

He Bent Pianos

Chapter One

Twenty-three years ago, in 1950 at the age of seventeen, Susan Gilchrist left Mary Erskine School in Edinburgh and went up to St Andrews to study History of Music. As a *bejantine* (a first year female student) she cut a striking figure despite the dowdy, red, undergraduate gown which she almost entirely discarded within the first month. Although there were three other *bejantines* from Mary Erskine School, she wanted to ignore them, to make new friends and explore new experiences.

All first year female students were expected to live in a University hall of residence but Sue and two other girls whom she had met during the pre-term initiation week decided to “go it alone” and get a flat. Susan had enjoyed a limited eclectic social life in Edinburgh’s pubs, jazz clubs and “Festival” outlets but, being an only child, was always perhaps too keenly monitored by her caring, loving parents. Here in St Andrews, she wanted to be free; no hall of residence, no gown, no pack drill. Soon, her flowing, blond hair, her Nordic facial features atop her sculpted, tall frame with low-slung jeans became landmarks, not so much at lectures as in the Imperial Hotel jazz club, the Market Street Coffee Shop and the Union bars. Susan Gilchrist would undo the Edinburgh shackles. She became the undisputed iconic *bejantine*, enhanced by her own pride in being Scottish. She, like 40% of the other students, was in HER Scottish University; the other 60% were “also-rans” from England, many of whom had been turned down by Oxbridge. St Andrews was certainly a northern outpost in some eyes but it was going to be home to Susan for the next three years. Many of her fellow Scottish students might “cow-tow” to their “mealy-mouthed” English contemporaries but not Sue.

Susan Gilchrist stood tall.

The flat, which she shared with Eileen Coyle from Kirkaldy and Liz Morris from Selkirk was in North Street, opposite but twenty or thirty yards east of the Younger Hall. The big, Georgian house, with two storeys, was divided into two flats. Susan and her friends shared the ground floor flat. This had two bedrooms, one with two beds, the other a single. The kitchen and adjacent dining/sitting room overlooked North Street; the bedrooms and bathroom were to the back. The whole place was drably decorated and minimally furnished but, within a week or so of moving in and after visits from their parents, the flat became personalised, even homely.

Sue shared the bigger bedroom with Liz, a small, dark, athletic girl who seemed to spend most of her time playing hockey and drinking with the locals in The Railway Pub on South Street.

University life was a full-time affair for Susan. She regularly attended the “modern” jazz sessions at the Memorial Hall and the “trad” at the more atmospheric Imperial. She started Sundays early with Chapel Choir practice, followed by two services then the Film Club after dinner. She scraped her way, almost literally, into the University orchestra on third violin, attended a peppering of lectures and tutorials, had a brief, torrid, confusing sexual experience with her room-mate Liz then became a “serious item” with Bob Gregory, a student of Civil Engineering who studied in

Dundee but lived in St. Andrews. They became engaged in the Christmas vac. of their final year, 1953.

Bob was something of an enigmatic “smoothie”, admired from a distance by many of the young ladies in St. Andrews although he made little effort to mix socially. He was a six foot, dark-haired Adonis whose serious outlook on life was trumpeted by his scowling, thick, black eyebrows.

In 1955, they married in Otley, Bob’s home town, where they lived for two years before moving with their twin sons to Wakefield and Bob’s big project.

In 1973 Susan and Bob Gregory were still living on Mountbatten Avenue in Wakefield. Their house was one of thirty or so four-bedroomed detached properties on this fairly new estate off the Barnsley Road. Bob Gregory was, by now, a forty-one year old, very successful architect who had designed the whole estate and was a partner in its builders’ firm, Thomas Bartholomew and Co..

Susan and Bob had comfortable, busy lives that didn’t seriously involve each other. They met for meals, they had friends round, they slept in twin beds, they talked about the weather and their investment portfolio. Their sons, Charles and Rupert were about to flee the nest, one to attend St Andrews, the other to join the Army. To all intents and purposes they were a normal couple, normal, that is, for Mountbatten Avenue in Wakefield. Ten miles away, across the big divide, in Batley they would not be normal. This big divide, the fifty yards across the M1, was a cultural rift, with the middle class whites to the east and the predominantly Asian working class to the west.

The Asians had begun settling in Batley, Dewsbury and Bradford after the Industrial Revolution when local mill owners realised they could import cheap, willing workers from the source of their cotton. Later, when the British Government, perhaps in a wash of guilt, issued ‘D’ passports to subjects of their former colonies, settling in Britain on what for them was a very good wage, became quite easy. Once established in West Yorkshire these extremely functional Asian families expanded by introducing relatives from Gujarat or Punjab to specific streets in Batley and Dewsbury. They were almost entirely working class Muslims, who were generally not welcomed by the local native workers. Nonetheless, run down corner shops were taken over by these immigrants and clusters of terraced houses were converted into tiny mosques where local families would send their sons to learn the Koran verbatim. The girls and mothers did not attend and the Christian-Muslim rift became wider and deeper. The Muslim lifestyle contrasted radically with that of the largely dysfunctional white families to the east of the M1.

Now, in August 1973, Susan Gregory felt her loneliness encroach. Her children, previously her *raison d’être*, were leaving home, her husband was flying high. She was gradually becoming more and more alone with no love in her life..

Chapter Two

According to local clubbers, Roly Hepwood could “bend a piano”. Nobody really knew what the expression meant and most of those who thought they did know got it wrong anyway, if you’re still with me.

Let me explain.

A note can be “bent” on a guitar or other stringed instrument by holding a string down on a “fret” then pushing it up or pulling it down towards an edge of the finger board. The note then slides up or down slightly giving it a stress or accent by altering or “bending” the pitch of the note.

So, clearly, you can’t bend a note on a piano; but you can almost make it sound like you are bending the notes as in George Shearing’s accompaniment of Nat “King” Cole on “Let There be Love”.

Anyway, the cognoscenti at the Lapwater, near Huddersfield, talked of Roly “bending his piano”.

I never really knew what made the Lapwater tick in daylight hours. It was a detached, two-storied stone building in its own grounds about seven or eight miles east of Huddersfield on the road to Cleckheaton and Dewsbury. I feel sure it was a restaurant but, by the time Roly and a dozen or so musicians had turned up at about 11 p.m. for a “knock” after their various regular “gigs”, there were only a few dining punters left. I can only remember these “knocks” happening on Friday nights too. This was ideal for Roly Hepwood who, although only a semi-pro, could more than hold his own with the pros who turned up from Batley Variety Club, Wakefield Theatre Club and the like. But, in March of that year (1973) he had become a junior partner in The Beeches dental practice on Corporation Street in Batley.

Roly was 26 years old, quiet, not very tall, slim and with swarthy good looks like a Russian soccer manager. Nothing musical “phased” him. He could read anything but preferred to kick things around and get away from the book. His skill, isolation, solitude, aloofness, call it what you will, made him the more desirable, musically, sexually and socially. A sub-group of the cognoscenti knew he could bend more than pianos.

Roly Hepwood and Jennifer Short shared their lives and a fairly up-market terraced house in Morley, a few miles to the south of Leeds and just over the M62 from Batley where Roly’s parents, Jack and Mavis, had lived for the last 52 years. They were both in their late seventies.

Chapter Three

Jack and Mavis Hepwood lived with their son Peter in one of those dark, monotonous terraces on Mount Pleasant, a clumsy misnomer, in Batley. It was a typical two up-two down on Beaumont Street with no front garden and a tiny fifteen by thirty back yard that contained a small tool shed, a still-used outside loo and, quite incongruously, a plumbed-in potato rumbler that Jack had bought thirty years previously from Tommy Harrap “at t’mill”. There was absolutely no way that Jack and Mavis would move in with Roly and Jennifer at their slightly more roomy house in Morley. Jen was a lovely, quiet, churchgoing 25 year-old whose clean, smiling, auburn features were a refreshing contrast to the drabness of a Sunday Batley when Jennifer and Mavis often

teamed up to prepare Sunday lunch. Mavis, with her seventy three years experience of traditional living knew from Jennifer's eyes that she was pregnant.

Jack and Mavis never really discussed this dilemma, not because of anything particularly moral; quite simply, it had nothing to do with rugby league or John Smith's bitter.

Jack was seventy-five "next". Of course he had retired and one or two of his closer friends had died off but Jack still had quite a busy timetable. He would crown bowl every Tuesday afternoon with the same three pals, attend each and every home match round the corner at Batley Rugby Club and spend every evening between six thirty ("after tea") and eight o'clock ("after Corrie") supping Smiths at his local. The only exception would be Friday evenings when he and his pals would don shirt and tie then accompany their wives to bingo at the local WMC. The togetherness ended there with the men going for a game of snooker and a pint in the lounge and the "girls" basing themselves in the concert room.

Nothing if not repetitive, but secure and safe. Indeed, in that respect, a bit like the lifestyles of the increasing number of Asian neighbours they all had. There was no animosity, just a general acceptance of each other. They nodded their recognition at one another and went their separate ways but ne'er the twain would meet, socially at least.

Forty years ago Jack was a squat, aggressive, Union man who loved his rugby league. He almost ignored Roly's success when, as a twelve year old, he moved from Park Road Primary School to the boys' Grammar School on Field Hill and thence to Leeds University to gain First Class Honours in Dental Surgery.

And fifty years ago, Mavis was just one of the neighbourhood girls who, everyone accepted, had always been "an item" with Jack who would become her husband.

Peter, 22 years old, lived in the house with his parents, Jack and Mavis. They didn't see a great deal of Peter who was quite reclusive, spending hours on his computer upstairs. He was studying Moral Philosophy with the Open University, working days in the offices at Wakefield Magistrates' Court and doing two or three nights bar work at the Lapwater. He was as scruffy and unkempt as Roly was smooth and desirable. He liked studying Moral Philosophy, his untidy, half-grown beard satisfying some sort of image, I suppose, and also because he enjoyed the discussions which he would manage to convert into arguments at the occasional tutorial in Leeds. Many of the public he dealt with at the Courts could also be argumentative as could the odd drunkard at the Lapwater. In fact, life was just a bowl of cherries for the little shit.

Roly sometimes gave Peter a lift to and from the Lapwater if he, Peter, would drive to Roly's house in Morley. But, once in the Club, they would virtually ignore each other. Peter might be an intellectual but there, any similarity with Roly ended. He was not "a looker", he hated the thought of involvement in sport although plenty people would give their back teeth to mince his brain in a boxing ring and he couldn't sing a note of music let alone play (or even bend) one. He loved his brother but there were few spaces for Peter to show it. Roly reciprocated Peter's feelings but not his style. He felt that Peter's aggression and scruffiness were really attempts to deflect attention. He had several friends in the Asian community over in Bradford which allowed him some anonymity not to mention cannabis and one or two other things. He was seen as being "an item" with Jacinta Pervez and spent many an evening with her in her flat near the University. Jack and Mavis would certainly not approve and Peter would run the risk of losing his very easy, cheap accommodation at home in Batley. No, it was better to leave things as they were with his two, quite separate existences shared between Batley and Bradford.

Chapter Four

Life was good for both Roly and Jennifer. She was 26, the same age as Roly and about the same height. They were fortunate in that they both had day-time jobs, he as a dentist and she as a middle school teacher in Kettlethorpe, in the narrow space between south Wakefield and the M1. They would both set off for work at about eight o'clock. Jenny would get back home to Morley at about five and prepare the evening meal. Roly got home by six and they would sit down to eat by seven. More often than not they then went their separate ways, Roly to play soccer or perhaps do a gig while Jenny would play squash or attend a church meeting.

But today, in late November 1974, she had something to tell him and Roly something to ask her.

"Jenny, pet" (the "pet" was always a warning signal) "would you mind if I did an exchange with a colleague in South America for three months? It would be great for my career. This private hospital in Rio has world wide fame for its work in maxillo-facial surgery and Thompson in Batley has given his guarded approval. It's only....."

"When?"

"Eh, well, if you agreed, it would be February, March and April."

"I'm pregnant."

"I'd stay in the hos..... what did you say?"

"I'm pregnant. We're pregnant."

"Christ! Shit! When?" he asked incongruously.

"Now, Roly. What do you mean 'when'?"

"I mean when's it due?" He realised he was sounding selfish. For once, he was making a complete balls of it and Jenny quite enjoyed his discomfort. "Jenny, I'm sorry." Deep breath was followed by slow expulsion of air. "Sorry, my dear. Is it..... are we having a boy or a girl?" He was getting back in control.

“I don’t know. The pregnancy was only confirmed yesterday. And, before you say anything else, of course you can do your exchange. I’m not due until some time in August.”

“Yes, but.....” Roly began to see a glimmer of hope.

“Look, Roly. I’ll be playing squash and badminton until June and you’ll be back in April.”

“That’s true, pet.” Roly was getting back on track. “The only trouble is we’ve booked my Mum and Dad for that anniversary surprise in Barbados.”

“Roly, the last thing I want is your mother flapping about the place if there should be a problem. Dr Lynch is very capable and you can be back here by my side in hours. My mother can be over here from Harrogate in an hour if needs be.

Let’s go for a drink and celebrate. I’ll have juice, of course.”

There was a shortage of “nice” places to drink in the area so they went into Batley where a Bistro had opened on the narrow end of Corporation Street, a couple of hundred yards from the Beeches, where Roly practised. He had received some information at work about holidays in Jamaica for his parents so he and Jennifer parked the car outside the surgery. Once inside, Roly locked the door and switched off the alarm.

Jenny had never visited the surgery before and was quite impressed to see the array of equipment which, under normal circumstances, would frighten her.

Roly started rummaging for the documents. Clearly, it was going to take time.

“Where’s the loo, darling?”

“There’s a patient one next door” he said, pointing through the wall. “Don’t be too long. I’m dying for a drink.”

Jenny headed out. “I was going to say ‘the loo roly’. You know, r...o.....”

Roly was still rummaging. “Knickers to you” she thought, quite aptly, as it happened.

By the time she returned Roly was replacing the documents in their big brown envelope. Jenny sat in the patient’s chair.

“Come on, Mr Hepwood, I’m ready”.

“So am I. Let’s go.”

“How do you get the chair to flatten out?”

“Jenny, I want a drink.” He flattened the chair. Jenny, at full stretch, pulled up her skirt and revealed her already unclad, welcoming crotch.

“And I want a filling” said she.

Chapter Five

Until now, Susan Gregory had been largely housetied. After “the boys” had gone their separate ways each morning, she would wash up the breakfast things, tidy the bedrooms, prepare herself a light lunch then, on a Tuesday and/or a Thursday attend the coffee morning at the local church. She was still a good-looking “girl” and now had more time to indulge herself in selecting and trying on chic gear from her catalogues. She had not really had time to make friends with the numerous other ladies nearby who had developed their own little cliques and mostly seemed older or younger than her.

At one of the coffee mornings, she sat with and became quite friendly with Jennifer Hepwood who, on a Thursday, at school, would spend her free period before lunch at

the coffee morning which was quite near her in Kettlethorpe. After a couple of weeks, Jennifer and Sue quite often had lunch at Mountbatten Avenue.

Their friendship developed until Sue eventually became a regular attendee at Jenny's church in Morley. After all, both the Gregory boys had left home and Bob, becoming more and more involved in the affairs of Thomas Bartholomew and Co., more often than not had Sunday meetings to attend.

At one of their lunches, Jenny mentioned to Sue that she had seen an advertisement in her "Parish News" calling for volunteers to train as magistrates in the Wakefield district. Sue, who was becoming more and more desperate with the lack of excitement in her life, applied and, by January 1974, she had embarked upon eight months of interviews and training at the Magistrates Courts in Wakefield. In fact her whole life changed. Apart from keeping on top of the housework, she accompanied Bob to several business dinners and appropriate Masonic functions. She had her coffee mornings and occasional lunches with Jenny, Church on Sundays, and countless talks or visits to several local Young Offender Units. Then, many a Friday evening, she would get to the Lapwater with Jenny. She was recapturing those stand-alone days way back in St. Andrews. She even joined the choir with Jenny at Morley Church which involved attending choir practice on a Thursday evening. And it was here that she met young Cathy Sands.

Chapter Six

The Bistro in Batley's Commercial Street had only been open a couple of months. The building, which had previously been owned by a gentleman's hatter, still retained some of its old fittings. The large pigeon holes, which had previously housed men's hats, were now used to display a wide selection of wines; the old oak counter now served as a stylish little bar; the floor was covered with Axminster A1 and the spacious display window housed what Alex, the owner, referred to as his "top table". It was a brave attempt at bringing *haute cuisine* to the diminishing ranks of white and growing Asian working classes. It was destined to fail and, even now, Alex realised it. Next to a very large impressionist painting of *Le Mont St Michel* he had a small plaque supposedly quoting Marx and saying "Never invest good money in changing a bad world". It was not that Batley was bad. The idea of converting the inhabitants was commercially bad, not morally bad. Their idea of a meal out was fish and chips wrapped in a free local newspaper. True, a few local youngsters might make good and travel widely but then, almost by definition they would not be around to enjoy the delights of the Bistro. The few who returned would be unwilling to visit this dingy part of Batley with no car park and a growing reputation for private stag parties. Alex, who had been a local schoolteacher had not done his market research with any enthusiasm. A year or so previously his Headmaster had asked him to organise an international social evening for parents to celebrate the formation of the new Kirklees Authority. At the buffet supper he had been amazed at how the local parents had devoured the snails prepared by the French *assistante* and had virtually ignored his hot-pot. On this very slim evidence, he decided to open the Bistro right opposite the roaring trade of the local transport café, commonly referred to as "The Greasy Spoon". Local rumour had it that, instead of spreading butter or margarine on the

“butty” bread, the landlord wrapped it round the unshaded light bulb. Anyhow, the Bistro was proving to be in the wrong place and it was destined to close soon. Having said that Roly and Jenny enjoyed a mouth-watering *filet mignon* in brandy sauce with *haricots verts* and a twirl of creamy *pommes de terre duchesse* all washed down with a half bottle of *Château Rieussec* followed by wafers and a glass or two of Bollinger just to celebrate “their” pregnancy and pick a decent break in Barbados for Roly’s parents.

Chapter Seven

By the second week of January 1974 Susan Gregory was well into her training as a Wakefield-based magistrate. She had already visited Young Offenders units and one or two category C and D prisons. Wakefield, a category A, high security prison concentrating on serious sex offenders, was not considered appropriate for a trainee magistrate. So she was asked to make her way to Preston Prison, over in Lancashire, where she would join a small group of Lancashire trainees then, after lunch, accompany them on a visit to Kirkham Open Prison.

Preston Prison was built in the 18th century, became a military prison during the Second World War then returned into the public domain in 1948. As with many of these older prisons, Preston Prison is very near the town centre. I suppose that, two or three hundred years ago, it would be handy for the prison to be near the Court. Also, presumably, public executions and floggings would be more accessible for the punters of the day. More recently, according to the *Oxford History of the Prison*, “it became desirable to mete out punishment away from the public gaze” and build those modern, serviceable, out of town lock-ups where the public would not and could not easily take the side of the prisoner and cause havoc. But, at Preston Prison some cells overlook, from a distance, the outskirts of the town centre and a few prisoners can actually shout to friends on the outside.

Anyway Sue drove past Red Rose Radio on the Inner Ring, parked her car in a pub car park then walked over to the main gate where a small group of half a dozen men and women was waiting.

Throughout her adult life, Sue had been concerned that, on occasions she had felt roused in the company of certain types of females. They were mostly young, dark and athletic. There had been a younger girl at school, Olga Keblinski about whom she had fantasised uncontrollably, Liz Morris in St Andrews who had briefly shared her passion and this girl outside Preston Prison, Annette Bracken. She would be about 28/9, five foot six or seven with short-cropped auburn hair and smiling, hazel eyes.

The prison grounds are fairly open, with workshops, exercise yard, education block, kitchens, medical wing and chapel separated from the main building by stretches of lawn and walkways. The 750 men are housed on four wings, A, B, C and D in the radial style, each wing radiating from the central, glass-fronted hub, like spokes of a wheel. The convicted prisoners are on two of the wings and the non-convicted, remand prisoners on the other two. While the remand prisoners await their trial, the very helpful, friendly “screws” will often see that suspected accomplices are on separate wings so that they are unable to discuss their case together or prepare their evidence. During their tour of the prison, the trainee magistrates visited the education wing where such remand prisoners, who had no intention of following an academic

course of study, will have enrolled for GCSE French, Maths or something so that they, quite simply, could discuss their case, pass over some cannabis or interpret their coded mail. In those days, the many teachers would work in superb facilities for £22 an hour. They would be lucky to “get through to” a quarter of their pupils.

While one or two of the visitors were quite obviously affected by the disdainful looks and snide remarks of some prisoners, Susan had no problem; if they had committed their crime, they were, rightly, enduring their punishment; if they were on remand and innocent, they would soon be out. In any event, they all had the right to appeal. She ignored the concealed wolf whistles emanating from all the Johnny Cash would-bes in the music room and was not in the least phased by being locked into the education block for security reasons when the fully-expected “rumble” began in the exercise yard outside.

“It’s for your benefit” said a very fat prison officer bearing a kettle to the staffroom. “It happens every time you lot visit. When will they learn that all the chewing gum in Ferguson’s locker and sellotape in Woolies is not enough to bugger up these locks?” presumably referring to the security doors to each section of the prison.

She sat with Annette Bracken on the 10 mile minibus trip to Kirkham. Annette was an excellent conversationalist with very good eye contact and Sue enjoyed her company. Kirkham is an open prison. This means that, while there is a degree of security within the perimeter fence, prisoners can walk or, indeed, run out of the front gate if or when they want. The point is, most of the prisoners are “low risk” or from more secure prisons and about to be released. If they “do a runner” they will eventually be recaptured and then be rehoused in a secure unit with an enhanced term. So, basically, life is all but another bowl of cherries at Kirkham. The prison produces vegetables for Kirkham and other prisons. The prisoners live in military-style dormitories and eat in one of the three ethnic eateries. When they are not working on the vegetable plots or in the offices, they bowl, play tennis, use the gym, attend a lesson or simply relax somewhere. It is all reasonably pleasant; drugs and alcohol can be acquired with some difficulty and risk but it is probably better to befriend someone in the know.

Susan, Annette and the others were given a short welcome by one of the two officers on the gate before they were given the choice of visiting specific sections of the prison. Sue, Annette and the other female trainee, a small, dumpy fifty year old know-all chose to visit the kitchens which were manned by three professional outsiders and half a dozen or so inmates. This team of laughing, whistling, joking pranksters were enjoying themselves preparing a cheese tortellini for the vegetarians, a chicken dopiaza for anyone who fancied it and a cottage pie for the less adventurous. The visitors were told that four of the workers who had lost their various ways on the outside enjoyed the atmosphere, buzz and pressure of the kitchen so much that they were studying, on day release at local colleges with a view to improving their job prospects upon their release. This issue of work after release was a major problem for all the prisoners at Kirkham and Annette found the Service somewhat lacking in this regard.

Chapter Eight

In the build-up to Christmas, as with every year, Roly’s musical commitments meant he played less squash and indoor soccer than he would like. He lead a piano, bass,

drum trio which was pretty much in demand for private and masonic functions in the Leeds-Wakefield area. The trio had appeared quite regularly on Yorkshire Television, backing various visiting “stars” and, when necessary, he was able to augment the band’s sound with some of the “pros” from the Lapwater gang.

His work in the Batley surgery continued apace. He was the youngest in a partnership of three and generally drew the short straw when new patients registered. Roly would do the initial inspection and anything beyond routine fillings and cleaning tended to be passed on to 35 year old Mr Pratt or Mr Molyneux, the middle-aged senior partner. Roly’s share in the practice had involved a lot of borrowing. While he would have to pay for the locum and the nurse, his earnings would be down during his three months in South America. He also had to pay for his parents’ holiday in Jamaica. But, hopefully, the experience he would gain in maxillo-facial work at the *Centro Especializado de Odontologia* in Rio would be invaluable in his Batley practice or, more appropriately, when he sold and moved into private or hospital work. He might grab a few games of tennis and find the odd jazz club too!

Roly travelled from Morley to Manchester Airport by taxi on Friday January 24th, happy in the knowledge that Jenny’s pregnancy was going smoothly. He was certainly looking forward to the change and the new challenge.

He had a two hour wait at Heathrow so, after ringing Jenny then his parents, he made his way to the Diners Club restaurant where he relaxed over free drinks and *smörgasbord* while he watched the delays pile up on the internal TV’s.

He arrived in Rio at 16.42. By the time he got through passport control and had collected his case, it was nearly 17.30 when he found himself standing in one of the taxi queues. An airport is an airport but he experienced his usual, inexplicable feeling of surprise as he stood on the edge of this busy, colourful city. The truth is he almost expected it to be a rundown shanty town but here there were skyscrapers as far as you could see and thousand upon thousands of colourful people ambling about their business.

He took a cab to the *Centro de Odontologia* on Rua Conde de Bonfim, a journey of forty minutes or so through the busy streets of Rio. Once in front of the Reception of the big, white hospital, he got out the cab and delved into his pockets while the driver off-loaded Roly’s luggage. He realised he had forgotten to get any *Cruzeiros*.

“Sorry. I have no Brazilian money.....cash” he said slowly and deliberately to the small, dark, young man.

“Whatcha got? Dollars?”

Roly was surprised and must have shown it.

“Anything’s better than cruzeiros. Francs? Sterling? Anything’s better.”

“Sterling” said Roly, still surprised and showing it.

“Thirty-five pounds” said the little fellow, looking around for possible eavesdroppers.

“Fucking Hell” thought Roly. “We’d pay ten or twelve quid for this in Leeds.”

“I can afford twenty pounds” he said, quite unnecessarily.

“Thirty” said the driver.

“No” said Roly, getting into the game and making to collect his two pieces of luggage. “I’ll call the POLICE” he almost shouted.

“OK, twenty-five.”

Roly paid him the twenty-five, making him wait until he found the fiver.

“Enjoy Rio” said the little *vilão* as he regained his cab.

The receptionist was petite and dark, wearing a pale green tunic. When she turned to look at the clock, you could see that her awfully trendy specs had very weak lenses, if, indeed any.

“Can I help you?” she asked with a North American accent and a customised smile.

“My name is Hepwood, Roly

“Yes Doctor Hepwood, we’re expecting you. Can I ask you to fill this form? I’ll get a porter who will take you to your room.” Just the occasional lapse of *tourneure* or accent suggested she was not a native speaker. In fact, Roly would find that, in this busy metropolis, almost everyone could speak and understand at least basic English.

The elderly porter insisted on carrying or propelling Roly’s two items of luggage along the lengthy, almost deserted corridors. By now it was approaching 8.30 p.m. and Roly decided he would spend this evening in whatever room they had given him. He might be able to find his way out, he thought, as the two of them got out the lift on the fourth floor but he might not be able to find his way back. Apart from anything else, he had no local currency.

They finally got to Roly’s room. The porter unlocked the door, switched on the light and turned to Roly.

“OK for you?”

“Perfect, thank you” said Roly, without really looking. He had already fished out a twenty pound note. Pointing it towards the porter with his right hand and using his left hand to clarify his meaning, he said, questioningly,

“For me, one bottle red wine?? *Vino tinto??*” he added in O-Level Spanish rubbing the red painted door. “*No blanco*”

“I understand. No problem. Red wine.”

“And a sandwich??”

“*Sandwiches*. OK. Tuna?”

“OK”.

Roly couldn’t care less if he acquired it from the hospital canteen. He planted the twenty pounds in the porter’s hand and clasped it shut to indicate: “That’s yours, pal.”

Twilight was approaching as Roly finished his sandwich and washed it down with his first glass of Argentinian plonk. Realising it would be near midnight in the UK, he rang Jenny from his bedside phone. All was well with the pregnancy. Jenny was in bed thinking of him, according to her.

“Sue and I looked in at the Lapwater but it was pretty dead without you, my dear.”

They chit-chatted for a couple of minutes then said their goodnights.

With most of the wine still left, Roly decided to look around his accommodation.

He drew the curtains open to be amazed at his hilltop view of the twinkling lights of Rio that led his gaze to the distant harbour. It seemed like the town was coming alive with car headlights criss-crossing the darkened landscape.

“Tomorrow, I’ll change some cash, I’ll make contracts with taxi drivers before a journey and I’ll explore the night-life” he thought.

The 20’ by 25’ room was mostly painted in pastel colours with a five foot wide, room-high panel of wall paper depicting a very colourful country landscape. This

seemed to compensate for the excluded liveliness of the town when the curtains were closed.

A good three-quarter sized bed was tastefully draped; the two bedside tables supported lamps, a telephone, a directory and a simplified map of Rio. There were two very comfortable armchairs separated by a rectangular, all glass or Perspex coffee table nestling in front of the full-length window.

A dark red door lead to a galley kitchenette and a good-sized bathroom with avocado-coloured fittings.

Roly was due to start work in the hospital on Monday 3d February 1975. He was going to have a busy week getting to know Rio.

Chapter Nine

By now, Sue and Bob Gregory were like ships in the night. They ate together, even slept together but, after breakfast, they would go their separate ways. They would usually meet for dinner then, more often than not, again follow their own interests. Sue saw more and more of Jenny Hepwood particularly now that Rory was on his short sabbatical and Jenny's pregnancy was developing apace.

At Morley Church choir practice on the evening of Thursday 6th February 1975, Sue sat in the soprano section between Jenny and young Cathy Sands. The three of them had had busy days. Sue had sat all day in Wakefield Magistrates' Court, Jenny's day at Kettlethorpe School had been boisterous and had finished with a fairly heated staff meeting and Cathy, who was far too nice to be a traffic warden anywhere had had two or three nasty, tiresome confrontations on the Headrow in Leeds. Choir practice was welcomed respite for all three girls.

At about quarter to nine they had a tea break. The usual sort of cliques formed but, as on most Thursdays, Jenny and choirmaster/organist Alan Bosworth stood together in deep conversation. Alan was a very pleasant thirty year old man, not very tall, slightly plump with prematurely greying hair. He was a music teacher at Batley Grammar School so, Jenny also being a teacher meant that most of the choir accepted their closeness as quite natural. He laughed a lot and had long-distance snippets of conversation with other cliques without ever leaving Jenny. He didn't seem to be a sportsman, a fact that always surprised Sue, who might have been getting the wrong signals anyway.

Cathy and Sue sat together mostly observing others but also chatting.

"Doing anything nice this weekend, Cathy?"

"Well, I've got an interview for a job in Harrogate on Saturday morning. I've got to catch a bloody train from Leeds at quarter to eight Saturday morning; God knows what time I'll get back. We've got church on Sunday, of course."

"I don't believe it" Sue lied. "I've been asked to sit in the Harrogate Court for a week and I'm supposed to meet a JP there informally on Saturday morning." She couldn't believe herself. "We could go up together."

"When? How?"

Was she being suspicious?

"I'm going up tomorrow evening in my car. I've got a room booked and I'll get one for you. It'll be on my expenses. What do you say?"

“Yeh, O.K.” Cathy smiled at Sue. “Thank you.”

The following morning, Friday, Sue picked Cathy up outside her parents’ home in Gildersome. Cathy was tall, about 5’9”, with long, auburn hair that blew out in the breeze as she trotted down the path to the gate. She was wearing a blue tunic top, cream hipster jeans and white trainers. She had an overnight bag draped over one shoulder.

Cathy pulled the passenger door open and flung her shoulder bag on to the back seat. She nestled into the passenger seat and then, with a hand on each knee, smilingly looked at Sue, to her right, as if to say

”OK. Here I am. What now?”

Sue, as if having heard the question, said

“Right. Harrogate here we come. We could stop in Wetherby for lunch, if you like.”

They smiled at each other and set off.

Chapter Ten

On Monday 27th January 1975, after a fairly busy weekend during which he had explored the bars and eating places around the hospital, Roly got up late, made himself a coffee, then headed out of his room on his way to the refectory, where he would try the lunch.

The elderly porter was standing at the door of the next room talking in what seemed like Spanish or Portuguese to the silent occupant.

“Ah, el Doctor ‘epwood.” He gestured towards the still silent, invisible occupant.

“La Médica García.....from Lima. You know ?”

Roly just decided to smile. What the Hell was he talking about?

A very dark, rather petite girl in her thirties modestly emerged into the doorway. She wasn’t amazingly attractive; she would be not much more than 5’ but her ponytail seemed to give her some height.

“Hi. I’m Juliana” she volunteered, extending a hand almost condescendingly.

“Hello. I’m Roly.”

“Roly” she repeated with the hint of a smile.

“I believe you’re

“I’m from Bogotá actually. I flew from Lima this morning.” There was very little accent. “Will you come in?”

Her accommodation was identical to Roly’s but with a different colour scheme and overlooking more of the hospital gardens than the bay. She had just arrived and her unopened bags were strewn about.

“I know your name, Roly, but what are you doing here?”

“I’m on a three month exchange from England. The guy from here has taken over my junior partnership role in our private practice in Lancashire and I’m here to learn some maxillo-facial stuff. What about you?”

“Well, I work under Liliana Otero at Javeriana University in Bogotá. I’m only here for a few weeks. They’re doing a series of frontal work that I want to see and Liliana’s cousin fixed things for me. Would you like a coffee?”

“A half cup, thank you. I was about to try the refectory for lunch. Would you like to join me?”

The refectory was huge and white. It could be anywhere, such was its clean, impersonal functionality. Serving units made up of glass displays and *bains Marie* went the length of the hall; the pale pink of the kitchen staff uniforms was a welcome relief from the stark white of the walls. Mobile phones rang with random urgency. Juliana and Roly helped themselves to fruit starters and *carne de vitela com batatas fritas e legumes*. Fairly basic, but free, even including two bottles of water! Apparently, Juliana's cousin would expect her to join his family for dinner most evenings so that, presumably, he could monitor her well-being and needs. As much as Roly enjoyed Juliana's relaxed conversation and pleasant smile, he didn't want to get too close. Next door for the occasional coffee was about right. He would make himself known this afternoon at the relevant Department in the hospital then, after a bit of a siesta and a bite to eat, he was off to Copacabana.

Chapter Eleven

Sue and Cathy made good time up the A1(M) to Wetherby that Friday morning. They stopped at one of the many High Street restaurants for a curry lunch. Sue had decided to wait until then to ring the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate, just in case their plans had to change.

She returned to the table.

"God! I've just rung the Majestic to confirm my booking. You and I'll have to share a twin room. Is that OK?"

Cathy smiled and gently shook her head with a frown.

"Yeah, Of course."

They talked and laughed on their way across to Harrogate helped, no doubt by the couple of glasses of wine they each had over lunch. Sue learnt that Cathy had no permanent boyfriend and had no immediate plans to move out of her parents' house. She sensed that Cathy, at twenty-seven, might well have the occasional difference with her parents.

"Hm. Interesting" thought Sue.

Harrogate was immersed in its usual middle-class sedateness.

"Being a traffic warden here would be a pleasant change" Sue observed. "You'd have to live here of course."

"I know. I don't know if I could afford that" Cathy replied. She was looking out the window at the lines of Georgian terraces.

The Majestic Hotel on the Ripon Road had a large, impressive Victorian front. They pulled up on the forecourt by the front door. A porter appeared and removed the overnight bags from the back seat.

"If you follow me into Reception, ladies, my colleague will look after the car."

"Wow!" thought Cathy. "Wow!"

She was putty. A huge reception area with people lounging about on those dark leather, studded couches and armchairs, staff milling around looking for things to do and another porter who, upon the "PING!" from the reception clerk's bell, appeared with a trolley to take Sue's and Cathy's overnight bags and some heavier cases that were lying aside.

Their bedroom was breathtaking, at least to Cathy. Two matching twin beds, a couple of big dark oak wardrobes with a dressing table between. Huge, lavish drapes on the windows and a cabinet containing the TV and below, a fridge full of fruit juices, water and sodas. Even with the two spacious loungers and other accoutrements there was room to spare. The en suite, with separate shower and bath, was all white. Nothing new for Sue but a whole new world for Cathy.

"Well, it's four o'clock now" said Sue. "I fancy a swim then a drink before dinner. What about you?"

"Yeah, that sounds good. I'd better stick with you anyway. To be honest, I've never been in a place like this before."

After their swim and in their white dressing gowns from the pool, Cathy and Sue titivated in the bedroom and en suite. By quarter to seven they were making their way downstairs to the opulence of the cocktail bar. They sat at a small table for two enjoying two or three Martinis. Sue was wearing a rather smart off-white suit she had brought with a view to her quickly arranged Saturday meeting; Cathy still wore the tunic top but had changed her jeans for a knee-length, dark blue skirt with conventional tights and low, sensible shoes again, perhaps in readiness for tomorrow's interview.

Dinner was good: lobster bisque soup, huile d'olive à la truffe blanche for Sue, filet steak for Cathy, one and a half bottles of housewine and, sin of sins, sticky toffee pudding followed by coffee and brandy.

They left the dining room at about ten to nine.

They walked along the corridor towards the Reception area. A few yards before the end of the corridor there was a large glass display unit with a couple of mannequins in colourful swimming costumes and bright, broad-brimmed hats. Cathy broke into uncontrollable laughter as she mimicked the poses and looked at her reflection in the cabinet's glass. Somehow this irritated Sue who, although light-headed enough from the meal-time excesses would rather Cathy didn't draw attention to herself. What

made matters worse was, when they passed the Reception desk, Cathy walloped the desk bell and burst into more hoots of laughter.

“Come on, you. Let’s get you to bed” Sue mockingly reprimanded.

“Ooh! I’ll look forward to that” said Cathy, rocking a little and staring up and smiling into Sue’s face from a few inches off.

Sue took her left hand as if to steady her then, having quickly checked around them, kissed Cathy gently. They walked, silently hand in hand to the bedroom.

Ten minutes later, when Sue emerged from the en suite, Cathy was sitting on one of the beds, cupping her naked breasts. Sue went to her and, supporting her under both her forearms, stood her up and undressed her. Then, still supporting her with one hand, Sue pulled back the blankets and, in total silence, guided her naked perfection on to the bed. Sue covered her with the bedding. Within minutes, Cathy was gently snoring.

At three or four the following morning, the beds together, Cathy roused to Sue’s moist caresses. She reciprocated and for the next two hours they melted in each other’s arms. Then, lying apart, they slept deeply until seven.

“I’m so very sorry” said Sue when she sensed Cathy was awake.

“Why?” Cathy asked, emerging from the bed and donning that white dressing gown. She went to the shower. Sue got up, donned the other gown and sat on the bed, waiting.

Cathy came back, drying her hair, her naked body still wet, shining. She bent over Sue and kissed her.

“Was I not good enough?” she asked playfully.

They both attended their meetings later that morning then met at the Granby for lunch before setting off again for Gildersome. Cathy had been told that the traffic warden’s job was probably hers; she would hear in a few days.

Conversation in the car was scant. They had both had a new experience and probably, the least said the better. But, on the way round the Leeds Ring Road, just before turning into Elland Road, Sue pulled up in a small lay-by.

“Cathy, please tell me. If you don’t want to know, I’ll understand. I’m older than you and I

Cathy stared out of the front windscreen.

“Sue, please shut up.” She turned to Sue. “I think I liked it more than you.”

Chapter Twelve

Roly clubs in Copacabana (Monday 27th Jan > Saturday 1st Feb)

Roly’s pre-work week in Rio. Meets Serena Garcia, Peruvian female exchanger in hospital who has room next door.

Taxi to Copacabana....boy? girl? But goes to Allegro Bistrô Musical, 502 Barata Ribeiro. Meets Isabel, singer. “Girl from Ipanema” had been written by the local Antônio Carlos Jobim and recorded by Stan Getz in 1964.

Copacabana had been composed but not famous until Barry Manilow's recording of 1978.

Roly didn't want to make a nuisance of himself so, after one or two introductions and the issuing of his security badge, he went for his siesta and a shower. Apparently the routine with the surgical teams was: when the morning operations were finished, they would do a final scrub up then briefly discuss the morning's work. Follow-up meetings to discuss any problems that might have arisen would be scheduled for later in the week. Then the two or three teams would disband for a relaxing lunch before the afternoon meetings when new teams were formed and tactics discussed for the following morning's operations. It was going to be a busy time. And while Roly was at the bottom of a very small pile in Batley, here he would be a complete NOBODY. These people were multi-national stars on a global stage. Roly wasn't going to bend any pianos here. He was a little fish in a very big pond. Roly Hepwood was happier being a big fish in a little pond, like Batley I suppose. Roly preferred a simple life. He preferred it in love too; getting involved or "playing away" as it was often called, normally ended in tears, thought Roly.

But what about Rio de Janeiro, 11,000 miles away from Batley?

Roly waited for his cab on the pavement outside Reception. It was just after seven. Twilight was falling. Workers were heading home and the early night shift taking over.

The crumpled Peugeot pulled up, right next to Roly, the swarthy little driver leaning on the open window sill, his right hand on the steering wheel. He looked up disinterestedly at Roly.

"You Epwood." It was probably a question.

"Yes"

"Address?" he asked, with American stress.

"Copacabana, please."

The driver closed his eyes and raised his eyebrows simultaneously which Roly took to mean unenthusiastic acceptance. He climbed into the back of the grubby box and they set off.

At the first set of lights the driver, still leaning on the sill, asked

"You want boys or girls?"

"Music" Roly answered.

"OK. 502"

The radio crackled and a loud voice shouted something indistinguishable. Roly heard the driver say

"Bistro Musical"

The wide boulevards went nowhere fast; the cab stopped at lots of traffic lights and Roly thought of Jenny for the first time in hours. This worried him slightly. In Morley/Batley Roly felt uneasy if he was at home and she was out and about. He would start to worry if she became an hour late not because he suspected her of seeing another bloke; she might have had an accident or the car could have broken down. He never even thought of how she felt when he was out gigging somewhere surrounded by admiring females. The truth was that, under normal circumstances, in Yorkshire,

neither would foul their own doorstep. Roly was talented enough and wise enough to enjoy the simple life. Jenny was the Christian wife of a local dentist.

For the first time in their married life, they were thousands of miles apart.

Roly got out of the cab in front of the *Bistro Musical*. It was about quarter to eight. The lights were just coming on over the *terraço*. People were sitting about having drinks and snacks so, as nothing was obviously happening inside, he took a seat and ordered a bowl of *frutos do mar* with some house wine.

Lots of other people were having an early *passeio* up and down the *Rua Barata Ribeiro*.

“If this were Batley or parts of Leeds” thought Roly “one or two of these people would do a double take and maybe ask for my autograph.” After all, apart from the limited audiences at the Lapwater, he had appeared with a band in Thames Television’s “Opportunity Knocks”, featured fairly often on Yorkshire Television’s “Calendar”, and had “depped” several times in the resident backing at Wakefield Theatre Club. He liked the recognition and respect. But he supposed it did have a price, particularly when he considered his dental patients, too. He was on show in Yorkshire most of the time. But here was different, he felt.

At about ten to nine he could hear two or three horns tuning up. Cue for him to go into the Club.

It was dark and unwelcoming. An average to good trio of piano, bass and drums was tinkering its way, perhaps wishfully, through “Here Comes that Rainy Day”. Roly ordered his usual Grouse whisky and a bottle of Pripps Blue. After downing the generous whisky in one he poured the small bottle of lager into the empty whisky glass and perched himself on a stool at the end of the bar. There were very few people in the place a table with two men and a lady and a group of four men and a smart blond girl standing at the other end of the bar. Judging by their laughter and bonhomie, they were probably the Club musicians.

Sure enough, within a few minutes, the girl walked down to the stage and, as if to a packed auditorium, took the microphone and said “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Nice to see you here. I’m Serena. These boys, John, Roberto and Jochim are this season’s resident trio and I’m your hostess. Let’s have a party!” over which the trio went into a four bar intro to a bossa then swing version of “Love Me or Leave Me”. Serena sang coolly and coquettishly although the place was all but empty. The music having started, people began to drift in. As Heppy in Wakefield used to say “Unless you’re Duke Ellington, spenders won’t come in until they can answer the WH questions: WHen are they starting; WHat sort of music are they playing; WHy is there no bugger in the place? If you get started they’ll know. If the punters still don’t come in, I’ll get another ****ing band.”

Roly was wearing his favourite going-out kitpale pink, open neck shirt, black trousers and his cream tuxedo. He wasn’t huge but the lighter-coloured top seemed to give him more status.

He had another Grouse and Pripps, continuing to occupy his end of the bar.

At about ten o’clock, the other four musicians plus Serena, took to the stage. Eleven years previously, Stan Getz had recorded the Antônio Jobim number, “Girl from Ipanema” and the bass, drums, guitar and sax floated into their version of what was an obvious standard around here. Serena’s singing of the middle eight was sublimely throaty.

A few numbers later and the band had finished their set.

Canned music took over.

The four musos went to their end of the bar but Serena came straight over to Roly.

“I take it you’re a musician” she said, drawing up a stool.

She had long, true blond hair and hazel green eyes. She would be in her mid-thirties and wore a long, body-clutching, pale red taffeta dress with a string of low-slung pearls. Her shoes were black. She was perhaps an inch or two taller than Roly.

“What makes you think that?”

“Most visiting musicians sit at this end of the bar when they first come. It’s nearer the door, I suppose, you know, for a quick exit.”

She looked prettier than she did on stage.

“Can I get you a drink?” asked Roly.

“What’s your nameeh....?”

“Roly.”

Serena smiled at a couple who had just come in and began a lively chatter with the American girl. Her partner, a dark, middle-aged professional who, Roly thought, might be a pilot or a businessman, just looked at Roly, feigned a smile and shrugged his resignation as if to say “Here we go again.”

He did say “Don’t forget to pause for breath, girls.” Definitely an American.

They chatted for ten minutes or so.

Roly looked over at the band, wondering which one was Serena’s other half.

Eventually, the American couple left for their table.

“Roly, sorry. I’ll have a Martini, please.” She was looking over at the band. “Just say to Tony, the barman, it’s for me..... Serena.”

“And what about your partner, Serena?” he said with the hint of a nod towards the band.

“Oh, she’s late, as usual.”

The band was getting ready to go back on stage. “You’re not a piano player, are you?”

“I am, yeah. Why?”

“Our piano player, Xavier’s on holiday or sick or something. Would you like to try a numberjust see if we knit, you know?”

“Why not?”

“OK. Let’s go.”

Roly followed Serena towards the stage.

“What will you do? Just tell the boys what key you’re in.”

“Mm!. Sounds like they might do ‘Desafinado’?”

“Fine.”

The band were in their places.

“*Posso apresentar a Roly, pianista?*” she said to the band. “Desafinado, please.”

Obvious who was in charge here!

The whole scene followed an international format. Roly did a two-bar explosive modulation in F which let the other guys know that he could actually play and that he anticipated they played ‘Desafinado’ in F as opposed to any other key. The sax player looked at Roly and pointed to the floor with one finger, confirming the key would be one flat (i.e. F). He then pointed to the guitarist and showed four fingers meaning, Roly assumed, the guitarist would play a four-bar intro.

It all started. After the intro they melted together, like peaches and cream.

Roly played with the band for the whole of the forty minute set. By the end of it they were all talking and joking as you do in a band. The dance floor was small and rarely used. By eleven o’clock the Club was about full, with a couple of dozen standing at

the bar, drinking and chatting and the rest of the *aficionados* sitting at tables of two or four.

Roly stood at the musos end of the bar. The gathering of 12 -15 sax, brass, keyboard , guitar, drum players chatted and drank. The “serious” jamming started about midnight. There was another keyboard player but he tended to dep. for the pianist in the trio. Roly was the only piano player in the house who could cope for the rest of the night, until 4a.m., with the *Chicos de Serena*.

“Have you got transport home, Roly?” It was the female alto sax player who had sat in for two short sets with the *Chicos*.

“No. But I’ll get a cab.”

“Where are you going?”

“*Tijuca, Rua Conde Bonfim.*”

“The dental hospital?”

Persistent, if nothing else. Another blond, She had a very laid-back attitude and quite prominent breasts for a sax player. Was she on drugs? Was a lift a good idea?

“Yeh, it’s probably”

“I live two kilometres from there. I’m more than happy to give you a lift.”

Patricia would be about thirty. She was quite tall, maybe the same height as Roly, with very dark, long hair and piercing brown eyes. Her high cheekbones suggested a Central European origin but there was no discernible accent.

Roly “sat in” with the quartet for the rest of the night and, following a 4a.m.

“nightcap” left the Club with Patricia.

They reached her small white Peugeot without much conversation, each probably concerned about what the departing regular revellers might say or be thinking.

Roly glanced at her neatly-formed bejeaned arse as she opened the driver’s door.

He made his way round to the passenger’s door while she took off her tunic top, threw it into the car then opened Roly’s door from inside. He climbed in. They looked at each other.

“Hi. I’m Patricia” she said, lisping the ‘c’ à *l’espagnole*. “Patricia Hewitt” she said in perfect English. “We’ll go via my flat for a little something.”

Roly hadn’t realised that, especially in southside Rio and particularly at that time of night, accepting a lift from a girl usually meant accepting a little something.

Roly left Patricia’s flat in a cab at something after 11 am. She was still *incommunicada* in bed. Roly had no idea if she worked during the day but, judging by last night’s performance it was unlikely.

He could cope with the morning-after feeling; he could cope with the lack of food; he could cope with his own bad breath, but not with his guilt. He hadn’t rung Jenny since late last Friday.

He had a shower back at the hospital and a late lunch in the refectory which was open all day.

At three in the afternoon he rang Jenny who was finishing her evening meal before heading out for a game of badminton. The pregnancy was fine but her GP had decided to refer her to Pinderfields to have a routine scan following an incident of bleeding and discomfort two nights earlier.

Roly was not unduly concerned and whiled away the rest of the week with leisurely days followed by evenings spent exploring the bars of Ipanema and the *Banca do Blues* in Rio itself. A couple of evenings at 502 with the inevitable “afters” at Patricia’s completed a busy week.

Roly's work at the hospital was very time-consuming. The two professors who headed the Department took his involvement seriously and expected him to do the same. There was an ongoing programme of inclusion of overseas post graduate dentists who were expected to keep detailed notes and observations of all operations and provisions made. These notes were scrutinised and graded by their personal consultant at the end of each week with a view to giving the attached "student" a grade for the three months' stage. So, for the next three months, Roly was tied to hospital work during the week with the occasional weekend sortie to 502 and, it has to be said, not an infrequent stop-over at Patricia's.

Chapter Thirteen

After the service at Church on January 26th, Alan Bosworth did his usual round of singers in the rehearsal room at the back of the building where the choir members were doffing their cassocks and surplices. As usual half a dozen choristers including Jenny, Sue, Cathy and Alan went along to the Old Griffin for a post-service drink or two. Again as usual the two teachers, Jenny and Alan, sat together within the group who were all chatting in twos or threes.

"Jenny, do you fancy a curry some time, just you and me?" asked Alan *sotto voce*. She took some time to answer.

"Yes, I do. Your wife, eh....."

"Just you and me, Jenny."

Again, a pause. Someone, laughing loudly, asked "Do you know him, Alan?"

"I don't think so. No", Alan smiled, feigning interest.

"When?" asked Jenny quietly and deliberately not looking at Alan.

"Tomorrow evening? I could pick you up."

Jenny looked at Alan, smiling in order to distract any curiosity amongst the others.

"What time? I've got a hospital appointment tomorrow afternoon."

"Would you like me to come with you?"

"No, thank you, Alan. It's just a regular check-up. But thank you. That's kind."

The Hepwoods' terraced house on Wakefield Road attracted little attention. Anyway, Jenny being a regular squash player, would quite often be picked up from home by a fellow player. This apart, Alan and his wife Sarah occasionally visited the Hepwoods sharing, as they did, their teaching and fairly eclectic interests in music.

The Aakash in Cleckheaton seemed a good choice to Alan. It was big enough for them to disappear yet they could enjoy the privacy Alan wanted. He seemed to be known by one of the waiters and chose quite a secluded corner table for two. They had a couple of drinks and ordered their meal.

"Jenny, the choir's thinking of having a weekend away at the Conwy Music Festival in July. I wondered if you'd like to come.....with me."

"With you?"

"Jenny, I.....most people in the choir know we can have separate rooms, Jenny, we don't have to"

"I'm expecting in July, Alan."

"Yes" was all he said.

“God. What a strange thing!” Jenny thought.
Thankfully, their meal arrived. They ate in near silence.

Alan and Jenny met almost every Monday evening at the Aakash, every Thursday evening at choir practice and, of course, every Sunday at Church usually followed by drinks at the Griffin. School work at Kettlethorp became more and more demanding but Jenny continued to meet Sue on occasions for lunch at Mountbatten Avenue round in Wakefield. On two or three other occasions Alan invited Jenny out for drinks and once, towards the beginning of March, in the Queensway Arms near Ossett, he became quite emotional

“Jenny, you mean a lot to me.” He took her hands. “I sense your pregnancy is not going too well and I’m worried for you.” His eyes moistened. “You know I’m here if you need me.”

Alan’s and Jenny’s relationship rolled on in Platonic mode. Alan took Jenny to her various doctor and hospital appointments without him showing anything other than concern and care. At a hospital consultation in Pinderfields in early April, the paediatrician told Jenny that, somewhere in Jenny’s records, she had come across reference to a child in her family who had suffered from Patau’s Syndrome. The paediatrician spent a lot of time explaining the implications to Jenny and they both agreed upon an amniocentesis to be performed on Wednesday April 16th.

Jenny and Alan continued to meet at choir practice, at church and for curries but the number of lunch time and unexpected evening calls increased. Roly rang home less often than Jenny would have liked but she supposed, quite rightly, that Roly would be busy with Hospital work. Nevertheless and in the light of her amniocentesis on the 16th, she decided to surprise and make contact with him at the 502 on Sunday 13th April. It meant that, in order to synchronize the two life-styles she, on her own, had to ring Rio at 4 a.m. That way she would be catching him at around 1 am when, she knew, he would be there.

But, by the time the operator on International Directory Enquiries had established that the 502 was in fact the *Allegro Bistrôt Musical, 502 Rua Barata Ribeiro, Copacabana* it must have been about 4.30 am.

“*Bom dia. Bistrôt Musical*”

“Roly, pianista, please” she said slowly and very distinctly.

“*Roly play piano now. You want you speak Patricia?*”

There was a pause. Patricia might be the manager.

“Patricia who?” She made it a definite question.

“*Patricia. Patricia*” He was getting impatient. “*Saxo. Mrs Roly*”

Jenny hung up. She sat for a long time, thinking. She thought of all the possible answers. What did *saxo* mean? Perhaps it meant “Are you?” or “There’s no”. Did he say *sexo*? Was he calling me Mrs Roly? But he wouldn’t know I was his wife. Christ, what’s going on?

Jenny was no linguist; nor was she a sloth.

“Do I know anyone who is Brazilian or Spanish or Portuguese or whatever they are?”

It was five o’clock on Sunday morning. She couldn’t ring anyone. But he should be back in his room by now.

She rang the Hospitala recorded message. After all, she supposed, it was not a 24/7 type hospital.

She didn't go back to bed. How could she? She certainly wouldn't sleep. She would see Alan and Sue later at Church. She thought she would rather talk to Sue first perhaps at the Griffin, after the service. But, by twenty past nine she couldn't wait. Sue was good at languages, having plodded through a couple of 'Teach Yourself' books in French and Spanish.

Sue was still in wake-up mode.

"Christ, what's up, Jenny?"

"Nothing, really. At least I don't think so."

"Is the baby OK?"

"Yeh, yeh. I have a medical coming up soon.....I have had a few problems as you know. No, it's not that. Is Bob up and about?"

"He's on one of his smart-arse week-ends somewhere. Why?"

"I couldn't pop over and see you before Church could I?"

"Yes" There was a pause. Cathy had spent the night with Sue. She would have to tell Jenny some time. "Yes, that's fine" she said. "When?"

"I'll be there in fifteen minutes" Jenny said and hung up.

(Sunday 13th April)

True to her word, Jenny knocked at the door of the Gregory house on Mountbatten Avenue at about ten minutes to ten. Cathy was sitting in a dressing gown at the dining room table. She was pensively downing a breakfast drink and, other than a smile to Jenny, said nothing.

Sue led Jenny into the kitchen.

"What's up?" she asked.

Jenny frowned and pointed to the dining room with her thumb.

Sue shook her head. "Later" she whispered.

They both sat at the little table. "Go on", Sue prompted and Jenny recounted the story of that morning's telephone call to the club in Rio.

"Hmm. 'Saxo' in French means 'saxophone' or even 'sax player'. I'm pretty sure it'll mean the same in most Romance languages."

"I'll find out" said Jenny, getting slowly more despondent.

"Hang on. Why don't we spend today working out a plan and we'll ring that Club tonight. We could always try the Hospital this afternoon. You never know."

As they all got ready for Church, Sue explained quietly to Jenny that Cath was a "girlfriend" who had a "sleep-over" with Sue when Bob was away on his many trips. Without saying that they were in a sexual relationship, Sue explained that she didn't want Jenny to talk about it; in return she would, of course, say nothing about Rio. In her turn, Jenny asked the two others that they didn't say anything about Roly to the choir and particularly to Alan Bosworth who, she admitted was being extremely supportive with her medical problems.

"And other things?" wondered Sue.

After Church, the three decided they would go about their own business and return to Mountbatten Avenue for about 9 p.m. when Sue and Cath would have prepared some supper, Jenny would have tried the Hospital and, assuming that was not successful, they would then plan their call to 502.

In the event, Jenny tried the Hospital three times that afternoon unsuccessfully and, as a result of her sleepless night on Saturday, fell asleep on the sofa until about seven.

She brightened up with a shower and returned to Mountbatten Avenue where Sue and Cath seemed to be enjoying the effects of a few wines.

Jenny herself was more relaxed and the atmosphere amongst them took on a very clear girls-v-Roly air.

In the light of Jenny's experience during her previous attempt, they decided that Jenny would again make the call. They would ring at about 11 p.m. British time when the band in Rio might

be getting ready to start the evening. If the woman Patricia came to the phone, Jenny would pass it to Cath who would cry "My papa Roly, papa Roly" or something to that effect in the youngest tones she could muster.

The three girls enjoyed their wine and at an appropriate pause Sue announced quietly and calmly:

"Jenny, we.....eh, Cathy and I..... thought you should know we have become an item. We're having a relationship. We enjoy each other's company, socially and sexually."

During the quiet that followed, Jenny looked at Sue whose blond, Nordic, high-boned features were tired as she smiled caringly at Cath.

"Do you worry about it?"

"No, we don't. I suppose the news will not be greatly welcomed amongst my magisterial colleagues." She poured herself another wine and topped up the others.

"Fuck 'em. We're happy, aren't we, Cath?"

"You bet." Cath smiled, her raised dark eyebrows in the frame of long, black hair awaiting the brief kiss.

It was eleven o'clock. Jenny had brought the 502 phone number which she rang with the other two in close attendance.

The same bloke seemed to answer.

"*Bom dia. Bistrôt Musical*" Jenny put the phone on loudspeaker.

"Pianista Roly, please. Roly, pian.."

"Wait"

Jenny knew he would be there that evening. Whether he could come to the phone was another matter. No mention of Patricia, though.

"Hello". It was a hesitating, inquisitive Roly.

"Hi. It's me, Jenny". Pause. "You've not rung for a while."

"No, sorry, love. By the time I finish work, shower, eat something and get here, it's time to start. Sorry" he repeated. A slight pause, then "How's the baby?"

"Fine. Fine." Sue and Cathy were trying to get Jenny to ask about Patricia. But was it appropriate now? "Who's Patricia?" she asked.

"She....you mean the one who plays sax here?"

"Whatever."

"She.....plays the sax here."

"The doorman or whatever called her 'Mrs Roly'. He must have got it wrong, eh?"

"Jenny, she....."

"Listen, Roly, I'm on someone else's phone. I'll ring you tomorrow.....if I get a minute."

She hung up.

Jenny and Alan met for their usual curry on Monday 14th April. Alan looked older and tired. School had been difficult but classroom discipline, particularly in Music and

subjects like PE, Technology, and Food, could be difficult to control. They needed strong personalities.

“I never imagined you’d have problems in class, Alan” Jenny ventured.

“It’s not in the classroom. it’s more the staffroom”.

“Why, what’s?”

“Oh, some bugger’s seen you and me around and it’s pretty well known that Sarah and I are having problems. Anyway, to Hell with ‘em!”

“That’s the spirit, Mr Bosworth. More winemy dear?”

Jenny decided that, after Alan had dropped her off, she would ring the 502 again. She was determined to find out about this Patricia. Roly would know that she, Jenny, would ring the Club again but he also knew that she didn’t speak Portuguese or even Spanish. The bastard probably had it all worked out.

Alan actually came into the house with Jenny for a night cap. It was after midnight by the time she got through to the 502. A woman answered the phone.

“*Alô. De onde fala?*”

“Patricia, please. Patricia saxo”

“Hi. I’m Patricia. I play the sax. Can I help you?”

Christ! An American. Jenny had not expected this woman, Patricia, to answer the phone let alone that she would speak English.

“Can I help you?” Patricia repeated. Jenny wanted to hang up but resisted.

“I’m his wifeRoly’s wife. Are you?” She didn’t know what to say.

The phone went dead. It sounded very much as if Patricia had hung up but Jenny kept listening, hoping she would speak.

Alan came up behind her. He put his arm round her shoulder. Jenny turned to face him, her face awash with tears. She let the phone drop. She sobbed then cried as they embraced.

Jenny was inconsolable. It was clear that Roly was having an affair with this woman Patricia. She, Jenny, was pregnant and about to go into hospital to have the pregnancy checked out. Her whole life was suddenly in turmoil; Alan had to stay with her. They sat together on the sofa, Jenny’s head on his chest, Alan holding her close.

3 a.m. Alan had dosed off. Jenny’s tears had dried and her sobbing abated. She looked around the room. It was small; the whole house was small. But everything she saw brought back memories when and where they had bought that picture; how they had struggled to find the cash for the carpet; how Roly’s Aunt Mary had given them that sideboard when she had moved into a home. Jenny’s tears welled again; Alan was still holding her but sleeping soundly.

The phone rang, startling them both.

“God! What’s the time?”

Alan struggled to focus. “No idea..... Bloody Hell, it’s after three!” he said through a yawn. “Aren’t you going to answer that?”

Jenny picked up the phone. Was it Roly?

“Hello” she said, uninvitingly.

No reply.

“Hello” she repeated. “Who’s that?”

“Is that Roly’s wife?” The female voice sounded vaguely familiar.

“Why?”

“I’m Patricia. I spoke to you earlier. Please, are you Roly’s wife? Please tell me your name.”

“My friends call me Jenny.....and yes, I’m Roly’s wife, or

“Jenny, thank you for speaking with me. I am so, so annoyed and embarrassed.”

“Why?”

Alan signalled to Jenny that he was going. He grimaced and shook his head. He didn’t want to be part of this. Jenny did a “Stop!” sign and pointed to a seat.

“I’m actually at home now” said Patricia. “I’ve walked out of 502. I told him what a bastard he was.....to me and to you.....especially to you, his wife. He told meanyway, I told him to fuck off.”

“What did he tell you?”

“Oh I can’t remember, Jen.....yes I can. He told me he was single.”

“Thank you.....Patricia”. She wanted to say “Tell him ‘goodbye’ from me too” but thought better and hung up. Awash in tears, she fell back into Alan’s arms again.

Schools were still on Easter holiday when Alan picked Jenny up in Morley to take her to Pinderfields in Wakefield for the amniocentesis. It was Wednesday the 16th April. Alan, not being an impulsive person, was still living with his wife Sarah. Yet he and Jenny went for their usual curry supper on Monday after which, Jenny stayed with Sue and Cath at Mountbatten Avenue while Bob was on another jaunt. This social, musical chairs was exhausting Jenny who, nevertheless, found Sue’s and Cath’s honesty about their relationship refreshing, almost fun. Alan was being an absolute rock, a tower of strength for Jenny but she wished he would express his feelings more openly. He had that teacher quality, that aloofness bordering on fear that Jenny had come to dislike. In musical terms, he was technically very good and played all the right notes. But, if you’re going to be really successful in music and life, Jenny felt, you must take risks, be cavalier, devil-may-care on occasions. You will certainly “splash” the odd note in music and probably make a few enemies in life. She wouldn’t advocate or condone selfishness but she did wish Alan would be more outspoken to her about his feelings. Just talking would help. It would help Jenny with her own feelings. She had no idea how she was going to handle this Roly affair.

The amniocentesis, scans and hanging about at Pinderfields took all of that day. Alan was with Jenny most of the time but excused himself to go for sandwiches for the two of them and, would you believe, a couple of pints for himself at about noon.

As they left the Hospital that evening Jenny was told to expect a call about the result within 48 hours.

At choir practice the following evening and especially at the Old Griffin afterwards, Sue and Cathy particularly and, to some degree, even Alan and Jenny were “coming out” more. There was, perhaps the occasional look askance which Sue and Cath seemed to actually enjoy. Alan was definitely less sure but he and Jenny spent the late evening after the pub together at the Hepwood house in Morley. Jenny was gently pleased that Alan was making no serious sexual advances. They would kiss warmly rather than passionately when they left each other’s company but this suited them. They both knew that most of their immediate friends appreciated something was “going on” but fortunately, they seemed prepared to respect Alan and Jenny’s privacy and maturity.

On Friday morning, Jenny being on the last day of her school holiday, received a phone call at home from Dr. Snell who had overseen the amniocentesis and other tests. She wanted to see Jenny as soon as possible. Once again Alan managed to drop whatever he was doing and accompanied her to Dr. Snell's rooms.

She was younger than Alan had expected. Seated behind her desk, Alan could not make out how tall she was. But she was a good-looking auburn girl in her thirties. She wore the almost compulsory black-rimmed spectacles with weak or possibly no lenses. A man, older, slim, dark-haired and with a short, bushy moustache stood erectly by her side. Alan wondered which of the two was the senior.

"Who is this?" Snell asked, looking at Alan with the suggested hint of a smile.

"Mr Bosworth. Alan Bosworth, my partner. I want him to be with me."

Apparently ignoring this, Snell scanned her notes. Stalin, to her left, remained immobile.

"Earlier this month" Snell said, "we reported to you a historical, familial, incidence of Patau's Syndrome. Hence our amniocentesis on Wednesday". Pause to allow for anticipation. "Our analysis of the chorionic villus sample caused us " nod, nod for emphasis "some concern."

"In what way?"

amniocentesis Wednesday 16th April
abortion on Monday April 21st

(From here to the end of the chapter [i.e. end of March] do the Alan-Jenny relationship up to and inc. the abortion on Monday 21st April and then the return of Roly on Friday, May 2nd. when he gets devastating news of the abortion and involvement of Alan Bos.. Roly returns to work in Batley on Monday 5th May. During May he gains more evidence of and suspicion of Bosworth. Loss of colour definition during game of squash and tingling during shower. Parents go on holiday to Barbados Tuesday 10th June 1975; Tuesday 24th June crash before landing at JFK Airport...."at least 40 killed")

PATAU'S SYNDROME

Cover blown.

Sue and Cathy meet at Mountbatten Avenue while Bob is away. (Friday 31st Jan and Sat 1st Feb).

Chapter Fourteen

Jack and Mavis were ambling through their retirement years in the confines of the ever-reducing Batley of old. Jack and his three bowling chums still played on a Tuesday. They all had children except Stan who, for some reason or reasons, lived with his housekeeper on Dewsbury Road. The other three occasionally mentioned their children but the bowls, the rugby and the "social" were more important. John Schofield's daughter was a nurse, his son a teacher, Rob Stone's two sons worked "in banks or summit" in Leeds and Alfie Gledhill's daughter was a divorced hairdresser somewhere in Wakefield. There were grandchildren around but Alfie and John left them to "the girls". They were proud of their children but generally felt they were old enough to look after themselves. Roly was highly respected in Batley but Jack and Mavis had false teeth. As far as he could remember, the last time Jack met Rob's lads was about twenty-three years ago when one of them was setting himself up as a "financial adviser". To help him, Jack had enrolled in one of his financial plans. He had had no idea what the lad was talking about except that it cost him, Jack, £1:50 a week to help him get started. It was a lot of money in 1952 but by now, 1975, he had forgotten he was still paying it.

In his letters or phone calls to his parents, Roly had mentioned their Golden Wedding Anniversary present in June and had asked them not to make any plans for that month without asking him. A couple of days previously when Jenny had come over on her own for Sunday lunch, Jack had commented on the cold weather and Mavis had made her usual remark about "retiring to Barbados". Jenny had then said something like "Why don't you have a holiday there?" and it had set Jack thinking.

"I'm wondering" he said to Rob Stone as they changed ends "if our Roly's got us a holiday in Spain or summit for us fiftieth." The truth was that neither he nor Mavis knew where Barbados was.

"Well that'd be grand" said Rob.

"Yeah. But to be perfectly honest, we don't have a lot of cash lying about, you know, for spends and that."

Two ends later Rob asked Jack "Have you still got that savings plan our Neil did for you when he started up?"

"Oh Christ. I've no idea. I can't remember stopping it, though."

“I’ll check with our Neil.”

The following afternoon, Wednesday 29th January 1975, Jack was in the back yard, whitewashing the outside loo when the telephone rang in the house. By the time Jack got down the ladder and into the house, the phone had stopped ringing. Then, the usual Sod’s Law, it started ringing again as Jack was approaching his ladder in the yard.

“Shite! It’s olus ‘tsame as a’ need some peace.”

He lifted the phone.

“Hi! It’s Rob ‘ere. I’ve got some bad news for you. Our Neil, I think they call it ‘sold on’any road he sold on your plan to one o’t big boys a few months after you took it out wi’ him. He needed ‘brass.”

“Oh, bloody great! Any road I’ll get on wi’ whitewashin’” Jack said, having not really thought about his investment since yesterday.

“No, listen. I’m only joking. Our Neil’s followed it up. You, Mr Smartarse Hepwood are worth 1.6 million quid less a few expenses if ye cash it in.”

It took a minute or two for the impact of this news to hit base. When it did, Jack felt sickly rather than deliriously happy. He could not conceive a million pounds; he had no idea what .6 of anything meant.

“Does it mean we can afford an ‘oliday?” he asked Rob.

“Yeah. In fact, if ye play yer cards right, I’ll let thee buy me a pint or five at t’club.”

It took the best part of a month for Jack and Mavis to comprehend the size of their new-found wealth. The month included two meetings with the Manager at the Yorkshire Bank in Batley during one of which he explained to Jack and Mavis that, if they put the money into a Yorkshire Bank Gold Reserve Account they would earn an annual interest of 5.4%, that is, something like £86,000.

“Eighty-six thousand quid? Every year? For how long for Christ’s sake?”

“For ever; as long as you don’t touch the 1.6 million” said the nice little bank manager.

“I’ve never ever needed ten thousand quid a year, forget eighty-six thousand or a million or whatever you said.”

“Mr Hepwood, can I suggest you allow us, the Yorkshire bank, to manage your account for a very small fee. You just spend whatever you need, preferably no more than eighty-six thousand a year, and we’ll do the rest. Actually if you could keep it to no more than seventy-five thousand we can increase the capital, you know, as a reserve against inflation or emergencies. How does that sound?” a bit like today’s “Nothing could be simpler,” I suppose.

At the end of March, by which time Roly was thinking more of getting home, he had asked Jenny to tell his parents that he had booked them an anniversary holiday in Barbados flying from Manchester on June 10th (1975). Neither Roly nor Jenny knew that Jack and Mavis had a new-found source of wealth and Roly was unaware that Jenny had been told by Pinderfields that they wanted to perform an amniocentesis on Jenny. The pregnancy was not going comfortably and Dr Snell had unearthed somewhere a history of Patau’s Syndrome in the medical records of the Short family. So it was that Roly launched into his last month at the *Centro Especializado de Odontologia* where he was now getting hands-on experience in some parts of the maxillo facial operations not to mention some games of squash in the Hospital sports

hall and yet more hands on at 502 and Patricia's nearby flat. The Roly Hepwood show had come to Rio. But, as we've seen, its demise would begin in a couple of weeks.

Chapter Fifteen

Dr Snell explained as slowly and as gently as possible that her immediate concerns were for the unborn child. It would almost certainly be born with serious handicap or handicaps some of which usually, in her experience, would be systemic, involving vital organs.

Snell allowed a long, deliberate silence.

"Should we terminate?" Jenny asked.

Pause.

"That's for you and anybody else to decide." She looked at Jenny for some considerable time. "I have to say that, if it were me and my partner who is also a gynaecologist, we would definitely terminate. Would you like time to"

"No. I want to go ahead."

"Go ahead?"

Another silence. Jenny began to sob.

"Jenny ... darling....." Alan tried "shouldn't you.....?"

"No!" she shouted and burst into tears.

Snell got up to leave the room.

"I'll come back shortly" she said just loud enough to be heard above Jenny's howls.

Alan cuddled her long enough to slowly calm her.

Unprompted and between her reducing sobs she managed to say

"I want an abortion as soon as possible. A termination of two things."

Jenny spent most of that Sunday getting her overnight bag ready for the stay at Pinderfields the following day, April 21st. She did not want to speak to Roly; she did not even answer what she knew were his many calls from Rio. Instead, after church and several glasses of red wine at the Old Griffin that Sunday, she almost enjoyed leaving a message on his room's ansafone to the effect that she was having an abortion tomorrow and not to bother coming back because it would be done anyway. "I hope he thinks it was due to his affair with that Patricia" she said to Alan as he settled on the settee downstairs for the night..

"I'll leave it for a week or so before I tell him I'm moving out" she thought as she went upstairs.

The whole episode at Pinderfields was, presumably, unpleasant and messy although Jenny saw and felt little. According to her notes the termination was due to medical concerns rather than an unwanted pregnancy and so Jenny evidenced sympathetic care and attitude from the medics. Alan, who now had school commitments was on hand first thing in the morning and after the event to add his usual unqualified support.

Chapter Sixteen

Sue and Cath went on with their affair openly and very happily. Bob, having returned home unexpectedly one Saturday morning had his suspicions confirmed about the two. In an unexpected sort of way, he was relieved that Sue was not involved with another bloke and actually enjoyed talking with Sue about the two girls' sexual exploits. Sue had helped Cath find a little flat in Harrogate and the *ménage à trois* rolled along quite nicely. When Bob was around at Mountbatten Avenue, Cath tended to stay at Harrogate although, on the few occasions when the three socialised, they all had a thoroughly relaxing time. If the truth be told Bob hoped there might be an occasion when *ménage* became *lit*.

Roly Hepwood, however, was not quite so relaxed. He was having unqualified difficulty getting in touch with Jenny who, it was now clear to Roly, was studiously avoiding his calls. He was beside himself with frustration. Why was she having the abortion in the first place and, in the event, how had it gone? Who was helping her through it? She had said she didn't want Roly's parents to be involved in any pregnancy matters; Jenny's parents were divorced; Roly's brother, Peter, was uselessly wrapped up in himself. It was not appropriate to involve anyone else. Roly had a final paper to submit to the Professor at the *Centro de Odontologia* by Friday 29th April otherwise he had no chance of gaining the prestigious add-on to his degree. Shit! Things were beginning to go wrong in the gold panelled life of Doctor Hepwood.

He decided to keep clear of the 502 but telephoned Serena to see if Jenny had rung. Nothing. Juliana had vacated the room next to his at the Hospital so, for Roly's last week in Rio, he observed operations, studied, ventured out twice to the local café, sat his "viva" and was on the 'plane back to England on Friday 2nd May. 1975, a breaking man.

When he arrived home late that evening he found a scribbled note saying:

Roly,
Changed mobile. I'll ring you Monday. Don't try to get in touch before,
Jenny

No kisses; no "Jen" as she would normally do in a note.

"Bloody Hell! I turn my back for five minutes and" He stopped himself as he briefly thought of Patricia.

On Saturday, he went to the Surgery in Batley to see how things had gone and to catch any mail relating to his parents' anniversary holiday next month in Barbados.

On Sunday he distracted himself with a game of squash in Wakefield during which he was beaten by a player he normally trounced.

During his post-match shower, he experienced a not-unpleasant tingling in the triceps of both arms which did not particularly trouble him. He was more concerned about Jenny. Where the Hell was she?

On Monday morning he was back in harness at the Surgery in Batley. He didn't have a full diary and used any spare time to work on details of his parents' holiday in Barbados on 10th June.

Jenny rang the Surgery at about quarter past five. Roly's relief would have been palpable to any observer. But Jenny's voice had no warmth; she sought no news, just a date and time to meet him at the Bistro where, to a degree, this episode in their lives

had begun. A date and time? Christ! What was this? A business meeting, a dental appointment? Roly felt empty and alone.

“Well, I’d like us to meet as soon as possibledarling.”

Silence.

“Jenny?”

“Yeh.”

“Could we meet this evening?Say seven?..... You said the Bistro.”

Jenny felt sad. The whole saga of the 502 came surging back. Should she ask Alan to come too? No.

“It’ll have to be nearer eight. I’m playing badminton after school.”

“I’ll see you there, then.”

He heard Jenny hang up. He hung up too, emotionally drained.

Three months had passed since leaving home for Rio. At that time he was a successful, up-and-coming dentist and a highly respected local musician. He was a young, sporty, good-looking individual who was never challenged, never questioned. Even Roly did not ask questions of himself. Why should he? Everything in his life was, or at least had been perfect this far. His dentistry was so good that his senior partners had agreed to his *stage* in Rio. He was top of the bill at the Lapwater and first reserve at Batley Variety and Wakefield Theatre Clubs.

But he had exited his small, water-tight cocoon. Other people with other standards had come into his life and he into theirs. Once back in Yorkshire he would find that the goalposts had been moved, not by others but by him. Jenny, “his Jenny”, had been the first to react and he couldn’t understand. O.K. there had been that little ‘do’ with Patricia but all that was forgotten. By him, that is.

Roly finished at the surgery at six thirty. The Bistro didn’t open until nearer seven so Roly decided to take a pensive pint at the Crossed Keys, a few yards away.

For the first time in months he felt totally abandoned. There were plenty times when he chose to be on his own but he couldn’t remember when he was last ALONE. There were very few people in the pub and certainly nobody he knew. He could have rung musician or sporting friends but, into his second pint, he realised or accepted that he missed Jenny. It wasn’t until his third pint that he worked through the idea that he loved Jenny and arrived at the conclusion that he, Roly Hepwood, medical and musical superstar on this little stage actually needed Jenny Short.

When he got to the Bistro, Jenny was already there, chatting to the little Maltese waiter. Roly crept up behind her at the little bar.

“Hi” he offered and waited for her to turn. She carried on talking to Tony, smiled at him and only then turned to Roly.

“Hi” she replied.

Roly began to lean towards her cheek. “Let’s sit over here” she said as she moved off. No kiss; no smiling welcome in her eyes. They sat round by the “wine cellar” behind the bar.

“Jenny, I”

“Roly, I (slight stress) have had an abortion.....of our child, and I don’t want to see you again. You know my solicitors.”

She stood up, looked down at him with mock pity then made for the door..

Roly sat there, *bouche bée*, dumbfounded and watched her go.

Completely stunned, he remained seated then, having given Jenny time to get away, he too left the Bistro, regained his car from outside the Surgery then drove it the forty

or fifty yards to the abandoned car park behind the “Greasy Spoon”. He stopped the engine then, with his head in his hands and leaning on the steering wheel, he wept uncontrollably for half an hour.

Of course, Roly being left by Jenny and Jenny leaving Roly were two completely different situations. Before the South American episode Jenny seemed content to let Roly run the show, as it were. He was the highly-respected dentist and the sought-after musician; she was the wife of Roly Hepwood. He made all the major decisions; she decided what was for lunch. But now that he had committed what in her eyes was the cardinal sin, she was taking over her own body, her own destiny

Roly had never realised just how much he depended on her. His life was upended. By the end of that week, Roly had found himself a home help by asking Inspector Thornton, one of his patients, if he knew of anyone reliable. Certainly, he enjoyed some good contacts in the area; but not good or wide enough to find where Jenny was.

Mrs Crabtree started her housekeeping that Wednesday and on Friday Roly went to the Lapwater. He wanted to restart his social life.

Would Jenny be there?

She wasn't.

In fact Roly kept quiet about his problems with Jenny. He didn't even mention them to his parents, Jack and Mavis who, apart from anything else, were busy, in fact concerned about their holiday in Barbados.

Roly, cool dude Roly Hepwood, cried every night.

Sue Gregory and Cath Sands continued their comfortable relationship. Sue had quite a busy programme in the local magistrates' courts and often joined Cath for tea and “afters” in Harrogate. They both still attended choir practice and the Church in Morley and it was there that Roly went, on his way to another squash match on Thursday 29th May. He parked discreetly hidden and, sure enough, Jenny turned up at about 7.40 accompanied by Alan Bosworth. Roly knew that Alan was the choirmaster. But Jenny looked so happy, so relaxed.

With a heavy heart, he went on to his squash match in Dewsbury.

That same drongo beat him again; in fact he hammered Roly. This annoyed him but he was more perturbed by his blurred vision and, again, his now quite pronounced tingling in his arms during the post-match shower. He resolved to research into this as soon as possible.

But he became more and more embroiled in his parents' travel arrangements. They were due to fly to Barbados on June 10th and Roly's free time was consumed by countless errands to that end.

On the morning of Tuesday, June 10th Roly collected his parents in Batley to take them to Manchester with a view to them catching a flight to Heathrow. They would then connect with their flight to Barbados and two weeks of holiday bliss. While they were away, Roly planned to resolve his two problems: Jenny and his own neurological concerns.

As for Jenny, he made some quite pathetic attempts at shadowing her. The badminton club, the choir, outside her school, that sort of thing. She looked perhaps less happy but certainly unperturbed. And that bloke Bosworth always seemed to be around.

Roly still wept at night when his loneliness seemed closer and more tangible.

That Friday evening he went, as usual, to the Lapwater, on the Saturday and Sunday he was depping at the Wakefield Theatre Club and that Sunday afternoon he decided to contact a kindred spirit, John Barclay who had studied medicine at Leeds University concurrently with Roly and his dental surgery. John played bass with Roly in the College Jazz Trio and was currently a neurological consultant at St James University Hospital. They talked and reminisced for over an hour and finished with an appointment at the Hospital in early July when John would perform an investigative lumbar puncture. Roly felt better. He was getting his life together again. To make things even better his Mum, Mavis, rang him from Barbados just as he was about to leave for the Theatre Club. It would be about 3p.m. there. She sounded very happy, maybe even a jot tipsy.

Roly felt good.

On the afternoon of June 24th at about 5 o'clock, Roly was tidying up in his surgery with a view to going home and having some tea before taking Mrs Crabtree over to his parents' house in Batley where she would give the place an airing. Jack and Mavis were due back from Barbados and Roly would pick them up in Manchester at about midnight. He always turned off his radio at 5 p.m. because that was the time he usually finished and, even if not, he would turn it off to avoid the depressing news of murders and road accidents. If he had listened for another couple of minutes he would have learnt that the FTSE was down again and that, at five past four that afternoon, Eastern Airlines Flight 66 had crashed during a thunderstorm at JFK Airport, killing many passengers and crew.

Roly only heard of the accident on his car radio en route to Manchester Airport where he and other family friends were given the devastating news. Roly spent two hours pacing and pacing up and down the lounges, inside and outside, his heart thumping irregularly, nausea welling deep inside. He was totally alone. The families of other passengers consoled each other but Roly's whole fibre could only churn and struggle. He couldn't DO anything. He could see and hear planes taking off and landing. Had it all been a mistake? Were his parents perhaps on a different flight?

At twenty past six his doubts, his hopes, his world collapsed. It was confirmed his mother had died and his father taken to Lenox Hill Hospital in New York. When he got home to Morley at 8.45, he received a call from New York with the news that his father had died too.

Chapter Seventeen

Roly sold his partnership in the Batley practice. He sold the house in Morley and sent half the proceeds to Jenny's solicitors. He kept his appointment with John Barclay in July 1975; by Easter the following year his Progressive MS was confirmed and he was generally happier in a wheelchair or at least a walking frame, accompanied by the now ubiquitous "Crabbie".

Roly Hepwood never played again at the Lapwater, Yorkshire TV, Wakefield Theatre or Batley Variety.

Jack and Mavis had left him a serious inheritance in their Wills. Financially, he had no need to work. Psychologically, he was a poor, broken, rich man. And he couldn't bend pianos.