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Samples from MAYAN CALENDAR GIRLS

The Great Meso-American Novel



The very last word in very last words.

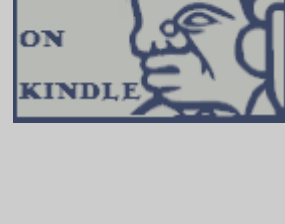
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Bonus Chapter from the Sequel

(Needless to say, the Final book in the series)



THE LAST RESORT

"It's nicer than I expected." Which it was; no two ways. Ordinarily Dino would've been more comfortable up in the swank, dusky dining room with all the linen and brass trim and nice dark hardwood walls to sit with his back to. Big fireplace when it must be eighty-five degrees even this late at night. He could do without the patio thing there, white canvas umbrellas and rattan chairs like some sidewalk café in Tribeca.

But it was all right sitting out here right on the sand, teak chairs sinking in a little when you sat down, linen table cloths making round white islands of light along the beach because they all had little glass globes on them, half full of white sand and shells to hold the nice creamy candles. He'd even kicked off his shoes like the *Don*, lost his tie and coat. No need here, not even to cover his piece because you didn't have a piece around here. Why he wasn't squirming without feeling a solid corner behind his shoulderblades. This place was secure as nun nookie, no two ways.

"You thought I was in a cave in the mountains somewhere? I could show you one of those. Or maybe some shithole in Brazil like that movie, the one where Pacino drives a truck full of dynamite?"

"Roy Scheider," he corrected without thinking. "Guy from 'Jaws'." It hit him and he glanced up, frozen. The *Don* had never been the type who enjoyed being contradicted.

But he just smiled and bowed his head like thanking him for the information. Jesus, if this place could mellow out a guy like the Boss, he should get a condo here for Isa and her mama.

"Sorry about the trip. I'm sure you understand why it's necessary."

"You bet, *Don* Amiche. Like a blindfold ride. But yeah, three days on planes is pretty weird. Couldn't you go around the coupla times, three days on a jet?"

"Part of that time you weren't in a plane. You were in this sort of simulator, airplane seats with a certain smell and, you know, vibrations. It's located outside Brussels, I hear."

Guy at the next table, smooth piece of work, Jewish or Arab type nose, turned around, smiled at the *Don*, said, "I heard Jakarta." Kind of creepy, people listening to everything around here, but the *Don* smiled, kind of toasted with his sniffer. Turned back and said, "But yeah, we got no more idea where we are than you do. I was thinking like some Madagascar kind of place, but there's people swear it's near the Galapagos, north of Australia, Samoa, lots of theories."

"So you don't have any idea where you're living."

"Which is the only way nobody else can know. Anywhere I go, they'd find me. So I'm nowhere."

"Then how'd you find it, don't mind if I ask? Special travel agency on Park? Internet?"

"It's like a number you call, they come grab you, put you through the same crap you went through with the flights and searches and scans, you go to sleep and wake up here in a hammock under the palms."

"And the number's written on the wall over the phone at Cicero's, right?"

"It gets around. Certain circles. Maybe they get hold of you. Sometimes they know you need to disappear before you do. Seriously. Ask some guys around here. Some guys got an open invitation, but are too stupid to spring for it. Castro's the classic."

Guy walking by with this dynamite blonde niblette on his arm, says, "Thank God for that. You want him around, jacking his jaw nonstop?"

"Lots of guys here expect Hugo Sanchez any day," The Boss went on. "Not me. He's a dumbshit, too. You watch, he'll be hanging from a streetlight in Caracas like Mussolini or that Romania asshole."

But Dino didn't catch the *Don's* last comment. He was staring, stunned, at the huge black guy who'd just lumbered out of the shadows onto the patio, plumped down under an umbrella. "Holy shit! Did Idi Amin just walk in here?"

The *Don* didn't even look around, just said, "No, it's an Idi look-alike. What do you think?"

The old fart with Miss Honeydews smiled at Dino. "He's great fun, actually. Wins all the sports tournaments except golf."

"He's working on that," the *Don* said, kinda grumpy. He'd always been proud of his handicap. "One thing with Idi, though..."

Dino could think of several things with Idi, but said "What's that?"

"If he tries to have you for dinner..."

The old guy jumped in, "...decline with regrets." He and the *Don* laughed at that and the cupcake giggled so hard she nearly fell out of the rest of her designer bodice.

"I thought he was dead, okay," Dino said sulkily when the old-timers quit yukking it up and the bimbomb had dragged old Sugarpops away.

"You thought *he* was dead? How about me?"

"Well I didn't, since I'm like the only guy left alive who..."

"Hey," the Boss blurted, making pat-down motions with his hands. "Hey! *Piano, piano*. Certain details, you know."

"What, somebody *here* is going to drop a dime? 'Hi, this is Herr Hitler and I've got a leak for you...'," Dino stopped, looked around. "Hey, was he here? I'm starting to think anybody they didn't find the whole body... Think I could see his room?"

"Before my time."

"*Marrone!* Who else is here? You got D.B. Cooper?"

The Boss shot his eyes towards a corner of the patio, where a very tanned surfer-looking dude seemed to be playing a drinking game, wedged between two black girls with killer shapes and minimal drapes.

"Damn. Is Jimmy Hoffa gonna show up, shuffling his cement shoes?"

Their waiter, a heavy-set black guy of indeterminate age and so subdued he hadn't even noticed him before, spoke for the first time. "Excuse me sir, but I hate to hear people badmouth Mr. Hoffa. People talk, but he was a fine gentleman and an excellent tipper."

The *Don* rolled his eyes. "Unlike some others, right, Sam?"

"I'd never mention such matters, Mister Amiche." The waiter moved smoothly away, a motion study in long-suffering, understated class.

"Is he really named Sam?"

"They all are."

Dino looked around, noticed all the waiters were chunky black guys. And, yep, so was the piano player. Who so far hadn't played "As Time Goes By." He noticed something else and pointed with his demitasse. "Guy over there, crater-puss."

"You must mean 'Nori', we call him."

"He's in a federal pen somewhere."

"He is, huh? Ask yourself, you ever seen an interview with him? TV story? Baba Wawa talking to the only head of state in the world ever kidnapped and tossed in an American joint? Think about it."

Then Dino spotted the guy with the beard. "Oh my freakin' God. It's him isn't it?"

"What gave it away, the beard, the turban, or the gown?"

"Holy *fuck!* So that whole 'hiding in a cave' thing was bullshit?"

"Not as much bullshit as the 'secretly buried at sea' thing."

"Meanwhile, he's sitting here sipping a drink on the beach?"

"No alcohol, though. He's as fun a guy as Idi." The Boss made a face. "*Not*. I'd rather be in solitary with Jerry Falwell than get around that pious raghead preacher."

"Well, I guess he can afford this place. Taliban moving all that weight, that shit."

"Not to hear him tell it. But anybody here whines about the money, you know they've got major bucks somewhere."

"So he's still running things, right? From here. His people come in, talk."

"Just like you and me, Dino."

"Better hope they don't hijack one of the flight simulators, crash it into the Magic Kingdom or something."

"Hey, you want, I could take you down by the breakwater there, show you the cave he films those videos. The props and shit."

Which Dino was hot to see, even though he didn't have a camera or cell phone or any implanted bugs or GPS. He stared at the Musselmadman, starstruck, wishing he could hear what was going down over there on a warm tropic night under a blaze of stars soundtracked with the murmur of surf.

Not that Dino could have understood it anyway, but what Osama Bin Ladin was saying to his most trusted lieutenant was, "Christians they might not be, but infidels they certainly are. Not of 'Western Civilization', but nevertheless from the West. They have watched the same stars our people watched from Baghdad and Sumeria at the dawn of time. They foretell an end of time and their scientists have created the tool to deliver it. Our struggle is not for land, not even for minds. Our deeper goal is to seize the time, in the name of Allah."

His dinner guest nodded, thinking that even here, in this fantasy of Western money and stealth, his Teacher sat with his feet in the sand, under canvas. Truly God is great. He said, "In that name shall it be done."

The superstar of Islamic pique plucked thoughtfully at the beard whose world fame was second only to Santa Claus and intoned, "The world is the creation of Allah, it lies unto Him and Him alone to bring its end."