

Ch 9 The Banquet Preps

On a Sunday afternoon, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway out towards the Grand Central was a pleasure. Four tired sailors drank coffee and relaxed.

The driver played soft quiet Miles Davis – a hypnotic beat. Dev fell asleep in the front seat. Frank can picture Miles in the Village Vanguard in the 60s with a half bottle of whisky on the floor. God Bless....

Ransom was happy – laughed telling Frank and Kari that the marina complained about the crew partying on MF at the dock – we broke the rules by feeding the swans. Told me transients are always a problem.

“Ah, the swans, feeding the swans,” Devin was alert, laughed. Frank said, “I have to tell the story of Kurt Hansom and the swans.”

They relaxed. Wind sailors shouldn't hurry. Hussey told his story, “We were cruising with a few PWYC boats out to Block Island. Mary & Kurt and the Shea's. Family cruise – no hurry – half a dozen children. On our way we always stopped at the mouth of the Connecticut River overnight – down near the lighthouses – near Kathrine Hepburn's house.”

“We always stayed at Hull Harbor One – the first marina off the Sound on the left....Big fixed docks

out into the river delta. A big ferry to Orient Point docked there. Many 45' trawlers – serious boats at the three rows of fixed finger docks.”

“The marina had swans aplenty. Our NY36 and Kurt's Beneteau shared a finger dock – the sterns both looked out to other parties – we were all partying – lots of others on their boats. And we fed the swans and drank.”

Devin interjected, “Dad was fiddling.” Dad-Hussy continued, “Kurt – the only man I kiss on the lips – it was his party. For some reason, blame Jack Danials, he made a lasso and unfortunately, on his first attempt was successful. The swan was lassoed , over its head and under a wing – chaos followed.”

Frank finished: the Swan rioted at the end of the rope – across from us, Semper Fi's cocktail party cursed at us. Kurt, always in control, pulled the swan onto his boat, grabbed the large swan near its rear – fondled him I guess – it relaxed and he freed it. “And Dad kept fiddling,” Dev threw in from the front seat.

Kari bent over in the car seat, laughing – was able to say, “I'm gonna pee myself.” She fell against Frank.

The limo pulled up to Hussey's cottage in Queens.

Ransom walked them to the front door. Hussey used his keys they fumbled with the police lock. Dev pushed past and ran up stairs to his domain. Ransom said to Frank, “thank you for being there for me – when the halyard failed. You probably know my field is Chaos Theory – you'll understand when I say my Chaos coefficients are off the charts. I feel vulnerable – probably for other reasons - I'm completely restructuring my consulting firm – a life change for me. Girard Thompson told me how reassuring it was to have you at his side in Lisbon. He suggested I should talk to you - perhaps we could have a more formal arrangement?”

“We should talk more – Kari's waiting - ciao,” Hussey didn't know what else to say. They shook hands – Charles left.

Frank considered what to do – interesting man. He called Ann at her Wall Street office. He could feel her smiling thru the phone, "I took a cab in at the crack of dawn." They laughed, “crack of dawn”, a ribald often used Kurt phrase. “Didn't know what time you guys would be rolling in. When you're both away, Sundays are a good time to catch up on my billing."

He told her about the crew party: he was very pumped up. "Go to sleep," she answered, "I'll be home soon to see my boys."

Instead he then set about producing Moveable Feast' s victory dinner – but the phone rang. “Hello is Frank Hussey available, Kari Ransom,”

“Hi Kari, Frank.” They talked about the Monday dinner. Kari, when they were on MF, had discussed Bordeaux but Frank was thinking Burgundy since Charles was picking up the tab. Frank said he would call PWYC and try to arrange the dinner with the chef – Matt something – everyone called him “Cooky”. Hussey reminded her the club was closed Mondays – he would call back “asap”.

For Frank, arranging a banquet was always a pleasure. First he took a sheet of paper and made notes for a menu.

MF Victory Crew Dinner (N = 20)

Open Bar

Wines: Pommery Champagne, Chablis Grand Cru (2 different), Echezeaux (2 different), Chateau

Rieussec Sauternes (2 different vintages), Graham's Vintage Port

Appetizers

Oysters (arrange for delivery from Oyster Bay)

Lamb Chops (Cooky prepares)

Liver Pate, Baguettes, Saint Andre

Entrees

Lobsters (cooked, delivered by Jordons)

Filet Mignon (cooked by Cooky)

Sides (prepared by Cooky)

Cake from Ashram (Frank's bakery)

Ice cream (from PWYC)

He called PWYC and made a deal with Cooky to open the upstairs room for a dinner for 20 on Monday night. Cooky lived on the Club property – no problem. Cooky knew Frank well – Frank's clan were serious users of PWYC – and they were generous.

Cooky agreed – on his off day - to cook the lamb chops, the filet mignon and the sides. The rest, Frank said he would handle – including calling Jack to get servers.

Frank called Kari. They talked wines – she liked his wine choices - she told Frank to use Young's Wines in Manhasset – they're like a fine wine library – name an important wine and they would have 3

different vintages.

He called Jack the bartender. Jack would arrange for Tony to be a waiter. Frank also got Anna Bonneannee, their weekly cleaning lady - happy to serve the dinner.

Frank ran down the stairs to what he liked to call his wine closet, actually a small air conditioned room in their cellar. He turned on the florescent light and studied the wines. First, he looked at the small California section but it was a small rare collection - perhaps only thirty individual bottles - and he hated to diminish it further. His interest soon turned to the larger Bordeaux area and he found a '69 lesser Pomerol that probably should be drunk. Several moments later he was back on the phone talking to Cooky but with a glass of wine to add to the conversation.

MF motored past LaGuardia past the Merchant Marine Academy into Manhasset Bay. In the PWYC mooring field, they moored Moveable Feast facing the 5pm sun. Her stern swung towards the long club dock.

“I'll take a cab home – I'm tired,” Dougie called the launch leaving Dawn, Dudley and Bob to close up.

Dawn was in no hurry to go back to the Ransom Sands Point estate. They sat in the cockpit with beers looking at the club “Tea House” on the end of the large dock. The Tea House was the roofed area at the end of the dock where the dock office was, where the dock boys hung out. The dock was big enough for cars to drive out on.

Dawn asked, “I keep coming back to Doug's comment. What was Dougie hinting at?”

Dudley said, “I also remember him, during the “twitch” conversation talking about “good and evil.”

“Wasn't that him talking about Dostoevsky?” Bob threw out.

They looked across at the Tea House. Dudley rubbed her tense shoulders. He said, “it's been a couple years since we were instructors here. We were all crazy.”

“What are you gonna do after graduation?” Bob asked.

Dawn kissed Dudley and then turned to Bob and gave him a long kiss. “Don't change the conversation Bob,” she said after a second kiss.

They looked across at the Tea House. So close.

“Oh to be 15 again. We were crazy. Blame the North Shore – they don't call it the Gold Coast for nothing.”

Dawn laughed, “Bob, look under the launch ramp – the way the the float continues under the Tea House.” She reached, ran her hand over his pant leg. “You spent a lot of time under there – in the shade. Bet you didn't call Marilyn “BJ” for being shy.”

“We never used the twitch.” He threw back to her and slid his hand down her shorts. “Did you?”

“I can't remember,” Bob relaxed.

“Your mother thinks we've got a thing going,” Dudley turned towards her.

“She tells me to wait – that I'm too young. Very funny.”

“Shall we call the launch?”

“If Bob gets his fingers out of my pants.”

Dudley pressed a flat hand against Dawn's neck. “Do you want to get dizzy for old times sake.” She turned to Bob, “Don't scare me Dud.” She pushed his hand away.

Dudley pulled down her shorts to her knees. Bob pulled down the front of her undies. Dud spread her cheeks, “let's just go dry.”

“Marilyn used to say that,” Bob stood up and said, “And Marilyn makes four.”

“You knew her better than me,” Dudley rolled away from Dawn and got up. He reached over to the VHF radio. “Port launch, port launch – Moveable Feast for a pick-up.”

“How are you both getting home?” Bob asked. “Call cabs?”

The launch came and took them to the dock.

“You two are still alive. Welcome home. Sunday afternoon hours,” Ann hugged Frank. “Dev upstairs? So what's the Charles Ransom Story?” She asked.

Frank rubbed Ann's tummy. “Change into shorts,” he suggested.

“Horney sailors,” Ann kissed Frank slowly. “I've got an interesting fuck-up with an estate.”

“I love it. Tell me about it,” Frank unzipped Ann's dress.

“Let me make a drink,” Ann said.

“I've got a Pommard open.”

“I'd rather have a vodka.” She asked, “did you guys eat? And what about Ransom – what's his story?” He nodded and kept undressing her. “Dev is probably upstairs doing “you know what”. They were a randy attractive crew.”

Ann managed to pour a large vodka into a tall glass of ice. “Should we eat at the Club?”

“Forget it,” Frank said, “we're tired. And tomorrow we have a crew dinner which I'm “crew chief” for.”

“Ransom must love you. So tell me about him.”

“I know him from looking up a bit of his Chaos Theory stuff. A couple courses past my stats courses. I learned there is a Ransom Coefficient. Used a lot in econ. I know he has a couple countries as clients.”

Ann drank deeply. “Should we feed the boy?”

“I'll look up and see what's up....”

Frank returned, “he's asleep. It was a long race. Goodnight 'till Monday.”

“So tell me more about Ransom. How rich is he?”

“I haven't been out to his Sands Point place. But we know the area well. I'm sure we'll get to judge it for ourselves. In any case, his taxes are probably my annual salary – even when I was a cop. Are you

hungry?”

“Why don't you join me in bed,” she said and took her pants off. Ann added, “and dream of Kari – by the way, I spoke to her this afternoon.”

“Goodnight,” Frank said. “Until the 'morrow.”

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Ch10 Crew Dinner – PWYC

Monday night - Ann came home around seven to find Frank and Dev napping - still getting back on track after the two day race. "My boys work too hard." She kidded them as they woke and ran around dressing.

“Frank,” she said, “I called the woman from North Shore YC with the connection at the Maritime Academy. We'll have two cadets in dress for the Award Dinner tonight.”

Frank smiled and thanked her, “we'll have them guard one of the trophy cases upstairs.” The upstairs room was Homeric, especially at night. Sitting high atop the 200 capacity first floor it jutted out only a dozen

feet from the bulkhead fronting the Club. The room would seat perhaps 50; it looked out onto the bay. Four deep window seats – really cubbyholes - framed the 4 large floor to ceiling windows looking out onto the bay, the stars and the lights of Manhattan just past the horizon.

"Dev," she feasted her eyes on her tall twelve year old, "you look great in your tux."

"I love formal ware. It's so theatrical, so gay, so bright. I remember being young, newly married to your father. We sailed our 19 foot Typhoon probably to the next harbor. Stayed at anchor overnight. Probably around 1978. We woke up at the crack of dawn – a Sunday morning. There were hot air balloons being blown very near us. We could hear them – roar when they fire up the gas for elevation. Oddly shaped – one a Quaker Oats package shaped cylinder. Another was a Cambells Soup can shaped balloon. We could see the ballooners – all formally dressed. The men in tails and top hats, the women in formal gowns. Waving and drinking champagne. Moments of Alice in Wonderland – ah, the Gold Coast, the North Shore – above it all. These celebs would land in peoples backyards."

"You don't have to come with us," Frank always offered Ann the chance to beg out of the too numerous club events, especially the race related ones. "But you really haven't met the crew."

"I wouldn't miss this dinner for the world, Darling. I know a few things more interesting than old wine will happen tonight. Kari was on the phone with me for a half an hour today."

Frank guessed Kari called Ann – several numbers are listed for each member in the club directory. Frank didn't have a "work" number. Hussey didn't want to guess what they spoke about and he certainly didn't press Ann for details. He felt very uncomfortable about Kari's clutches after the storm. He knew nothing about the Ransoms. This was the first time Frank crewed for Charles.

Frank raced lots – most weekends all summer - he crewed on other peoples boats. He preferred J24s - as a bowman he was valuable.

James built his crew from the pool of young competitive sailors. His son was his magnet but also his

deep pockets.

Frank wondered if Kari talked about Charles's accident. Who is Lipsky – he remembered Charles said he is a lawyer – is he a good sailor?

Ann never liked Ransom though she found Kari interesting and she forgave Kari her entricities putting them down to being married to a man like Ransom.

"She said to tell you Dawn wouldn't come tonight. She's upset about Charles. Is she supposed to be on your crew?"

Frank, carrying his white jacket, ran out of their bedroom. "Where are the car keys?"

Ann laughed as she finished her make-up. "Look on the hook," she yelled down to him. She turned to Devin. He had been sitting on the bed watching his mother dress. "Men are great detectives."

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Ch 10... The Dinner

Port Club was empty when the Husseys walked in – lights were dimmed . They walked thru the hall, past the cloak room (with no attendant – the club was closed). Then on the left past bathrooms - “Buoys” and “Gulls” was the winding staircase to the second floor - the staircase used by debs and brides for “grand”

entrances into the vaulted ceilinged main ballroom.

Upstairs, a balcony looked down into the main room. Flags, like soldiers with raised swords, arched into the main ballroom.

They entered their favorite Club room - the private upstairs dining room. The room, with three long tables leading to the cubbyholed windows, was bordered, on one wall by trophy cabinets – where the cadets would be standing - full-dress honor guards.

At the back of the room, near the curved wood bar and the food prep area and the dumbwaiter going down to the kitchen, there was Jack, the bartender. Jack was famous for his long “pour”. He was unpacking wine bottles.

"Hoo, boo - you and the Misses look like a million. And Devin too."

“Yes Jack, Dev has moved up for the big race. We'll be crossing the Atlantic together.”

Anna came out from the prep area. Hussey gave her a big hug. He always practiced his French on her. Her Haitian French was worse than Husseys. “How did you get here?”

“Pas de probleme,” she replied. Beautiful food. I've put together a few baguette, cheese. Frank handed her a bag, “Here's some mortedella and... you'll see.”

Jack continued, “I do love your dinners, Professor. But this isn't a Viper dinner. It's Charles Ransom's gala. I've set everything up perfect. Lot's of glasses. Cooky's in the kitchen – he'll send the lamb chops up in the dumbwaiter.”

“We won't be breaking glasses tonight, Jack – not to worry.” The last drunken Viper award dinner they had moved the gong from the balcony into the room and had a contest throwing glasses at it – who had

started that? Hussey vaguely tried to remember – does that streak of madness run thru me?

"But, did you hear the one about the old couple who visit Jerusalem?" Jack interrupted his line of thoughts. Devin grabbed some goldfish and ran downstairs. Anything rather than listen to Jack tell a grownup joke.

Half way through the story, Frank tried to slow down Jack enough to get a drink. "We're too parched to hear you, Jack."

But at that moment, Jack was completely stopped by an attractive woman entering the room. Ann and Frank turned and waited for Kim to walk over to the bar.

"Kim," Frank said. "Hello, Kim." He gave her a big hug and kiss.

"Hello, Mrs. Hussey." Ann offered a hand – Kim put out two hands which Ann matched. "You had a good winter racing on Moveable Feast? Did you fall in love?"

"Kim, Yo" And Captain Hussey," softly with a lisp and started to kiss Frank again. But he was too quick for her and put out his hand grabbing hers and shaking it. "Am I early?" she asked, her inverted Swedish tonality always reminded Frank of Zero Mostel's secretary in The Producers. Kim's eyes: green like Ava Gardner's; Asian in their deep drama held Frank's.

Hussey smiled, "No, no. I'm so happy this crew thing worked out for you with Ransom."

Ann walked over to Anna. She was taking charge of the meal. Frank only had the briefest moment of guilt – Ann, the opposite of Frank, couldn't leave a production to chance. Frank went behind the bar and popped a mag of Pommery.

Kim, following his hint, sat at the bar. He moved the ice bucket onto the bar and poured two flutes.

“I've sailed on Pommery, Kim chatted. Frank toasted her. “We don't have Pommery anymore. Do you know the story of her name?”

Ann overheard, drifted over and started to tell the story “Ah, Pommery – we had a bathtub full of Pommery at our wedding – long time ago.” She saw a guest coming in from the balcony – she went to welcome him.

“Interesting times on Moveable Feast. I know the provenance of her name.” Kim said.

Jack rang the bar's bell twice - a muffled deep clang. Everyone stopped what they were doing, stood and quietly faced the window where the flag ceremony was taking place. Sunset at Port Club. A launch boy, dressed in khaki, quickly lowered and gathered the large American flag, then shot off the big cannon. The moment of silence was ended with Jack's ringing the bell again. The Ilbergs with their two high school aged daughters were ushered in by Tony. Ann came over to Frank, “...you invited the Vipers?” Frank smiled, I thought Dev would enjoy the girls – his Jr. sailing buds. He distracted her - rubbed her tummy. “A few more for cocktails won't be noticed – and they are club members.”

Frank walled over to Noel and Lenore with an unopened mag of Pommery, “Pop this and be useful. And organize the cadets. Tell them to leave at nine. Here's two twenties for them...” The Ilbergs walked toward the trophy and the table with a tray of flutes. Poured wine and organized the two cadets. The Viper parties often used cadets.

Ann blocked Frank as he headed towards the door, Dudley, Dawn and Bob Jr. walked in. Frank introduced Ann. Ann pointed out the trays of oysters. “I hope you guys like oysters.”

Finally Ann got to ask Frank, "Did you she was coming tonight? Why would Ransom invite Kim

tonight?"

Ransom walked into the room. The fire of the setting sun cast a strobe flash into the room. Many candles had already been lit.

"Ann, you're so beautiful." Ann was a beauty. Almost baby cheeks bouncy over her strong chin. Large brown eyes above her sculpted cheek bones. "You'll always be my favorite calc student."

"It was modern algebra that attracted me to you. She let him rub her tummy. He reached under her top to pat her tummy, "did Ransom invite Kim?"

Frank said to Ann, "I have to get the cake from the car."

Cooky called Frank Hussey over to the bar. Frank called Jack over. Frank poured Cooky a glass of Echezeaux and a taste for Jack and a taste for himself. Cooky swirled, sniffed and tasted. He then toasted, "Very nice" He sipped again, chewed. Swallowed and said, "Classic. Everything's a go. Jordans called. The lobsters will be here in a half hour. 24 boiled two-pounders. The fillet will ready after that. Enough to feed this crowd. Along with sides. "

"Good," Frank agreed: "We'll serve the lobsters in a half hour. Then the fillet. We'll do it all using one table for the buffet. I'll get Captain Ransom to give a 15 minute pep talk now. Thanks for your work."

Charles Ransom walked into the party. Lipsky walked over to him, "What are you drinking Captain?" Ransom smiled and walked over to the bar. Frank and Jack made room for him. Cooky shook his hand, and left after looking around at the room.

"I love the Academy Honor Guard. Frank, good job." Ransom looked at Jack. Jack

said,"Cognac, Professor? I brought the Camus XO up from downstairs."

Ransom smiled - said, "yes," brushed back his thin yellow-grey hair. He took the offered snifter and took Frank's elbow and walked him towards the side door around the far side of the bar. Pulled Frank away from Lipsky out onto the outside landing. The night was cool.

Frank said,"Charles, perhaps you want to say a few welcoming remarks before dinner is served. Cooky cued me in. Lobster in 15 minutes."

"Good Frank, lovely stuff," he took a sip looked out at the dimming light across the water. The field of boats sat quietly at their moorings. They stood on the metal landing. Out the side of the Club under them, the driveway ran out onto the wide dock to the Tea House – an open structure. From the Tea House, with the launch boy's office – three ramps lead to three floating docks. Straight onto the black water they could see Moveable Feast. "We should go in Captain," Frank said.

Ransom said,"we'll talk later, Frank." He turned facing the door. Lipsky, near the bar, stood just inside. They all walked across the room to the trophy cabinet and the Honor Guard. Frank whistled and held his glass up high. And Ransom spoke.

"Fellow sailors, dear friends, a toast to Moveable Feast and her 1986 summer campaign." Glasses clinked. "I'd like to thanks the Annapolis crew – Kari, of course, and Frank and Douglas and Dawn and Dudley and Bob. And Devin." He raised his snifter high and said, he coughed,"and the Columbus Race – I hope they're still onboard. And also Kim Linde and PJ Lipsky. - Let's eat."

Lipsky, standing next to him, raised a glass,"a toast to victory."

Frank turned to the cadets,"Thanks, here's an extra twenty each and the evening is yours." They

ended up staying another hour.

Kari just walked in. She walked over to the bar and took a bottle of the Chablis. Tony followed her with a tray of glasses. Kari walked over to Dawn and said, “get two lobsters and a large tray and meet me in my lair. She gave Dawn a wet kiss. Kari walked over to the furthest window seat. She crawled towards the back – kicked away her skirt. Her red satin dress was not troubled as she crossed the large deep cushion. Tony put the tray by her on the wide oak arms bordering the yard wide cushion. “Anything else Mrs. Ransom.”

She smiled into Tony's smile. “We'll need tools of destruction for lobsters. And butter.” Kari crossed her legs in a basic yoga pose. She waved her finger – Tony was staring at her legs. “And my name's not Ransom.”

Tony pulled away as Dawn brought the metal tray with lobsters. Lenore oohed onto the edge. “you're Keri Ransom... I'm Lenore Ilberg.

Tony had brought napkins and butter. “Can I go now, Mother?” Dawn blew a kiss and said, “you don't have panties on....”

She left and Kari laughed and said to Lenore, “I'd bet my lobster she didn't wear panties.”

Lenore said, “you're way ahead of me. I've got panties on.”

Kari dipped a piece of tail in the butter, said to Lenore, “you're one of the Vipers....I know all about the Vipers. You guys have great parties....” Lenore had another long sip of the Chablis. She sat back further beside Kari.

They ate and watched Dawn walk towards the side outside platform. Bob was at the bottom of the outside stairs – smoking something. He waved it up towards Dawn. She came down.

“Let's go out to the Jr. Dock. “ Dawn took the joint from Bob. “Dud's there with some coke.” The Junior Sailing dock had a floating finger covered with artificial grass – sloped for launching dingies, Sun Fish. The three of them used life jackets for pillows. They lay back with their coke and joint. Looked at the few stars that the NY City lights allowed in the cloudy grey sky.

The slope of the dock looked across at the main dock, south away from the City lights. Dawn, between Dud and Bob said, “are we gonna play being 15...”

“Coke always makes me a lover,” Dudley said to the breeze. Dawn reached across to his thigh. That excited her. Bob tickled her ear... then her neck. Across on the main dock they saw someone near the hoist. On the far side of the dock on the finger dock at the hoist.

Dawn said, “kids?” as Dud slipped his hand up her short sleeve touching her armpit. She started to hum. “I wish I had a beer.”

They could see Mrs. Lipsky climb down the latter to the dock, So it wasn't kids. “I wonder what their doing?” Bob said. Feeling the two men made Dawn wiggle – they could hear the music from the club. “Bob Marley.” Dawn said humming and squirming. “Good coke.”

“I wish we could see them,” Dud said. “I'm so relaxed.”

“Where do you want us?” Bob said.

“Call me BJ,” Dawn whispered into his ear. He pressed into her neck. With 2 fingers, then harder with three. “You were next to me that night.”

Dud stood up. “Somethings going on over there.”

“I think Doug saw the whole thing.”

“What would he do?” She got onto her knees in front of Bob. “Get down here Dud.” Bob now had both hands at her shoulders – the heel of one hand pressed above her breast plate cutting off her breath. Dud sat behind her and pulled her hips onto his lap. “Oh, wow. Press. Soft.”

Inside, at the bar, Ann sipped some Dow's Port. Frank sat across from her with his hand on the seat of her chair. “Don't you dare – you old sailor.” Frank dared – Ann was wet. “So lover, so Kim is Azores crew.”

Frank wasn't worried about Kim. He knew Ann's skirt covered his hand. His fingers loved her. He leaned over and kissed her lips.

Lipsky sitting with Noel Illberg across from Kari and Lenore.

Cooky brought the cake and ice cream out – more champagne – no one tried the sauternes. Tony put out more glasses. Anna was busy cleaning up – Jack would drive her home

Along the window Lenore had fallen asleep with her head on Kari's thigh.

Lipsky chatted Noel up. Introduced himself – “I've only been a member for a few years.” He went on about the “Bridge”. Told Noel he was interested in getting on the “Bridge”.

“On the Bridge,” Noel looked at him with owls eyes – pulled back his face and laughed. Noels boys came in with Devin. “Ah, cake and ice cream.”

Ann and Frank gather around the buffet. Dished ice cream all around. Robert Lynn, the senior, sat with his wife at the upright piano and played some show music. Noel tried to get Mrs. Ransom to dance - "I'm not Mrs. Ransom," she said. Over and over again – she had gotten out of the cubbyhole – Lenore left there in a stupor – her head flopped onto the cushion.

Kari started dancing, wagging her finger and Noel joined her – the music became Scott Joplin-ish.

Devin walked out onto the Jr. Dock with the two Ilberg girls. They joined Dawn, Dud and Bob - sprawled on the floating dock. Dawn moved over to the three young kids and shared their champagne bottle. She laughed spilling the mag – she was having trouble holding it. She seemed to get serious and asked them, "were you guys over on the main dock? What was that commotion?"

"It was great" – Devin bragged. "We watched from under the Tea House."

The older Ilberg girl shushed Dev, "the father who used to run Jr. Sailing..."

"You mean Dougie?" Dawn asked.

"No his father..." she corrected Dawn. "He saw us smoking out at the Tea House. I thought we'd get a lecture. But he was in a partying mode. He was pretty drunk. He told us to hide next to the launch ramp and be quiet and watch. He met a woman down at the hoist – wow.

"Dev," Dawn understood. She told Devin and the girls to get back to the party. "Dev, leave the bottle – see you tomorrow."

Dev left, Dawn sat back with the Dud and Bob. "The Captain is still circulating with the kids.

What a scumbag.” Dud and Bob don't know the half of it! - Dawn thought.

Back upstairs at the party, Frank Hussey opened a bottle of '78 Climens. He brought glasses around to the small group around the piano player.

Monica Lipsky walked in from the outside platform. Frank walked over to her, “you look like you could use a cognac.” She ignored her husband – he seemed engrossed in a conversation with Noel Ilberg.

Standing together at the bar, Frank poured two large cognac's. “Monica, so tell me about the Lipskys. I've never sailed with your husband – is he good?”

“He's OK – strong – look at him – maybe a bit soft. We're both lawyers – work in Garden City,” she took a long pull of her drink – so long that her eyes watered. She avoided looking directly into Frank's eye. He had put a black velvet patch on his left eye. As the second swallow settled, she settled her tired eyes on his.

“Some of my best friends are lawyers,” he said. Their arms rested next to each others on the counter. Robert Lynn still played – now softly. His wife sat on the piano bench, had her arm around him.

Monica looked at them – had another long drink. Hussey asked, “so what kind of law?” He was actually interested. It was the “cop” talking. He couldn't help himself. He had started collecting bio's on the crew since Ransom had stoked the flames of his interest in the crew.

Monica looked so tired. “You could go home,” Hussey could feel her emptiness - felt he was speaking to a friend.

“You look ruffled. What happened outside?” he asked.

“Very personal question,” she answered. She looked across the room. “I will go home....”

“Have you seen Ransom?” he asked her – she laughed

Her watery eyes looked deep into his - “are you following me?”.

Dev and the Ilberg girls came in from the outside platform. He went over to his dad, “Tony's asleep in the driveway.”

Hussey offered Dev a sip of the Sauterne. “This is a top Sauterne – subtle, interesting fruits – not too big for a long evening,” and he asked, “will he get run over?”

Dev said, “he's in the walkway – near the skeet shed. He probably tried to crawl into the shed.” Next to the club's nautical flagpole was a low plywood shed big enough for one stooping person - it opened out to the water. During skeet competitions, Club members stand along the bulkhead shooting out onto the bay. The shed protected the kid who would huddle inside it and operate the clay pigeon launcher.

BANG.... Hussey ran over to the nearby door and out onto the platform. Noel joined him. They went down the outside stairs and walked towards the dock. Smoke was coming from the skeet shed. Stooped inside sat Tony. He cried, there was puke around him. He held a bleeding hand. “I shot myself with the cannon.” It used 12 gauge blanks. Frank grabbed Tony's wrist tightly. Pulled him out towards the club. He said to Noel, “go back up and call the Fire Station for the ambulance. The number is on the

wall behind the bar. Jack will know.”

Devin was there, “I'll bring down some towels. He really fucked up his finger.”

Tony said, “I had my finger in the barrel...” A crowd gathered – they walked around to the front of the club. Soon, the ambulance arrived. Tom Egan, a volunteer from Plandome, well known to the sailors was driving. The volunteers took Tony to North Shore Hospital leaving behind a puddle of blood and puke.

Everyone went back upstairs.

Doug, in front of the bar, tapped a glass to get attention. “ He took a drink, toasting the group. Put down his glass... The Annapolis race was great. And a great party.” his father walked in behind the drunk party crowd. He called to anyone, asked, “Give me a cognac.” He was handed a cognac. He turned towards the group.

“The big race is less than a week away. I want to thank Tom Healy for again organizing Moveable Feast's pit crew. Once more to the breach. As he did during the past winter, he is running around, refitting, replacing halyards," a couple of laughs at the reference to the frayed halyard incident - he continued - " getting things done as we checkout MF for the Columbus race. So, thank you Tom and thank you Eleanor. Eleanor thought she would have Tom to herself after he retired."

"MF will stay here 'till tomorrow night - supplies, new sails and all. Then an overnight hop to Shelter Island YC and Wednesday, at ten, we'll leave Shelter Island. If anyone wants a ride to Newport - be there."

"The crew will assemble in Newport, hopefully Thursday. Let me thank the Lynns for supporting our effort. They have given us their house and dock as a base at Fort Cove. Thank you, dear friends. Ronnie, our trainer will take up residence at Lynns Cottage, Wednesday thru Saturday.”

“They have also given us their son. In a moment I'll get to that. I hope these beautiful digs will encourage the crew to check in early. The gun is Saturday at noon.”

Tom Healy started playing Cole Porter on the upright and his beautiful wife, Elenore, sang with a clarity, lacking vibrato, that suited Cole Porter fine.

At eleven, Frank slipped Jack an extra fifty dollars – he would lock up. The marzipan frosted cake had been set out to warm on the circular glass coffee table. The table's center support, under the glass, was fashioned from a replica of a old wooden boat steering wheel. Surrounded by four leather Morris chairs and matching sofa, the table became the host's court where Kim and the recently arrived Morettis were discussing the cake and the weather

Candles burned from the sconces on two walls of the lounge and from perhaps half a dozen candelabras on the high table and several sideboards. The third wall was glass sliding doors looking down on the main dining room and was dark. The west wall window seat groupings, little cushioned caves, were illuminated in a fashion by the candleabras on the high table. Their windows looked out onto a harbor scene with a white sliver moon. Kari was back at her lair.

"The yellow light inside this room gets humbled by the moon," Ann quoted , short of breath as Frank had been touching her under the table.

"I can't think of a nicer place to be," he said to Ann. The double meaning was lost on the Lynns who shared their rambling conversation. Devin and Dawn walked from the door to the roof across the lounge towards the main staircase. Ann waved to Devin but he pretended not to see her.

"Perhaps we should we get Devin home?" , Ann suggested. Frank' s hand had come to rest on her crotch outside her panties. Mrs. Lynn smiled at Ann. "I like seeing a close-knit family," she said, now aware

something was going on under the table to warm Ann up.

Noel waved goodnight and mouthed “Thanks – Lenore is sleepy”. And waved to Frank and Ann. Lenore, being helped out the inside door, slowly knelt on the soft rug at the top of the stairs – as Noel held her arms. Jack walked over. Noel said, “she's asleep.” He tried hold her under the arms. Jack had her feet. With her bottom bumping on each thickly carpeted step, they carried her to the cab waiting outside.

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