

PACIFIC BREEZE

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

MARK TWAIN

FRANK WAS SIPPING ON A SOMEWHAT WEAK CAIPIRINHA, while reflecting on the past few months. The Caribbean breeze was gentle, and the clucking sound of recurring soft waves made him calm. He was approaching early retirement and his mind was still sharp, but the left knee sounded like a pop-corn machine from time to time. The grey hair and facial features made him look somewhat like an untamed mid-size schnauzer and he was happy with that description. A gold stud in his left ear as a homage to the many sailors that had lost their lives at sea. The value of the gold would cater to a proper burial when found. If it is any truth to that could probably be debated but he liked the thought.

The evening wind was pleasant as he looked up into the nightly sky and surely felt small in the presence of heaven and eternity. The Southern cross could be clearly visible and along the quiet beach front walked a monitor lizard that probably was looking for companion or midnight snack. It was a good night be alive he reasoned with himself while stretching for another mug of brew.

His father's voice was ringing in his head while puffing on his Castro cigar and thought that after a long search had found his place. Frank Senior had been of the older generation and in his mind, you get a job and then stick with it even if you find the tasks meaningless and your workmates drive you to develop suicidal tendencies. After a few decades you retire and then live another handful of years if you are lucky. There is probably value in that. It simply was not his cup of tea.

The last time they had spoken his dad had looked at his son differently and said with a strong voice "I am so very proud of you my son, and that you are following your own path. It takes a passionate person to do what speaks to your soul and touches your heart. I stand behind you wherever the wind may blow, and I will walk by your side from now to the end of days". That was many moons ago

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For a handful of years, he now called the South Pacific and the island of Espiritu Santos his home. His first wife Maria had passed from complications of severe malaria when they were both working at an orphanage in the shanty towns of Soweto. Together they had daughter Josefina that now oversaw the World Health Organization and their joint research venture with The Mayo Clinic. They were focusing on finding a vaccine for this new virus. Their daughter had always been a free spirit with a nick for science and medicine. If anyone aspiring to be a rainmaker then she was for sure a main candidate.

Frank had yet again found true love and shared his days with his Faluah. He had adopted her twin boys Samuel and Jacob. Both Princes were about to start second grade in the upcoming monsoon. They were a tight team and together ran a small supply store that catered for the many sailors visiting the island.

This week Faluah she was on the main island visiting her elderly aunt and picking up necessary supplies. Before she left she told the kids “Samuel and Jacob you be good to daddy now and I will see you two hooligans in just a few days” Jacob had looked up while Samuel was feasting on a mango “Daddy cannot keep up even if he tried and remember that we are going to catch blue marlin and someday he will show us what is on the other side the reef” he said beneath a wildly grown set of dark hair. “You sure you can handle these both heathens” she said and smiled “Sure. I will fit them with ankle monitors and have a lasso over my shoulder. You give Macy my best and I love you honey” “Right back at you my Silverback”.

Frank sighed deep and in the corner of his eye the monitor lizard made itself present again. It was time to put out the last flames of the fire and backtrack his steps to the modest house they had built themselves. On the path back home,

he felt the scent of hibiscus and could hear the night crickets. As he came closer, he felt a sharp intense pain in his left heel as if he had been penetrated by some indigenous javelin. He stopped and bent down and found something: "Fucking Hell I should never have bought these LEGO pieces for the kids" he muttered. As he came home, he gently peeked into the boys' room and Jacob was laying snoring softly among a pile of pillows and the sleeping position looked rather unhealthy if you would have asked a chiropractor. Samuel was holding his stuffed monitor lizard and looked peaceful. It was the same stuffed toy he repeatedly said he was way too old for.

He went downstairs to the kitchen and drank almost all the fruit juice straight from the Tetra Pak carton. These are the little joys you can do when your wife is not around, he thought to himself while feeling like a teenager. He was about to get a few hours of beauty sleep before the morning dusked and he would take the boys to their long wait for deep-sea fishing and the illusive blue marlin was to be on the menu.

Frank looked in the mirror while brushing his fangs. The scar from the knife-fight outside of a seedy pub in Cork was clearly visible even after all these years. That was just one of many stories. While standing there thinking he felt his shoulders had taken a beating from the scourging sun. He yawned quietly and realized while slipping off his havaianas that he was more tired than he wanted to admit.

The years he now had in the rearview mirror had been good to him in so many ways that he did not know who to thank first. He smiled internally as he remembered the many adventures and roads less travelled. Those days he oversaw running the African Safari operation or when he and the sultan of Brunei had ditched the lifeguards and gone for an all nighter in Dresden. That endless evening when blue haired Joe-Ann from some backwater place of Arkansas had taught him Bible-quotes. That Sunday in the Amazon where he learnt that kidney stones are no laughing matter. Teaching people about civic matters and giving political lessons to a handful of dissidents from Caucasus.

Dancing tango in San Telmo or marvel over the natural beauty of Norwegian fjord landscape or the great outback down under. Free diving outside Aitutaki with a deaf group of teenagers. Powder dogging the white valley or bumming

a cigarette from Queen Margareta. Heimlich maneuvers and standup comedy. Sending people home in wooden boxes or bribing the military in less reliable border controls. Witnessing Maradona's show 1986 and playing shuffleboard with Gary and his wife from Indiana. Financial discussions with Paul Holmberg or walking down Brick Lane. Chasing up confused individuals and their suitcases. Telling people to go to hell in such a way they looked forward to the journey It was all part of the job description and he had surely earned his black belt.

Now he had money in the bank and dividend stocks. He felt good about himself and the many accomplishments. "Yesterday is behind us and tomorrow is not yet to come and today is the present. That is why they call it a gift" he thought to himself but stopped right away since he started to sound like a fucking fortune cookie.

On the old radio Farrukh Bulsara belted out one of his world-famous songs and this island boy had surely taken the world by a storm and a landslide despite hardly anyone knowing his birth name.

Frank switched off the radio and turned off the lights and mentally prepared for a full day with boys. Blue marlin and juicy mango sounded like the perfect Tuesday. One day he would share the stories and show them the other side of the reef and tell them to follow the unknown path wherever the wind may blow.

Frank
Spiritus Santos
Anno Domini

