

SAVING GRETYL

The sequel



CHAPTER 1

OUT WITH THE OLD

‘I wasn’t raised to wash dishes, dear. My hands were meant for more noble purposes,’ remarked Gretyl as she stood at the sink, rinsing a few plates.

‘I’m sure the Boston strangler thought the same thing,’ laughed Albert. Before he had time to retract his ill-timed comment, the damage had already been done.

‘How could you be so insensitive? Do you know what it’s like to have the life choked out of you?’

‘After fifty years of marriage? I’ve absolutely no idea, love.’

‘I wasn’t asking for your opinion. I was challenging it! How could you be so cruel to your dear wife?’

‘Sorry, love. I was only teasing.’

‘Yeh, well anyway, the Physiotherapist told me I have to try and put it all behind me now.’

Gretyl rubbed her fake eyelash back into place for dramatic effect.

‘You mean Psychotherapist, not Physiotherpaist!’ smirked Albert.

‘I prefer a physio for a therapist. Who wants to be treated by a psycho?’

Albert raised his eyebrows and poured hot water into his favourite West Ham FC mug.

‘Love, you’ve done really well since Marbella. It’s like Sharon said, ‘What doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger - just like bacteria.’

‘That’s lovely. So now I’m a superbug?’

Albert smiled. ‘Look at us. We were at each others’ throats until this happened. We’re talking now, aren’t we?’

Gretyl raised her voice. ‘There you go - talking about throats again!’

‘Sorry, dear. I meant that we both had ‘issues’ that needed to come out in the open.’

‘You’re right, dear. Sorry. I’m just nervous about this final interview thingy with the police tomorrow. That lethal fruit cake was intended for me, Albert and nearly six months later, the police are still no closer to finding the woman who delivered it.’

Albert placed his arms around Gretyl’s shoulders.

‘We’re in the clear, love. Reverend Forsythe has already corroborated my version of events with the police. I don’t think we’ll be hearing from any hit man or ‘hit-mrs’ for that matter, ever again. Everybody knows that Rochester wanted you dead and he’s the one pushing up the daisies now, so there’s no need for anyone to bump you off now.’

Gretyl sulked. ‘You’re in the clear because we didn’t tell the police about your text on that Arti-what’s-his-name’s phone; otherwise you’d have been implicated in the attempted murder of your wife!’

‘It was only an innocent pint with a stranger I met in the pub. He told me he was a semi-retired hitman; I told him I was a retired Formula One racing driver! We swapped numbers and thought of meeting for another pint.’

‘Yeh, well I’m glad Sharon hit him over the head and grabbed his mobile. If I’d seen your message on his phone, I might have woken him up, doubled his money and sent him off to take care of my husband.’

‘Love, you know I was drunk when I met him in the pub. I was joking when I said to him, ‘take care’ of my wife!’

Gretyl winked at Albert and kissed him on the cheek.

‘I know. I’ve read it. Sharon showed me the text and told me that she believed you were innocent. That’s why she didn’t tell me straight away and none of us told the police about the phone. She’s hidden the thing in her house, somewhere.’

Albert smiled and grabbed his Sporting Life newspaper from the kitchen table.

‘That’s the stuff, love. We have to laugh about it, or we’ll go mad. It’s like that bloke Shakespeare said: ‘All’s well that ends well.’

‘You’re right, Albert. Look how things have turned out. My half aunt’s money, this house, Sharon and Dave next door - even Rochester dead.’

‘Exactly,’ muttered Albert. ‘Tomorrow will be closure for us, love. Then, like you’ve planned, you can open your new businesses in the village.’

‘Oh Albert, I’ve got so many surprises up my sleeve, I really can’t wait.’

Albert’s thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a large cylinder engine revving outside the front of their property. He made way to the front door.

‘Who the flaming heck is parked up in a Rolls Royce outside our house?’ remarked Albert.

‘Oh, that’ll be one of my surprises, Albert!’

Gretyl ran out of the door and onto the drive to greet the capped driver.

Dave Soddall sat proud in the front seat with Sharon next to him, fully suited up and donning a grey cap with union Jack badge above the lip of his smart, pin-striped apparel.

Dave lowered the driver’s side window as Albert approached.

Hi Albert. She’s a beauty, ain’t she! Just short of two hundred grand’s worth of Rolls-Royce Phantom 6.7 litre automatic.’

Albert looked perplexed. ‘Dave, where did you get the money for this? You told me you don’t even have a driving license?’

‘Don’t worry, Albert,’ smiled Sharon in the passenger seat. He’s got one now.’

Sharon pointed to Dave’s provisional license blu-tacked on the dashboard.

Albert laughed. ‘He’s driving a new Rolls Royce on a provisional license?’

Gretyl interrupted. ‘It’s all legit, dear. Don’t worry. I renewed my license when I was 70, so he can chauffeur me around town.’

‘Love, Dave hasn’t even passed his test yet. He’ll be buckaroo-ing around town in this beast like it’s the Dukes of Hazard!’

Well Albert, I’ve bought it, Dave’s hired, and with me in the Rolls, I can potter around wherever I want.’

Dave winked at Albert, a little embarrassed.

‘I don’t have a problem with Gretyl hiring you, Dave, but that blue suit and sailor’s cap makes you look fit for sea, rather than the road, mate!’

Gretyl jumped in the back seat and reclined awkwardly amongst the large cream leather piped seats. With her nose pointed in the air, she pouted her lips and practised the pose that she felt belonged to her new-found wealth.

‘Don’t you go worrying yourself, Albert Trollop. Me and the boy, we’ve got plans. Trust me, The Soddalls and Trollops are going places. We’re gonna put ourselves on the map, eh lad. Now take this lady out for a drive, will you. I can’t wait to see the neighbours’ faces!’

CHAPTER 2

UP YOURS

Gretyl waved out of the back window of her new chauffeur driven Rolls Royce en-route to the village shops. In the six months that she'd lived in Poncey Bridge, Gretyl had made enemies with pretty much every business she'd visited.

After hearing of Albert's spat with the Post Office owner, Gretyl was 'well up' for a sparring session with Mrs Blowhorn as she entered the store.

Gretyl smiled at a young girl at the ice cream counter.

'I wouldn't choose that one, love,' remarked Gretyl, pointing at the Pistacio n' mint. 'It looks more like mould and rat droppings to me. Can you smell that ...'

Gretyl was interrupted by Mrs Blowhorn.

'I'll have you know Mrs Trollop that our ice cream comes straight from our farm!'

'Ah. That's the smell? I used to think it was your latrine.'

Gretyl turned to the young girl, who was now ordering a vanilla cone.

'You can't beat The Ice cream in London. It's the real deal. None of this stuff made from cows.'

Mrs Blowhorn snapped. 'We only serve whipped ice cream here!'

'So it's not just the husband you beat, but cows as well!' mocked Gretyl.

'How dare you! I've stood here for over forty years, serving the best ice cream in the village.'

'Forty years? That'll explain the haggard look. One look of your boat race, and I bet your cows crap slabs of cheese!'

Mrs Blowhorn stood mouth open, aghast.

'I'd close that mouth if I were you,' laughed Gretyl. 'You know what they say about flies.'

Mrs Blowhorn left the counter and grabbing Gretyl by the arm, threw her out of the shop.

Gretyl yelled back, 'I'm gonna report you to 'Save The Cows!''

Dave stepped out of the Rolls and escorted Gretyl to the car.

‘Everything alright?’

‘Absolutely. Couldn’t be better my love, couldn’t be better!’