

Un-Anticipated III – The Conclusion
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Jake approached the entrance to the Chinese restaurant, ‘Kim Lee’s.’ He had a copy of ‘The Mirror’ newspaper rolled, and tucked under his arm. It was raining, and he ducked his head down as he entered, covering it with the newspaper. He was looking forward to a cup of hot tea.

Gesturing, ‘one,’ with his index finger, he signaled the hostess that he would be dining alone. He glanced down at the newspaper, taking pride in the latest article he had written on the bus crash. He felt proud of the fact that he had fooled everyone with the list of the death toll, which included Sheila, who was not actually dead. He figured this would help her in some way. The hostess held out her hand, motioning that he should sit in the booth near the corner. He slid onto the cushion, feeling comfortable, and welcome, as usual.

Suddenly, he smelled something familiar, it wasn’t egg rolls, it was perfume. He looked up to see a nervous Caucasian woman, placing water glasses at the few occupied tables throughout the restaurant. There was something familiar about her. Could it be? No, he thought, but it was. She looked a little disheveled, but it was her, Sheila.

“I should have known it was you,” he announced, as if he had the winning numbers to the lottery.

“Are you trying to blow my cover?” she whispered, tucking her head down as she approached him. She placed a water glass in front of him.

“You look cute. What’d ya do, cut your hair?” he smiled as he caressed her hair

She smiled blushing, as she brushed his hand off of her. His hand felt familiar, but she had to stay on guard. They could be back any time. “I’m trying to blend in here. Can’t you see?”

“You’re doing a great job of it, too. I’m proud of you. What gives?” he inquired, ready for the next scoop.

“What do you think?” She set down a bowl of fried Chinese noodles in front of him, and floated away to the kitchen, trying to blend in, once again. What am I doing, she thought. They’ll be back to look for me. I have to come up with a plan. She had noticed the costumes and wigs in the kitchen cupboard. It seemed they were for a Chinese New Year celebration. She headed for the cupboard.

“Sweet and Sowa fa table five,” the cook set down two plates under the heating lamps. He looked at her as if she should get back to work. She didn’t want to be bothered now, but it was her cover to blend in. She grabbed the plates, sliding them onto a serving tray, propping it on her palm above her shoulder. I’d better keep it up, or they’ll be onto me, she thought.

She appeared in the dining room, carrying the tray like a pro. Jake glanced over to look at her, then back at his paper, smiling.

“Here you go, two Sweet and Sour Chicken,” she announced. “Is there anything else I can get you?” she mumbled.

“We’re all set, thanks,” the customer spoke for both of them. Relieved, she headed back to the kitchen, intending to get that wig, and something that resembled everyday

attire.

She came up with a pair of silk, black pants, and a fuchsia-pink top with gold, frog clasps. It would have to do. Closing the door to the employee bathroom, she could hear more orders being called out, "Peppa Steak fa table six." She didn't care.

Emerging from the kitchen, feeling quite different, she decided to blend in for her escape. "Did you order, yet?" she inquired, slipping into the booth across from Jake. The menu she had grabbed was open, shielding her face.

"I thought you'd come around. Whata ya havin', Babe?" Jake asked casually.

"Let's get outa here, now." Sheila meant business, he could tell. Jake slid out of the booth, grabbing his newspaper.

"Where to? he asked, waiting for her instructions.

"Follow me, and keep quiet," she ordered grabbing his hand. It was important that they looked like a couple. "Remember the deposit I was supposed to make at the Chase bank before the crash?"

"Yeah. Where is it?"

"I don't know. You're gonna help me figure that out. Then it's away to Mexico, if you play your cards right."

"What da ya want me ta do?"

"Go visit that lady in the hospital. And make it convincing, like you're her nephew, or something," commanding, as if she were a director in a play.

"How am I suppost ta..." he started to ask. Then she interrupted.

“You’ll figure out something, I’m sure.” She replied, pulling his arm forward as they headed to the hospital. “Kiss me now, and make it look convincing,” she demanded.

“Gladly,” he answered. They paused under the awning of the bakery. They appeared to be lovers on a walk, which is exactly what she wanted. Unbeknownst to them, they were being tailed.

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At the hospital, they entered through the EMERGENCY entrance. There were many people filling up the waiting room, and hallways.

“Must be another accident,” she whispered to him.

They walked by the mass of confusion unnoticed. Just as the elevator doors opened, Sheila noticed the old lady from the bus.

As the old lady looked right at Sheila, she asked, “Wasn’t there a similar accident to this last week?” Sheila was beside herself. That old lady was in a wheel chair with a cast on each leg, a cast on each arm, two black eyes, and a neck brace. She heard Sheila’s gasp, and turned. Sheila replied to the old lady.

“No, but you look like someone familiar from the bus accident. You were on the same bus as I was,” she remembered out loud.

“Oh, yes. I’m Harriet,” the old lady started to speak, as Sheila kept moving on. “It was so dreadful...” she stopped, and spoke in a delightful tone, “At least I was one of the people who survived from that accident. And of course you were, too, dear.” The old lady softly held Sheila’s hand with the unbandaged part of her arm. A grin appeared on

the old face like a pimple on prom night. Sheila could not believe her ears. This woman was going to do her in. "I couldn't hold my neck straight at first because the neck bone was weak," she continued. "I'm embarrassed to remember how much my head used to bobble, just before the sudden crash." The old lady rambled on, as the nurse pulled the wheel chair away.

"Please wait," she motioned to the nurse. "Can I buy you a cup of coffee in the cafeteria?" The offer was directed at Harriet. "What floor should I bring her back to, Nurse?" Sheila already had one hand on the wheelchair handle.

"Oh, sure." The nurse was somewhat confused about the new arrangement. "Let's see. She's on the fifth floor, room five fifteen," she announced, pretending to count on her fingers.

"We'll have her back by dinner," Sheila was already several feet ahead now, with both hands on the handles. "Come along, dear. How 'bout that cup of tea?"

"Oh, yes." Jake snapped to attention, moving alongside her down the hall. He suddenly realized how thirsty he was.

As they turned the corner, Sheila noticed the LINEN CLOSET. "Why don't you take Harriet in here, Darling? She can pick out a new gown. I'll be right back." Jake was thrilled to be back in the game. He knew he had to stall her.

"Right this way, mi Lady," he acted, as he tried to think of a reason for taking her into a closet.

"I don't think I need a new..." Harriet rambled, as the door closed behind them.

All she needed was a syringe with something quieting in it. She chose the chloroform. Jaunting back to the room, she found Jake giving a soliloquy about the sheets. Luckily, Harriet's back was to her.

"This won't hurt a bit," Sheila whispered to herself as she stuck her with the needle in the back of her shoulder. It was about the only place on the woman not bandaged. She won't need all of it. Besides, she's already out. "Help me get her out of this chair," she ordered Jake. As they lifted the light woman. One of the casts unsnapped.

"It's not even real," Jake exclaimed. Sheila was already looking for the chip as she flipped her over like ragdoll.

"Got it," she reported. "Now, let's go."

"We can't just leave her," Jake pleaded.

"You've been outa the loop too long. Move it." Sheila ordered. Obediently, he followed her out. They bumped into an orderly, as they exited. "Wrong way," she directed. "The LINEN CLOSET's been moved down to the end of that hall," she gestured, pointing to the right. Then moving to the left and onto the elevators.

In the elevator, she removed her earring and attached it to the chip that came from Harriet's leg. "Here's the combination. Mexico, here we come," she cheered as quietly as she could. "The money," It just occurred to her, "is in the lady's casts. We gotta go back," she proclaimed, her eyes wide and worried.

"We can't. We'll get caught," he reminded.

"There's no other way." Suddenly the roles seemed reversed.

“I’ll go back,” Jake explained. “You get a car.” He was ordering now.

“Can I trust you?” she beckoned.

“Of course, Babe. It’s me you’re talkin’ to.”

“Okay,” her voice wavered, not sure if she could. There wasn’t time. He got out of the elevator. The doors closed behind him. She pushed the ‘G’ button.

In the lobby, the doors to the elevator swung open as people tried to crowd into the elevator. Sheila slipped out, just barely, as she lifted her arms to make room for the gurneys being escorted in.

Out in the front drive, she spotted a Driver’s Ed. car. It stuck out like a sore thumb. Walking through the automatic doors, she heard the kid.

“I just wanna visit my girlfriend. I’ll be right back,” he explained to the instructor.

Sheila jutted toward the vehicle. “Valet,” she announced. “No minors can be unescorted. You must take the young man to the VISITORS station. You’ll fill out a valet ticket there. Thank you.” She climbed into the driver’s seat, as the man, looking confused, followed the boy into the hospital. She shifted into DRIVE and turned out of the drive into EMERGENCY PARKING where she found Jake waiting, trying to act casual. “I didn’t think you’d be here,” she started, as he climbed into the passenger seat.

“Nice get up.” He looked around at the interior, noticing the brake pedal on the passenger side floor.

She sped away, out the exit, heading toward the airport. “How much didjya get?”

“All of it. All eight million of it,” he retorted. “Drive.” He looked forward down the

road. “Mexico will be sweet. Won’t it?”

“With you, it will be,” she glanced at him, noticing his handsome profile.

“Lookout,” he shouted pointing at the truck that was backing away from the construction site near the hospital. It was beeping as it backed perpendicular into the road that ran in front of the hospital. Instinctively, he pushed his foot to the floor, thinking he was driving. The brakes screeched to a halt, as the Driver’s Ed. car came within inches of the cement truck.

“That was close.” she blurted out.

“We almost lost ya,” he smiled looking over at her. “It wouldn’t have been the same without chya.”

“No, it wouldn’t have been the same,” she repeated as she threw the half-filled syringe out the window. I think he’s a keeper, she thought. I’m not going to need to sedate him after all.

