and asked the taxi driver to please hold on, no problem ma'am.

What is all that noise Annika, it's traffic, where are you, I am in San Francisco with Henry this week. Henry is on holiday Annika, no mamma he is working and I am shopping. You are travelling with Henry while he is working, yes mamma. We spent ten days in Brisbane and Sydney and the week before we were in Singapore and the Philippines.

I have some fantastic news to tell you, are you going to tell me how many clothes you have bought. No mamma, I was going to tell you that last week Henry fired me, what in the world did you do wrong, nothing at all. I am now Henry's girl friend, my god Annika. I am guessing you are very happy, I am ecstatic mamma, I have never been so happy or so spoiled in my life. My life has changed so much since I met Henry. I am pleased for you Annika, thank you mamma, I have to go as the taxi driver is waiting

for me, I will phone you when we return home.

She gave the taxi driver a \$50 tip and thanked him. The concierge arranged for a maid to help Annika take her bags to her room. When Henry returned she asked him if he had any space in his case as she had gone a little wild with her shopping trip, he just smiled and told her that they will make a plan. They had one of the best steaks Annika had ever eaten, it was their last night in San Francisco and they found a Latin dance club, got dressed up and danced several Tango's and Salsa's both of them were in their element. Henry said, we need to return to the hotel because I want to tear your clothes off. They left and only got up for a lazy breakfast at 08:00.

Jeff's computer came to life and a little box popped up telling him that Henry James had check in for his American Airways flight from SFO to JFK, changing to British Airways flying to London, Heathrow. No meeting today, he then spotted that Henry's file had been updated and he found that Miss Annika Olsson had been added to his file. She must be a very close friend of Henry's, Jeff thought, good for you Henry.

Roger was waiting at the arrivals and noted that four cases came back and he was sure they only took two, he did not pass any comment and just thought, it must have been a good trip.

Once inside Henry asked which case gets left here in the laundry, that one Annika pointed, should I put the other three in our bedroom, that would be very kind of you Henry. He put the cases in the bedroom and they had a shower, while he was in the shower Annika joined him. They kissed and soaped each other all over, they were just loving living life together. After they were dressed Annika made some breakfast and while they were drinking their coffee Lydia arrived, hugs all round and Annika went to make Lydia a coffee. Lydia placed some files and her lap top in the office and came back to drink her coffee.

What did you think of your trip Annika, it was great, however, I could not do it on a regular basis like Henry does. It was exciting for me and I did far more shopping than I have ever done in my life, we had to buy two extra suitcases. Lydia laughed and said, that tells me you had a great time. We did Henry replied, I also made a big change in my life, Lydia just looked. Annika smiled and told Lydia that Henry had fired her, he did what, Lydia asked. He fired me, I am no longer his housekeeper, she is now my girlfriend. I am so pleased for both of you, I guess I had better hand the key back then, they all laughed and Annika said, well, not as far as I am concerned.

Henry and Lydia went to the office and Annika went to unpack the suitcases and move all her clothes and her make up and anything else from her old bedroom to her new one. Henry handed over the files and while Lydia was going through them he opened his post. Nothing exciting only a couple of bills, Lydia had not finished with the files so Henry phoned Jean-Claude, ah Mr James, you are calling to find out if I have your ring, I am and I do Mr James. Do I need to phone before coming to see you, bien sûr que non Mr James. Then it will be in the next ten days, bien.

When Henry put the phone down Lydia looked up and said, I see you also had a good trip for business Henry. First let me ask you what have you got next. Lets talk about the Viking Lady while Annika is not here, it will be collected the day after tomorrow and will be taken into Southampton and loaded on a cargo vessel, ten days later it will be unloaded on lake Nicaragua. You are a star Lydia, thank you Henry.

I have fifteen potential clients waiting for appointments, where are they. Four in Mexico City, three in Singapore, two in New York, two in Washington DC, two in Copenhagen and two in Stockholm. Lydia waited for Henry to tell her where he wanted to go first. You can get me to Singapore first within the next two days, Annika will not be going. Lydia just looked at him and did not say anything. We can then go to Mexico City with three days in Acapulco, please advise the ladies we are coming. You said we, is Annika going with you, yes she is, because I want to introduce her to my clients and their wives. I will tell you something about Annika. She is without doubt the best dancer I have ever danced with in both ballroom and Latin. That is fantastic Henry. From Acapulco we can go to Nicaragua and sort out the Viking Lady. Need one week this time and then I wish to spend around five days in Belize on the way home. We can then go to Scandinavia and while I am with clients in Copenhagen and Stockholm Annika can go and see her mother.

I will let you know tomorrow whether you send me to New York or DC first and for how long. I will get straight onto that, before you do that I wish to tell you that now I have found a beautiful young lady whom I wish to make my wife, I do not want to be charging around the world doing this job any longer. So, I would be very happy if you stopped making any more appointments for me. Lydia asked, does Annika know about any of this. The only thing we have spoken about, is her becoming my girlfriend, however, I would think she would be happy to move to the next level after girlfriend. Lydia said, me too.

Will Annika be going with you to America I would want her to accompany me as I wish to introduce her to a couple of friends if possible. I know you said, that you wanted to work for me for only two more years and you may feel that if I am not taking appointments you should stop working. Please do not do that as I am sure to start something else as I am too young to do nothing. We can cross that bridge when we come to it Henry, thank you Lydia.

One hour later Lydia told Henry you leave tomorrow night for Singapore, and one has pulled out so I have you there for one day only, that's good. Annika walked past and asked if you guys would like a coffee, they both said, yes please. She brought in the coffees and placed hers on the other side of Henry's desk and said, I need to fetch something before I have my coffee. She came back and placed a gift box on Lydia's desk in front of her and just said, I got this especially for you from Union Square in San Francisco. Oh Annika, that is very kind of you and she started to open the box. Before you open that box you might not want to do that while Henry is here, oh, Lydia uttered. It's okay Lydia, I need to make a

call so I will disappear into the lounge.

Lydia carried on opening the gift box, inside she found a beautiful plum coloured dress and matching underwear. The dress had a plunging V neck almost down to the naval, a scalloped rear and it also had a split up to the hip on the right side. This is very daring Annika, it is, however, that is what you told me you wanted for your games with Ian. Now, check out the bra and thong. Lydia picked them up and said, this does not even look like a quarter cup bra Annika, I know and it will be a big turn on when you wear that for him. My god Annika, this is the smallest thong I have ever seen, a string in the rear and a piece of material two inches wide at the front. I think you are going to have a fantastic weekend wearing these, I believe I will, thank you so much, she got up and came around her desk and hugged Annika and thanked her again, you are more than welcome Lydia. I trust it will work just how you want it to.

Henry phoned the Hamble school of yachting and told the lady on the phone who he was and explained that he is moving his yacht, somewhere nice and warm Henry, lake Nicaragua he replied as we both want the hotter weather. He then phoned Mårten Karlsson and told him he was looking for a new Malö, you wish to trade in the 36 Henry, no Mårten, the 36 will be moored on lake Nicaragua from the last week in February and the new yacht will be moored somewhere along the Pacific or Caribbean coast of Nicaragua or possibly Belize. You are moving there Henry, I own a house on lake Nicaragua so it is the obvious choice. Do you want a new yacht Henry, I think so, then you need to pay a visit so we can discuss the layout. I will be in touch just as soon as I can arrange a date.

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The next day Henry and Annika jogged around Hyde Park a couple of times before showering and going out for a late lunch. Henry told her he had to fly back to Singapore tonight and would only be there for one day. I am not asking to come with you, that would be a wise decision Henry replied. He slept most of the way to Singapore and walked into Raffles hotel and went straight to his room and had a shave and a shower.

He phoned Jane and she said, hello Henry how are you, I am very well Jane how are you, fine thank you, now what can I do for you. The First lady asked me to let her know when I was coming to DC again. Do you have any dates for me Henry. Any date after 27th March whatever suits her, they will both be in the White House from the 29th March until 10th April. I will ask my boss and get back to you, thank you Jane and please tell her I have somebody I wish to introduce her to. You have a girl friend Henry, I do Jane and I am sure she will be more than just a girl friend by the time we fly to DC, I will call you just as soon as I have spoken to her. Thank you Jane.

Henry walked into Elliott and Carmen and was welcomed by Jean-Claude, they exchanged pleasantries and Jean-Claude said, please excuse me while I go and fetch your ring. He returned and placed two ring boxes on the counter. This one contains the 4.5 carat ring you purchased in 2003 and he opened the box showing this beautiful ring. The second one contains the new ring, this ring was noticeably bigger and because it is bigger it looked brighter.

Jean-Claude removed the ring and held it up for Henry to look at. It looks magnificent Jean-Claude and Henry held the ring, this is a 10 carat brilliant cut flawless square diamond ring. Jean-Claude said, I believe the young lady will be speechless and will only have tears in her eyes Mr James. I will take it Jean-Claude and Henry placed his debit card on the counter, do you wish to look at anything else while you are here Mr James. Henry smiled and just said, not today Jean-Claude, I think I have spent enough for one day. It is my job to make sure I have taken care of all your needs. This is the certificate for the ring and he showed it to Henry and after he had read it Jean-Claude put it back in the envelope. They shook hands and Henry picked up the box and put it in his pocket and left.

He ate in the courtyard and while he was drinking his coffee Jane phoned him, good evening Jane, hello Henry. I have spoken to the First Lady and she is very pleased to hear that you now have a girlfriend, Henry smiled. Would Friday the 8th April work for you Henry, it would be perfect, then I will pen you in her diary, shall we say 20:00 for 20:30 that will be great Jane. Will you be staying at the Inter Continental Henry, I would think so Jane. Then a driver will pick you up at 19:45. thank you Jane, you

are welcome Henry. He finished his coffee and thought that will be a very nice end to my last business trip. It was too early to go to bed so he ordered another coffee and just sat relaxing while looking at the people going by.

His phone rang again and on checking he said, hello Mary, how are you Henry, I am very well thank you, please hold for your God Father. He smiled because Mary was the only one that said that. Hello my boy, how are you, very well Randolph how are you. I am over the moon my boy, what have you done to make you so happy. It's what I am going to do for you, pray tell me Randolph, the fun has started my boy with the oil companies beginning to make contact. Three have already phoned me and I have told them to put their offers in writing and I will see if my clients are interested. I know what you paid for these tracks of land so to save us both a lot of time, do you have any idea what you would accept.

Let me start by telling you what I have done and what I plan to do, I am listening my boy. I no longer have a housekeeper because I fired her and she then became my girlfriend. I am very pleased for you my boy and I know Martha will be very happy as she likes Annika very much. I have decided to stop flying around the world signing up anymore new clients, I will start looking at doing things that I would like to do. Now I own the investment bank I will make a lot of money at the end of each year and not have to fly all over the world. What do you want to do Henry, I would like to open a company to restore world war two aircraft. I would hope we can get as many airworthy as possible and all the others we could open a museum for the public to come along and see some history.

Anyway something along those lines, so you could do with a lot more money because that type of restoration needs large amounts of money. What percentage profit would you be happy with, 100%, 200% or 500%, as much as you can get. Then are you happy for me to make the decision or must I keep informing you. I am happy for you to take control of that Randolph because I know you will always do your very best for me. Just bare in mind that the more you make for me, the more jobs I can create. Leave it with me my boy. The only other thing to say is, that Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd owns three tracks of land and I would like them all to be sold at the same time Randolph, I agree my boy.

That evening Annika answered the phone and the display on the phone told her it was Christine, good evening Christine. Good evening, am I speaking to Annika, you are indeed, however, I am sorry to tell you Henry is not here. That's not a problem as I wanted to speak to you. Do you dance Annika, yes I love dancing, that's great because I want to know if you and Henry will do me a favour at my wedding. What do you need, when Henry's sister got married she asked Henry and I to dance a Tango for her, we did and everybody loved it. I would like you and Henry to dance a hot smoking Tango at my wedding, would you be happy to do that for me. We will do that with pleasure, thank you so much Annika, you are very welcome Christine.

Henry felt very happy with the way his life was going and he knew when he had finished signing up the last few clients, he would start looking for

a place to build this war-bird restoration company, which he thought could be a good name.

He signed up both clients in Singapore and flew back to Heathrow the following day. Henry thought this is how most people felt, when you return home, your girlfriend is happy to see you. Lydia had been working for an hour when Henry walked into the office, this is most unusual Henry, I can see having a girlfriend is very good for you. Have you told your mother and father, no, I did not give it a thought. You have not told anybody Henry, I have told Randolph and an American friend, maybe Sir Randolph will tell your father, he cannot do that Lydia. It is called client attorney privilege so he cannot. You do not change Henry James.

Henry and Annika landed in Mexico City on the 17th February and had all day looking around the city and walking in the parks. Annika told Henry that she really liked this city, although there are lots of people they are all friendly. The next day Lydia told Henry one of his appointments had cancelled due to ill health so he managed to see the remaining three and they flew to Acapulco that evening. They met up with Henry's clients and their wives at the dance club. It was hand shakes and hugs all round and the ladies told Annika they are very happy now that Henry has a girlfriend to take care of him. They then warned her she will have to share him while he is in Acapulco as their husbands struggle to dance more than two dances all evening. Annika smiled and told them that Henry had explained what will happen. The evening ended with everybody saying they had a good time and the ladies said to Annika, please make this a regular visit. They got in a taxi to take them back to the Fairmont Acapulco Princess, where they made love for most of the night.

They got up quite late and had a leisurely breakfast and then took a tour enjoying a fun day on this islands ecological reserve. The glass-bottom boat allowed them to observe the sea life as well as a submerged statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe on their way to Isla La Roqueta. they also went swimming, snorkelling, and sampling some delicious seafood. They really enjoyed their day and the next day they visited the Fuerte de San Diego which is one of the most important historical monuments. They walked around the hotel gardens and had some fantastic meals. Henry suggested to Annika that she should phone her mother, I only phoned her the other day, Henry raised his eyebrows, she smiled and said, I promise I phoned her while you were in Singapore. That's nice, however, I am only suggesting for you to arrange to meet her because we are going to Sweden in about three weeks time and you could spend the day with her while I see clients.

Annika phoned her mother and when Fredrika answered she said, are you alright Annika because you only phoned me last week. You see Henry, mamma is not happy because I am phoning her again, as it was only last week, I did not say that Annika, I know mamma. Apparently we will be travelling to Sweden in three weeks and I could come and see you while Henry is working. Do you have a date for me, please hold and I will find Henry and ask him. As Annika walked around the gardens looking for

Henry, Fredrika asked, are you in London, no mamma, we are in Acapulco.

You are travelling with Henry, yes mamma, we flew to Mexico City because Henry had clients to see and whenever, he comes to Mexico he always spends time in Acapulco. When here he spends an evening with clients and their wives dancing every Latin dance. So you had more Latin fun Annika, we certainly did, how long are you in Mexico, we leave tomorrow, where are you going, ah, I see Henry. Do you know what date we go to Sweden Henry, as mamma is asking, we go on the 14th so you should arrange to see her on the 15th, and please tell her I say hello. Henry says hello mamma, hello Henry. So where are you going tomorrow, my mother is asking where are we going tomorrow Henry, it's a surprise Fredrika. Did you hear that mamma, yes I did, is Henry always so secretive, only sometimes. Do you think, stop mamma, before you ask me something I might get upset about, I do not think anything. I am very happy to go anywhere with Henry, I will see you on the 15th of March.

Do you understand why I do not wish to phone my mother all the time, she still thinks she has the right to know everything I do and I can get very cross with her at times. We had words over Christmas because of what she asked me, she loves you and she just wants to make sure you are happy so do not get upset. I can say the same about your mother, she just wants the same for you, however, I do not think you call her every week Henry, and you certainly would not tell her who you saw and what you did. Touché Annika. They had another fantastic seafood meal and again made love for most of the night.

The next day Henry told Annika we are flying to Nicaragua to do a little sailing, that's great Henry, Pacific or Caribbean. Neither, we will be sailing on Lago de Nicaragua, which is the largest lake in Central America. What yacht will we be sailing, not sure, we will see what they have when we get there. When they landed Henry arranged for one of their cases to be stored until they flew out. They were met at the airport by a man holding a board with Henry's name on it, he had a seven seater taxi and forty five minutes later they were in Granada. Which hotel Sir, no hotel we need to go down to the port.

There were a number of yachts moored and Annika asked if he thought it was one of those, I do not think so as I am guessing it is that one that is being lowered into the water by that crane. Henry paid the taxi driver and thanked him. They walked along the quay towards the crane, a man walked towards them and asked, Mr James, that's me, they shook hands and the man said. Sorry we are not quite ready for you, we had a little trouble finding a truck we were happy to use. Not a problem Henry replied, we will just sit and wait, thank you Mr James. They sat and watched as the yacht was lowered into the water. Why did they have to bring it by truck Henry, because it came from Bluefields on the Caribbean coast.

When they had tied it up Henry said, lets go and check it out and they walked along the quay towards the yacht. It was only when they got close enough that Annika could see the name, The Viking Lady. Oh Henry this is a surprise, a nice one I hope, very much so. Henry checked around and

signed a document and they boarded their yacht. You did not tell me you were bringing her here, I thought you would like the surprise, she gave him a big kiss. I will unpack the case, we should then go and find some food, they did find a shop and got a couple of sandwiches.

They set sail and once out of the port Annika asked anywhere special or just follow the coastline. Henry replied, you can set a course for Puerto Morrito Annika, it is more or less opposite the two volcanoes. She replied, aye, aye skipper, and the Viking Lady's sails filled with the wind off the lake and they both felt very happy to be on the water again. After half an hour of cutting through the water they had moved far away from Granada and Annika told Henry she was going to change into her bikini. She came back on deck in a stunning red small bikini, wow, Henry said, you look incredible. Is it alright if I sunbathe, sure it is, just let me put some shorts on first.

Henry returned and took over the wheel, he gave Annika a kiss and said, I brought us some water, thank you. Annika picked up her bottle and went to lie down to catch some sun. Henry looked at this beautiful, perfect, intelligent and very sexy young lady. He thought I am so lucky to have found her and my life is now going in the right direction, I have everything a man could wish for.

He said we are 30 minutes out, Annika sat up and could see the shoreline, she went down to the cabin and put on shorts and a t-shirt, she then joined Henry in the cockpit. As they got closer she could see a large house, are we going there Henry, we are, do you know the owners or have you rented it. I know the owner, will they be at home, not at the moment. She reduced the sails and Henry manoeuvred to the jetty under power, they tied the Viking Lady up and Henry helped Annika onto the jetty. They stood holding hands for a while just admiring the Colonial. What do you know about this property Henry, it is a Spanish Colonial built by the Conquistadors in the 1530's and it has just been renovated. Come, let me show you around, Annika had a very big smile because just like Henry she loved old properties.

Henry walked towards the steps and the front door opened and the caretaker stepped forward and said, good afternoon Mr Henry, good afternoon Maria, welcome back to Nicaragua, thank you Maria. Henry said, in his best Spanish, please meet Annika, Annika this is Maria, they shook hands and Maria said, it is nice to meet you Miss Annika. They walked inside and Maria asked if they needed her, Henry's Spanish was not very good so Annika said, we will call you if we need you. Maria left and Henry showed Annika this magnificent Colonial. How do you know the owner Henry, I have know him all my life. The last room Henry walked into was the master bedroom and Annika said, everything is just perfect and the view across the lake with those two volcano's is fantastic and it is so peaceful here. Is this a place you could happily live in on a semi permanent basis Annika, I could live anywhere as long as I am living with you Henry.

Henry got down on one knee opened the little box and held it up to

Annika, he asked if she would marry him. For a second or two she was lost for words and then she recovered and just said, yes, I would be honoured to marry you. She then noticed the ring, oh my god Henry, that is the most magnificent ring I have ever seen, she held the box and Henry removed the ring and placed it on her finger. Oh Henry, I do not know what to say to you. There is nothing else to say as I only wanted to hear the word, yes. They hugged and kissed and Henry picked her up and carried her to the bed, ripped her t-shirt, shorts and bikini off, she helped him out of his clothes and they made mad passionate love for the rest of the afternoon.

Are you serious about living here Henry, here and a couple of other places. Do you think the owner will sell, no he will not sell, then how can we live here. Because I bought this Colonial last year and had it renovated, it was finished in January. You are such a tease Henry James, I know Annika Olsson. I think we need to fetch some clothes, that's a good idea Henry, they put on their shorts and t-shirts and headed out along the jetty to the Viking Lady. Henry picked up the case and said, this is your New home Viking Lady, I hope you will be happy. Of course she will, we are both very happy and for the umpteenth time she held her hand slightly out in front of her and looked at her ring. Thank you Henry, I really do love you, I know and I love you Annika and I am sorry I have wasted so many months. I should have, stop right there Henry, do not talk about what you should have done, you only need to talk about what you are going to do. He squeezed her and kissed her and they walked back to the house.

Where does Maria live, out back over the garages, lets go and find her because now she has met you she will want to know if she still has a job. But of course Henry, why would she think that, because as far as she is concerned, she works for the lady of the house. They walked out the rear door and Henry called out, Maria, she came from the side of the garage, Henry said, we would like to talk to you. With that Annika spoke to her in Spanish and Henry did not understand everything that was being said as they both spoke so quickly. They laughed and smiled and finished up by hugging each other, come Henry, Maria has something for you. They followed Maria around to her apartment above the garages and went upstairs, once inside she showed them the apartment where only one room was furnished. We will get this sorted in the next day or two, Annika explained to Maria and a very big smile came to her face.

She then gave Henry an envelope, he opened it and found a document and two keys, Maria pointed to the floor. Lets go take a look, they went downstairs into the garage, there was a New Mercedes Benz 4 x 4. We will go to Granada tomorrow and get everything that Maria needs, Annika explained to Maria what Henry had said, and also suggested to her that she makes a list of everything she needs for her apartment as well as food for the main house and food for her apartment. Henry also wants to know if you can recommend people to work on the property. Maria asked what type of work do you need doing. We will definitely need at least two

gardeners but I think three would be better, does Mr Henry want a man or would he accept a woman. What do you have in mind Maria. My daughter finished college six months ago and is looking for a job. What subject did she take, horticulture, and she cannot find work. Nobody wants to employ her because she is a woman, unless she is prepared to have sex with the owner. I know that attitude very well Maria.

Can she come and see us this week, if she has the qualifications and we all get on then Mr Henry will not have a problem with her working here. She will be here in the morning. Is she married Maria, no, she has not met the right man yet. Can she live with you, I would be very happy, however, she may not want too, we will see tomorrow Maria.

Henry and Annika went to a small restaurant in Puerto Morrito, apart from the meal they wanted to check out the locals. Everybody was very friendly and Henry told Annika, it is because your Spanish is so good. Everybody seemed to know who Henry was and several people told Henry that if he needed any work doing he can find workmen here, it is not necessary to go to Granada. That's good to know Henry replied, Annika translated as Henry's Spanish had not sounded correct. Over the meal Henry asked Annika what she wanted to do. What do you mean Henry, well I am not going to be flying around the world like I have been and there are a couple of things I want to start doing as I cannot just retire and do nothing, that would not be healthy.

I have enough money to start a project that I have always been interested in. Do tell Henry, I want to find as many world war two aircraft that I can and restore them. All the ones that become airworthy could fly at air shows around the country and all others could be put in a museum, of course, we would have to build that. My god Henry that sounds like a major undertaking, very interesting and I am sure it will cost, what do you say, *an arm and a leg*. Probably more than that Annika. So tell me now that you have become the lady of the house, what would you would like to do with your time?

I have always wanted to help children to improve their lives. Do you have anything in mind? She burst out laughing and said, how much money do I get to play with. How much do you need, well, it must be done right, so several million. I have not run away from that amount as yet so what do you have in mind. I have always felt that if you give a child the best education then he or she should be able to go out in the world and make something of themselves. Would you be interested in building a school in Nicaragua Annika. Very much so Henry. You will want to go and see the school facilities to find out what you need to do. It could cost many millions Henry, are you sure. I am more than happy for you to get involved in such a wonderful project like education, especially since you wish to do it here. I am happy to start your project off with a £10m investment, just make every pound count. I am sure I can do a lot with 10m Henry and I will not waste your money. I do know that and I also know that when you come up with a date to become Mrs Henry James it will be your money as well. She squeezed his hand and told him she loved him, I love you too,

Henry replied. When they left most people shook their hands and said, *buenas noches*. On the drive back Annika said, the natives seemed friendly enough, they do indeed.

They made mad passionate love for most of the night again as Annika was insatiable. Henry woke up with the sun shining through the window, and he looked at Annika curled up in his arm as she was still sleeping. He again thought what a very lucky man I am, his life is perfect and he could not think of anything that could change it. He kissed Annika and said, good morning sleepy head, she opened her eyes and a big smile came to her face, I think it's time for us to jump in the shower Henry said.

They sat on the front veranda drinking their coffee when Maria came around the corner of the Colonial and said, *buenos días*, Henry and Annika looked up and replied, *buenos días* Maria. I would like to introduce my daughter Daniela, *buenos días* Mr Henry. Henry and Annika stood up and shook Daniela's hand and both said, *buenos días* Daniela. Will you join us for a coffee Daniela?

That would be very nice, thank you. Maria went off to make a coffee, please sit and join us at the table, Henry said. Both ladies smiled, Daniela sat down and opened a folder and gave Henry the contents. He looked at it, smiled and handed it all to Annika saying, my Spanish speaking is not very good, however, I cannot read Spanish at all. Annika read through all the papers that Daniela had brought with her. These are very impressive she said in English, Daniela said, they are better than I was expected to do, however, I did not get A's in every subject and I feel I should have done much better. We all feel we could have done better, Annika replied. So you understand English, do you speak it Daniela? I understand more than I speak Miss Annika and I am sure my English will get better if I am around you and Mr Henry. Annika smiled.

Because Henry feels his Spanish is not good enough he wants me to conduct your interview. How about another coffee Henry asked. Both ladies said, they would like another, Henry went off to find Maria. Annika told Daniela that they are looking for people to look after the whole property. A manager that can be left in charge to see that everything is done as it should be. Arrange for outside workers to repair anything that needs fixing, employ gardeners to take care of the grounds. Henry and I want most of the property to be left wild so that it will attract as much wildlife as possible. Around the Colonial we want to have an orchard with as many different fruit trees that can be grown here. Daniela's eyes lit up and a big smile came to her face as Annika continued. We want the area close to the Colonial to be a blaze of colour, also from the front down to the lake we would like a large area of grass.

Do you think that is a job you could handle Daniela, you want me to manage the property, I thought I was coming to speak to you about being a gardener. I have just explained what we want to do to the property, so it is up to you which position you apply for. It would be expected that Mr Henry would employ a man in the managers position as nobody would employ a woman in that position in this area.

Annika laughed and asked, why ever not. Because people around here think a woman is just not capable, she is only there to cook, clean and make babies. Annika asked, do you think you are capable of being the manager here? I am not interested in what other people think, I am only interested in what you think. I do feel I am more than capable of doing that job. Good, both Henry and I like to buck the system. Now, if you can give us a little while to discuss this, maybe while waiting you could look around and make suggestions as to where you feel the fruit trees should go and what you know will grow here. With water everything will grow here. Please ask Maria to bring us some water and Henry and I will have a talk.

Annika explained to Henry everything she and Daniela had spoken about and what her pass grades were in horticulture and business management. Henry felt she fitted the bill, however, he asked Annika what she thought before passing any comment. I like her very much Henry and my instinct tells me she would do this job very well. That's it then, we have found a manager that will look after the property, better give her a shout so we can give her the good news.

Annika got up and walked around looking for Daniela, she found her sitting on a bench at the rear of the Colonial writing in a note pad. Sorry to interrupt you Daniela, will you please return so that Henry can talk to you. She jumped up and followed Annika back to the front porch where Henry was waiting. Please sit down Henry said. When she was seated he said, Annika has explained in great detail everything she spoke to you about and we are both very happy to offer you the position of Estate Manager. She was thrilled and had a tear in her eye, she thanked Henry and told him she would not let him down. We are sure that you will excel in this position because all the locals will be watching you and they will be waiting for you to slip up.

When we go to Granada today I will go and see the attorney and get him to draw up a contract. Now, it will be your decision who you employ and where you purchase from. If anybody gives you a hard time stop using them and move on to the next supplier. Just remember, whoever you employ and whoever you choose as your suppliers is your decision and we will stand by you. Never accept any rudeness from anybody, and if people try to put you down then write them off and just remember this, it is their fault and their loss. If you finish up having to get all your supplies from Granada then it means the people here are very stupid and deserve to loose your business. We will always stand by our decisions.

I will also go to the bank and set up an account that will be for all the needs of this estate, you will have to keep a set of books to comply with the law. The only demand I make regarding employees is that everybody must go to the hospital for a full medical check up before they can be employed, just in case anybody has some awful disease. So you and Maria must have a check up today if possible. The full cost must come out of that bank account, that way the medical report will get sent to you and there cannot be any reason for you not to read it. If somebody has a

serious medical problem then you should not employ them. Once you have passed your medical we can discuss salary and a working budget. How many people can I employ, I would expect you to need more people for the first year so they should be employed on a one year contract. After that then you will work within your budget. Can I employ my brother or do you not want family members, I do not have a problem with that, how could I, your mother works here. But she does not work for me and I do not work for her.

My brother does have a medical problem, when he was eight years of age he was involved in a fight at school and since then he gets a lot of pain in his ear and gets dizzy at times. Was he not taken to the doctor, he was but the doctor told us there is nothing they can do. Bring him this morning and he will have a check up. Now, lets start at the hospital in Granada. Once Henry dropped them off at the hospital he went to the bank and then the attorneys. Annika arranged with the hospital that people would be coming for check ups before they will be employed. The hospital administrator was happy to carry out the check ups and send the report to Daniela before receiving payment.

Both Maria and Daniela had a clean bill of health, however, Geovany had damage to his right inner ear. The doctor told the three ladies that he had Perilymph Fistula. A PLF repair involves an operation under general anaesthetic working through the ear canal. The eardrum is lifted up and minute soft tissue grafts are placed around the base of the stirrup. The operation usually takes about one hour to complete and the good news is, there is very little pain. Once discharged he must spend three days at home with limited activity and will be completely recovered in one month. Annika asked when can he have this operation, Maria said, we do not even know how much it will cost and I will need to get a lone from the bank. Annika hugged her and told her, Henry will pay so lets tell the doctor to start as quickly as possible. Maria sat down and had tears rolling down her face, do not cry Maria everything will be alright. Annika turned back to the doctor and he told her the operation could be done straight away.

Henry walked into the attorneys office with much shaking of hands taking place, after pleasantries and coffee, he was asked what could they do for him. several things please, just ask Mr James and we will do our best to help you. I need to open a bank account so that all the running cost for the Colonial can be made, I can do that with a phone call straight away. He picked up his phone and asked the secretary to get José at the BAC bank. Your second request Mr James, before Henry could answer the phone rang and Henry could make out that it was José from the bank. The phone was put down with the words sorry Mr James, what were you about to say. I need you to draw up an employment contract for the New estate manager, no problem. Do you need anything special in the contract, no, just a standard contract with a three month trial period and Henry gave Daniela's name.

I would also like to change the name holding the shares of the company that owns the Colonial. You have sold it Mr James? No, not at all, I have

just got engaged and I wish to give this property as a present to my fiancée. It is not for me to tell you what to do Mr James, however, I would want to know a young lady for quite some time before I did anything like you are planning to do. I have known her for some time, but it needs to be done before we get married. Antenuptial contract no doubt Mr James, that is correct. I just need her full name, Annika Olsson, do you need an address? Not at all. I will make the changes and give you a photo copy so you can show the young lady, that will be ready at the end of the day, just drop in after you see José.

You need something else Mr James, yes please, I wish to apply for Nicaraguan citizenship for Annika and myself. That would go through pretty quickly Mr James. I have all the information so I can start the process immediately. Before I forget your appointment with José at the bank at 16:30 hours today. They shook hands and Henry left and headed back to the hospital.

Henry found them in the waiting room and said, sorry to keep you waiting, you are not, we are waiting for Geovany to come round. Annika explained what the doctor had found, she then arranged for him to have the operation straight away. The doctor told us everything went according to plan and he should be awake about now. That's fantastic Henry replied. He then told Annika they had an appointment at the bank at 16:30 as they will need to sign some documents, Daniela must come as well. Half an hour later they were leaving the hospital and heading for the bank. Maria and Geovany stayed in the 4 x 4 while Henry, Annika and Daniela went to the bank. They met José and told him what they needed and he told Henry that a cheque book and debit cards would be ready in four days. Henry then told him he would make a phone call and get money transferred, he phoned Daniel and gave him the account number and asked him to transfer 20k US dollars. José was very happy with his New clients, shook hands and told them that if they need any help to just call him.

Back in the vehicle they asked how Geovany is feeling, he replies that he feels better than he has ever felt, everybody smiled. I need to stop off at the attorney's to pick up a paper. We then need to find a shop that will supply furniture where can you recommend Daniela? She told Henry where to go and they headed towards the outskirts of Granada. In the store they found most things they needed for the apartment, Maria said to Henry and Annika, that she has never known such kind people in her life. When they returned to the vehicle Henry said, what we need now is a good restaurant to celebrate Geovany's successful operation. They all had pasta and laughed a lot. Henry asked Daniela if she can make an appointment for Annika and himself with the local mayor. When do you wish to see him, as soon as possible, I will try for tomorrow.

When they returned to the Colonial Henry said, why don't we have a coffee on the veranda, that would be very nice Henry. Annika made the coffee and brought it out on to the veranda. She poured and gave Henry a big kiss and sat down, I have enjoyed today she said, it felt really good to have been able to help Geovany. Henry smiled and said, I think you

were in your element. Daniela came around the corner of the Colonial and told Henry that she had made an appointment with Jodocus Medina for 10:30 tomorrow, thank you Daniela.

Henry squeezed Annika's hand and said to her, we need to talk about getting married. Are you in a hurry Henry, not really, it is just that I must explain what must happen before we get married and what happens when my father dies. This sounds serious Henry, it is serious Annika and I do not want you to get concerned. I will sit and listen to what you have to tell me. Before we get married we must sign an Antenuptial Contract, I know you might think that this is not a good way to start a marriage, however, I assure you it is necessary. I do think it is a good way to start a marriage Henry because so many people are getting divorced now a days and I think an Antenuptial Contract would be a good thing. If both parties agree then there friendship should survive if they do get a divorce. You are a very sensible young lady, I know I am. I do see some positive reasons for me doing this, if we do it when we are madly in love I am sure to be given a very good settlement. That would never be a problem Annika, I know Henry just teasing.

The main reason is because the family home must always stay in the family and I must never be put in a position where I might be made to sell Queensberry. You will understand once you have seen my mother and father's home. I would like to take you there just as soon as we return to London. She squeezed his hand and said, me too.

When my father dies his title passes to me and I become Lord James and you become Lady James. We must then move into Queensberry Manor and my mother has to move out, that seems very unfair to your mother Henry. It is the way that the aristocracy has always done it and my father would not wish that to be changed. Oh Henry, I see I have a lot to learn, do not worry about that, my father will live for many years.

Anyway, Randolph will take care of the Antenuptial Agreement, basically it will say, what is yours before getting married will stay yours. That's not a problem Henry, I do not have anything, I beg to differ. I do not even own a car so I will enter our marriage with just my clothes and you paid for most of those. Henry finished his coffee and said, please come and sit on my lap and listen to what I am going to tell you, she jumped up and sat on Henry's lap in less than two seconds. Let us start with the ring you have on your finger, that is yours to keep because I gave it to you, I did not loan it to you. If I was stupid enough to look for another young lady I would not want that ring, just as it is not the same ring I offered to Rachelle. You mean you purchased this especially for me, I most certainly did. However, I did trade the old one in against this one because I was never going to give that one to you. She just stared at him, you are my special lady and needed a special ring. She kissed him and said, I love you Henry James and I love you Annika Olsson.

Back to what you own, she hugged him and just looked into his eyes. He removed the photo copy from his pocket and handed it to her, what is this Henry, it is proof of something you own. She unfolded the single

sheet of paper and read it, I see you have given me shares in a company Henry. Not any company Annika, you own 100% of the shares and that company owns this Spanish Colonial. She sat bolt upright and could not believe what he had said. I do not understand Henry. I have given you this Colonial for your engagement present, you gave me this magnificent ring Henry. The ring is a symbol of my intention to marry you, it is not a present. The Colonial is your present and just to confirm, everything in or on this property and that means The Viking Lady belongs to you, well it will in a couple of days once it has been registered. So this brings me back to what you own before entering into marriage. Do you want to stay here or do you want to go to my bedroom, because I am going to do things to you and I feel we will be making a lot of noise. I think we should retire to your bedroom, she jumped up and pulled him by his hand and almost ran upstairs. Their lovemaking lasted for hours.

They walked into the offices of Señor Jodocus Medina, they all shook hands and Henry and Annika were offered coffee. What can I do for you Mr James. Annika and I have been very lucky in our lives and feel we want to give something back to people that are not as fortunate as we are. A smile came to Jodocus Medina face, Annika wishes to help the children in this area. She feels that a top class school providing the best education in the world, would provide all the local children with the ability to improve their lives. That is a wonderful gesture Mrs James, I am not Mrs James, at present I am Henry's fiancée, my name is Annika Olsson. I am sorry for my mistake, you have nothing to be sorry about Señor. What do you need from the council, because we do not have money for new projects. We need the permission to build and the land to build on, other than that, there would no cost to the local government. In that case, I do not see any problems, let us take a look at what we have.

He drove them to the school in town, it consisted of three rooms, one quite large, this was a building with no walls and was for all the Primary school children. They range from 6 years to eleven years old, and all ages are taught in this open classroom, Annika asked. I am sad to confirm that is correct, my god Señor no wonder they struggle. The second building was for secondary school students and it did have walls, however, it was a lot smaller than the first, this is for 11 year old's up to 14 year old's, Annika just shook her head. The last of the buildings was very small, it was smaller than the kitchen in their Colonial and Señor Medina told them this is for all children from 14 years up to university. How many students do you have. We only have four in this room. This school only has four students that may go to university Henry asked, that is correct Mr James. How many children live in Puerto Morrito Señor. The municipality of Puerto Morrito covers an area of 677 Km² and the total population at the end of last year was, 1000 residents living in town and 5000 residents living in the rural area. Within that there are 3000 children under 16 years of age. Yet you still only have three rooms at the school, se señorita. So we need a school for 3000 students Henry. Non, non señorita, there are other primary schools in the rural area but the municipality of Puerto Morrito only has

this one secondary school. Then most children drop out of school before reaching secondary school so we do not need a school for 3000 students.

Annika looked at Henry and said, this is ridiculous, it is no wonder this country has such a high number of people that cannot read and write. There is a lot of poverty in this country señorita, and most people in the rural areas cannot afford to send their children to school. These were the figures at the end of last year. 249 attended preschool, 667 were in regular primary schools, and 701 were in multi-grade primary classrooms. The number of secondary students dropped from 170 at the beginning of the school year to 71 at the end. I know we have to do a lot better if we want to increase our literacy rate in this country, however, we do not receive enough funds from the government. Annika looked like she was going to burst into tears.

Henry turned to Señor Medina and told him, it is not just classrooms we need to build. We want a top quality school and it has to have, science laboratories, sports facilities, gymnasium along with music and drama. All these things must be taught. Even if we build all those things, without a good headmaster and top rated teachers we will not achieve what we want to achieve. I am sorry Mr James but you are talking about a school in England, this is Nicaragua, it would not work here.

I am guessing you think that because of the poverty around this town. People just cannot afford to send their children to school Mr James. Señor Medina, I am telling you now, if I am going to pour my hard earned money into this project, I will make sure the only reason parents will not register their children to attend Annika's school, will be because they wish to deprive them of an education. There will be absolutely no cost for these children to get the best education in the world. Well, I guess I am bias, I believe I had one of the best educations you can give a child and I hope that Annika will base this school on standards that we have in Oxford. How can you make this statement Mr James, *no cost*, it cannot be done. Before you throw us out, please show us the areas where we can build this school, I do mean a school with every facility. It does not have to be one school, it can be split up into two, a primary and a secondary. We will also need to build houses for teachers.

I will show you land that the municipality of Puerto Morrito owns, then you can make up your mind if you think it is suitable, thank you Señor. He drove them around the little town which Henry would call a village and he showed them several areas. These seem very nice for buildings, however, we need sports fields, do you have areas large enough to build a football, hockey and athletic fields. When they had finished Henry shook Señor Medina's hand. If you would be kind enough to have all the areas you feel we can use measured and get that information to me as soon as possible. We will go away and work out what we need and get plans drawn up.

One of us will get back to you once we have all of that. I would then ask that you confirm we have planning permission to build, that will not be a problem Mr James, that's good news. Annika will then put a presentation together and she will come back and explain what she wants

to do. I would like to see as many parents at this meeting so that Annika can explain what she plans to do so that their children can get a great education. If the parents need transport to attend this meeting, please put on busses and I will reimburse the municipality.

Just one other thing, after the parents meeting Annika needs to see builders that would like to quote on any part of the project. If there are not enough builders in Puerto Morrito then we will need to go to Granada. When is the main school holiday. December and January, then we need to build as much as possible during that time. I will be bringing in a structural engineer to over see the project. Do you have any questions for me Señor, not right now Mr James, however, I may once I have reported back to the council members. Señor Medina then shook Annika's hand and told her he looks forward to her return. They drove back to the Colonial.

Annika was very quiet on the drive back, Henry said, I am guessing you did not realize this is how citizens of countries in the third world live. I did not Henry and I am really worried now that I know how they live, maybe they will think I am telling them what to do and they will be against building a new school. I would not worry about that, I would think that the majority of parents will look on you as the saviour of their children. When they arrived back at the Colonial the delivery of the furniture was taking place, Annika went to have a look and Maria was looking like the cat that stole the cream. Henry phoned his father and after exchanging pleasantries he ask him for the name of the engineer that had worked for him on the buildings at Queensberry. His name is Don Redman, do you need to speak with him my boy. I wish to know if he would be interested in running a building project in Nicaragua, I thought you had finished the renovations. They are finished but I am going to build a school in the local village and will need somebody to be on site that knows what they are doing. He retired a few years back but I will give him a call, he may be interested in going to Nicaragua. Thank you father, I will be back in London in two weeks and I plan to come home because I have something to talk to you and mother about, if it is possible I could talk to Don Redman while I am there. I will make an open appointment for you tomorrow, that is unless he is away and I cannot get hold of him. Thank you father, please give my love to mother, I will my boy, take care. David thought, I wonder what he wants to talk to us about.

Annika came out of the Colonial and told Henry Maria and Daniela are very excited with the furniture, I have never seen two women so excited over anything. Daniela asked me if she must arrange a post box at the post office in Puerto Morrito, I told her that is something we had not thought about and thanked her. She can drive in tomorrow as I think we need to get out on the lake, that sounds wonderful Henry. Maria wants to know what we would like for dinner, I told her to surprise us, Henry smiled. I have a call to make before we take a walk, would you like me to find something to do while you phone, not unless you want to.

You are almost mine so you can listen to any conversation I have. I guess, never mind what you guess, I have no secrets from you, anyway it

is about your project. I have spoken to my father and he will get you and I an appointment with Don Redman an engineer. You told your father, I told him I was going to build a school, I did not say that, it is your project. I meant, did you tell him we are engaged, definitely not, although I did say I will be back in London in two weeks and plan to come home as I want to talk to them.

Henry phoned the secretary at Magdalen College School, she remembered Henry as one of the students that never gave any problems and was always very polite. What can I do for you Henry, I wanted to know if you can give me the name of a company that works with the planning of new school facilities. Not 100% sure so let me check this out for you and get back to you, it may only be tomorrow Henry, that is fine, thank you.

Are you wanting to take over my project, not at all, I am just getting things organised for you. However, if you know of a company that works with school facilities and you also know of an engineer that would be happy to be on site during the building phase, please feel free to contact them so that you have a choice. I am teasing you, I do not know anybody. He picked her up, hugged and kissed her, she wrapped her legs around his waist and asked him, what are you going to do with me now. I am going to put you down so that we can go for a walk in your grounds, a big smile came to her face. We might get lost and fall over in the undergrowth, we might very easily sit down because we need a rest and you never know what might happen. I have a pretty good idea Henry James, he smiled and said, lets go. They did find a perfect place to sit down and roll about but the ground was just loose dirt and Annika said, this is not what I had in mind, me too. However, I think it is about time we christened the Viking Lady, you are so clever Henry James, not really, just horny, me too, lets go.

They ran onto the jetty and once aboard and in the cabin they tore each others clothes off and made passionate love in the master cabin and in the galley. They looked at each other very intensely, hugged and kissed and told each other how they felt, they were madly in love. They got dressed and returned to the Colonial. Maria came out to ask where they wanted to eat, Annika said, lets eat in the dinning room and please ask Daniela to come and talk to us, and can we have some coffee please, se señorita Annika. Henry explained to Daniela that they will be out on the lake tomorrow so it will be a good day for you to take the vehicle and start sorting out your staff and deciding what equipment you need and possibly who you will purchase from. Do you wish to interview any new staff I take on Mr Henry. Not at all Daniela, that is your decision, all I insist on is a full medical check up. You employ who you want to employ and you purchase from whoever you want to, you are the manager and I expect you to manage. Thank you Mr Henry, thank you Daniela.

Maria had made chicken and pasta with salad and she brought in a bottle of wine and hoped they would like this one, they both thanked her for being so thoughtful. After a wonderful meal they decided to go to bed,

again they got carried away and could not seem to get enough of each other. They were both in their element, Henry was infatuated with this beautiful Swedish lady and could not do enough for her. He knew he would give her anything she desired. All Annika wanted was for this feeling to never stop. They woke up early the next morning and got dressed and sailed away in the Viking Lady. Lets sail over to Ometepe Island and check it out Henry said.

They sailed over to the Island and decided to sail all the way around. On the other side they moored in a little bay and sat on deck looking at the two volcanoes. Henry's phone rang and on answering he found out it was the secretary at Magdalen College School. Sorry it has taken me this long to get you the information you asked for Henry. That is not a problem, please give me a second to pick up a pencil and paper. Okay I am ready, she gave him the name of the company the school uses along with a contact name and phone number, thank you so much for your time and trouble, you are very welcome Henry. After she had put the phone down she said to herself, he is still a well mannered young man.

Henry immediately phoned Jock Macdonald, he gave his name and told him he had got his name from the secretary at Magdalen College School. How may I help you, we would like an appointment to come and see you and discuss a new school we are planning to build. When would you like to come, we will be back in London in two weeks time, do you have a day free after that. At present I do not have any appointments for the following week, so I will pencil you in, just give me a call as soon as you get back, thank you Mr Macdonald, Jock is fine.

Henry returned topside and sat down next to Annika, she said, I would not like to live this close to these volcanoes, we get a good view from our Colonial, he smiled and asked if she thought he made a good choice, very good choice Henry. I have spoken to Jock Macdonald and we will go and see him when we return to London, what does he do Henry, he designs school facilities. I do love you Henry James, I know. He put his arm around her and they sat and looked at the view without saying anything else.

Daniela drove to the post office in Puerto Morrito, she was a little nervous driving Henry's new vehicle, but soon got over that when she told herself, if he was worried he would not have given me the keys. She opened a post box for Henry James, with the address of, The Spanish Conquistadors Colonial, on the lake, Puerto Morrito, department of Rio San Juan. She then drove to see her friend Gabriela who had just graduated. They kissed hello and Daniela asked how are you getting on, it is very hard nobody around here wants to employ a woman in horticulture. I have been looking in Granada but no joy as yet, how about you. I have just got a job. You have, that's fantastic Daniela, what are you doing there. I am the manager of an estate on the lake just outside of Morrito, what estate Daniela. It is the Spanish Colonial built by the Conquistadors in the 1530's and the property sits on 185 hectare. I heard that it is owned by an Englishman, that is correct, however, his fiancee is Swedish. They are here just for this week and they employed my mother as the housekeeper.

They gave me this job and I have a free hand to do what I feel is the best way to make things work, so I am very excited, I bet you are. They built a three bedroom apartment over the garages and workshops. This was for my mother to live in, I will have the second bedroom and Geovany the third. I am so pleased for you and your family. I came to see if you had found a job and I am pleased that you have not, that is not very kind of you. Daniela laughed and told Gabriela she would like to offer her a job, how do you know they will want me, that does not matter as it is my decision whom I employ, really. Yes, really, so unless you do something stupid or you are rude I do not see a problem. Mr Henry only has one demand, all employees must have a full medical check up which he pays for. We did that yesterday and the doctor found that Geovany had Perilymph Fistula. This was probably caused when he was in a fight at school when he was eight years of age. Miss Annika arranged with the doctor to do the operation straight away and they paid for the operation. They really are terrific people.

Now salary, you will have a one month trial where you will be paid whatever the going rate is for your qualifications, after the trial you will receive a 50% increase and you will receive a bonus at the end of the year. Every year you will get a 10% increase in your salary. Are you interested to work for me, when can I start, just as soon as you have had a medical check up. I can go tomorrow, why not today, because I do not have transport. That's not true I have the use of Mr Henry's 4 x 4 so we can go right now.

They drove to the hospital and Gabriela was given a clean bill of health, they were both so happy. While we are here I would like to find out what plants and fruit trees they have and their prices. Daniela drove back to the Colonial to introduce Gabriela to Henry and Annika. When she saw Gabriela, Maria hugged her and told her it is a long time since I have seen you. Maria then said, Mr Henry and Miss Annika have not returned yet. Daniela took Gabriela to her office and showed her the sketches she had drawn up for fruit trees and plants. She then showed her round the estate.

As they were walking down towards the jetty Daniela saw a yacht heading straight towards them, this must be Mr Henry and Miss Annika, they sat on one of the benches and waited. 100 yards out all the sails were lowered and Annika started the engine and brought the Viking Lady neatly alongside the jetty. Henry jumped off and tied her up. Good afternoon ladies, hello Mr Henry. This is Gabriela my new employee, pleased to meet you, and they shook hands. Annika joined them and Daniela introduced them. I do like your yacht Miss Annika and the Colonial looks fantastic, thank you. Please ask Maria if we can have a barbecue tonight and all staff are included. Daniela and Gabriela said, thank you and went off to find Maria.

Henry and Annika showered together and almost never made it downstairs. Maria had the barbecue going and Henry poured the wine, Annika asked Geovany how he is feeling and he told her he was feeling great, he then added, I am looking forward to starting my job, I never

thought I would be able to find a job. You are the kindest person I have ever met and I will love you forever. Maria over heard what he was saying to Annika and told him not to say things like that. It is okay Maria, it is great that he can express himself and it makes me very happy that we were able to change his life for the better.

During the meal Henry welcomed Gabriela and thanked them all for joining him and Annika for this barbecue, Annika translated for Maria and Geovany. Henry continued, is there anything you need from me Daniela or have you got everything under control. I have made some sketches for you and Miss Annika to take a look at. She went to fetch them, when she returned she sat on a bench between them and went through the sketches she had drawn up for them and both Henry and Annika thought she had come up with a design that looked great, they immediately agreed. Once I have the cheque book from the bank I can start purchasing equipment and we can then start clearing the areas ready for the flower beds and fruit trees. That is great Daniela. We will be leaving tomorrow so please take down Annika's phone number just in case you need something. Just remember what I said to you, do not take any nonsense from people who do not like the fact that you have a position which gives you more freedom to work the way you want to. You will also receive a higher salary than any of these locals. Annika said, it will be their loss if you decide not to use them because of their attitude, do not worry about it.

Tomorrow morning we have to move the yacht into the boat shed, we will need you to drive us to the airport Daniela, on the way we can stop at the bank to see if the cheque book is ready. After that I want to visit a car dealership to purchase a new pick-up as I feel that would be a better vehicle for what you need, it most definitely would Daniela replied. Once you have the means to pay, you can start purchasing all the equipment you need to start clearing areas. If Geovany learns how to install irrigation equipment you can let him do that job, I am sure it would give him some pride. Of course, if you have something else for him, I am not trying to tell you what to do. I think that would be a good move for him Mr Henry.

The next morning Henry and Annika glided the Viking Lady into the boat shed and secured her, Annika said goodbye to her. They said goodbye to Maria, Geovany and Gabriela and then they drove to the bank in Granada, the cheque book and debit card had arrived one hour before. José gave them to Henry who handed them over to Daniela, explaining to José that Daniela is the estate manager and she will be purchasing equipment, plants, shrubs, fruit trees and anything else she needs along with paying the accounts for the Colonial. José wished her well and told her if she has any problems with suppliers to give him a call and he will sort them out. Henry thanked him and they left.

Which way to the car dealership Daniela, she directed Henry to Casa Pellas the Toyota dealer. The young man asked if he could help them, he did not speak very much English so Annika told him they were looking for a pick-up. He showed them three different models and Henry told him he liked the Tundra he replied, buena elección. How long for delivery,

Annika asked the salesman, this dark blue one is available straight away, if you want a different colour then it will be four weeks.

She explained to Henry and he said, we will take the blue one. Please tell him we need a tow bar fitted, he told Annika it would be ready in three days. She asked him the price including a full tank of fuel and delivery, he told her the fuel is free and it would depend on where you want it delivered. Daniela explained where the Colonial was, I will just go and ask the manager. When he returned he asked, how are you going to pay for this vehicle, Annika replied, cash transfer. Then delivery will also be free, he gave her the total cost for the pick-up. Can you please give me your account details to transfer the payment, he showed them into the managers office and while Annika gave him the registration details Henry phoned Daniel and asked him to please transfer \$21,686 into Casa Pellas account.

Within the next five minutes Henry, thank you Daniel, and we are arriving later today so hope to see you tomorrow if possible, just give me a call. Henry shook the managers hand and told him it should be in your account within the hour. This vehicle is going to be used by Daniela so she is the one you must deal with for servicing and any problems she might have. He shook her hand and told her if you have any problems please call me direct and he gave her his card.

I think we have time for a bite to eat before leaving. They found a little place and just had a sandwich, Henry told Daniela that he did not know when they will be back, however, Annika may be back on her own. Annika went on to tell Daniela that she has just started a project to build a school in Puerto Morrito. Daniela said, wow, that is fantastic Miss Annika. I have a meeting in London when we get back and then another in Oxford only then will I know when we or I will come back. I will phone you just as soon as we know. Daniela dropped them off at the airport and they hugged and wished her well in her job, she thanked them for giving her such a fantastic chance.

C

Chapter 36

P

roperty search in Belize

Their flight landed in Belize and Henry told Annika, I forgot to ask Lydia to book a car for us, we will hire one at the airport. When they came through customs there was a man holding a board with Henry's name on it, I am Henry James. Good afternoon Mr James. He gave Henry an envelope, who is this from, Mr Knox Sir, Henry opened and read the single sheet of paper. Dear Henry, welcome back to Belize, Tom is one of our drivers and he will take you wherever you wish to go. Just tell him which areas you are interested in looking. I can then make some inquiries for you. I can see you at 17:00 hours tomorrow if that is convenient for you, just let Tom know.

Henry looked at Tom and said, we are booked in at the Turtle Inn in Placencia. Do you know where that is, yes Sir, we should be there in about an hour. Are you sure it will only take an hour, not really Sir I am guessing, maybe it takes two, maybe three Henry said. I was told to drive you wherever you wanted to go. Henry replied please thank Mr Knox's for his offer but I think we will fly, Henry gave him \$20 for his trouble. Henry and Annika walked up to the Tropic Air counter and asked if they have a flight to Plaencia, not for another 90 minutes Sir. Is it possible to charter a plane, yes sir we have a Cessna 172, well that's a reliable aircraft Henry said. You can be airborne in 15 minutes, we will take it, forty minutes later they landed at Plaencia and got a taxi to Turtle Inn.

Henry answered by saying, good afternoon Daniel how are you, I am fine Henry, Tom has been to see me, sorry I did not ask you where you were going to stay. Not a problem Daniel, what time can I come and see you tomorrow afternoon. I will be free from 14:30, see you then Daniel. Henry phoned the plane charter company and told them he needed to get into Belize City by 14:00 tomorrow. We can have a charter for you Mr James, just arrive at 13:30, is there any chance we could fly over the blue hole for a little while before going to Belize City, certainly Mr James, how long would you like to fly around the Blue Hole. 30 minutes would be good, then arrive at 12:30 and we will get you to the City by 14:00, thank you we will be there at 12:30.

Henry and Annika sat on the deck of the Lagoon Bungalow drinking a coffee and admiring the view. After coffee they took a stroll around the hotel and finished up at the Mare Restaurant. They had a fantastic meal and sat holding hands over another coffee just talking about what they wanted to do while in Belize. The love making that night was more intense than ever.

They got out of the taxi and Henry spotted the Cessna 172 they had arrived in, they walked over to the pilot and he said good afternoon Mr

James. Good afternoon to you Henry replied. If you are ready to go, Henry and Annika replied, we are ready and they followed the pilot out to the Cessna. By 13:00 they were over the Blue Hole, that is a spectacular sight Annika said, it does look like we should be diving in it instead of flying over it. The pilot circled for more than 30 minutes and then said, we have to leave if you want to get to the City by 14:00. I promise we will dive in that hole one day, I will hold you to that Henry James.

They arrived at the bank at 14:20 and the receptionist said, good afternoon Mr James, Henry returned the greeting and they were shown into Daniel's office. He stood up and came around his desk and shook Henry's hand. Henry said, I would like to introduce my fiancée, Annika Olsson, this is Daniel Knox. They both said, nice to meet you. I thought this lady worked for you Henry, she did Daniel, however, that had to change, well congratulations to both of you, Henry smiled and Annika said, thank you Daniel. That is some ring Annika, it is indeed Daniel, he picked up her hand and just said, whatever you do, do not show it to my wife.

Please sit down and tell me what I can do for you, I think we will be spending more time here as we wish to purchase a property. What type of property and in which region do you wish to live. Well Daniel, it must be out of a major city and it needs to be directly on the coast, we will be happy with a property on its own. One small point I have just thought about, it needs to be close to an airfield or permission to build one on my own land. What length of runway do you need Henry, minimum of 6250 ft. What do you want to buy Henry, a 747, no Daniel, I think a Gulfstream would be very nice. Well that limits us to a few areas. It means you can only use the international airport which is in Ladyville, northwest of Belize City. Unless we can get permission for you to build your own runway.

I know there is a rather run down property on Northern River Lagoon, its at the northern end so you would have to sail through the lagoon to get to the open sea. It would also take you over one hour by 4 x 4 on a very rough almost no road. That does not sound very exciting Daniel. There is a very large track of land somewhere between Payne's Creek National Park and Punta Gorda. That is right at the end of the Southern Highway. What is large Daniel, I think it is about 200,000 square feet it might be bigger than that. Nobody wants to buy it because it backs up to Payne's Creek National Park and all logging and clearing for agriculture has been stopped. It would take about one and a half hours to Big Creek airport, however, that only has a runway of 2,300 ft long so unless they let you increase the length that would not be suitable for you Henry.

Is there any chance we could see it, both from the air and on site, let me make a call. He phoned the agent and Daniel told him what Henry wanted, he asked could you go tomorrow morning, sure thing. When he had put the phone down he told Henry what the agent had said. He is quite happy to drive you from your hotel to the site, however if you wish to see it from the air then the cost of a plane would be for you, that's fine what time do we meet him. He said, he would pick you up at the Turtle

Inn at 11:00 hours, if you want to also see it by air he can make arrangements at that time.

I will be making some changes to my accounts Daniel, just as soon as we have sorted this out I will get back to you, that's fine Henry, he shook Annika's hand and told her it was very nice to meet you. They left and headed back to the airport. They again chartered the Cessna 172 and Henry told them he wishes to charter it for tomorrow morning at 11:00 hours for a short flight to look at some land near the Monkey River. More great food at the restaurant followed by some wild love making, they both were enjoying these two weeks together.

The next day the agent arrived to pick them up, Henry told him that he had arranged for a charter plane. I think we should fly over the property first before driving there, that is sensible Mr James. When they arrived at the airport the Cessna was waiting for them, they climbed in with Annika and Henry in the rear seats. The agent told the pilot where to go, we are coming up to Monkey River and Payne's Creek National Park is just after that. The next river we come to is Deep River, the property borders on to Deep River and is around 10.4km², do you need me to convert that for you Mr James. I would think that would be about 2,500 acres Henry replied, the agent said, I could not confirm that without a calculator.

What do you want to do with this land Mr James, we wish to build a house, just one, well one main house along with garages and housekeepers accommodation. There are no buildings on this property at all, but if you are only looking for one house with a garage and maids quarters then I do not think we would have a problem with planning permission. Then we would like to go and walk on the land, they returned to the airport and the pilot asked, anywhere else Mr James, not today thank you.

They got into the agents Land Cruiser and they took the 140km drive along the Southern Highway towards Punta Gorda, they passed through the village of Hellgate and a few miles further on they turned off onto a dirt road. As they turned onto this little track the agent told them, we have a further 14km on this road, at the end of this road is the start of the property.

They got out of the Land Cruiser and walked into what the agent told them was the corner of the property, he pointed out on the map, from here up to the bend in the river around 2km away. Not quite directly south to the sea, around 4km away. It then follows the coast to the mouth of the river and up the river to the big bend. On the other side of the river is Payne's Creek National Park. They walked for a short distance in the rain forest, this land had never been cleared and cultivated so it is virgin forest. The area is what we would call lowland because there are no mountains just hills. Not easy to walk in Henry remarked, is the whole area forest like it is here Henry asked. According to this map I have, there is an area of Mangrove Swamp along the coast. Does that mean we could not get to this property by boat. I am sure not all the coast is Mangrove Swamp, but you could always land a boat from the Deep River.

I think we saw more from the plane than we can see down here Mr

James. Have you made any opinion about this property. We like the isolation of the property, however, it would be hard to build on. This 14 kilometre dirt road would maybe, be a problem for trucks to access during building and if the Mangrove Swamp is all around the coast then we could not get deliveries in that way, so it might not be feasible to purchase. I would like to put more boots on the ground and check out what we would be able to access and what can only be left to nature.

I think we should take a boat ride to Deep River tomorrow and take a look before spending any more time and money on this property. The agent asked if Henry would like him to arrange a boat, I am sure that would be easier for you to do, Henry replied. I think it would be quicker to drive down to Monkey River Town and take a boat from there. Would 07:00 be too early for you young lady, not at all, any time is good for us.

Okay, then I will see you at 07:00. They walked back to the Cruiser and the agent dropped them off at Turtle Inn. He said, it would be better if you take the Hokey Pokey ferry to Mango Creek and I will pick you up at 07:00, the ferry leaves Placencia at 06:45, we will be on the ferry.

Over a meal they discussed the property, they both liked it's isolation which would mean they should see a lot of wildlife. They really wanted a property that gave them all that nature had to offer. I can also become very vocal and not have to worry about the neighbours, Annika laughed. Henry smiled and thought, I am very lucky to have found such a wonderfully wild young lady.

They boarded the ferry and the agent was waiting when it docked, he drove down to Monkey River Town and a boat was waiting for them. The Caribbean sea was calm and the boat sped along which made a pleasant ride, the captain cut the power to idle just after they came around the headland so that they could take in the view of Deep river. This view is stunning Annika said, as they go closer to the shore they saw the Mangrove Swamp and noted it was all along the coast. They headed into the river and followed it round the first bend. Still Mangrove Swamp as far as they could see. They continued up the river to the next bend about 500 metres and came to a small tributary of about 6 metres wide.

The captain turned into this and it finished up a further 300 metres at the property with the Mangrove Swamp on either side. They were able to dock and walk on to dry land. So this is the only entrance to this property from the sea Henry said. The agent said, you might think that is a plus Mr James, I do not see how. You would not receive many visitors, that may well be true Annika said, however, we do have a yacht that needs to be moored.

Do you think they would allow us to put in a jetty with some form of barrier that could be locked to stop the yacht being stolen while we are away. I do not know Mr James, the government is very strict with Mangrove Swamps, it would depend on how much you wanted to change. I do not see the need to rip out the Mangrove Swamp at all, I just need to be able to secure the yacht. Then I do not see any problem at all. They walked on through the trees. They seemed to be on a small trail made by

animals, the ground started to rise and they climbed a hill which finished on a Plateau about 100 feet up. This gave a view to the sea through gaps in the canopy, it seemed to be about 100 feet by 100 feet. If we have this property then this is the place to build our house. Henry turned to the agent and told him we have seen enough for today, we need to talk about it and find out if we are able to build or not. What is the asking price \$500k, thank you we can return now.

When they got back to Turtle Inn they showered and got changed and took a walk around Placencia, they decided they would eat in a little restaurant rather than go back to the Inn. They had ordered their meal and was talking about the property, Henry told Annika that on the plus side, the one thing he really liked was the fact that a yacht would be very safe when moored in that small tributary. It would only be seen if anybody took a boat into the tributary, otherwise it would never be seen at all. The down side, access to build could be a major problem. Henry's phone rang, good evening Daniel, hello Henry how are you and your gorgeous fiancée enjoying Belize. We love it Daniel, good, can you drop in to see George and you can tell him what you need in the way of building permits.

They checked their cases into storage at the airport and then took a taxi to the bank. George showed them into his office and showed them a map of the property they are interested in. Please mark approximately on this map where you would wish to build and how many buildings you want. Daniel tells me you wish to build a runway for a private jet. I do not see a problem with house and outbuilding also a secure mooring and jetty for your yacht, it might be a problem for the runway. George passed papers across his desk for Henry to sign, this gives the bank the right to take the fees out of your account for any application we make on your behalf . They got in the company car and the driver drove the three of them to the government offices. Once inside George placed the folder on the officials desk, she stood up and shook hands with Henry and Annika, Mr Morgan has assured us you more than meet the financial requirement, I believe you are looking at purchasing property at present. She sat down and read the letter that George had drawn up, this is a straight forward procedure for me, not sure about the runway though. I will stamp your request, however, there will be some environmental questions for you to answer and assurances to be given, Payne's Creek National Park may object to the runway, you may have to consider giving the park a sweetener for them to drop any objections. We can do that, in fact you can state that if we are given permission then we will make a yearly donation to Payne's Creek National Park. She stamped and signed both forms. Your documents should be ready in about three weeks if there are no objections, they thanked her and left.

On the way back to the airport Henry said to George, we are very interested in this property we were shown near Payne's Creek National Park, however, the asking price is \$500k US dollars. We are not prepared to pay that amount because it has very limited access, also it has no direct access to the sea. Building would be difficult to say the least and I am sure

it would be very expensive, that is if they gave planning permission. If you are prepared to make an offer Mr James I can act as your agent. That is kind of you George, I would pay \$250k US dollars providing we were allowed to build a house of eight bedrooms along with garages and staff quarters and a private runway. Anything else Mr James. That's everything George. Then I will start by making your offer, if that is accepted, I am guessing you wish the runway to take the chartered aircraft. Maybe to start with George, however, I will be looking to purchase a private jet so we can fly direct from London. Do you know the length of runway you would need, minimum of 6300 feet long. I will be in touch once your offer has been accepted.

They slept on their overnight flight back to London and Annika thought, this is definitely the way to travel. Roger was waiting and welcomed them back home, they thanked him and he asked if they had a good trip. We had a fantastic trip Roger, in fact it was the best trip of my life, I am so pleased Miss Annika. Benson greeted them and gave Henry some post and they went up to the Penthouse. Henry stopped before stepping aside and letting Annika walk in first. I think this is where I am supposed to carry you over the threshold. That would be nice Henry but I think it is after you marry me. He picked her up in his arms and walked inside putting her down in the lounge, not the bedroom Henry, I will save that until we get married and they both laughed. Henry took the suitcases through to the laundry so Annika could unpack them.

Henry jumped in the shower and Annika put the first load of washing in the machine, she sorted out the clothes that had to go to the dry cleaners and then joined Henry in the shower. After they got dressed Annika asked if he would like a coffee, that sounds perfect. While Annika made the coffee Henry opened the post and checked the stock, he found that Lydia had moved one stock because of a drop that Annika's programme had suggested. She brought the coffee and he told her your programme was worth every penny. I have no idea how much you paid for my programming, maybe I did not pay as much as it is worth.

Lydia walked in at 09:00 and hugged Annika and asked how did you enjoy your trip, I want to know all the details. How are you Henry, I am very well thank you Lydia. I will make you a coffee and we can sit and talk. Annika returned with the coffee and gave it to Lydia. My god Annika that diamond ring is bigger than any engagement ring I have ever seen, so you have asked Annika to marry you Henry. I did indeed Lydia, I am so pleased for both of you, congratulation. What did your mothers say, we have not told them as yet, Lydia's mouth dropped open and she just stood and stared at both of them. We will be going to Queensberry tomorrow morning and we will tell mother and father then. I want to introduce Annika to everybody at Queensberry and also my friend John. We must see a Mr Don Redman to see if he will take control of Annika's new project, you have another project Annika. I want to build a school in Puerto Morrito the village where Henry's Colonial is. It is no longer my Colonial Lydia, I gave it to Annika as an engagement present along with

everything that is on or in the grounds. Henry said I need to make a phone call, please excuse me. Henry went into the lounge to phone Jock Macdonald.

Sit and tell me why you think Henry gave you the Colonial, he gave you that magnificent ring. When I told Henry that it was not necessary as he had given me this ring as a present, he told me he gave me the ring as a promise to marry me, the Colonial was my engagement present. You have found out how Henry James thinks, you will never change him, just accept him the way he is Annika. What did you think of the Colonial, it is absolutely magnificent Lydia, you need to come and see it. We have taken on an estate manager and she has employed two people, Henry also purchased a pick-up truck for Daniela to use for flowers, trees, tools and anything else she needs to make the grounds beautiful. She started to tell her about the school she wants to build when Henry returned and told Annika, sorry but we have to leave right now so that we can see Jock and start this project. We will go to Queensberry tomorrow and we need to fly to Washington DC on Wednesday 6th and we can go on to New York on Monday 11th, I will arrange that straight away, thank you Lydia.

They walked into Jock's office and they told him what they wanted to do and how many children went to the school now and how many will be able to attend next year. Henry pointed out that until they receive all the land sizes it would be difficult for you to start, however, they will be smaller than anything you have worked on before. Are you looking for the same curriculum as we have in this country, I am sure we are Annika said, Henry believes that he had the best education in the world, so lets not try to reinvent the wheel. I will put together what I feel you need to accommodate the number of children that are eligible t about the land areas attend next year. Just as soon as we have the available information about the land areas we can use, I will get that to you straight away. Hand shakes all round then Henry and Annika left.

When they got back to the Penthouse Lydia told Henry they are booked overnight to DC on 6th, I have booked you into the Inter Continental, I take it one room is sufficient Henry, thank you Lydia.

I am really looking forward to tomorrow Henry, your mother tells me it is a magnificent home, she is correct, it was the perfect place for me to grow up and it brings back good memories when I drive through the gates.

C

Chapter 37

A

Annika's first visit to Queensberry

Henry turned off the M4 at junction 14 and headed towards Wantage, at Wantage he turned left onto the B4507 and told Annika that Queensberry is just 5 miles down this road. I am so excited Henry, your mother told me a little about your home. She is right, it is a beautiful building. How many bedrooms does it have, 38 since my mother had some renovations done, it used to have 45 bedrooms. Before I was born she turned the bedroom next to hers into an en-suite complete with walk in wardrobe. Several years later she remodelled the rest of the bedrooms, reducing the number of rooms but making all bedrooms en-suite.

He turned the car into a driveway and twenty yards in they had to stop at some very large impressive wooden gates. You are kidding me Henry, about what Annika, 38 bedrooms, if you open the glove box you will find what I call, a talker, please point it at the gates and press numbers 951. She did as he asked and the gate swung open revealing a tree lined driveway. The car moved forward very slowly and Annika looked out at areas amongst the trees that had some of the most colourful flowers just starting to open.

Henry stopped the car and said to Annika, just around this last bend you will see the family home and you will then be able to decide if I was joking about the size of the manor house. Annika looked excited and squeezed Henry's hand and just said, I am ready, Henry took his foot off the brake and the SLR McLaren rolled slowly forward and once around the bend Henry stopped again. Annika said, oh my God, she just looked at this magnificent Manor House about 800 yards in front of them. You should close your mouth Annika, because you look a little strange with it hanging open like that. You live here Henry, I was born and brought up here, however, one day I will have to move back.

It is out of this world Henry, I now understand why you are like you are, Henry pulled away and Annika did not say another word. He parked the car by the front entrance and Philip came out and immediately opened Annika's door, and said, welcome to Queensberry Manor Miss Annika. Before she could get out of the car Henry said, let me introduce you, this is Philip the butler/driver, he is in charge of the house, this young lady is Annika Olsson, very pleased to meet you Miss, likewise Philip. Henry walked around the car and shook Philip's hand and said to him, you look younger ever time I see you Philip. Philip smiled and just said, welcome home Mr Henry, it's good to be here Philip. Are my parents here, not at present, I will be picking your father up from the station in about one hour. Your mother is still working. Thank you Philip, let us go and find Jessie, and he stood aside so that Annika could enter the house.

Oh Henry, I do not know what to look at first, do not worry you will see far more things the next time you come. Philip said, I will take your

cases up to your rooms Mr Henry, thank you Philip. Henry took hold of Annika's hand and led her towards the kitchen, Anne, one of the maids looked up and said, welcome home Mr Henry, thank you Anne, is Jessie around, she is in her office, Henry guided Annika towards Jessie's office.

The door was open so Henry said, hello Jessie, I have somebody to introduce you to. Jessie jumped up and said, welcome home Henry, this is Annika, please come in, Henry then said you are about to meet the most important person in this house, this is my Jessie. Welcome Annika, I have heard a lot about you from Alexandra, and I must add, it was all very good. They shook hands and Jessie turned to Henry and gave him a big hug. You are staying until Sunday Henry, no Jessie, we are here until Tuesday the 5th. We never seem to see you for very long Henry and then it could be months before you come back. Annika, please make him change.

Annika smiled and told Jessie, it is not as easy as you might think. However, Henry has changed his work schedule a great deal. If I had a body like yours it should not be difficult to make him do anything. Do the two of you know I am standing right here. If you go and sit outside I will bring some coffee for the three of us, that's a good idea Jessie, please do not forget the cake.

Will you give me a hand Annika, certainly, what would you like me to do, just talk while we are on our own. Annika smiled and asked what do you want to know Jessie. Alexandra said, you are a very smart lady. Let me ask Anne to make us some coffee and she is sure to find some cake as Henry is home. Jessie returned to her office and squeezed Annika's arm, I am so pleased to finally meet you and I can see you are looking after my Henry, thank you. Now, let me see this ring I feel on your finger, Annika lifted her hand so Jessie could see her engagement ring. That is a very big diamond ring Annika, to buy you a ring like this one he must be head over heels in love with you. I hope you are right Jessie. That is a beautiful ring Annika, I think so Jessie, tell me how this happened. I first have a question for you. What is it with you and Henry because you both say, my. Well, I started working here before Henry was born, Alexandra and I are the same age and my mother worked for David's parents. David's parents along with my mother were killed in a serious car accident which meant David and Alexandra had to bring their wedding forward as they had to take over Queensberry Manor. David took over his father's seat in the House of Lords. Alexandra employed me and I was allowed to sort the house out the way I wanted it to run. I fired two people who both thought they should have been offered the position before I was. Over time all the old employees have either gone on pension or have passed away. Alexandra had to take over the running of Queensberry Manor as David spent a lot of time in London. He did that for almost fifteen years and realised, just because his father was a member of the house of Lords it did not mean he also had to be one. He resigned and went into investment banking. While David was in the house of Lords they did a lot of travelling all over the world, so I brought Henry up and I think of him as mine.

That's a great story Jessie, however, at present I am his fiancée and I

am also his crew member and the yachts cook. Since we got the yacht he has cut down on his travelling which is a very good thing. Since we got engaged he has really cut it down and we now spend a lot of time together. There was a knock on the door, come in, Anne entered and asked Jessie where must she put the coffee. Please place it, on the table outside and tell Henry we will be out in a couple of minutes. When Anne had closed the door Jessie just looked at Annika and asked her how they met.

The truth is I fell in love with Henry back in Stockholm, the first day I met him, at that time I did not know anything about him, I just knew, that apart from being good looking, he was a very kind and thoughtful man. I had just lost my job and he offered me a job for three days as a guild around Stockholm.

After the three days he offered me the position of housekeeper and mamma and I came to London to check it out. I accepted his offer and since that time Henry and I have got on very well indeed, we have some great times sailing and he is very good to me, I feel very lucky to have met Henry.

When I returned to Sweden for Christmas last year, Henry told me he would take me with him so I could see how he lived. I did not expect him to take me in January. We travelled to many countries and I was very excited as he took me to countries I had never been to before. In Australia we went dancing and won a ballroom competition and the next night the Latin competition. Henry is a fantastic dancer. When we got back to the hotel he told me he had fired me which caught me off guard, however, I quickly understood when he said, I wish to take our relationship to the next level. Jessie smiled and said, just like his father. We went to several countries and one day he told me, I think it is about time for me to stop flying around the world. He plans to do that at the end of this year or maybe before.

When he goes to Mexico he always stops over in Acapulco where he meets his clients and their wives, apparently they always go dancing and the wives keep Henry on the dance floor for most of the night. I definitely had to share him that night. The next day we flew to Nicaragua and he showed me his Colonial, it is beautiful. On the first night there he asked me to marry him and gave me this magnificent engagement ring. I could not stop looking at it for days

Should I have only made up one bedroom for you, I do not know if David would be happy with us sleeping together in his house. Oh, I am thinking you sleep together now, we do since I became his girlfriend. However, your Henry is a very honourable man, he feels very strongly that he must do the right thing. When I was his housekeeper we did not have any sexual contact because he felt you must not have any sexual contact with a member of your staff.

We had a lot of fun together, we talked about everything and anything. We hugged each other and when he was at home and not working, we would curl up on the settee together and watch a movie, I usually finished up falling asleep while using Henry as a pillow. What did he do then, he

picked me up and put me to bed, kisses me goodnight and then went to his own bedroom. What in the world is wrong with my Henry, could he not see what was happening and it is very unfair to lead you on.

Alexandra tells me he is like his father, that is very true Annika, he most definitely is a chip off the old block. That's a nice saying Jessie, a very old one. However, I think that David will not have a problem with you sleeping with Henry, Henry told me he would not let Takahiro sleep with Miyu just before they got married. Then why do you think he will let Henry sleep with me. Simple really, Henry is his son, Miyu is his daughter, fathers have different rules for sons and daughters.

Alexandra was worried about the American lady, I remember her saying, I just hope we do not have another Wallis Simpson. Who is Wallis Simpson Jessie, she was the lover of King Edward V111 and he had to abdicate to marry her. I do not understand how that relates to Henry. I am guessing Henry has not told you everything about what happens when his father dies. Well Jessie he has told me basically what will happen. Then that's another story for another day, they both smiled. I think we should join Henry before he comes looking for us, they walked through the lounge arm in arm. Henry looked up and asked Jessie, did you manage to learn everything you wanted to.

I love you Henry James and I love you Jessie Williams, however, we both knew that you would always find out more than my mother could, and the three of them burst out laughing. Did you leave us any cake Henry, just a slice each. With that Alexandra walked around the corner, welcome to Queensberry Annika, thank you Alexandra. She stood up and they hugged and kissed each other, she then turned to Henry and hugged him. Jessie made a mental note that Alexandra wanted this young lady as her daughter in-law, so just wait until she sees that ring. Do you want a coffee Alexandra, had far to many today, I think it would be a good time to start on the red wine.

Let's celebrate Annika's first visit to Queensberry Manor and make sure it is not her last Henry. He smiled and said, we hope not. You do have a magnificent home Alexandra. Has Henry shown you around, no, we have not long been here. It is a magnificent house and this estate does take a lot of work, I will show you around tomorrow.

Do you have enough for an extra guest Jessie, that would not be a problem, who will be joining us, I will ask Victoria because she is also going to Christine's wedding and it would be nice for Annika to meet her tonight rather than at the wedding. Thank you Alexandra, that is very thoughtful of you. Victoria is my personal assistant and has been working for me since May last year. Jessie stood up and said, I must check on the progress in the kitchen.

We have something to tell you mother, but we will wait for father to get home first. Why in the world would you need to do that Henry, you can always tell him when he arrives, with that David walked through the door. He greeted Annika with a big hug and a kiss, that's something new for my father Henry thought, welcome to Queensberry Manor my dear,

although, I guess I am not the first today to say that to you. You are not David, however, you make it sound so very nice, thank you my dear. I got here as quickly as I could my boy, as you did say you wanted to talk to your mother and I.

Henry put his arm around Annika and said, I have asked Annika to marry me, both David and Alexandra stood and looked at Henry, then David said congratulation and stepped forward and kissed Annika and shook Henry's hand. Alexandra did the same but when she kissed Henry she whispered in his ear, about bloody time Henry. She turned back to Annika and put out her hand and said, please show me your diamond ring, Annika put her hand in Alexandra's so she could take a close look.

This is the most magnificent diamond ring I have ever seen and she could not stop looking at it. David told Henry he was very proud of him and thanked him for asking him to come home so he could tell them both together. I would appreciate it if you do not tell Takahiro and Miyu and Randolph and Martha because I wish to tell them myself. I will be taking Annika around the world to meet all my friends, so please mother respect my request. She will my boy, it is something you should do and we appreciate that you came to see us first. Not quite father, however, the first family members.

I was just going to ask you if you would like to look around the garden while it is still light Annika. You have plenty of time to look round the garden tomorrow Henry, I need information from Annika because it is no use asking you. She took Annika's hand and lead her into the lounge and closed the door, she was not going to stop until she was told, when did he ask and where were you and what did he say. Annika told her much the same version as she told Jessie, with that Alexandra was happy.

Henry and David sat and talked, so my boy you want to build a school, I take it is in Nicaragua. It is indeed father, however, it is not my project, it is Annika's. She wants to do something to better the lives of the children. That is very admirable my boy. I phoned Don Redman and asked him if he would be interested in a job, he told me that he would like to know more because he lost his wife last year and he feels he needs to move on and a new project would occupy his mind. He also said, he is at home all day tomorrow. If you give me his address we will go and see him tomorrow, I will do better than that my boy, I will drive you and Annika myself as I would like to see him again. That's very kind of you father and we accept your offer.

How are you keeping father, why do you ask Henry, because you are looking tired, I am very tired Henry and I feel I should stop working in London. You know I have always wanted to renovate the old castle so maybe I should look at that project more seriously.

You are looking very well my boy and I feel it has a lot to do with Annika, you have hit the nail on the head father, I have never felt this happy for as long as I can remember. I am so pleased for you my boy and I want you to know your mother and I have been praying that you would ask Annika to marry you. We feel she will make the perfect wife for you

my boy, so do I father.

So much so that I am making some serious changes to my life. Do tell my boy, I have already told Lydia to stop looking for new clients as I want to stop flying around the world and settle down with Annika. She wrote a programme for me which allows my business to almost run on it's own. Lydia tells me it has made her life so much easier and her stress level is down to almost normal, whatever normal means father. David smiled and thought about the job his son does, he has always known that if Henry had got himself worked up like most young men doing a similar job he would have burnt out two years ago. It always seemed to David that Henry went through life without a care in the world, although he knew that could not be correct.

I want us to do things that we feel passionate about, Annika is very passionate about helping underprivileged children. So I know that once we get some plans to look at and the Puerto Morrito council come back with land areas that we can use, Annika will be a driven woman and god help anybody that tries to stop her building this school. What do you wish to do Henry.

I want to start looking at renovating world war two aircraft, David was going to ask, what brought this on, however, before he could ask, Henry told him he has wanted to do this for several years. I would like to put as many aircraft as possible back into flying condition. The ones that cannot be restored to flying condition would need to go into a museum. Of course, this would mean starting a company for the restoration and also building a museum. Never mind the building of a school, what you wish to do will need many millions just to start. I know father, and knowing you my boy I am guessing you have some plan worked out. Well, if I do not take on anymore clients, then at the end of the year we will invoice for £45m. Do you mean that is from the clients you purchased from Sir John, yes father and because I do not work in England I do not pay any tax. David just looked at Henry and said, I really hope everything will work out for you my boy.

I will also tell you father, that since we did the geological survey which showed that the three tracks of land have a large oil and gas field. The Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration company now has several big oil companies interested in purchasing. Randolph is in his element, and he has told me he is going to make me a very rich man. I have given him a free hand to sell the three tracks of land for whatever he can get. Here I am thinking that you are already rich Henry, so this purchase you made back in 2003 could turn you into one of the super rich. I do not know about that father, just as long as I make a very good profit I will be happy. Annika and I can then turn our projects into employment for the locals. I know the school will be built in Nicaragua, where are you thinking of building your project Henry. Locally if I can, so I must start looking for old world war two airfields that I can reopen. Before the ladies come back father, I take it you will not be happy if I sleep with Annika tonight. I think you are old enough to share one bedroom my boy. Different rules for

brother and sister father, when you are talking about sleeping with my daughter, most definitely there is, Henry smiled.

Alexandra and Annika walked outside and Alexandra walked up to Henry and hugged him saying, that's a beautiful ring Henry, he just smiled at her. Annika tells me you are going to Sweden later this month, yes mother, I have some business to do in Stockholm and Annika needs to tell her mother that she is engaged. I do hope she will be happy Annika, she will be over the moon as she believes Henry cannot do anything wrong. I would not say that, Alexandra replied. Father will drive us to see Don Redman tomorrow morning Annika. David told Annika, I think he will be very happy to travel to Nicaragua and build your school for you. He lost his wife last year and he needs something that he can absorb himself in and get his life back on track. I am sorry about his wife, but I do hope he will be happy to come and work with me.

They all had a drink and then Alexandra said, I think it is about time we went up to change. I will show you to your room Annika, thank you Alexandra, she told her she had put her in the room next to Henry. This room is quite a distance from our room, just in case you and Henry get carried away. Alexandra showed her into the room and told her that one of the maids had unpacked her case so you might find she has put things in a different draw to what you would have put them in, thank you Alexandra, we will see you downstairs when you are ready.

When Henry had showered and changed he went into Annika's room, just in time to zip me up Henry, this is getting a regular job, is it a problem for you Henry, not really, however, I would rather remove your clothes. You know you can do that anytime Henry. I just came to tell you I have spoken to my father and he is happy for you to sleep in my bedroom. Jessie told me she did not think he would have a problem with that. I will get Jessie to send a maid up to move your clothes, I will see you downstairs and he went off to find Jessie.

Just before supper Victoria arrived, David and Alexandra each gave her a hug she then turned to Henry and he hugged her and gave her a peck on her cheek. Before Henry could say anything Alexandra said, please meet Annika, Annika this is Victoria, they both said, pleased to meet you and shook hands and Victoria said, I am very pleased for you Henry, it was about time and I can see why you have fallen in love with this sexy young lady.

I am very pleased that at long last you have somebody to look after you. Henry smiled and said, me to. I do have more news Victoria, I asked Annika to marry me, oh Henry that is fantastic, congratulations to both of you. Please let me see your ring Annika, she held her hand out and Victoria just looked at this diamond ring, my god Henry that is the largest diamond I have ever seen, Alexandra noticed that a tear came to Victoria's eye. They sat down and they all had a glass of wine and they toasted Henry and Annika. It was not long and Jessie told them, dinner is ready.

Lets go through to the dinning room, Alexandra seated them so that David was in his normal seat at the head of the table, Annika and Henry

was on his right with Victoria and Alexandra on his left. Lots of small talk during the meal. Victoria asked Annika if she knows Christine, no I have never met her, however, I have spoken to her a couple of months back. Henry tells me she is a lovely lady, I have only seen her twice since I have been working here, and she does seem to be very nice.

David said, you mean Henry's red head, laughter from everybody, this is the young lady that Henry saw potential in. Because of that it made Alexandra and I realise we needed to do something for juniors that could not afford the membership fee, we set up our junior programme. Henry persuaded Jasper to build her a full set of clubs and because of Henry's keen eye this young lady now plays on the European tour and has been doing very well. Credit to you my boy.

Over coffee Annika told Victoria she is very pleased we met before Christine's wedding, me too. At 23:45 Victoria said, I think it is about time I went to bed because one of us has to work tomorrow, the others all smiled and Henry said to her, we all feel so sorry for you. If I did not know you better Henry James I would think, what a kind man you are. They all burst out laughing and Victoria said, I will see you at the wedding if I do not see you before, to nobody in particular, hugs and kisses all round and Victoria left.

Have you told your sister you are engaged Henry, no mother, is it the diamond ring that stopped you hearing. Alexandra just carried on. Well maybe you should phone her tomorrow morning, I could do that, however, I have told you I have planned to take Annika and introduce her to family and friends. We started with my favourite people, then while we are here we will go and see John on Saturday as he will not be flying this weekend. In a couple of weeks I have my last new business deal in New York to take care of and while we are there we will be seeing a couple of friends. Theodore is a wonderful young man Annika, you will really like him. Maybe he is away Henry, no mother, I have spoken to the Vice Admiral and he docks today for a six weeks holiday. I do remember you have already told us that Henry, Henry and Annika smiled and David shook his head.

After Sweden we will fly to Japan to see Miyu and Takahiro, then on to Australia to see Johnny and Bonnie. After that it is New Zealand to introduce Annika to Alexa and her daughter Olivia. By then she will have met all my family and friends. No other friends Henry, no others that you would be happy for me to bring home mother. Alexandra did not reply, Annika squeezed Henry's leg and smiled. They had another coffee and all went up to bed. Annika noticed that all her clothes had been moved into Henry's room, she was very happy.

After breakfast Henry and Annika walked around the garden hand in hand, all the flowers and blossoms were starting to spring into life and Annika could see it was going to look fantastic in a months time. They sat down on one of the benches that were placed amongst the shrubs. You are very lucky to have grown up at Queensberry Manor Henry. I know, and I feel it has been very humbling being able to see what I had as a child.

I do appreciate everything that I have been given in my life. I do love this house and always find an inner peace when I drive through those gates. You could say I feel very blessed, my mother and father brought me up to respect people and property and not to take anybody for granted. They installed integrity and honesty in me and gave me a purpose in life, without that I would never have become the person I am today.

I did not sit back just waiting to inherit what my father and his father before him had made, I went out into the world and I have worked hard and made something of myself. I became a self made, he hesitated and then said, man. He felt it was maybe not the time to tell Annika how much money he had made, that would come later.

David came to find them and asked if they are ready to go, they walked to David's Range Rover and they headed out towards Oxford. David knocked on the front door and Don Redman answered, David and Don shook hands and greeted each other, Don then turned to Henry and shook his hand. My, you have grown since I last saw you Henry and I barely remember you.

David then introduced Annika and Don said, when you meet people you always save the best until last young lady. She smiled and said, very nice to meet you Mr Redman, if I am going to work for you Annika, you had better call me Don. He asked several questions which Annika or Henry were able to answer and he then asked Annika if she had any question for him. David has told me you are the finest engineer in Oxfordshire, so the only question I have for you, will you come to Nicaragua and build my school. How can I say no to such a beautiful young lady. Thank you Don and she stepped forward and gave him a hug. Henry told Don that just as soon as they receive the plans he will get them over to him. Hand shakes all round and they left.

When they got back to Queensberry Henry told Annika he would like to show her round the estate, I would like that Henry. They walked to the rear of the house and Henry showed her the old castle telling her his father wants to renovate this to it's former glory. Do you think he will, I do hope so Annika otherwise I will feel I must do it once he dies, oh Henry. He then headed out past the staff quarters and nobody was around, two hundred yards further on they came to the stables. There is a young man in here that I want you to meet, they walked into the stables and Georgia said, hello Henry, hello Georgia how are you, I am very well thank you.

She then noticed Annika and Henry introduced his fiancée to Georgia the stable manager, very pleased to meet you. Annika asked, where is the young stallion you want to introduce me to Henry. He is in here, come and meet Sultan, my beautiful Black Arabian Stallion. She said, he is rather big Henry but he is really beautiful. Will you be riding while you are here Henry, I do not know if we will have time, however, if we do I will phone you. Thank you Henry and it was very nice to meet you Annika, she turned and walked further along the stable. Annika stroked Sultan's face and said, he seems very gentle Henry, he is a beautiful stallion and he is great to ride, he is fast and very sure footed. Georgia rides him for me as he needs to

be ridden on a regular basis.

They then walked passed fruit trees and shrubs that Annika could see would be flowering soon, they cut across the middle of the front lawn and walked diagonally across the grassy area and onto the path until they came to the gate across the footpath. A lot of people have walked through this gate and not all of them came back, are you sure you wish to venture further. She looked up at him and told him he is such a tease, you know I trust you and will go anywhere with you. Now what's behind this gate, it leads to the golf club. Henry put in a code and the gate swung open and the path continued up to the clubhouse. This is where I learnt to play golf and I want to introduce you to the man that taught me.

They walked into the pro shop and a voice from behind one of the racks shouted, I will be with you in a sec. When he walked around, he said, welcome home Henry, it must be months since you were here last. Henry introduce Annika to Jasper Conway, he shook her hand and turned to Henry and told him, you are forgiven for staying away so long, now I see the reason. Is this another young lady that needs customised clubs Henry. Not at present Jasper, thank you. However, when the time comes I will bring her back to see you.

They came out and Annika asked what was that about. My father told you what happened last night when I was a junior. So this is Jasper that built her a full set of clubs. Yes, that is how Christine got started, so you were getting people to do what you wanted them to do from an early age Henry, what can I say, I am a very likable person. They both laughed and Henry asked if she would like a coffee, yes please, they sat on the terrace and watched people teeing off and playing down the fairway. After coffee they walked back to the house.

They sat in the lounge and Annika asked Henry to tell her about Queensberry manor. Queensberry Castle was given to the James family by the Earl of Banbury, William Knolly in 1632. Queensberry Manor House was built in 1725 about 350 yards in front of Queensberry Castle. My father has been looking to renovate the old castle and he has decided this will be his project once he retires. That is a very long time that this property has been in your family Henry. Yes several generation have looked after it for hundreds of years and this is why we have to have an Antenuptial Contract. It is normal to have one when either or both parties have substantial assets and we both have, she smiled and knew this is why he gave her the Nicaraguan Colonial. In my case one clause is needed because of this property, it must be left for future generations and cannot be sold off. I do understand Henry and I agree this house must stay in the James family for future generations. He looked at her and said, we seem to be agreeing on most things at present.

Before my mother asks, do you have any idea when you would want to get married. You are too late Henry, she asked me yesterday, it does not surprise me. She also wanted to know if I wanted to get married from here. What did you say. I thanked her and then told her, since a little girl I have always dreamt about getting married in the snow and arriving by

horse drawn slay. She replied, it is always nice to have a dream dear, however, dreams can change.

Do you want to get married from Queensberry Henry. Oh Annika, it is not what I want, it is your day and you will have what you want. I look at the marriage day as the brides day, it is her day to do and say and dress how she wants, the groom is only there to make up the number. It is not his day and it is not the brides mothers day, and it most definitely is not the future mother in-laws day. The bride or the brides mother tells the mother in-law to be, how many guests she can invite. So the only thing your future mother in-law gets to decide, is the people on her guest list. Maybe your mother will not like me to treat her like that Henry. I am sure she will not, however, deep down she knows that is how it is. She would love you to get married from Queensberry, because that way she would get more chance of organising your day.

Traditionally the brides mother and father pay for their daughters wedding, however, in your case I would not expect Fredrika to do that. We will pay for our own wedding. Your wedding will be your choice and yours alone. If you wanted to leave from your family home that would be your decision and not mine. As you asked me I will give you my opinion, do not get married from Queensberry.

One day you will live here and then it will be yours to run the way you see fit and the only person that should have any input into your decision would be me. When you are ready to start the process of organising your wedding, I would expect your mother to help you, I do mean help and not take over. If you want my opinion on any aspect of your wedding day you only have to ask me.

You would help me plan our wedding Henry. No, not at all Annika. If you wanted my opinion regarding things like, this church or that church. Also this venue or that venue for your reception. I would be prepared to give you my opinion, however, it would only be in a limited way, as I said, it is not my day, I am only there to make up the number.

I do love you Henry James, and I love you Annika Olsson. We do things a certain way in Sweden, but I have decided I will take the James family name, however, any work I do once we are married I will use my maiden name. I like that thinking Annika. Another great meal and after much talking they all went up to bed.

On Saturday morning Henry and Annika thanked the staff for taking great care of them hugged and kissed Jessie and told her they will see her soon. Hugged and kissed Alexandra and David and got in their car and drove to Huffkins Bakery and Tea Room in Witney, they walked in and Henry spotted John and Kate sitting at a table along the back wall. When they saw Henry walking towards them they got up.

It was quite an emotional meeting as the last time John and Henry had seen each other was just after Victoria arrived. The two of them hugged and Henry then turned to Kate and hugged and kissed her on her cheek and told her he was sorry about her mother, thank you Henry and I trust you got my letter, I did indeed and thank you so much for allowing me to

keep my family home, you are more than welcome.

Now, this is my fiancée Annika Olsson, please meet one of my best friends John and his loadmaster Kate. They shook hands and John said, Kate is now a little more than my loadmaster Henry, we are very good friends, we just cannot advertise that. I am guessing the RAF has some policy against dating a work colleague John. They do indeed, if Kate worked on another base they would be okay with that, but even at Brize Norton doing a totally different job they would not be happy.

So your relationship is covert, it is Henry and at times you feel you should just leave. Kate turned to Annika and asked if she could see her ring, Annika held her hand out and Kate said oh my god Annika, that is some diamond ring you have there, it must weigh your hand down. It is truly magnificent, please show John. He looked and just said, wow, that is the biggest diamond I have ever seen, and before you ask, I could never afford it. Surely you wish to match what your friend purchased for his fiancée Kate said, not at all.

The Oxford four were good together but different people, Takahiro, being Japanese is very set in his ways and I think he had to always make sure he did not do or say anything to offend anybody.

Both Henry and Theodore, were very competitive and were always trying to be top dog. I on the other hand was the joker always happy and not competitive like Henry and Theodore. On leaving Oxford three of us went into the military in our own countries. Both Takahiro and I joined the Airforce, I went into heavies and Takahiro became a fighter pilot.

Theodore was expected to follow his father into the navy and being competitive he has worked his way up to XO on a nuclear powered submarine. This guy across the table also followed his father and became an investment banker and I am guessing he has made more money than he would ever admit to. So if we get engaged I am sorry but that ring is out of my pay grade.

They all burst out laughing and Henry ordered coffee and while drinking it Kate said, I do hope you are coming back to our house for lunch. We would not miss that for the world Kate.

Over lunch John pointed out that the last time all four of us were together was at Miyu's wedding, I think it is time we made a plan to all meet up again, that would be nice Henry said.

Kate asked Annika if she had met the others, no, you are the first, and Henry did not know about John and you. My plans are simple, I want to introduce Annika to all my friends and because we needed to see a man in Oxford yesterday, it was the perfect time to come and see you.

We will be in Sweden on the 14th March and Annika will go and tell her mother on the 15th and I guess show her the ring, that is for sure, Annika said. So your mother does not know as yet, no Kate I think it is better to go and see her. What did Lady James say, she was very pleased Annika replied. She just wanted to arrange the wedding, Henry told them. I can tell you this Annika, Takahiro and Miyu's wedding was the largest most well organised wedding I have ever been to, John said.

Henry continued, we then have two weeks in London before flying to DC to see Theodore, the Vice admiral and his wife at the beginning of April. Please give him my regards Henry, I certainly will John. I have my last client to see in New York before returning to London. We will stay a few days and then fly to Japan to see Takahiro and Miyu.

Again give them my regards, I will John. From there we go to Australia to see two wonderful friends, Johnny and Bonnie, Air Vice Marshal Johnny Weston of the Royal Australian Air Force at Base Tindal. After that we fly to New Zealand to see two ladies, Alexa and Olivia, mother and daughter, it's then back home as we have to make some money to pay for all these holidays. John roared with laughter and Henry smiled a very big smile.

I am sorry to break up the afternoon but we must get back to London as we fly out to Sweden tomorrow. Hugs and kisses all round and they left.

C

Chapter 38

A

Annika meets Miyu

They got back to the Penthouse late afternoon, and checked his emails and he had received one from Señor Jodocus Medina. He told Henry the attachments included all sizes of each area, the rest of the board were very happy that Annika wanted to build a new school and he can take it that planning permission has been granted. If you need more land please come back and let me know the size of the area you need. Henry called to Annika and told her Señor Medina has sent all the sizes and says, you already have planning permission. How can he say that Henry, when he does not know what we want to build. Quite easily Annika, the board of Puerto Morrito which he is probably the chairman of, pass or reject planning.

In your case they are telling you that no matter what you want to build for the children it will be passed. I guess you are still far too much Scandinavian. You are quite right Henry, I will try to change, that's good I think, however, as long as the change is not in the bedroom. They both laughed and Annika assured him, in the bedroom we will only get better.

Henry sent the attachments to Jock and told him they would be away for one week from Monday and then away again from the 6th April to the end of April. He also told him what ever you come up with planning permission will be granted. If you need more land please let me know straight away. We also have an email from George Morgan and in it he tells us the owner of the property wants more, he will not sell for less than \$300k. Henry looked at Annika and asked what she thought about \$300k for that property. Why do you ask me when it is your money and we are not married yet, as I do not have any money to give them. I am sorry if I made you feel uncomfortable. Let me rephrase the question, do you think the property is worth the extra, yes Henry I do. He turned back to his computer and sent a reply to George, we accept the \$300k, conditions still remain.

He then read out another email, we are looking forward to seeing you brother, what news do you have to tell us, I cannot wait. You sent her an email Henry, you have to contact military personal as early as possible because they may be away and it's a long way to go to find that out. There is also one from Johnny, it just said, looking forward to your visit mate. Do you mind if we invite a couple say tomorrow lunch time, of course not Henry, what do you want me to cook, your choice Annika, who are you inviting. Randolph and Martha. What time should I tell them, 14:30 for 15:00, I will phone straight away. Martha answered the phone and Henry said, is that my favourite god mother, I hope so as I am the only one you have. How are you Henry, I am very well thank you. I wish to know if you and Randolph would like to come for lunch tomorrow as I

have something to tell you. That would be very nice Henry, what time do you want us to arrive, 14:30 then we will be there.

On Sunday morning Henry and Annika jogged around Hyde Park as they both felt it had been a long time since either of them had been jogging. They stopped at the Island Grill and had a couple of smoothies for breakfast and then went home for coffee. After coffee they showered together which took almost an hour and when they finally came out of the bathroom they had big smiles on their faces. It was 11:00 by the time they were dressed and Annika went into the kitchen to start preparing the meal. Henry went into his office and switched his computer on and saw a note from Lydia, she told him that Annika's programme worked like magic and she has now stopped checking stocks every few minutes and just does it once per day, not that she needs too, it's just because she feels she should. I hope you had a good time at your family home, see you on Monday.

Henry found an email from Jock telling him that he can get most of the building within the areas they have been given, so I have started drawing up plans. We are short of a proper drama and music building, this has to be a certain size because of good acoustics for teaching and playing music. The other is a bigger size science laboratory, I can only get two rooms and I think three or even four would be better. I will draw those plans up last and hopefully you will have secured more land. The last thing we need is a sports stadium. We have enough for a football pitch and nothing else, so no maintenance facility and no stands for spectators. It would be a lot better if we could build a stadium which can incorporate all sports. That way the football pitch could also be used for all types of field athletics with the running track around the outside. Before you ask Henry, we need an area of 34,000 square metres in an oval shape. That would give you a very good range of sporting facilities complete with spectator seating of around 10/12,000 along with maintenance facilities to take care of the complete complex.

Henry called Annika and let her read the email from Jock, she turned to Henry, threw her arms around his neck and whispered, so it really is going to happen. He squeezed her and just replied, of course it is, that is what you wanted. I am not used to getting what I want. That was before you became engaged, I feel so lucky to have met you Henry. They hugged and Henry sat down and Annika curled up on his lap.

Henry sent Jock a reply and told him he is working on getting more land. He then asked Annika to please reply in Spanish to Señor Medina, she thanked him for the information and explained, plans were already drawn up in the areas he had sent. However, we are short of land to build three much needed facilities. She coloured in the areas on the plan that Señor Medina had sent, she used blue for the areas that were big enough and plans were being drawn up. Red for the two areas that needed to be doubled in size, for the science and a much needed theatre for drama and music. She used green for the sports stadium, telling him this needed to be a minimum of 34,000 square metres and could be an oval shape. She again thanked him and looked forward to hearing from him.

While Annika got on with the meal Henry started writing a list of the things he wanted to do, top of his list was the renovation of world war two aircraft along with a museum to display them. He then wrote down what he needed to make that happen, a building preferable on an old airfield, in Oxfordshire. He wanted this project to be based in Oxfordshire so that it could provide employment for local people. His father had always told him, from an early age spend your money where you live, if at all possible. Try to look after the local people, that way you will get respect from them, otherwise they will look at you as a wealthy spoilt brat.

He needed people that knew about renovating old aircraft as he did not want this to be a volunteer project. A company would have to be registered once he found the right airfield. He made a note to contact the local MP to make sure he was on his side. He did not see any point in making further notes to what he needed until he had found an airfield that he could use. He searched for world war two airfields in Oxfordshire and decided there were only two that he felt could be used. Brize Norton, which is an RAF base and he did not see any chance that a private company would be allowed to use it. His only other option was Chalgrove Airfield which looked perfect, it is around 13 miles south east of Oxford and 26 miles east of Queensberry.

It has three runways of 4,186 ft, 4,347 ft and 6,004 ft, so this airfield would be perfect. He noticed that it was leased from the Ministry of Defence by Martin-Baker. He would talk to Randolph and get his advice who to contact first. By the time he had finished looking at all the information he could find of Martin-Baker and Chalgrove Airfield it was 13:45. Annika told him the leg of lamb is ready and suggests they go and change into something a little smarter.

At 14:25 the intercom rang and Benson told Annika that Sir Randolph and Lady Martha had arrived. Henry opened the door and waited for them to get out of the elevator. They hugged and Martha said, it seems like forever since I last saw you Henry, how are you, I am very, very well. In fact I do not think I could be better, that is good news my boy. They walked through to the lounge and Annika jumped up and put her hand out to shake Martha's hand, Martha just hugged her, how are you my dear, very well Lady Martha. She turned to Randolph and said hello Sir Randolph, hello my dear and he gave her a hug and said, something smells good, I hope it also tastes good. A drink before we eat Henry asked, Martha had a red wine and Randolph a whiskey. Henry sorted out the drinks while Annika asked them to please sit down.

When they all had their drinks Henry put his arm around Annika and said, I want to tell you that I asked Annika to marry me. Randolph and Martha got up and with lots of hugs and kisses and congratulations were offered to both of them. They all sat down and Martha said, we are so pleased for you Henry and you have made me so happy Annika, because I know you will take great care of him. Please let me see your ring, Annika got up from her chair and sat down between them on the settee and held her hand out for Martha. This is very beautiful Annika a really magnificent

ring and one I feel you are worthy of, thank you Lady Martha. Annika, you are going to marry our god son, from now on it is Randolph and Martha please remember that.

I wish to tell you Randolph, I fired Annika before I dated her, lots of laughter and then Randolph said to Henry, I trust you complied with Annika's employment contract, because as her legal official I do not want to advise her to sue you. Everybody burst out laughing then Henry said, I did indeed. I am pleased you do listen to me sometimes my boy.

Over lunch Henry said to Randolph, we will leave it up to you how you word the Antenuptial contract. I have explained to Annika about Queensberry, she knows there will be a clause excluding that. I feel that we should have something simple regarding what we own remains ours, before we get married. With that Randolph laughed, looked at Henry and shook his head. My boy, nothing is simple when a person of wealth gets married. Just leave that to me. Now, when are you planning to get married Annika, we have not really spoken about it. I will draw up what I think should be in your Antenuptial contract and you can both come and have a look and tell me if you want to add anything. It will then be ready once you have a date for your wedding.

Martha asked, where will you be getting married Annika. I do not know, Alexandra asked me if I would like to get married from Queensberry. Henry told me it is my decision where I get married. Martha said, Alexandra is my friend, we have known each other since before we were married. She took hold of Annika's hand and said, my advice to you would be, do not get married from Queensberry. That is exactly what Henry said, and he is right my dear. What do you really want for your special day, I have always dreamed about getting married when it is snowing and I arrive in a horse drawn slay. Then unless you change your mind, that is what you should do. Everybody was smiling. Let me clear away and get the dessert. I will help you my dear, thank you Lady Martha.

When they had cleared away and returned to the kitchen Randolph told Henry he is making progress with the sale of the shares of Offshore Oil & Gas Expiration Ltd. I am going to make you not just a very rich man, I am going to make you the richest man in England. Oh Randolph, that's a joke, I am in no way joking my boy. I have three companies very interested and they keep offering more money. I believe we will get to a final figure before the end of May. I think I should not tell you what we are up to at present, why is that Randolph, because I believe you will say, just take it and I believe we will get more.

A part from this wonderful news what else have you been doing with yourselves. When Annika accepted my proposal I gave her the Nicaraguan Colonial as a present, Randolph laughed, I guess you wanted to make sure she had her own property before getting married, something of worth, am I that predictable Randolph, I think so my boy and that is a very nice gesture because once she knows how much you are worth, if she had nothing she may feel intimidated. I have decided to stop flying around the world and I have told Lydia to stop looking for more potential clients and

where possible no more appointments. You did tell me that, the last time we spoke.

Since then we have started on Annika's project for a new school in Puerto Morrito. Father introduced us to Don Redman last week and he has agreed to go out and build the school. We have also been to see Jock Macdonald and he has started drawing up plans for the areas of land the Puerto Morrito council has already approved. We asked for some more land this morning because I believe that if I am going to pour a lot of money into this project then it must be the best school in Nicaragua and one that will set an example for all others to follow. We want children to learn and parents to want to keep them in school. I have told Señor Medina the Mayor of Puerto Morrito, there will be absolutely no cost for the children to attend school. So I am hoping you make several millions from that sale because I am sure we will need it. Do not worry my boy, you will have more than enough to do whatever you want to do. Thank you Randolph.

I have started looking at my own project and feel I must start with an airfield that I can use before thinking about anything else. I would like my company to be on a world war two airfield if possible because I feel we may find it easier to get permission without too many objections from locals. What county were you looking at Henry, Oxfordshire if possible, that makes sense my boy. I think there is only one that would fit the ticket. Chalgrove Airfield which would be perfect, it is around 13 miles south east of Oxford and 26 miles east of Queensberry. It has three runways so it has plenty of room and it is really in the country side, the only people that might complain would be from Chalgrove village. Martin-Baker leases it from the MOD at present. I do not know if I should ask them first or approach the MOD. Leave that with me for a few days and I will make some enquiries off the record.

The dessert arrived and after coffee it was almost 19:00, where are you going in the next few days Randolph asked. We are going to Sweden as I have one new client to see and Annika will tell her mother she is engaged. After that we were coming back here for ten days and then on to DC. I think it would be better if we went straight to Japan from Sweden to see Takahiro and Miyu first, you have not told her Henry, no Martha I wanted to tell her to her face so I can see her reaction. Are you thinking she might not be happy Henry, no, not at all, she will be exceedingly happy as she has tried to push me to get married for ever. I will let you know when I have something for you to come and look over. They said their goodbyes along with hugs and kisses, the elevator doors closed and they were gone.

Henry and Annika walked back inside with their arms around each other, would you like a coffee Henry, yes please and while you make it I will look for a movie as it does seem we have not watched one for weeks. Annika brought the coffee and they watched The Hunt for Red October. Before it was finished Annika had fallen asleep. Henry picked her up and carried her to the bedroom, laid her on the bed and removed her dress, as he was removing her thong she woke up, do you need any help Henry. Not

at all Viking lady, I do not think I will have a problem as I have had several weeks practice. They made love for most of the night. Roger was waiting for them at 05:00 to take them to Heathrow for their flight to Stockholm. The car was waiting when they came out of customs and the driver drove straight to the Grand. He then asked, what time must I return Mr James, at 12:00 thank you. They checked in and then ate breakfast.

Henry was waiting for the driver to pick him up when he noticed Boris Christerson walking up the steps, good afternoon Boris how are you. Why Henry, long time since I last saw you, I am very well thank you. How are you keeping Henry, I could not be better thank you Boris. Glad to see you are still making money for me Henry. Henry headed down to the car and he was whisked away.

Annika phoned her mother and told her she is staying at the Grand Hotel, if you grab a cab we can then go and do a little shopping. I will be there in a few minutes, I will wait in the lounge for you and we can have a coffee first, see you just now. Fredrika walked into the Grand and told the receptionist she had come to see her daughter, Annika Olsson, you will find her in the lounge. She walked in and Annika stood up and they hugged and kissed and Fredrika told her she is looking very, very well. Thank you mamma, you are also looking very good.

I have started to go dancing again and I am really enjoying life once more. What about you Annika? We went to Nicaragua after we left Mexico and he had a surprise for me, he arranged for the Viking Lady to be moved to Lake Nicaragua.

We sailed out onto this large lake and after one hour we moored at a jetty in front of a magnificent Spanish Colonial. I asked Henry if he knew the owner and he told me yes, he has known him all his life. We then entered the house and he showed me around, it is in perfect condition as it has just been renovated. The view from the master bedroom is as good as a view gets, you look out over the lake and on the other side are two dormant volcanoes. He asked me would I like to live here. What did you say, I told him I would be happy to live anywhere with him. He then got down on one knee and asked me to marry him and she held her hand out for Fredrika to see her ring.

Fredrika put her hands to her mouth, Annika got up and walked around to the other side of the coffee table to show her mother. The tears were running down Fredrika's face as she looked at Annika's ring. This is the most beautiful ring I have ever seen, it must have cost Henry a great deal of money, I have absolutely no idea mamma, you do not ask Henry James how much things cost, you accept him like he is or you must walk away, I am saying this because a couple of people have told me that, he will never change. He always wants to pay and never wants anybody else to pay for him, if he likes you, he will give you the world. He obviously likes you very much Annika, she smiled at her mother. I am very happy that you have got what you wanted and I guess you will never have to, watch every ören you spend again. They never went shopping that day, they just sat and talked and talked. Fredrika asked if she had a date for her

wedding, no mamma I have not really had time to think about getting married. Fredrika held her hand and kept looking at her ring. I did that for a couple of days when I first got it, it is very hard to take in the size and brilliance of this diamond. Henry did tell me it is a 10ct flawless, round brilliant Tolkofsky cut, with a GIA Grade of D. I have no idea what all that means, however, one day when I have a lot of spare time I may look it up.

Annika then told her mother that Henry is not going to be flying around the world anymore signing up new clients, in fact we are going to start our own projects. He asked me what I wanted to do with my life because he wants to start a project renovating world war two aircraft. I told him, I think the best thing you can give a child is a first class education. So he asked me if I wanted to build a school, I said, I am guessing there would be a lot of good that we could do here in Nicaragua. So he took me to see the local mayor and my project has started.

You are going to build a school Annika, I am mamma. The plans are being drawn up as we speak and we already have an engineer that will go and build the school. So you and Henry will be working together to build this school. No mamma, this is my project, Henry helped me to get it started and he has asked the mayor if the school can be called, The Annika Olsson School. He will set up a fund to cover all costs and it will be up to me how I spend the money. If I get stuck on anything I just need to ask him.

I have agreed to base the school on the schools that Henry attended because he feels he had the best education in the world. He does not speak as many foreign languages as you do, so it cannot be that good. Oh mamma, have you never heard about give and take or compromising a little. I think it is far better to give into such a small point instead of trying to be adamant that I want the Swedish system. I did not have to beg Henry, he asked me what I wanted to do and when I told him he said, that's great, lets build a school.

Annika then told her mother all about Henry's family home. All the staff are wonderful, Alexandra has staff to run her house. She does indeed and she needs staff, Alexandra's showed me around and when you see where Henry grew up you can understand why he is like he is. It has 38 bedrooms all en-suite, the dinning room has a table that can seat 24 people and if you think the lounge in Henry's Penthouse is very large. I can assure you it looks quite small compared to the lounge at Queensberry. It also has a golf course within the grounds and some farming is done there. It must be beautiful Annika, it is mamma.

You enter through a pair of large wooden gates and there is a driveway stretching out in front of you. When you drive around the bend you get your first look at Queensberry Manor House. It stands about 500 metres away and looks magnificent. Henry showed me the old castle which is behind the house, this will be David's project when he retires, he wants to bring it back to the original condition when it was given to the James family in 1632. I met his horse, Sultan which is a black Arabian Stallion, Georgia

the stable manager looks after him and rides him when Henry is not there. It is a total eye opener as to the way the aristocracy live. The frightening part is, when David dies Henry must move back into Queensberry and he becomes Lord James. Will your title be Lady James, it will mamma. Before that time comes, I need to learn about the English aristocracy, I am sure Alexandra will help you, I am sure she will, however, I will start by asking Lady Martha, she is a wonderful person and she is Henry's god mother, her husband is Sir Randolph the family barrister. They are the nicest couple I know.

Henry is taking me to Japan to meet his sister and brother in-law, then to see friends in Australia and New Zealand and Washington DC. I do not know what order we see them in but it really does not matter.

Henry arrived back at 16:30 and hugged and kissed both of them, Fredrika then congratulated Henry on his engagement, he thanked her for producing and bringing up such a wonderful daughter. Will you join us for dinner Fredrika, she looked at Annika and said, if my daughter has not had enough of me for one day, I would love to. Over dinner Henry said to Fredrika, unless you have anymore questions, I have something I wish to say. You have the floor Annika said. Thank you my Viking lady. I have spoken to Lydia today and I got her to change our flight details. So instead of returning to London for ten days and wait around to go to DC, we will fly straight from here to Singapore staying over for one night, then onto Japan to stay with Miyu returning to London for two days before flying to DC.

That's great Henry, however, I really want to meet your sister but I only packed for two days in Sweden. Do not worry about that, you will be able to find everything you need in Singapore. I bet you will not need to leave the Raffles hotel as they have some great shops within the complex. Of course, we may have to purchase another suitcase and the three of them laughed. I do have something else to ask you Fredrika and I do not want you to take it the wrong way. Whatever you ask me Henry I promise I will not take it the wrong way. Now that we will be related one day, I feel I can ask you what you do for a living. I am a secretary at the Saab dealership in Stockholm.

Do you enjoy your work Fredrika, enjoy may not be the right word Henry. I used to like my job up until last year, then I got a new boss and he is not such a nice man, so enjoy would be pushing it. If you would have asked me if I am enjoying my life, I would tell you it is much better now. I was telling Annika a little earlier that I have started dancing again and I am really enjoying that. When Annika's father was alive we would go dancing at least once a week, after his death I had to stop as it just did not feel quite right. I understand and it is great that you have started doing something you love. I must tell you, that as far as I am concerned Annika is the best dancer I have ever had the pleasure of dancing with. Whether that is Ballroom or Latin, she is great. Well Henry, I feel the same about you. That must be a good enough reason to marry me. It is, however, you do have some other qualities I very much like, they all laughed.

If your boss gets too much for you to handle Fredrika, please let me know and we will see what we can find for you. Thank you Henry. I have been here twelve hours so I think it is time I went home. It was great to see you both again and your news, has really made me so happy. I thank you for coming to see me to tell me, I know I would have heard sooner but to take the trouble to come in person means a lot. I love you both very much and I know you will always be happy together. Fredrika got in a taxi and with a tear in her eye she waved goodbye.

They went up to their room and Henry said, I closed my last deal today and it was the largest one I have made in Scandinavia. It was for £25m, they made love for the next three hours.

They went down for breakfast at 07:00 with cases packed, after they had finished they took a taxi to the airport. What time is our flight to Singapore Henry, 20:35, Annika looked at him and asked, why are we so early then. Because we are going to see Märten Karlsson, the man at Malö Yachts Henry, yes Annika, that Märten. Why do you want to go there, because I need to have a yacht of my own. Oh Henry, you do not need to do that. I think I do.

Märten was waiting when the helicopter landed, they shook hands and Henry told Märten that he and Annika were now engaged, congratulations and I do hope the Malö had something to do with that, they all laughed. You told me the 36 is now moored on lake Nicaragua Henry, that is correct. We own a Spanish Colonial on the lake so it seemed the best place to Moore it. What do you want the new yacht for. We are looking at purchasing a property in Belize so it would be moored there. We would use it to travel up and down the central and south American coast, dive off the barrier reef and anything else that took our fancy. I would recommend the Malö 41 and you would probably go for the classic transom if you are going to do a fair bit of diving. Märten showed them a couple of 41's with different transoms, as he predicted they went for the classic transom.

Annika made a slight change to the galley and a little more room in the master cabin. Henry signed the order and Märten told him there is a deposit needed. Is it alright if I do that when we return to London in a weeks time. That is not a problem Henry, I will put this order through straight away so that it gets started as soon as possible. They said their goodbyes and got back in the helicopter which took them back to the international airport. They boarded the Singapore airline flight and after a nice meal they settled down and drifted off to sleep.

As they walked up the steps of the Raffles Hotel, Annika said, I really like this hotel, me to, Henry replied. They checked in, took a shower and got dressed and headed down to the restaurant to have a little breakfast. After they had finished Henry said, lets start with the shops around the hotel. He guided her into the courtyard and along to the short row of shops, how long are we going to stay with Miyu, allow for seven days. Annika found lots of things she liked and Henry thought, she looked absolutely stunning.

If you cannot find everything you need then we can go into town and I am sure you will find whatever else you need. She fitted on several outfits and modelled them for him, she was in her element. She got three from the first shop and they moved on to the next. Finding two more in this shop and a further two in the last shop. Lets go and have a coffee in the courtyard. They sat down and ordered and while waiting for the coffee to arrive Jean-Claude walked by, Henry stood up and shook his hand, let me introduce you to Annika. So this beautiful young lady is your fiancée Mr James, she is indeed.

This is Jean-Claude and he is the gentleman that sold me your engagement ring. Annika said, pleased to meet you, Jean-Claude kissed the back of her hand and told her he was very pleased to meet her. Your ring looks fantastic on your hand, in fact your skin tone makes it sparkle a lot more, she thanked him. Over coffee Annika said, Jean-Claude is a very nice man for the job he does, Henry smiled.

When they had finished their coffee Henry said, if you have found all you need lets take a look at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park. They took a taxi and walked around the park holding hands enjoying the beautiful laid out park and the babbling of the water features. Henry felt excited because he had never been with a young lady that he could walk around with just enjoying their selves. He really liked this new experience and he would make sure they had many more days like this.

They got back to Raffles and Henry suggested that they eat which would save them coming down again, they had fantastic fillet steak with pepper sauce and veg. They showered together and played for most of the night and only got up at 08:00, over a leisurely breakfast Henry asked Annika what she would like to do today, she replied that she did not mind. Henry said, then lets go to the Underwater World as I have never been there either. They spent the best part of five hours there and really enjoyed their visit. They headed back and again showered together got dressed, packed and headed for the airport.

Their flight was called and they settled down and after a meal they drifted off to sleep with Annika thinking about their life so far. She thought it was like a fairy tale and hoped that she never woke up.

As normal Henry woke up about one hour before landing, he woke Annika up and asked her if she needed to freshen up, she thanked him and went off to the toilet carrying her little bag. Henry also cleaned his teeth and splashed some water on his face. They each had a glass of orange juice and sat and held hands and chatted about their trip so far. Annika then asked, how far does Miyu live from Tokyo airport, a long way, how far is a long way Henry. Well, we have a 90 minute flight to Misawa airport and then a ten minute car ride, that is a long way Henry. Do you visit her regularly, this will be the first time I have visited them on this base.

What does your brother in-law do at the base. To give him his official title, he is Major General Takahiro Yoshino and the major is in charge of the Japanese side of the air base. Wow Henry, that must be an important job, I am sure it is Annika. Since he was promoted and stationed at this

base, Miyu is very happy, however, I suspect that Takahiro would still rather be flying F-15's. So he is also a pilot like John, yes, they are both pilots but fly totally different types of aircraft. John fly's the C-17 transport aircraft where as, Takahiro used to fly the F-15 Eagle's which is a fighter jet, much more of a boys toy.

Does that comment mean you are sorry you did not go into the air force and train to fly fighter jets. If you had asked me eighteen months into my present job I would have probably said yes. Because at that time I had become fed up with constantly flying around the world and having no life to speak of, I was making a lot of money but never seemed to have time to enjoy it. If your question is related to the present day, then my answer is no, because I would never have met the love of my life. You are such a smoothie Henry James.

We have a two hour lay over at Tokyo, so we can use the first class facilities at the airport to shower and change. I would really like to do that Henry, I thought you might being the first time you are going to meet my sister. What is she really like Henry? Very domineering, arrogant and not wishing to be rude about her but she could kill you if she ever fell on top of you, she is so big, I have seen her wedding photo's so I know you are telling big porkies Henry James. She got married two years ago and I am sure I do not have an up to date photo, Annika just smiled at him.

After a shower and a change of clothes they both felt a lot better, they sat holding hands while waiting for their flight. When they landed Henry saw a young lady in a military uniform holding a board with Henry's name on it. They walked up to her and Henry said, I am Henry James. She looked at Henry and said, that Major General Yoshino apologises for not being able to meet you himself. That is not a problem as you look much nicer than Major General Yoshino, she smiled and blushed. Annika said, you are terrible Henry. I have to take you to Major General Yoshino's house, thank you Henry replied.

The car stopped outside a detached house with twice as much ground as the others close by, Henry thought, this must be the perks of the job. They got out and the corporal told Henry she would take the suitcases. Henry and Annika walked up the four steps to the front door, Henry moved Annika to the side so she was out of sight, he knocked on the door and Miyu opened it and almost shouted, Henry you made it at last, she jumped into his arms and hugged and kissed him and told the corporal to please put them in the second bedroom on the right

The corporal took the cases through to the bedroom, it then struck Miyu that she had taken two cases. My god Henry, no wonder you fly first class just so you can take two cases. The corporal returned and Henry said, thank you corporal, my pleasure Sir. Miyu still had her arms around Henry's neck and her legs wrapped around his waist. I am so happy to see you Henry, I was beginning to think that you would never visit us. Well, I had to come, it does not matter why Henry, I am just happy to see you.

I would guess that even my fiancée thinks that, your fiancée, you have got engaged Henry, I have and if you can release me I will introduce her

to you. Miyu stood up and let Henry go and spun round and saw Annika standing by the door. Miyu put her hands up to her mouth and said, please forgive me I did not see you, I am very sorry. It is not a problem Annika replied. As you may have guessed, this is my sister Miyu, this young lady is my fiancée Annika Olsson. Miyu walked up to Annika and threw her arms around Annika's neck and said, welcome to Japan and our humble home, I again apologise for not seeing you. Annika said, I am pleased to meet you Miyu, I have heard a lot about you and Takahiro, I just hope Henry did not make up some story, he did, and I told him I did not believe him. Please come in, Miyu linked her arm in Annika's and walked her through to the rear patio. Oh Henry, why did you not tell me you had a girl friend.

There is a very good reason for that Miyu, there will need to be a very good reason Henry James. Annika was only my girlfriend for a few days before I asked her to marry me. Miyu's eyes got very big and she just looked at Henry and said, I think you are not telling me the truth. This time he is telling you the truth, Miyu turned to look at Annika and she asked, how long have you known each other. Just eight months Annika replied, how come I have never heard of Annika before now. That is because I was Henry's housekeeper, so brother you slept with your housekeeper, I thought that was against your morals. Henry just shook his head stood up and said, I am going for a walk, do not venture too far or you might get arrested.

Annika, do tell me how you and Henry met, well, please tell me everything about you and Henry. Annika smiled and proceeded to explain to Miyu how they met and the things that they had done together and when she became his girlfriend. He fired you so that he could sleep with you, I guess that's about right. I am so pleased he did that, he is a wonderful man and needed somebody to look after him. Please take great care of my brother, he is a special person. I have found that out long before I became his girlfriend. Miyu held Annika's hand and looked at her ring. This is truly a magnificent ring, did he take you to choose it out Annika. Not at all, in fact I did not know when or where he purchased it, I only found out when I met the man that sold it to him in Singapore.

Maybe he had it for some time, I do not think so because he did tell me that he traded in the ring that he purchased when he asked Rachelle to marry him. So this is not the one he got for her, apparently not. Knowing Henry for several years now, I do not think he would give anybody a piece of jewellery that he had purchased for another lady. Henry only buys the best and anybody would realize that when they look at your ring. Have you fixed a date to get married, we have not had time to think about that. You must stop Henry from all this flying around the world he does, I do not have to, he has decided to stop himself. That is great news, he must love you very much, Annika smiled. He is not stopping work completely as he wants to start a project of his own. As he said to me, I cannot just stop working that would not be very healthy for me. I think I should let him tell you what he wants to do himself.

Henry also told me that now I am the lady of the house I will need to

get something to do and he asked me what I would really like to do. I told him that I have always wanted to help children and I have always thought that the best gift anybody can give a child is education. Anyway, to cut a long story short he has set up a trust and I am going to build a school in Nicaragua, in the village near the Colonial house. That is fantastic Annika, when do you start, we have just started. We went to see the Mayor of Puerto Morrito and he has made land available and told us planning permission is granted for whatever we want to build. The plans are being drawn up and we have an engineer ready to go to Nicaragua to build it.

That is unbelievable Annika. Henry James seems to have a way of getting what he wants Annika replied. They both smiled and hugged and Miyu said, I do know that. I believe we are going to get on very well, I do hope so. I am going to phone my friend in Australia and give her the good news. Is that Johnny and Bonnie, yes it is, has Henry told you about them. He just said, they are wonderful people and he is taking me to see them next month, and also two ladies in New Zealand.

That would be, I think their names are Alexa and Olivia. I know they are mother and daughter, and Olivia is the girl that was in a car accident and Henry ran to see if she was alright and he finished up crawling under the car and staying with her while the firemen cut her free. Her sister died in the accident and Henry got burnt when the car exploded, he did not tell me that, he just said, they are friends. It does not surprise me that he has not told you as he has always just shrugged it off as something anybody would have done.

If you are going to see Bonnie next month Henry cannot expect me not to tell her before then. We speak at least once a week and it will be at least three weeks before you see her. With that she picked up the phone and Bonnie was on speed dial number 3. Bonnie answered straight away and they exchanged the normal pleasantries and then Miyu put the phone on speaker and said, I have something to tell you that I am sure you do not know? I think I do, you think you do. You are going to tell me that Henry is coming to Australia to see Johnny and I. That was not what I was going to tell you, because I know he has told you that.

You are becoming as secretive as your brother. Now, stop keeping me guessing and tell me something I do not know. Henry has just arrived and he is not alone, do tell, has he got a girlfriend, she was his girlfriend she is now his fiancée. That is the best news ever, it is fantastic and not before time. I am very pleased he took some of my Australian advice. What advice did you give him Bonnie, I told him to stop hanging around and dump that American bitch and find another beautiful young lady.

Now tell me her name and what does she look like. Her name is Annika and she is the most beautiful lady I have ever seen, Annika said, do not be silly Miyu. She is there Miyu, she is and you are on speaker phone. Hello Annika, hello Bonnie how are you, I am so happy that Henry has finally found a young lady and it is great that he wants to get married. I want to see you right now not wait for three more weeks before you come and visit us. Just ask Johnny and see if he can arrange for you to fly here, Miyu

said. That would be fantastic, I will do that just as soon as we put the phone down. Now Annika I know your name and according to Miyu you are beautiful, beautiful is not quite the right word Miyu said. I should have said, a Viking Goddess. You do know I am still sitting here Miyu, Bonnie and Miyu burst out laughing. You need to come and see Annika's ring because I would not do it justice to try and explain to you what it is like. I am going to say goodbye now ladies as I need to speak to Johnny right away.

She seems like a nice lady, she is a wonderful friend and is a very nice lady, as I am sure you gathered, we all love Henry and only want the best for him. I guess I had better start making lunch. I wonder where Henry has got to. Just walking around I guess Annika replied. Henry had walked around several roads when a jeep pulled up alongside him. The two people in the jeep looked at him and asked, may I help you, just walking around as I needed to stretch my legs. Do you have some form of ID Sir, Henry felt in his pocket and pulled out his passport.

The man was happy that the picture in the passport looked like the man in front of him. Do you mind telling me how you got here Mr James. Sure, a corporal came and picked us up at the airport and drove us to Major General Takahiro Yoshino home, how do you know the Major General Sir. He is my brother in-law, sorry to have bothered you Sir, do you need a ride back to the house, that's kind of you Sergeant. Henry got in the jeep and they drove off, the driver said, down this road Sir.

I do not know if you can get to Major General's home that way because it is not the way I came, straight on and take the next right. Thank you Sir, they drove Henry onto the driveway and Miyu came out and said, I told you to be careful Henry, did the Sergeant arrest you, not as yet Miyu. It is alright Sergeant, I will vouch for my brother, thank you ma'am.

They sat down and Miyu asked if they would like a coffee, they both said, yes please. She told Henry that Takahiro had phoned and he would be home in about one hour. I did not tell him about Annika, however, I did tell Bonnie, she seems a lovely lady Henry, Bonnie is a lovely lady. With that the phone rang, Miyu shouted from the kitchen, please answer that Henry. He saw the call was from Bonnie, he picked up the phone and said, is that my sexy dance partner from Australia calling. It is indeed Henry and congratulation on getting engaged, thank you Bonnie. I see my sister cannot keep a secret, Bonnie laughed and told Henry that three weeks is just too long for something as important as this. How long are you staying with Miyu, five days because we have a wedding to go to. You are getting married that quickly Henry, I am sure that you do not think that.

Please tell my friend I will be landing at 13.30 tomorrow, you are coming here Bonnie, damn right I am, if you think I am waiting three weeks to see this sexy lady, you have no understanding how a woman thinks. I look forward to seeing you again, please give Johnny my best wishes. I will Henry.

He walked into the kitchen and told Miyu that her friend will be landing

at 13:30 tomorrow. I am so excited Henry do you know how long it is since we were all together, I think it is around nine month, far too long for friends not to see each other. You will need to make some changes Annika, Annika laughed and told Miyu he is changing and I am sure we will see a lot more of each other. Then we will all be happy if you make that happen, I will do my best.

Takahiro walked through the door and greeted Henry and asked where is your sister, I thought she would not let you out of her sight Henry. She has been so excited and I think she has been counting the hours down since you told us that you are coming to visit. She is in the kitchen and she is far more interested in talking to the lady I brought with me. That's fantastic Henry, you have a girlfriend, I am so happy for you.

They walked into the kitchen and Henry said, I would like you to meet Annika my fiancée, this is Takahiro one of my best friends and also my brother in-law. Takahiro bowed and said, pleased to meet you Annika, he then stepped a little closer and gave her a big hug and said, congratulations. Annika replied I am very pleased to meet you Takahiro and thank you. congratulations my friend and he shook Henry's hand, when are you getting married.

Do not ask me, that depends on Annika, it is her decision as to when and where. Takahiro let go of Henry's hand and turned to Miyu giving her a hug and a kiss and said, I see you are very happy, I am over the moon and before I forget, can you arrange to pick up Bonnie at 13:30 tomorrow, she is coming here. As she would say, damn right, I cannot keep this secret for three more weeks until Henry and Annika go to Australia to visit Johnny and Bonnie. Takahiro just shook his head and looked at Henry. Do not say anything my friend, it does not have anything to do with me. You men do not understand, Henry has never had a girl friend, well, not one that he could take home to meet his family. So now he has got engaged, it is a very big deal for Bonnie and I and we need to get to know Annika straight away and welcome her into not only the James family but also to join the friendship that Bonnie and I have.

The wine came out and more congratulation were given, Takahiro took hold of Annika's hand and picked it up so that he could see her ring. This looks like it cannot be real as it is bigger than anything I have ever seen. Real or not, this ring stands out and the word goddess comes to mind, you and your ring are both stunning. Please forgive my husband Annika, apart from me every other female he sees wears some form of service dress, Henry and Annika laughed, Annika gave Takahiro a hug and a kiss and thanked him for his complement. They sat down to dinner with Miyu wanting to know where do you come from in Sweden. Annika explained where she comes from. Is that near where mother comes from, no, your mother comes from the north of Sweden. Henry then said to Miyu, you do realise that whatever you ask Annika, Bonnie will ask her again tomorrow, so it would be a lot easier if you only ask your questions when Bonnie has arrived. Annika said, it sounds like this is what they did in the middle ages, they all laughed. Miyu said, it does make a lot of sense Henry.

Henry told them that John wishes to be remembered to them and also about his relationship with Kate. Takahiro explained that if their relationship is discovered by the RAF they will be severely reprimanded and one of them will be made to leave the squadron. I am guessing they would make it plain that it costs a lot less to train a loadmaster than a pilot. Miyu said, please give him our love next time you see him, we will Annika replied.

Henry asked how is your pen pushing job going Takahiro, do not joke Henry, I have a lot of paperwork to complete and I still feel I am far to young to fly a desk. I have instituted a new program that puts me in the cockpit of an F-15 Eagle once a month. I have convinced the top brass that my licence should stay current, so I will get to fly one patrol per month. It is far better than not flying at all. Would you like to see the base tomorrow Henry, very much so Takahiro. You do know your friend really envies you Takahiro, you mean Henry, yes I mean Henry. Why in the world would you envy me Henry.

After I had been doing this investment job for around two years I started to get really fed up with all the flying around the world I was doing. Living out of a suitcase pretty much all the time. Yes, I made a lot of money, however, I never got much time to spend any of it or enjoy myself. It was around this time that I thought, why the hell did I not go into the RAF like John and train on fighters like Takahiro. So yes, for a short time I envied you, then I received my bonus at the end of the year and realised I had become a multi millionaire and if I carried on doing what I was doing I could buy my own plane and retire early. I then set about working as many hours as I could. You did not tell me you are a multi millionaire Henry. It is something I feel you should not advertise, however, in your case I did not want to scare you off. Much laughter from everybody.

When they went to bed Annika told Henry that she likes his sister and brother in-law very much and I am sure I will become a close friend of Miyu's. In Takahiro's bedroom Miyu asked him what he thought of Annika, I think she is a very nice young lady and she is a very foxy lady. I thought you might have noticed that, I did indeed but what do you think of her. I think she is a lovely person and somebody I am sure will become a very good friend, I agree with you, she is a very sexy, beautiful and the perfect lady for Henry.

At breakfast Takahiro asked Henry if it is alright if they take a tour this morning because he will not have time this afternoon. Whenever suites you is fine with me. Annika asked if it is possible for her to tag along. Before Takahiro answered Miyu said, that's a good idea we can all go. Takahiro picked up his phone and told the person on the other end that he needed picking up and wanted to take two friends and his wife on a tour of the base. The car arrived in less than five minutes.

It was the same corporal that picked them up at the airport, she saluted and said good morning sir. She drove them around the Japanese side of the base and Takahiro pointed things out to his guests. They pulled up on a slight crest in the roadway and watched as two F-15 eagles were taking

off. The car stopped by one of the offices and Takahiro told them he will not be long. Do you like living here Miyu, it is far better than the base we were on before and because Takahiro has this job I see him almost every night now, so I am very happy. Once you get used to the noise of the jets it is not too bad. The other wives are very kind and helpful. Takahiro returned and spoke to the corporal in Japanese and she pulled away.

C

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F

light in a F-16 trainer

I have spoken to my American counter part and he is happy for me to show you around the American side of the base. The corporal pulled up at a gate that was guarded by American marines. Four rather large armed marines approached the vehicle, two on either side, one marine walked up to the window and saluted and asked for the papers of the passengers. Takahiro handed his ID card to the marine and told him this is my wife along with Henry James my brother in-law and his fiancée Annika Olsson. I am taking them on a tour of the base. The marine said, one moment please while I clear this. He returned and said, thank you Major General Yoshino. This side of the base was much larger than the Japanese side and there was a lot of activity going on.

They stopped by a line of F-16 Fighting Falcons, some were getting refuelled. These aircraft are flown by American pilots and their roll is the defence of the base. The F-15's we fly patrolling the Japanese waters looking for any suspicious activities. Lets go and meet the Major, they walked inside and Lieutenant Colonel Richard Scott stepped forward saluted and then shook Takahiro's hand, the Lieutenant Colonel said to Miyu, good morning ma'am and she replied, good morning Lieutenant Colonel. Takahiro then introduced Henry and Annika, they shook hands and the Lieutenant Colonel said, so you are the young man that wished he had trained as a fighter pilot, I did Lieutenant Colonel. Well I have clearance for you to take a back seat ride in one of our trainers, then if you are still interested after that, let me know. Henry looked at the Lieutenant Colonel in surprise and then said, that sounds awesome, he turned to Takahiro and said, I have said this before about you my friend. You are the man. The Lieutenant Colonel then turned to Annika and asked, would you also like a ride I do have two trainers, yes please Lieutenant Colonel. Lets go and get you kitted out then.

They followed him to the locker room, an airman saluted and the Lieutenant Colonel asked him to please give our guests flying suits, yes Sir. He went off to get some gear and the Lieutenant Colonel told them he would see them outside once they are suited up. The airman returned and handed a flight suit to each of them and pointed to the changing rooms. After getting their flight suits on they walked out together holding hands and Takahiro remarked that they both look the part. The Lieutenant Colonel introduced them to their respective front seaters. He turned to the two pilots and said, Henry here fancies he could be a top gun pilot Major, so you will need to make sure he is up to that position. He then turned to the Captain and said, make sure Annika is happy to be put through any manoeuvre you wish to do, so explain to her first, yes Sir.

Enjoy yourselves and they went off paired with their respected pilots.

As they turned the corner of the hanger they saw two F-16 trainers being towed out. While they were waiting for the F-16's to be made ready the major explained what manoeuvres they would be performing. We will be performing every move in the book Henry, the Captain will then ask you Annika if you are happy to make the same move. If you are then he will follow, if you decide not to do one or two do not worry, most people will chicken out from anything more than a barrel roll, so you do not have to feel embarrassed, go for what you are happy with. I am sorry Henry but the F-16 we will be flying may have a problem with the intercom, so I may not be able to hear your screams. Major General Yoshino has asked me personally to put you through every manoeuvre in the book. That sounds like Takahiro Major, Annika laughed and said to Henry, the best of luck and squeezed his hand.

Takahiro told the corporal to drive along the east side of the base so that they could watch the two F-16's take off. Miyu said, I do hope Annika will be alright, I am sure she will, if you wish to worry it is Henry you should think about. When we were at Oxford, Henry always got his way and of course, he is very competitive, this is my chance to shake him up a little. The moves that the Major will be pulling will be close to maximum.

While walking to their aircraft the Major said to Henry. Watching films like *Top Gun* it's easy to see the appeal of being a fighter pilot, but would Tom Cruise have made a real fighter pilot? The cockpit of a fighter plane is a very hostile environment. Because of the altitude at which they may fly there is very little oxygen available, along with the outside temperature being very low. The movement of the plane can result in motion sickness, and the forces exerted on the body by one of the most advanced acrobatic aircraft in the world is literally crushing. So I really do hope you are up for this challenge Mr James, I am not in the military so please call me Henry. Thank you Henry, my name is Ronald.

They climbed into the cockpit and as one of the ground crew was making sure Henry's harness was secure Ronald started to tell Henry a few facts. G-force is a killer. In fact, the effects of g-force was, as long ago as the Second World War, causing the death of pilots who either lost consciousness or were unable to bale out of their planes. The 'g' refers to 'gravity' and while the force has little to do with gravity it provides an easy to understand measurement of what g-force is, essentially acceleration. Most people think of acceleration as an increase in speed.

This is how the word is generally used when thinking about cars and motorcycles, but in purely scientific terms, acceleration is a change in velocity (change in speed and/or direction). It's weird to think that a car that is braking or turning a corner is actually accelerating if the word was used in its scientific sense. We measure the force we feel as we accelerate in multiples of gravity - gs. The force you feel under the influence of gravity is 1g. Put simply, if you were to weigh 80kg (like me) then at 1g you will still weigh 80kg. In most people's day-to-day life they may feel a little "g" force when accelerating hard, cornering or braking in a car.

The centrifuge works much like a spin dryer, but instead of squeezing water out of clothes against the side of the drum, as this centrifuge spins faster and faster we will be pushed harder and harder into our seats. Under these conditions anything that *can move will move*, including the blood in your body. In an F-16 fighter jet pulling an aggressive break turn it is possible to experience $9g$. That means that in a tight turn I would weigh 720kg (nearly three quarters of a tonne).

Such forces are bound to mess up the body. The first effect that is noticed by the pilot is that it is difficult to breathe. This is because the g-force is pulling the ribs down, which empties the air from the lungs. This isn't the most dangerous effect, but it does wear you out. The most dangerous effect is that blood is pulled away from the brain and pools in the legs and feet.

This is exacerbated because the internal organs tend to be pulled down through the body, meaning that blood has to be forced further to get to the brain. After a short time experiencing 'high-g' turns, the eyes lose peripheral vision - giving tunnel vision and you may only be able to see in black and white (greying out). If the turn continues all vision is lost.

This is called a blackout. Should the turn keep going the pilot would risk losing consciousness. It is called a g-LOC (g-induced Loss Of Consciousness).

A healthy person would expect to start suffering from a loss of vision and other g induced problems at 5 or $6g$. After that they usually need help. The first line of defence, if technological aids aren't available, and certainly the most important aspect of resisting the negative effects of 'g' force is the 'Strain'. It's an exhausting exercise which involves contracting as many muscles as possible in your feet, calves, upper leg, stomach muscles and butt cheeks while allowing your upper body to remain relaxed so that breathing is relatively easy.

Negative Gz-forces, however, are an entirely different matter. Nobody, literally no human—anti-g suit or not—can withstand more than 2 or 3 negative Gs before losing consciousness due to all the blood in their body pooling in their head. If you accelerate downwards faster than the rate of natural free fall, you will experience what is known as a negative g-force. As you accelerate, the liquid in your body (the blood) moves slower than the solid parts of your body due to the inertia of the blood, often resulting in a feeling of weightlessness. An example would be travelling in a car accelerating over the crest of a hill, or riding on a roller coaster that accelerates downwards. Negative g-forces can result in a '*redout*', where the blood gathers in your head and everything has a slight red tinge, something pilots often experience in high-speed dives.

So called G-Suits which we are wearing can be used to minimise that pooling by pinching off the torso so the blood flow is minimised upward. They also work to minimise blackout when pulling positive G's where the blood tends to pool in the legs and feet and away from the brain, which is why the blackout.

And many throw up as the negative G's really want that greasy

hamburger in the stomach to come back up. But most dangerous is that negative G's can cause pilots to become disoriented as the inner ear and what is seen are sending out conflicting signals. One of the most dangerous conditions in flight is called the *inverted spin*, where the aircraft is spinning so as to create negative G's and the pilot's visual cues are reversed from the normal spin.

Under normal conditions, your body must maintain 22 millimetres of mercury blood pressure to get blood from your heart to your brain. Each additional +Gz (blood flows from the head to the feet) that a person experiences multiplies that requirement: The body has to muster double that at 2g, triple that at 3g, and so on until they hit around 4 or 5 G's, at which point most folks will pass out due to oxygen starvation because all the blood stays in their feet.

Aircraft are not the only places people experience the forces. Astronauts routinely endured 3g during shuttle launches, 8g atop a Mercury-era Atlas booster rocket, 7.25g aboard a Gemini-era Titan rocket, and around 4g for the Saturn 5s. Even re-entry exposed astronauts to extreme forces: Mercury capsules hit 7.8g during re-entry, Apollo capsules topped 6g. However, the most extreme G-forces mankind has ever generated have actually been created here on Earth. For example, in the immediate post-WWII era, Air Force physician John Stapp set about researching how to improve cockpit designs to make them safer and better protect pilots against not just the G-forces experienced during a crash (which were thought to be the main cause of pilot deaths back in WWI) but also the mangling effects of the aircraft as it disintegrated upon impact (which is what was really killing pilots).

To prove this was the case and that the human body could withstand much higher Gs than conventional wisdom dictated, Stapp developed the "Gee Whiz", a rocket-powered, track-mounted acceleration sled, to see just how many Gs the human body could really handle. By 1948, Stapp had stopped using test dummies aboard the Gee Whiz and had begun using himself instead. Through these experiments—in which the sled was violently accelerated then stopped just as abruptly—Stapp showed that the body could withstand up to 35 Gs and survive.

In the 1950's, Stapp built and tested the Gee Whiz' successor, the Sonic Wind, which accelerated him to 632 mph in less than 5 seconds, then stopped in just one second. This generated a staggering 46.2 g (which means his 168 pound framed felt like it weighed just over 7,700 pounds) and exposed Stapp to 2 full tons of air pressure during the ride. Surprisingly, he walked away from the ride without a scratch proving that the human body is fully capable of massive G loads, albeit only for a short time.

This rocket-sled record was then broken again in the 1970's aboard the Daisy Decelerator, which was built to test the effects of -Gx forces. Major John Beeding, an Air Force volunteer, endured a whopping 83g (albeit for .04 seconds) during the sled's nearly instantaneous stop. He too walked away from the experiments none the worse for wear. Both of these

experiments only focused on the effects of exceedingly large G-forces over extremely short time periods largely because that's what the human body can handle. This has important implications, not just here on Earth, but for our space exploration aspirations as well.

So Henry, I think that the real thing to remember is that it's definitely not as easy as Tom Cruise makes it look in *Top Gun* and although he did not suffer from *g*-loc he did not even have to operate a combat fighter, with all its complex instruments and weapons systems.

Are you ready for the ride of your life, more than ready Ronald. So Ronald gave the signal and the two F-16 were fired up. As they taxied to the holding point Ronald told Henry that the F-16 is certified to 9 positive and 6 negative *g*'s.

The F-16's gathered speed along the runway and as they lifted off Takahiro turned to Miyu and said, lets go to the control room. They walked into the control room and all the Airforce personal that were not busy at monitors saluted. The Colonel asked if they had come to watch the two F-16 trainers, yes Colonel we do have an interest, you will be able to hear everything that is said between the pilot and the back seater. As the two F-16's climbed vertically they heard the Major tell Henry that they will climb vertically to 50,000 feet, they will then roll out and make several manoeuvres on the way down to 20,000 feet. The Captain told Annika that they will roll out of this vertical climb at 50,000 feet and lets see how you feel before making any manoeuvres on the way down.

The Captain was 500 feet below the Major's F-16 so they could watch all the manoeuvres that the Major did. At 50,000 feet the Major rolled out of the climb to starboard and went into a spiral spin down to 45,000 feet he then levelled out and asked Henry what he thought so far. I am still with you Ronald, then we will carry on.

The Captain asked Annika if she wished to follow, lets give it a go, so the Captain rolled out of the climb and went into a spiral spin just not quite as tight as the Major had. They watched the F-16 ahead doing a four point roll and then immediately pushing over and heading towards the sea. This put them into a 2 negative *g* dive before rolling out. I will not be subjecting you to any negative *G*s Annika. So Henry, are you still with me, I am Ronald although I was looking at the world through a rose coloured haze, that was the idea Henry.

Well if you are still up for it lets throw this bird around the sky. Takahiro said to Miyu, he will either love it or hate it. They heard the Captain tell Annika that he will make the same moves as the Major, however, they will not be as violent, thank you Captain. The Major was going from port to starboard manoeuvres without any rest between. Henry's stomach felt that sometimes it was in his mouth and other times he had no feeling other than he was sure he was going to black out.

The Captain followed most of the manoeuvres making gentle turns and rolls, Annika was loving it. The Major again asked Henry if he was still with him, if my friend and brother in-law thinks he is going to make me cry chicken then I have got news for him, whatever you put me

through I will not cry it off. Then I will make one final manoeuvre before returning to base, this is the inverted spin, we cannot stay in it too long because if we did it would kill us. They pulled up to 50,000 feet and the Major pulled back on the stick and closed the throttle. As the F-16 went inverted and started to spin, all personal in the control room heard the Major cry out and then nothing. The controller asked if he is alright, no reply from the Major, respond Major, nothing. Takahiro stepped forward and almost shouted into the microphone, push the stick to starboard Henry, no reply, do it now Henry. Henry could hear Takahiro's voice but he was almost unconscious, however, in that split second he realised that Ronald must have a problem. He moved the stick and the F-16 rolled over, but was dropping like a stone, Takahiro looked at the screen in front of him and said, well done Henry, now we need some power, half throttle will be fine. They saw the F-16 stop falling and it was starting to climb ever so slowly. That's good Henry now how do you feel, I will use the word recovering, however it looks rather red outside, that's okay Henry, I will now hand you over to the flight controller.

Mr James, Henry is fine, thank you, that's great I am Stephen. Please hold that course and the Captain will be flying along your port side so that he can take a look at the Major, I will get back to you once we know the Major's condition. Within seconds the Captain pulled alongside, he told Henry to please keep the aircraft on it's level flight, the Captain dropped down and reappeared on the starboard side. I will talk to control and get back to you Henry, he raised his hand in acknowledgement, Annika waved back. The Captain reported to the flight controller that the Major was slumped in his seat with his head to one side, no response from him at all. Get Henry to turn around so he is heading back towards base at the same speed and altitude.

The Lieutenant Colonel walked across the room to Takahiro, we have a problem here, it looks like the Major has had a heart attack as he is not responding. How sensible is your brother-in-law, I would say about as sensible as you would find. That's good, so you think he will follow orders, I would not go as far as that, well he bloody well better, Takahiro shook his head. I do not see any option but to ditch the F-16 as close to shore as is safe to do so. He turned to one of the controllers and told him to scramble air sea rescue. Lets hope you brother follows instructions Miyu.

Tell the Captain that I will speak to Henry as we want him to ditch and he must stay on station to advise if necessary. He then picked up the microphone and said, hello Henry this is Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, Henry replied hello. It looks like the Major has had a heart attack which gives your flight a problem, now, I do not want you to get upset or worried at all, I just want you to follow some instructions and we can get you and the Major down as quickly as possible. Over the next five miles I want you to reduce altitude to 8.000 feet and follow the Captain in a turn so you are heading back out to sea again. You will then need to close the throttle, this will send the F-16 in a slow dive, you will then pull the ejection seat lever and you and the Major will float down into the sea. We have air sea rescue

on station and they will pick you up within minutes. How does that sound to you Henry.

It sounds like a load of horse manure to me, I beg your pardon, if you are having a problem hearing me I will repeat it for you. I said, it sounds like a load of horse manure to me, now did you hear me that time. I did Henry and I have to say two things, I am not used to being spoken to like that and I expect all ranks below me to obey my orders without question.

Well, Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, I am sorry if I offended you with my comment, however, I am not in your military or anybody else's for that matter so I will not be obeying your orders. Let me say this to you, if the Major has had a heart attack then he needs medical attention as quickly as possible, he does not need to be blasted out of this F-16 to then have to be winched up out of the sea into the rescue helicopter and flown to the base. The quickest way for him to get medical attention is for me to land this plane. That is not going to happen Henry, you could crash on landing and you would both be dead never mind the F-16. So you will follow my instructions to the letter do you understand.

You need to understand that I have never turned a challenge down and I will not be ejecting out of a serviceable aircraft. I will be landing or at least attempting to land this F-16 with a lot of help from the Captain. It is my duty to get the Major to hospital as quickly as possible so lets stop the quibbling as I need to get some instructions from the Captain. I cannot give you permission to land, that's not a problem for me. Correct me if I am wrong but I do not see how you are going to stop me. If I should plough this F-16 into the runway and we both die what is the difference, you would loose the F-16 anyway. Now with great respect please keep this channel open for the Captain. Is your brother always so bloody minded Miyu, he can be. Get the runway lined with emergency vehicles and good luck Henry, thank you.

Captain, yes Henry I am here, I need to know what I must do to land this F-16. are you sure you want to go through with that, absolutely, I have a Major that needs to get to hospital and I do not wish to be remembered as the guy that cost your tax payers several million dollars because I ditched one of their F-16's. The Captain started by telling Henry to call him Andrew, he then proceeded to tell Henry exactly what he needed to do and in what order. I will fly alongside of you right down to 20 feet. Do you remember *Top Gun* Henry, where Maverick flew alongside Cougar and he landed on the carrier, I do indeed. Well that's what we are going to do. Andrew gave Henry a heading to set which lined him up with the runway, we have a 10,000 feet runway so you do not need to try and land it on the numbers at the start of the runway. Andrew came alongside and told Henry they needed to reduce height slowly as we need to descend to 350 feet two miles out. We will then reduce our height gradually over the last two miles, any questions Henry, when do I lower the undercarriage. Not just yet Henry, we will leave that until we reach the last two miles because the drag will lower the aircraft and that may turn out just right.

Annika said, I love you Henry, I love you too Annika. I know, just be

Henry James

careful, do not worry as I still plan to to say I do, she smiled and said, thank you Henry. You are doing great Henry, just keep your controls steady. We are now at two miles and our height is 380 feet, so I did not get that quite right, that's perfect. Now lower the undercarriage and you will feel the aircraft drop a little once the wheels get in the air stream. Henry lowered the undercarriage and he felt the F-16 drop a little. That looks good so far Henry but you need to loose 220 feet over the next mile. The one mile marker came up and Andrew said, looking good. They crossed the fence at 180 feet, now deploy the air brakes to 20 degrees, Henry did that and the F-16 started to drop a lot quicker. Now very gently push the stick forward and reduce your air speed to around 140 MPH. Henry felt the F-16 was dropping towards the runway like a stone and he felt for he first time completely out of control, it was all going terribly wrong. In that split second he thought, I hope I have not made the worst decision in my life.

The end

The Second Book Of The Trilogy

can be found here

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