

A Life In Many Parts.....CHANSON TRISTE

Life in the Ø Part: The Before Time...

Oh sure, he'd sampled the delights of others. Quite a few others. He was, after all, a young man and young men are driven to experience new and thrilling lives.

There had been the normal flings and one or two of them had almost gotten serious. Serious enough that he'd thought about making it permanent. It might have happened too, if he hadn't heard a little voice in his head saying,

"Do you really want to spend your life stuck to this one? "Those words gave him second thoughts, chilling his ardor to such an extent, he'd walk away. "Lucky for me" he would think, "I backed out. It just didn't seem like the right thing to do". That was his excuse.

The truth was he didn't really know what he wanted. Walking away from each *Almost* meant he could (once again) check out the field, experiment, and judge the merits of all the others.

And there were plenty of others. It had been a candy store for him, and he wanted to sample all.

He spent hours checking out places where a young man found) exciting companions.

He Googled all the sites on his computer. He clicked on boxes to indicate what he liked, and by doing that, built what he desired.

The 4 or 5 magazines he subscribed to, let him pour over photos featuring every size, shape, and origin he lusted over.

He joined groups that catered to those who gathered for the same purpose. As any young man would, he played the field, judging each as a new experiment, interesting, or disappointing.

He enjoyed challenges.

As time passed by, he felt something in each of those encounters was missing. Not one of the moments spent with those discoveries was satisfying. At the end of the day, he didn't care for any of them, and he was getting bored trying to find that perfect one. The early days of excitement had gone and now only the drudgery of the chase was left.

As a kid, he'd learned to sail. Sailboats were his passion. Having joined clubs of likeminded people had exposed him to the adventure.

As a man he matured in sailing skills and sought a partner to keep that passion fresh.

He received an email from a group he'd joined some time ago. They were on their own searches and would be gathering at a new location that weekend. With mixed feelings these meetings had become an exercise in futility for him. They were at times, a fun bunch of people, but he was getting bored with their constant chatter about how, "This one had beauty" or how "Fine that one's shape was".

Though, he still had hope. Hope he'd find the *one* that would make him happy and proud. "OK," He said to himself, "What the hell, why not?" Saturday, the group showed up at the decided-on location. He knew it was going to be a long day. Too often it had resulted in disappointment. Was it going to be just another day of frustration and rejection?

Life in the 1st Part Adoration Time

She was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen! When he'd turned that last corner, he stopped and gasped in awe. She was breathtaking. He couldn't believe that no one in the crowd reacted as he had done. In fact, they moved farther along, leaving him dumbstruck on the spot. To make it even more unbelievable, as he stood there, a shaft of sunlight pooled around that gorgeous beauty before him.

It was if the heavens had opened and were saying to him, "She's the one for you."

The young man took a few tentative steps forward and quietly spoke, "You are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

Her name he discovered, was just as beautiful. *Amada*

From that day on, he knew he had to have her, to be part of her and to spend the rest of his life with her. The days and weeks passed by and any time he was free, he came to see her.

He, hoping upon hope she'd be in the same place and each time it was a delicious relief to find her there, waiting.

Every day he spent admiring his *find* was thrilling. He'd never known such feelings. Spending the time getting to know each other's habits were joyous moments.

They went everywhere and often spent nights alone in secret secluded places. Away from the prying eyes of others.

Family and friends were struck by the devotion and attention he showered upon his companion. They hardly ever saw him anymore. He was with his new love nearly every hour of the day. A few family members began to worry that he might be getting in over his head and when they finally caught up with him, they would caution him. He shrugged them off saying, "I've never had so much happiness before". Those who worried could hardly deny that he was the happiest he'd been in years.

As everyone had come to expect, one day he made it official. Signing the paper that made the love of his life, his alone. His *Amada!* I've found the *one*, the only *one*", he told those who witnessed his commitment. Friends and family wondered at the respect and love he displayed. Like any man who is totally committed, he spoke of nothing else. He never tired of bragging about the gentleness of his love. But, as in most relationships, there were problems.

Most of his family and a few of his friend felt he was too obsessed with his love.

Time spent with old friends was next to nil and his family seldom saw him. They whispered among themselves that his affection had become so deep, he thought of nothing but *Amada*. It remained that way for many years. Friends had dropped away and even family members communicated less. Slowly at first, then more and more, he began to feel that something was wrong. A kind of claustrophobia. Before long, it turned into resentment!

Life in the 2nd Part..... The Wearisome Time

It came so slowly, there was no awareness. Years moved on. Less time was being spent with *Amada*. He still loved special times, but not being together as often didn't bother him. Work and new experiences had pulled him away. As more of those outside activities became important, separation was expected and, in some cases, welcomed.

He was now middled aged. Time had taken its inevitable toll. What once as a young man he'd eagerly sought, wasn't all that important to him.

They still went to those places they had discovered years ago, but the excitement of being there had lost that first-time charm. Much seemed dull to him now.

There was excitement when friends invited him sailing. He could relax and not have to deal with what had become the bothersome quirks of *Amada*. Being with others on their boats was fun and he liked being part of a crowd.

Feeling guilty, he sometimes slipped away from home and leased one of the modern sailboats he'd seen in sailing magazines.

To have the feel of something new and exciting in his hands gave him wonderful feelings. It was like years had dropped away and those pains in his joints seemed to hurt less.

His mind became young again and he laughed out loud at the joy.

There was always that voice in his head, telling him that this was cheating. He did feel some shame, but he reasoned it was exciting and new and was keeping him alive.

More and more, he neglected *Amada* and found pleasure elsewhere. Hours and sometimes days, he would be gone. These were secrets to be savored by him alone.

He worried that there might be repercussions, but that didn't stop him.

When they did come together after that, things were never the same. Spending less and less time doing things together, soon it became a total separation. Long periods of time passed where no physical contact was made. It was like each were strangers locked together but locked together by circumstance.

Each year thereafter, a hate developed. That once young man, now at the end of his middle ages, had become bitter. He knew he was trapped.

Amada was too old to be attractive to anyone now, so he had to keep tending to her. He resented that. It had become a life sentence of drudgery with no pardon forthcoming.

Day after day, he withdrew and was distant to others. The years past slowly and they hadn't been kind to him.

With age came pain and loss of interest in the things that once had given him joy. He was angry.

Angry at getting old and... angry about *Amada*.

Life in the 3rd Part..... The Closure Time

There was no joy in this house. Time had taken away laughter. Pain and medication were the topics of conversation.

Crippled with age, he could no longer sail or do the things he dreamed of. When friends dropped by, and that was seldom, the old man might tell them the tales of things once done, of exploration and discovery.

Sometimes his eyes would moist over talking about watching a sunrise while at anchor in some far-off place.

Always, with *Amada*, whom he loved so much then, and probably still did...in his way.

Those old stories were being told less as days and weeks snailed by. Friends and loved ones stopped visiting. No cards or letters from family. There was no keeping-in-touch. The house was empty and silent. Alone and lonely, he no longer had any contact with *Amada*.

Now in her own place, slowly fading away as he was doing. Since there was no pleasure in touching her, he avoided seeing her.

What had thrilled him once, spending days and nights together, now had become impossible. His weak legs and crippled hands made it painful to go to her.

Besides, she was old and no longer able to give him the pleasure he had once received.

Their last years together hadn't been happy ones. There was a demand for more and more of his attention.

He, getting older and frail, could not take care of *Amada* as he once did.

Those early days when he fussed over her constantly were gone. He'd loved doing it then, but as the years rushed by, he found the demands irksome.

He didn't like having to be the caretaker. Besides, she smelled of old vomit and stale urine.

The odor of old.

When they first had reached old age, he sought out new places for his attention. Now, in the elder years, all that searching was gone.

A comfortable chair and television were his world. Getting up and going out was difficult and at times, impossible.

Undetected at first, then coming all too quickly, his mind began slipping away. Aging has a way of erasing a person's history and worse, their... today's.

He was sinking into some kind of silent *stranger* hidden inside his head.

The few family members who had watched the decline, finally agreed to place him in a care home. They all felt badly, of course, but what could they do?

Each day was lost to him, but every once in a while, the care home staff would hear him laugh out loud. There were occasional short bursts of chatter from him.

The staff seldom knew what he was saying, except they would hear him say, “jib”, “rudder” and phrases that they found to be sailboat terms.

Then there were the times when the old man would shout, “*Amada!*”.

Everyone in the home heard the anguish in his voice. Everyone in the home heard his sobbing following that shout.

Everyone in the home would walk away with tears in their eyes.

They too, sometimes, wept knowing how much the old man must have loved his *Amada*.

Life in the Σ Part..... The End Time

Slipping deeper and deeper into a living void, the old man became one of those who are all but forgotten in a rest home.

He shared a room at the back of the home with another empty vessel of a man. Attendants only came to them during necessary times.

Even the shouts calling for *Amada* were rare. Like an ancient newspaper’s type, he was fading away. No one seemed to care.

Early one spring morning, the staff heard him call out that now familiar name three times, pleading and sobbing, then all was quiet.

It was a few minutes later when breakfast was to be served, they found him. He had quietly stopped living.

They reasoned that shortly after his call to his love, and getting no response, the old fellow had just given up and died.

Lying there, they all agreed, was a husk of a man who might once have been a young man full of life.

A caring gentle man who loved to sail and loved his... *Amada*.

Life in the Nether Part..... The Closing Time

The dockmaster at City Marina was doing his normal rounds. He was about to head to the office for his morning coffee. It was spring, but the temperature was still on the chilly side, and he needed that first cup. For some reason, he decided before going to the office he'd walk over to the back slip and check out the boats there. He seldom went there because most of the boats were abandoned or going into stages of decay. No one would steal anything from those derelicts. Rotted and out-of-date hardware wasn't worth the trouble. As he walked along the slips, he clucked his tongue and shook his head. Once these boats had owners who cared for them. Owners who played on them, made love in them, and whose lives were enriched for the experiences. How could they leave them here, forgotten?

The dockmaster walked to the end of the last slip. He gasped at the sight before him. The boat must have been a beauty in its day. The lines and the look were breathtaking. Sadly, he thought, how could someone let this gorgeous boat rot away. He could imagine it heeled slightly and pushed the water away from its fine bow. At least he imagined that it was a sleek bow. He couldn't see that part of the boat. It was moored there, slowly sinking, now down by the bow. The water had filled the boat until only the cockpit area was above water and dry. The back one third of the boat was the only part sticking out of the water. Where sails had been, now were strips of cloth. Where once the hardware might have been shining bright in the sun, now was covered with dirt and the droppings of countless birds. He knew he'd have to call the salvors soon to come and pull the thing out before it sank totally. It would be destined to be crushed and made part of a landfill.

His inspection over, he turned and started his return trip. The thought of coffee waiting quickened his steps. Glancing around at the sad gathering of boats, he paused at one and took a last look at the boat that was about to sink. His eyes fell on the transom, jutting out of the water.

Even that unusual view confirmed to him that the sleek and once beautiful vessel was unique. Barely visible was what appeared to be a word.

Through the grime of years, he could just make out the writing. What might have once been golden script, now was shadows of letters. He moved closer.

In his mind he traced each figure, each letter. He could just make out what must have been the vessel's name.

The word came to him like a flash, and he spoke the name out loud....

“AMADA”!

End....

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