

CHAPTER 1

Resignation

‘We need to get you consummated!’

An uncanny silence is to filter through the stale nicotine - infested air.

Simon, appreciative of John’s steel-like nerve, is the first to crack by asking John, ‘Who were you with last night then?’

John maintains his integrity by remaining silent.

‘Looks like were gonna have to hold his forehead under a dripping tap of water lads!’ says Murphy, with a sadistic grin on his face.

And with the fan on the bar going at full speed, the atmosphere does not let up – as John, whilst feeling intimidated, says: ‘you lot want to be careful, I just happen to be a black belt in Tai Chi!’

‘Tai Chi is Chinese yoga you tit!’ Replies Simon, trying to look serious.

Wanting to strike whilst the iron is hot, the vociferous Shaun – with the situation bearing on the tumultuous – says to the lads, with turgidity, ‘looks like we are going to have to keep a close eye on the Scarlet Pimpernel. I can’t have him cramping my style now. Not with me being the ladies man round here.’

‘I!’ Says Murphy, whilst looking perplexed. Then with pertinacity, continues, ‘seems to think he has something we don’t.’

Shaun, although looking concerned, quickly says: ‘perhaps we should pass it around the area that John is a bi-sexual transvestite!’

As everybody laughs at this comment, John, whilst remaining steadfast, just says: ‘cut, cut, can we return to scene 4 please. Thank you!’

This is to get the desired effect John is after: silence. Except with everybody looking at him dumbfounded.

“Well that seems to of stopped the Spanish inquisition,” thinks John to himself – as the Status Quo is quickly restored. With most of his fellow staff: Shaun; Murphy, and the ever vapid Simon, from the nearby restaurant having not long arrived, there is also Malcolm the local village idiot, who likes to have a drink with all the lads. Especially with it being a hot Saturday night.

And with Malcolm being a natural country bumpkin, and of course, with him slightly pissed, he decides to get everybody a drink.

‘Pedro!’ Shouts Malcolm to Tom the landlord. And with a serious look on his face, Malcolm says: ‘drinks all round here, and be quick about it!’

The way this is said, is for Tom the landlord, to look daggers at the petulant Malcolm – who is chuckling away to himself.

Realising that he is being wound up, Tom with all eyes firmly fixed on his – soon recovers himself.

Tom, having composed himself, says to Malcolm: ‘I’ll give you be quick about it, you halfwit! What do you think I am, a bloody octopus?’

Tom the landlord, who, not long coming down here to Little Hampstead in rural East Anglia from London, is still getting used to the village idiot – or should it be said, idiots; as the village appears to be full of them.

John, although coming from Leicestershire, is very much like Tom, still getting used to the village. With the others lads being from the local area, John and Tom have even started imitating the local country dialect: to the obvious amusement of the others.

‘Usual lads?’ Says the vivacious Tom, with his usual witty smile.

‘Make mine a stein Tom, I feel thirsty tonight,’ replies Simon, trying to wind up Tom a bit more.

‘This is only the Hare and Hounds you know, not the Munich beer festival. I’ll do you a pint, how’s that?’ Says Tom, with askance – whilst resorting back to his distinctive Cockney accent with being wound up.

And just as Tom is pouring out the beers, the front door opens

to reveal two of the waitresses from the restaurant, Jackie and Julie: who have just finished work, along with Brian, one of the waiters. Also there is the voluptuous Lisa from the village, a good friend of Jackie's and Julies.

All eyes but Malcolm's of course, make a beeline for the girls. And it doesn't take much to work out what's going on in everybody's minds. Especially Shaun, who gets a dialogue going immediately: as he thinks himself to be the ultimate ladies man.

'Hi girls, have you been looking for me all night, or just a life time?'

'Were not that desperate!' Is Jackie's speedy reply – which is to get all the girls giggling at Shaun: who looks like his alter-ego has been shattered.

With the evocative Lisa being a single lass, and a favourite of the village, John can't help but notice Murphy giving her the big stare – which unbeknown to Murphy, is also noticed by Tom. Tom, who is always looking for a way of winding everybody up, on returning with the drinks, says to Murphy: 'Murphy, have your haemorrhoids cleared up yet?'

'Nice one Tom,' says John quietly to himself; as Murphy goes bright red; with the girls looking on gob-smacked.

Fancying the personable Lisa himself, and with it being near to closing time, John decides that the time is right for a quick joke: so as he can make an impression on the girls – especially Lisa, who looks stunning in her flowery summer frock. And as the girls get served; with their drinks being paid for by Shaun; John quickly makes his move.

When everybody finally settles down, John seizes his opportunity and shouts out 'joke!' Which is the only way of getting everybody's attention.

On mentioning joke, everybody instantly becomes excited. Not least Tom, who is prone to tell a joke or two himself. Also, with Tom liking a joke, he instantly stands right in front of John; whilst staring right into his eyes.

Feeling slightly intimidated by Tom staring right at him, John, having had a few, is unperturbed. Having got the attention of Lisa anyway – who John is trying to impress the most – John gets ready to tell his joke: as everybody and Lisa look on transfixed.

So, staring right into Tom's large brown eyes, John begins his joke.

'Earlier this year when I was in Ireland I w..'

'I don't remember that!' Says a sinister looking Tom; whilst staring directly into John's eyes like he means it.

'No Tom, it's a joke, you Charlie, Umbrella, November, Tango!' This really gets them all thinking. And with Tom being the quick-witted Cockney that he is, he soon goes through his phonetic alphabet – which instantly brings him out in a grin. With the others still trying to work out what John has just said, John, whilst looking defiant and perturbed at the same time, says: 'as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted!' And with Tom standing there looking like a child that has been scolded, John before continuing on with his joke, squints his eyes Clint Eastwood style at Tom to warn him off. And with everybody looking like they are on their best behaviour, John continues. 'I was over in Ireland earlier this year, and as I was walking through this most beautiful village in county Clare, I happened to notice a most gorgeous cottage that was being worked on by some builders.'

All eyes are now firmly fixed on John – as he takes a crafty look at Lisa, who still has her eyes firmly fixed on his.

'So I said to this builder, "this is a most beautiful cottage, are you doing much work on it?"'

'The builder, whilst looking excited, replies, "we had to take off all the plaster from the interior walls and remove some of the interior walls."

"Oh really!" I reply.'

"And guess what we found between the gaps in the interior walls?" Says the builder looking astonished.'

"I have no idea!" I reply with anticipation.'

'We found the skeleton of the Irish hide and seek champion!'

Everybody just stands there in complete silence. And with a perspicacious Tom staring sort of dumbfounded at John – John just says: 'that's it!'

Then realising that they are just winding him up, John, looking dishevelled, says: 'cobblers, you philistines!' Which is to get them all laughing.

Despite the wind up, the joke is to have the desired effect John

is after, as Lisa, with a lovely smile on her face, stares right into John's glazed eyes. And with Lisa's big beautiful cerulean eyes sparkling, this really does make John's heart flutter.

Feeling pretty chuffed with himself, John tucks into his pint – whilst everybody settles down to a chat. And with the juke box playing 'Doctor, Doctor,' by the Thompson Twins, John again clocks eyes on Lisa.

But, as John is feeling pretty pissed and full of bravado, he this time, with certitude, decides to wink at Lisa; who in turn gives John a lovely smile.

With the rest of the lad's chatting up Jackie and Julie, John surreptitiously makes a move towards Lisa; whilst at the same time holding her stare.

After a brief, 'hi, how are you,' and all that, they both settle down with Lisa telling John all about her job in nearby Colchester, where she works as a travel agent. The ice has been broken. And with the ice having been broken, John begins to relax – as he starts telling Lisa about his job at the restaurant, where he works as a chef. Whilst they are happily chatting away, John's eyes are looking deeply into Lisa's eyes for the first inclination of a move in the positive direction towards him scoring.

And whilst the ever loquacious Lisa is chatting away, John keeps wandering to himself how he's going to get her down to his pad, if the need should arise. John, with it being nearly closing time, needs to act fast. So after plucking up all his Dutch courage – thanks to all the beer he has had – John interrupt's Lisa and asks her if she's had enough to drink yet. Her answer to this is immediate, and is to leave John speechless for a second or two; with Lisa saying that the night is still young yet.

Being a tight-knit community, one has to be careful of one's activities in the village. John – with some of the villagers being old fashioned, and objecting to a lot of the modern ways – also has Lisa's reputation to protect as well.

And as no one is listening into their conversation, John quietly asks Lisa if she fancies a night cap at his. With Lisa saying yes, John – who is feeling euphoric – quickly makes the necessary arrangements.

John, with his heart thumping away, can't help thinking to

himself, "I'VE CRACKED LISA AT LAST!" When all of a sudden Tom shouts out; 'time please ladies, vagabonds and footpads, the doors over there!'

This is greeted with the usual chorus of, 'don't forget to shut it on the way out Tom!'

Knowing that Tom always serves a late drink and that all the staff from the restaurant will be staying, John – whilst trying to look languid – makes his excuses to leave: with him knowing they are all in good spirits.

'Sorry lad's and lassies, but I've had enough and must be off.' Says John, in a sort of slurred dribble.

'Can't take the pace,' says Brian, with a sadistic grin on his face.

'Let the cherry boy go, it's way passed his bed time anyway,' reiterates Shaun, as sarcastic as ever.

John, who looks like he hasn't a care in the world, just says goodnight, and quickly brushes past Lisa; whilst winking at her at the same.

Lisa, who is going to make her excuses in about ten minutes, lets out a yawn to let everybody know that she is tired as well.

As John closes the front door, he steps out into the darkness of the night and immediately stands on the tail of Tom's black cat – which is obviously loitering with intent. A loud 'meeeeooow' echoes out into the night. Hoping it hasn't disturbed the others, John, who has only Lisa on his mind, quickly makes his way back to the restaurant and his room.

But, it is not long before the fresh air is to hit John – as the night's ale starts to take it's toll.

The restaurant, being only about a hundred yards down a busy country lane, seems daunting, as John staggers back to his room.

With no cars about, and in complete darkness, it is not long before John goes crashing head first into a bush, after tripping on the kerb. In his semi-conscious state, John manages to get back on his feet, before continuing on down the road to the restaurant; which is all lit up and in full view.

On reaching the car park, John staggers quietly and carefully to the front door of the staff house – which just happens to be opposite the main restaurant kitchen door.

With the sound of the washer-uppers working away, John

opens the front door carefully; then crashes full length to the floor as the door flies open. This sudden surge of movement – as John dives head long to the floor – is for John to discharge a fart, that is very explosive and lasts as long as it takes John to hit the deck.

Recovering himself yet again, John heads down the corridor, to which turns out to be the games room, and where everybody eats their meals. Realising that he is heading in the wrong direction, John turns about and staggers back to the other end of the corridor; which is where his room is. On opening his door – which is never locked – John suddenly remembers something about Lisa. And as John looks round his room – after finally putting on the light switch – he discovers that he has two of everything. John, with his head in a spin, then decides to put on the radio: as at this time of night, radio Caroline is excellent. So after what seems like hours, John finds the switch and ‘hey presto,’ music.

John then, in his well-oiled state, takes off all his clothes and underpants, and lies down on top of his bed, with just his socks on.

And within seconds, John, in his soporific state, is fast asleep.

All this time, Lisa was hiding behind a tree at the entrance to the car park.

As sod’s law should have it, the washer-uppers, who are having a cigarette break, just happen to be standing outside the kitchen door. After getting away from the Hare and Hounds with no problems, this is all Lisa needs. To Lisa, it is to feel like an eternity, before the washer-uppers, after finally stubbing out their cigarettes, go back to work.

With the road clear, Lisa plucks up the courage, and with all stealth makes her way to the front door of the house. Knowing the layout, after previous visits with Jackie and Julie, Lisa opens the front door and heads straight for John’s room.

On reaching John’s room, Lisa then taps gently on his door. And with a loud whisper, she calls out his name.

There is no reply. And with just the sound of music coming from John’s radio, Lisa turns the door knob slowly and opens up the door. As John’s light is still on, Lisa – seeing John lying there in his naked state – with instant horror, slams the door and bolts for it.

On the way back home, Lisa decides to cross to the other side of the road; as not to meet anybody coming the other way, if that should happen. Not knowing how long the other staff are going to be at the Hare and Hounds, Lisa walks back up the lane as quiet as possible in the pitch darkness. And as Lisa is walking, her only fears are that if a car should come past her with its headlights on full, she will be totally exposed.

But, as Lisa is thinking this to herself, all of a sudden, she hears noises in the distance, which sounds much like that of the staff returning home.

Instantly, Lisa dives to the ground and buries herself in a nearby hedge. And as the voices get nearer, Lisa's worst nightmare comes true; as a car leaving the pub car park sets off in her direction, with its headlights on full. With her heart in her mouth, Lisa buries herself even further into the hedge; as the lights from the car light up the whole area.

At the exact moment that the car reaches Lisa – Jackie and Julie – along with the others, are exactly opposite her on the other side of the road, as the car cruises past.

Lisa is too terrified to look up after they have gone past. Also, with trembling all over, it is a few minutes before Lisa realises that it is finally safe.

After getting herself back on her feet, Lisa, whilst still trembling, brushes off the shiny metallic spangled spider webs, that have all but infested the hedgerows about her. With the silky webs tickling her face, Lisa wipes her matted face, before heading off in the direction of home.

The lads, along with Jackie and Julie, decide to have a game of pool before retiring to bed. And as they make their way to the staff quarters, they open up the front door and head off towards the games room. Shaun, who is all but three parts pissed, stops first for a slash in the toilets that are directly outside of John's room.

Shaun, whilst singing away to himself, has himself a much needed piss -with most of it going all over the toilet seat and floor. On finishing, Shaun – before making his way back to the others –

on leaving the toilet, all of a sudden notices John's door to be slightly open. With the light shining through the gap in John's door, Shaun opens up John's door to see John in all his glory fast asleep on his bed. Delighted in seeing John like this, Shaun calls to the others to come and have a look. The others, on hearing Shaun call, can't get there quick enough – as they all stand jammed in at the doorway; whilst grinning away to themselves, like Cheshire cats.
