

Inkslingers Blended Session

20th May 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“A Chance Encounter”

And the Visual



Bronze Cauldron 1588 Spanish Armada Streedagh Co Sligo

A Chance Encounter

Angelina Kelly

Immediately after the Christmas festivities the Waterproof People chartered a Lear jet to take them to the island of Gran Canaria and chose the resort of Anfi del Mar as their base. Touching down in Las Palmas Airport in the early morning, they had the entire day, and night, ahead of them.

Usually, Darren stayed with his friends but today he felt aimless and wanted time alone. Completely out of character, he went for a walk along the beach-side path. Wandering through the shops he greeted the vendors and exchanged pleasantries with them. At one of the beach-side restaurants, his gaze drifted to a young woman, seated at a table alone. Dark brown hair fell to her shoulders, gold hoops dangled from her ears, and she fingered a beaded necklace around her tanned neck. Something about her triggered a vague memory.

Just then she looked up and caught him staring at her. Her eyes widened as she gasped in amazement. He nodded to her and racked his brain to remember how he knew her. She responded with a cute tilt of her head in his direction, her surprise still registering on her face. Not wanting to appear rude, he went over to her table.

He simply asked, "Don't I know you?"

I looked up at him. My heart fluttered in my chest as I replied, "Julia ... Jamaica ... Jake's."

He snapped his fingers and nodded in agreement, "Ah! That's it! You're Julia... of 'The God People'. Yes, I remember you now. How are you and how come we happen to meet by chance in another tropical locale?" He extended his hand towards me, and we shook hands.

"Coincidence, I guess," I replied. His smooth palm and long tanned fingers held my hand perhaps a moment too long, but then again, I didn't withdraw.

Gesturing to the empty seat on the other side of the table with his other hand, he asked, "Are you waiting for someone, or may I join you?"

I smiled and nodded, trying to keep that flutter under control. *What in the world is making me react like that?* “No, I’m alone, please do.”

He sat down, gestured to the waiter, and ordered a Tequila Sunrise. Turning to me he asked “Can I get you anything?”

“No thanks, I just replenished my drink a moment ago, I’m good for now.”

He nodded to the waiter, who scurried off to get his drink, then turned his attention back to me. He grinned; his white teeth highlighted against his perfectly bronzed skin. Sun-drenched blonde streaks ran through his dark brown hair. “So, what brings you to Gran Canaria?”

To keep my mouth from drooling, I sipped my drink. His presence unnerved and excited me. He wore a brightly flowered tropical shirt over white trousers that showed off his tanned skin. A trace of his cologne — Armani, Acqua Di Gio Profundo — drifted to my nose.

“Holiday. At the office Christmas Party last December, I bought a raffle ticket, and I won a package holiday. The weather is so bad at home at the moment that I decided to start the year off with some heat and warmth. So here I am.”

“Are you alone?”

“Yes. It’s my second holiday since my divorce. My first truly alone since my trip to Jamaica, where we met.” I took a sip of my drink. *Was any of that the right thing to say?*

“Oh! I’m sorry to hear that – about the divorce — I mean.”

I nodded. “Yeah, I am too. Sometimes things don’t work out.”

Darren took a sip of his drink. I looked out at the sea trying to calm myself. Between the memory of Mike and the presence of this beautiful creature sitting only inches away from me, my heart was in a flutter and my head in a spin.

Everything was falling into place like a dream. My flight to Gran Canaria had been smooth and event free, even landing twenty minutes early. My check-in at the hotel had been a breeze, and I had been upgraded to

a one bedroomed apartment, on the sunny side of the building, where I found a bottle of wine and a congratulatory note for winning the trip.

On arrival I had shed my winter clothes and unpacked my brand-new seaside wardrobe, selecting a bright-flowered sundress and red sandals with flowers at the toes. I gushed to myself over the beautiful view of the sparkling sea framed by willowy palm trees. How lucky I was to win this trip and have everything go right. What more could I ask for?

Darren interrupted my thoughts. "So, we didn't get much chance to talk in Jamaica. Tell me about yourself."

"Well, I'm Financial Controller of a finance company. I recently moved into my own apartment in Dublin, Ireland and I'm still trying to pick up the pieces and move on." I fiddled with my napkin, pressing until I had folded it into neat accordion pleats. "How about you?"

"What is there to know? I come from a well-to-do family. Dad is an extraordinarily successful litigation lawyer and has made so much money that he is simply unable to spend it. My mum, my two adult siblings and I have no need to work. I contemplated following in

Dad's footsteps for a while and accepted positions in his company, but I couldn't fit in with the staff, and the Board of Directors didn't approve of me either - I guess because I am the boss's son - so I left to pursue a life of travel and adventure while I figure out what I want to be when I grow up. Singapore, Australia, Mauritius, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, New York, Los Angeles, and the Caribbean - anywhere that takes my fancy. That's it, that's who I am, that's what I do." He shrugged.

"You've been to all those places?" *Up to now, England, Europe and Majorca were the extent of my travels.*

"Yes! Haven't you?" His voice held no sign of disdain.

"No." *Oh my God, I'm so out of his league!*

"Why not?"

"Too busy working, I guess." We both took a sip from our drinks.

"Do you have a favourite place?" I asked.

“The Caribbean! I love the heat, the humidity, the verdant tropical forests, the beaches, the music and – most of all - the food and the alcohol – especially the cocktails.” He raised his Tequila Sunrise, tipped it in my direction. and took a long sip from the glass.

I studied his tanned fingers with manicured nails curled around the glass as he raised it to his lips. His athletic physique moulded perfectly into the chair giving him an air of relaxed confidence. His short, dark brown hair framed his tanned face. I shook my head. *Oh, dear God, he's absolutely beautiful.*

Strange Encounter

Gerard Byrne

Fergal's garden centre had recently gone under some unwanted renovation work. A stormy Atlantic sea for four days and nights had weakened the cliff face that Fergal's business was situated very close to, leading to three quarters of his garden centre ending up in the ocean along with a shit load of muck and rubble.

As Fergal looked down at the mess a couple of hundred feet below him, he couldn't help but admire all his lovely expensive plants now dotting around what looked like a poorly built rockery. He cursed the air once more and prayed that the insurance company, insure your hovel dot com, would pay out for the damages.

Suddenly a young man appeared beside him and looked over the edge of the cliff, "what you looking at?"

"My bloody garden centre", Fergus wasn't in the humour for customers right now. Probably never ever again.

"What's it doing down there?", the young man was munching away at a packet of peanuts. The smell of which was filling the air.

Fergus put back on his flat cap and tried to remain level headed, "the storm washed out the cliff face. What the bloody hell do you think happened"

The young man shrugged his shoulders, "don't know. You could of just had a bad day and fucked all your gear over the edge. Stranger things have happened"

Fergus was a bit taken aback by the young man's flippant attitude, "are you for real?. You really think I threw all my expensive fountains, plants, ornaments, down there, just because I was having a bad day"

The young man was silent for a few moments before answering, "Ah well, least I know the truth now. Any chance that you have a few lilies for sale?. Me ma wants a few for the front garden"

Fergus wiped the drops of sweat from his brow, "what did I just say? All my stock is at the bottom of the cliff. Hopefully the insurance will pay out"

"And if the insurance pays out. What happens to all that stuff down there?", the young man pointed to the new rockery at the bottom of the cliff.

"Don't know", Fergus was starting to get a feeling that the young man was trying to go somewhere with this line of questioning, "why do you ask?"

The young man smiled broadly, "because I'm driving my dad's jeep and he's got all his scuba diving equipment in the back. Could go down there and see what I can salvage"

Fergus eyed him up suspiciously. This seemed too good to be true, "and what are you expecting in return for helping me?"

"You had a fountain that featured a giant bronze cauldron, for sale", replied the young man, "well, I know it's not really bronze, more like painted. You were looking for three hundred euros for that fountain. All I want is one of them and the lilies and I'll help you salvage the rest of the stuff. You might make a tidy profit between this and the insurance payout. What do you say?. Have we a deal?"

Fergus thought for a moment about the young man's offer. It was highly tempting and he had very little to lose these days. He might actually come out on top for once. He turned to the young man and outstretched his hand to seal the deal, "when can we start?"

A Precious Moment

Bernadette O'Reilly

I booked for dinner and a show
The hotel changed the menu
There was nothing I could eat
On this new limited menu
After complaining to management
Hungry and angry
I sat through the show
Later walking into the hotel lobby
The singer's smile lit up his face
When he saw me
I greeted him grumpily
Then ordered a taxi and then
Marched outside into the cold night air
At home with a mug of tea and a sandwich
I replayed in my head the scene in the lobby
Berating myself for messing up
A chance encounter
A precious moment.

Spin Man Paddy's Chance Encounter.

Mark L'estrange

Stephen and Spin Man Paddy after an hour finally got to the front of the cue, there was a guy who was dressed like a monk standing there with what looked like a magic wound.

He asked.

"What has happened to this person?" Paddy explained what happened to him.

"Ok can you leave me with him for a few minutes?" "Ok I will be just over here."

Stephen came back down the mountain about ten minutes latter. "Wow I feel fantastic now." His hands and everything where back to normal. Paddy asked, "What did he do?" don't remember to be honest, I woke up with a stick attached to my shoulder and next thing there was a cloud of what looked like poison rising up from the stick." "That's great hope it lasts this time."

They headed back to the airport to catch a flight home, on their way back Paddy noticed a car following them with about five lads in the car, Paddy drove into a carpark to see if they were really being followed, the car drove in after them it was the rest of the gang that where doing the break ins in Dublin. "This is some chance encounter to bump into you here what are you doing here." we are taking Stephen the rat we have a few more things we need him to do."

"I am Garda Spin Man and you're not taking anyone you guys are taking a spin with me." "They laughed at him, Paddy went to start them spinning while he called for backup, but for some reason it didn't work. The lads grabbed Paddy and Stephen and put blind folds on them and threw them into the car.

"You wont get away with this." "Shut up we are." Said one of the crooks, they drove for what seemed like ages and next thing they found themselves trapped in a disused warehouse. Paddy had his secret Garda phone in his sock he phoned the Sergeant on it and explained what happened.

“We have a tracker on your phone don’t worry we will contact the authority’s in Mexico, we will get you out of there.” “Could you not use your powers Paddy” Stephen asked him. “No its weird I have felt funny ever since we left that hill, hope that monk didn’t take them away when he was helping you.” He then phoned the guy who told him to go there when he said what happened “Oh no they should not have sent you with him that can happen he can remove all sorts of stuff, I will contact him and ask what you can do to get back to you.” “Ok thanks.” He rang back and got him to repeat the mantra “I am spin man give them back” four times and take four deep breaths straight afterwards. He did it and like magic there was bright light shining in to the warehouse. He said to Stephen. “I am sorry I am going to have to try this on you?” “No problem.” And thankfully it worked.

To be continued,

My brother's eyes

Heloisa Prieto

(Excerpt from The Storyteller)

Akin, my new found brother loves to talk. I invited him over, and having him at the house has filled my grieving heart with songs, tales and teachings about Ifa traditions. I loved to learn about the ancient wisdom of this Nigerian philosophy. So the more he told me about it, the more I wanted to know.

I have already memorized several Nigerian proverbs. "Never set sail under someone else's star" being my favourite one.

Back home, Baba used to tell me, says Akin or else In Lagos, as a boy, I loved this song, (and he sings it) or still, back home, a Griot told me a tale (and he tells me the story at least twice in a roll).

My mother's family came from Italy, that means I am used to people talking around me, at me, about me. Mom used to sing as well. All the time. She was either talking nonstop, or humming all sorts of music: rock songs from her youth, pop music, Italian lullabies, samba, Brazilian traditional songs. Whenever I asked her questions about our family life, she just told me a fairy tale. I couldn't always find the connection between my questions and her narratives, but I have always loved her magical stories.

I feel at home with Akin. I love the way he moves around my living room, finds his way into the kitchen if he is hungry, and his cooking is just unbelievable.

But there was this time when he stared at me. Silently. We had just finished dinner. I thanked him for being around. I knew I had to clear the table, but I just wanted to linger for a couple of minutes nursing my warm coffee cup. He must have felt the same way because he would not stand up, nor offer to do the dishes, as usual.

He sat across from me and stared at my eyes. In silence. I know I tend to attract people's attention. I am taller than most girls my age, my blue eyes shine bright against the strong colour of my face and my braided

hair reaches down my waistline. People constantly tell me how beautiful I am. But I cannot say they actually see me.

Akin's stare reminded me of Toca's.

I fidgeted. I tried to leave the table, but could not. His eyes held me there, looking back at him. Speechless.

Then he grinned.

I reached out for his hands.

"I wish I had met you before." I told him. "It hurts me so deeply not to have known our father. Please, don't come up with those wise proverbs of yours right now.

Just listen to me."

"No, Sis. It's you who must listen. To the silence. Feel the void. Be brave. I can hold your hands..."

I stared back at his large, strikingly beautiful brown eyes and I was taken somewhere else. I could see a large family at the dinner table. I could smell their spicy food. The wind was wide open and I saw the dark green leaves of a mango tree outside. I could listen to the dogs barking and the sound of the warm evening breeze. Suddenly, I knew I was not sensing his past, nor catching up with his memories. I was seeing my own future.