

## Chapter 27

### *Frank's flight to Istanbul*

After settling in aboard their aircraft, Frank quickly grew bored and passed the time pestering Martin. "That was most extraordinary, sitting down to dinner with six people who were once world-famous."

"Not at all," replied Martin. "It's quite common for fame to slip away. And famous or not, most people eat dinner every day. That they might dine with us, once in our lifetimes, is but a trifle, hardly worth mentioning."

"Who do you think is more unhappy: Rob Gronkowski, Angela Merkel, Greta Thunberg, or me?"

"I have no idea," said Martin. "I'd have to be inside your hearts to know."

"Ah," said Frank, "If Les were here he'd know and tell us."

"I don't know what scales your friend Les would use to weigh the misfortunes of people and judge their sorrows," said Martin. "All I presume is that there are billions of people in this world who are a thousand times more unfortunate than Gronk, Angela Merkel, and Greta Thunberg."

"That may very well be true," agreed Frank.

The Bosphorus straits appeared in their window as the aircraft banked over Istanbul. Upon landing, Frank bought out Mahmud's contract at a very high price. Then he and his companions boarded a ferry bound for the shores of the Sea of Marmara, where Missile-Tits could be found.

Two men in dark jumpers were at work emptying garbage bins in the galley, and doing a poor job of it. As they struggled with the bags and bins, their supervisor came over to berate them. While Frank watched, their body language and tones of voice reminded him sharply of old friends. "Really," he said to Mahmud, "if I hadn't seen Les hanged, and if I hadn't stabbed Dick in the abdomen, I'd think they were these two men emptying the garbage."

On hearing Frank's remarks, the two men in the dark jumpers looked up, and together said:

"Huh? It's Frank!"

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"Is this a dream?" asked Frank. "Am I awake? Is this the brother-in-law I killed, and the bartender I saw hanged?"

"Yes, it is!" they replied. Frank embraced Dick and Les again and again. "How is it that I didn't kill you, Dick?" he asked. "And you, Les, how is it that you're still alive after being hanged? And why are you both emptying garbage on a Turkish ferry?"

"Is it true that my sister is in this country?" asked Dick.

"Yes," replied Mahmud.

"I've found my dear friend Frank again!" cried Les.

Frank introduced Dick and Les to Martin and Mahmud, and they all began talking simultaneously. The supervisor wandered over to disrupt their glee, and Frank transferred him 120,000 Lira to look the other way while Dick and Les discarded their work clothes and prepared to jump ship.