

## Day 54 - Friday 26th May

Parental Advisory Notice: Mom, I'd skip to Day 56 if I were you.

The weather remains awful. No rain though but still the grey clouds and howling wind. I pity the folks who have only come for a week long last minute package deal. Weather downer aside, I am pleased to note that my conjunctivitis treatment has finished with a very positive outcome. Normal eyes, nice one Doc de Tejero. After a people watching breakfast where Group Two are particularly active today in a complaining mode, there are only Group Ones sausages on offer, I begin my crap weather tourist ritual. Walk, bar, walk, bar, walk, bar, bar, walk, bar. It must be keeping me fit though, if only I could cut down on the rest breaks.

I'm drawn back to the bar where the Black Widow preys. No, not for the Black Widow, the barman helps me translate Marca when I get stuck. Today he needs to help me translate a lot. They still rate Spain's chances highly, even after the mediocre draw last night against a team who failed dismally to qualify. I don't understand. Sven would've been crucified after an England result like that. Here I think we have a prime example in the differences in our national characters; the Spanish like to think positively, if it doesn't work out then there is always tomorrow. We, on the other hand, like to think negatively, if it doesn't work out, then we knew that already and proceed to chastise the blamee, then look for the next person to take the blame once we've got the initial blamee the sack. Has anybody got Desmond's number?

The Black Widow comes in. I duck behind my paper. Phew, there's another bloke sat on his own. I hadn't noticed him. She sits at the table next to him. Within ten minutes they leave together. The barman gives me a knowing I told you so nod. I have a thought that I may have lost the opportunity to shack up with a possible millionairess. Behave. You're going on a mission tonight

Mishter Bond. Which also means I better cut down on bar visits. I go back to the hotel for a long siesta.

The room hasn't been made up. I go down to the hotel's poolside bar. There are several people lying by the pool in their swimming gear, refusing to allow the bad weather to ruin their holiday and having a sand blast skin treatment instead. I find another discarded Sun. Sven, as a Swede, has purposely ruined England's chances, apparently. Nothing at all to do with our overpaid prima donnas not being able to perform on the international stage then? Sven, for thirty grand a week I could underperform on the international stage, *no problema*.

I try the room again. It still hasn't been made up. I search out the chambermaid and ask her how long before it will be ready. She's not impressed that a guest is asking her how long it's going to take her to do her job. She gives me a machine gun blast of Spanish, I catch that she has a lot of rooms to do and something about not being able to do a hundred rooms at once. Apart from that? Not much else, and there certainly was a lot much else. All she had to say was in one, two or three hours, sir. Fair enough, you poor over worked underpaid wretch, you get one less room to clean today. Why do workers lower down the food chain always fail to grasp the concept of customer service? The cause of the demise of world communism is blatantly obvious to me. I retire for a siesta. Do Not Disturb sign hanging from the door.

I feel slightly nervous. I haven't been on a date in ten years. I better have a couple of liveners. I don't think I'd make a very good spy; *The Spy Who Slurred Incomprehensibly At Me*, I doubt that ever crossed Ian Fleming's mind when he was thinking of a title. I walk up to my tapas bar for a chat with the boys. I don't feel that hungry but ask for a tapa without garlic anyway. A couple of beers and garlicless tapas later, it is time. To Russia with love, Mishter Bond.

Bloody rugby league again. I hope Katya doesn't want to stay here. I get a plural beer off her while she finishes her shift. She won't let me pay either.

Bonus. She disappears at nine to return not long after wearing not very much at all. In jeans and a shirt, that I've ironed especially, I feel somewhat overdressed.

"Come. We go drink with my friends." That'll do me. Anywhere but rugby league. She has a car too. I am being taken to her den. It looks like you will be having a de-briefing later, Mishter Bond. Katya carries on purring at me in her Russo-English. If I were packing a Walther PPK, a Rolex with a retractable length of wire and an explosive Schaeffer fountain pen, I'd feel complete.

Ah, so this is the road out of Roquetas. Easy when you know how, I'll have to remember this way. We pull up in a side street in El Parador. I follow Katya back to the main road. We walk down it for a while until we come to a door. The door has a sign above it that gives nothing away other than the name of the place and in smaller letters underneath are the words *club privado*, private club. We go inside. It's a bar. It's quite plush by Spanish standards. It's quiet too, none of the usual noise you'd associate with a Spanish bar. Flamenco music wafts over us at a sensible volume. There aren't many people in here either. Two suited and booted middle-aged Spanish mafia dons are talking to a couple of girls young enough to be their daughters, even grand daughters in one corner, several other girls are sat in small groups around the rest of the place. It must be the pre-club drinking den of El Parador. The girls are certainly dressed for clubbing. The micro-mini is without a doubt the height of fashion in El Parador.

"What you want drink?" Katya purrs at me. Vodka Martini, darling. Shake it or stir it, I ain't bothered.

"Errr, I'll have a beer." The Spy Who Laged Me. She gets the drinks from the bar and we sit at a table in the opposite corner to the mafia. There really is something not quite right here. Katya's mobile goes. She yabbers down it in Russo-Spanish. I struggle to follow.

"Sorry. I have to go." Oh, that's a shame. "I introduce you two my friends, they look after you." She beckons to a couple of girls sat at another table. I don't know what club they're going to after but it must get very hot inside indeed.

"This is Nadia, she Russian, and this is Felicia, she Spanish." *iHola, chicas!* Nadia seems bored. Felicia likes me. We have a couple more drinks, Felicia keeps giggling at my Spanish, she moves closer putting her hand on my leg, giving it a firm squeeze. International Babe Magnet and a Super Spy.

"¿You like to see the menu?" She asks. I'm starving, *guapa*.

"Sí. ¿Why not?" She calls over to the barman who brings a laminated piece of A4 and nods at me sagaciously. This is a strange bar. I look at the menu. There's not much on it and it's very expensive too.

*Joder*, whatever that is, a hundred Euros, *Chupar* fifty. Must be gigantic lobster and half a gigantic lobster. There's no way I'm going to be able to afford three dinners here. *Juegos Auténticos Con Dos Chicas* is a hundred and seventy. *Juegos? Dos Chicas?* A hundred and seventy? Authentic Games With Two Girls? That's an unusual name for a dish. *Masaje* forty, massage? That is a massage. The full-blown, self-esteem zapping realisation hits me hard, very hard, with my translation of *Alivio Con Los Manos*, hand relief, admittedly the cheapest choice, at twenty-five Euros. I'm in a fucking brothel. I've only gone and pulled the wrong type of lady friend. Taxi!

Paying for sex with a dirty old slapper or even two, though these two aren't that old and don't look that hygienically unsound either, is most definitely not on my list of things to do before I'm forty. In fact, it's only on my list of things to do before I die if I ever get past eighty.

I make a very stuttering excuse about not wanting to die an early sexually transmitted death, I'm doing well enough with alcohol and fags thank you very much, pay an exorbitant amount for five drinks and stumble with jelly like legs into the warm night air. *James, you have failed to complete your mission. I'm afraid that Q didn't furnish me with armour-plated condoms, Mish Moneyppenny.*

I've hit a personal low. Middle-aged German women want me for free, but they might eat me afterwards. Young nubile Russians want me for an hour, as long as I cough up a shed load of hard earned *vino* vouchers, that would have

been a very expensive three minutes indeed. I find the least brothel looking bar I can in El Parador and down a large brandy in one. I have another then ask the barman to call me a cab. Travel broadens the mind? My mind has been broadened enough for one night. I'm going back to the hotel and bed, via the mini-bar and the foxy weather-*chica*. She was no help, crap weather tomorrow too.