

## Chapter XXIII

### Book Deal

January 22, 1949 – April 1, 1949

There was a short wait for their luggage and then they had to pass through customs, where they exchanged some of their cash for Brazilian cruzeiros. Outside of the terminal, they hailed a cab. The cabbie didn't speak english, but understood "Hotél Grande" and took them into the center of the city.

It took five minutes to travel the kilometer and half from the airport to the hotel. Everything was measured in the metric system, which took some adjustment. The temperature was twenty two degrees Celcius, which felt like something between seventy and seventy five degrees Fahrenheit.

The hotel was loacted at 175 Rio Branco Avenue, on one of the main thoroughfares of the city, and was in the heart of downtown, within walking distance of many of the attractions the city had to offer. There was another hotel next door and another one across the street.

The hotel lived up to its name, on the oustside at least. It was indeed a grand hotel. The twenty story building, built in 1902, had an ornate main entrance and facade. Once inside, the grandure continued. Together they stepped up to a window and Sheffield asked, "Você fala Inglês?" the only Portugues he knew. He wished Morris was with them. He had asked, "Do you speak English?" At least that is what he thought he had said.

The young man behind the window responded, "um momento por favor." and promptly left his station. A moment later, another man came to the window and said, "Welcome to the Hotel Grande. How may I help you?"

With his help, they were able to check into the hotel. They went up to their room on the fourteenth floor where they had an excelent view to the south of the city, the entrance to the bay, and Sugarloaf Mountain. Still feeling the effects of the long flight, they curled up together on the bed and took a two hour nap before really beginning their vacation.

They didn't plan much for the first day as they were tired from the flight. Besides, it was Sunday and many of the attractions were closed. They decided to walk around just to see what was nearby.

As they turned the corner onto one particular street, Sheffield said, "I remember this place. It was when I was just an Ensign during my first time here back in twenty two on the Wadsworth's world cruise. Me and Tony Pauldini, the ships chaplain, were out looking for something to do.

"We were walking this direction when three men burst out of that building up ahead on a dead run. Someone ran out behind them shouting and hollering. We couldn't understand what they were saying, but it sounded urgent.

"Now you've got to understand something about Tony. He was a rough and tumble character from the Bronx who had a history with the mob. That was before he turned religious and became a Roman

Catholic priest. Because of his past, nobody wanted him in their parishes so he joined the Navy and became a chaplain. At that time he was a lieutenant junior grade.

“Anyway, as the thieves attempted to rush past us, we were ready for them. Between the two of us, I was a NCAA wrestling second place finisher and he was a welterweight golden gloves champion. I tackled one of them and wrestled him to the ground, pinning him.

Tony took on the other two himself. Shoot, if hadn't of been there, I think he could have managed all three of them. He knocked one of them cold with one punch and had the other one backed up against the wall just wailing the tar out of him.

“Needless to say, they didn't get away. We held them for the police and then went on our way.”

Ramona replied “I had never heard you tell that story before.”

“I haven't thought about that in years. But being here, were it happened, it all came back to me.”

“Tony sounds like an interesting character. Whatever became of him.”

“I really don't know. After I left the ship, I lost track of him.”

Sheffield and Ramona found a place to have lunch near the hotel and then took a taxi the six kilometers to the Corcovado Train terminal to take a ride up to the Christ the Redeemer statue that overlooked Rio. The train, actually more of a trolley, ran on electricity from overhead wires above the tracks.

Between the two outside tracks was a third track with notches in it. The train was driven by an electric motor that turned a cog that meshed with the center track, enabling the the two car train to climb the steep grade the 2.4 miles to the top of the 2,329 foot summit.

Once they arrived at the terminal, there was a line of people waiting for the next of the four trains. When it came, it filled up, leaving them waiting for the next one that came twenty minutes later. They were able to get on that one for the twenty minute trip to the top.

At the top of the mountain is the one hundred thirty foot Cristo Redentor, or Christ the Redeemer, statue with out stretched arms, that presided over Rio de Janeiro and Guanabara Bay below. From that vantage point, the breathtaking panorama included Sugarloaf Mountain and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Sheffield and Ramona lingered for while, taking in the scenery and watching people.

What made it interesting was the fact that they couldn't understand a word that was being said. As they listened closer, they detected other languages being spoken as well, mainly German and French. It was hard to tell the difference between Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian because they all sounded so similar.

Then they found a couple speaking English. They were definitely not American. Sheffield and Ramona approached them and introduced themselves. The couple, who appeared to be in their mid sixties, turned out to be from Australia. They too were there on vacation.

After having enough, they waited for the next trolley for the ride back down to the mountain to the

terminal. From there they took a taxi back to the hotel.

The next day, they took in some of the attractions of the city, including the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Presidential Palace. The Museum had been established in 1937, but its history was much older. It was housed in a building that had been built for the National School of Fine Arts. The style of the building was said to have been inspired by the Louvre Museum in Paris. The palace, known as the Catete Palace was built between 1858 and 1867 and had been Brazil's presidential palace since 1894.

That day they also visited Sugarloaf Mountain. The name "Sugarloaf" was coined in the 16th century by the Portuguese. In those times, blocks of sugar were placed in conical molds made of clay to be transported back to Portugal. The shape given by the molds looked similar to the mountain, hence the name. A cable car line, which had been constructed in 1912, ran along a 1400 meter route between Sugarloaf (1,299 ft) and the Hill Urca (723 ft) every 20 minutes. To reach the summit, passengers had to take two cable cars. The first ascended to the shorter Morro da Urca, the second car ascended to Sugarloaf. From the top of Sugarloaf, they had a similar view that also took in the beaches that were obscured by the mountains from the statue.

On Wednesday, they took in the Municipal Market, the National Historical Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and Republic Square. The National Historical Museum was established in 1922, but the architectural complex that housed the museum was built in 1603 as the St James of Mercy Fort. The Museum of Modern Art on the other hand was new, having opened in 1948. Republic Square, was a public park in the center of the city, similar to Central Park in New York City, but smaller.

Thursday was reserved for the beach, spending the entire day at Copacabana. The beach stretched for more than two miles, separating the Atlantic Ocean from Copacabana. Copacabana in turn was separated from the city by low hills. In fact, the street to the beach went through a tunnel. For a weekday, the beach was crowded with tourists and families. January in Brazil is summer vacation time. It became very apparent that the Brazilians were quite lax in their standards of modesty compared to Americans, at least when it came to bathing suits. Atlantic Avenue ran along the beach with its row of high rise hotels. It was a beach as nice as any that Hawaii had to offer. After having enough sun, sand, and surf, they wandered through the shops and outdoor vendors.

On Friday they went deep sea fishing. There was a marina not far from the hotel where they chartered a fishing boat for the day. Of the captain and his two crewmen, only the captain spoke English. His name was Sérgio Martins. As they headed out of the bay into the Atlantic, he and Sheffield learned that they had a lot in common.

Sérgio had been an ensign in Brazilian Navy during the war and was the communications officer aboard the destroyer Japurá. The Japurá had once been the USS Wadsworth that Sheffield served aboard

early in his naval career. Not only that, but the Japurá had sailed with the Reprisal during the hunt for the Edelweiss and subsequent patrols during the Reprisal's time in the South Atlantic.

Sérgio took them several miles offshore to an area where they had been successful the last few days. Once in the area, Sérgio cut the engines and let down their lines. Sheffield and Ramona also put out their lines. It wasn't long before they began brining in some smaller mackerel and other fish.

Sérgio and his crew were professional fishermen but he chartered out his boat to supplement his income. Since there was no way for Sheffield and Ramona to take their catch home with them, they contributed what they caught to the boats catch. They were just there for the experience and to enjoy being out on the water. It was a lovely day for such an outing. The sky was blue and sunny. The water was just as blue and calm.

They took a break around noon for lunch. While the crew went back to work, Sheffield and Ramona laid back and closed their eyes for a while. After a while, they let out their lines again. Towards mid afternoon, Ramona had a solid hit on her line. Sheffield joined her in handling the line to reel in whatever it was that she had. Sérgio said that by the resistance it was perhaps a swordfish or a large albacore.

As they worked to reel it in, it breached the surface to reveal that it was an Atlantic blue marlin. Judging by its size, Sérgio estimated that it was a young male, as it was smaller than the mature males that were typically harvested. He explained that the females are characteristically larger than the males. After several minutes, they finally hauled it in. Once in the boat, it measured just under seven feet long and weighed one hundred seventy five pounds.

With Ramona's catch aboard, Sérgio and his crew pulled in their lines and stowed their gear for the trip back to the marina. They had a sufficient catch, and the marlin would bring a good price at Rio's fish market.

On the trip back, Ramona commented to Sheffield, "This has been the trip of a lifetime and I have thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it. Even though there is still a lot to see and do, I have to tell you that I have this nagging feeling that we should cut it short and go home tomorrow, a day early."

"Any particular reason?" Sheffield asked with surprise.

"Not that I can come up with. Just call it intuition, I guess."

"I learned a long time ago not to trifle with a woman's intuition. If you feel that strongly about it, then I say we should go home."

Once they returned to the marina they parted company with Sérgio and his crew, but not before getting a group photo with Ramona's fish hanging by its tail and the boat in the background. There was also a photo of just Sheffield and Ramona with it. That evening for dinner, they had grilled marlin at the hotel restaurant.

The next morning found them at the airport to catch their flight home. This time it was daylight as they flew over the vast interior of Brazil. From twenty thousand feet, the Amazon River was clearly visible. After a layover in Caracas, the remainder of the flight was in darkness. The sun rose about hour before landing in Washington D.C.

While waiting for their luggage, Sheffield called Mace and Pat. They arranged to meet for breakfast before flying home to Roanoke. His next call was to have the Staggering serviced and fueled. Once they collected their luggage and cleared customs, the Owens were there to meet them. Mace wanted to hear all about their vacation as he had been there with Sheffield while the Reprisal operated from Rio. Mace announced that he planned to retire from the navy at the end of the next year

Finally, they were winging their way home in the Staggerwing. There was a fresh dusting of snow on the landing strip when they landed at the Two Star Ranch. Each carried what they could from the plane into the house. "Where are the kids?" Ramona asked.

She called out for them, but no one answered. "Is their car here?" She asked Sheffield.

He went out to have a look and returned to report. "Yeah, its here. All of the cars are here."

"Where could they be?"

Sheffield went out the front door and found footprints in the snow and followed them out to the driveway. They led right to a set of tire tracks. He returned to the house and reported to Ramona what he saw.

"I just found Sarah's purse beside the couch." She said. "They must have been here and taken them with them. But from the looks of things, they were in a hurry."

"At least we know who they're with." Sheffield said reassuringly. "Why don't you call them while I go bring some more stuff in."

A few minutes later, Sheffield came back in the house. "Did you get a hold of them?"

"No. No one answered. I called Emmaline and she didn't know anything. Then I called Sylvia but no one answered."

"If they're with Walt and Sarah, I'm sure everything is alright. Why don't you start putting things away and I'll go get the rest.

About a half an hour or so later, while putting things away, they heard the front door open and someone come in. They came out of the bedroom to see the kids with Walt and Sarah right behind them. "We weren't expecting you until tomorrow." Craig said.

Before they could respond, Ramona saw Janet, who had a bandage over her left eye. "Oh dear. What happened to you?" She rushed to her and held her in her arms. "Are you alright?"

Craig explained, "I was spitting some firewood this morning and she stopped to talk to me on her

way back from gathering eggs. A splinter went flying, hitting her right in the eye.”

Norma picked up the story from there. “She came screaming in the house holding her hand over her eye, with Craig right behind her. She ran into the bathroom to look in the mirror. There was a big sliver in her eye. I told her not to rub her eye because it would only make it worse. I called Aunt Sarah to see what we should do.”

“I told her not to do anything and that we’d be right there.” Sarah interjected. “We came as fast as we could. It looked pretty bad, so we loaded them all into the car and took her to the hospital to get it removed.”

“I could tell that you were here. I found your purse. From the looks of things, you left in a hurry.”

“Yeah, we did.”

“So what did the doctor say?” Sheffield asked.

Sarah continued, “He was able to take it out and put some drops in her eye and bandaged it. He gave us some more drops with instructions to change it once a day and bring her back on Friday for him to take a look at it. He didn’t think it did any real damage, but he won’t know until then.”

“We were so worried when we got home and found them gone.”

“We thought you were coming home tomorrow.”

“That was the plan, but the day before yesterday, I had the feeling that we should come back a day early. Now I know why.”

Ramona looked down at Janet and asked, “Are you alright sweetheart.”

“Yeah. I’m fine, but it sure hurt real bad.”

“I’m sure it did. I’m beginning to worry about you kiddo. First a broken arm, then a broken leg, and now this. I’m beginning to think that you’re accident pron.”

“Now that everything is alright, tell us all about your trip.” Walt said.

After getting a report on their trip, Walt and Sarah left to go back home.

Sheffield turned to Craig and asked, “So, other than Janet, how did things go around here while we were gone?”

Craig told him that three more cows calved without any problem. He also reported on how wrestling practice and government class went during the week. Other than the incident with Janet that morning, there weren’t any problems at home. It turned out that Ramona’s intuition was correct, as usual. Meanwhile, Ramona called the hospital and talked to the doctor who had treated Janet.

After getting things settled and put away, including the Staggerwing, Sheffield realized that there was something that he could do for Janet. He remembered a lesson on administering to the sick. Now that he was an elder, he could use the priesthood to bless his family. The only thing was, he didn’t know how to do it, but he knew who did.

He called Roger, but he was out with the working with the cattle. He told Chantelle what he needed and she said that she would have Roger return the call when he came in for lunch. When he did call back, he arranged to come over that evening.

When Roger came, he was wearing his suit. "You didn't have to get all dressed up just to come see us." Sheffield said.

"No. But whenever I officiate in the priesthood, I'm representing the Lord so I like to look the part."

"That makes sense." Sheffield said. "Give me a moment and I'll be right back."

While he was changing his clothes, Ramona explained to Roger what happened and what the doctor had told her.

A moment later, Sheffield returned wearing his suit. "Okay." he said. "Tell me what I need to do. I remember having it explained to me in priesthood meeting a few weeks ago but I didn't understand all of it."

"Do you have some consecrated oil?"

"Yes. I do. During that same lesson, they asked who needed some and they had each of us who did consecrate some. Let me get it. They said to keep it in the refrigerator."

Roger explained the process to him, with the rest of the family listening. He counseled Sheffield to be sensitive to any promptings and impressions that came to him. When he was finished, he asked, "So, why don't I anoint her and you can pronounce the blessing."

"I suppose."

Then Roger said to Janet, "Do you have faith that your eye can be healed?"

"Um huh."

"I typically like to have the person receiving the blessing offer a prayer to invite the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. Would you be willing to do that Janet?"

"Without hesitation, she bowed her head, folded her arms, and said the sweetest prayer. It was short, but sincere and it did bring the Spirit into the room.

With Janet sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, Roger poured a drop of consecrated oil on the crown of her scalp and handed the tiny glass container back to Sheffield. He then placed his hands on her head and said, "Janet Taylor Brason. By the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ, I anoint you with this oil that has been consecrated for the healing of the sick. Amen"

He stepped aside to let Sheffield stand directly behind her and place his hands on her head. Roger then placed his hand over his. Sheffield took a deep breath and began, "Janet Taylor Brason. In the authority of the priesthood, I..."

"Melkizedek Priesthood." Roger coached."

Sheffield continued, "Melkizedek Priesthood, I... we hold, we seal this anointing and give you

blessing that your eye will heal with no permanent damage.” He paused momentarily and then resumed with more confidence, “Janet, be sure to keep your bandage clean and be careful not to disturb it so as not to slow the healing process and cause further damage.” Again he paused. “We, your mom and I, are so happy to have you and your brother and sister as part of our family. We love you. Your Father in Heaven loves you and wants to bless you. In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.”

Sheffield and Roger removed their hands from her head and Janet stood up and turned around and gave her dad a big hug.

Roger lingered and asked about their trip and wanted to know how the calves were doing. After visiting for a few minutes he left.

The next morning while getting ready for church, Ramona changed the bandage. She was surprised at the amount of puss that had been secreted. There was a lot of redness in the eye as well. Overall it wasn't as bad as what she expected.

It was hard to get back into their regular routine on Monday after being away for a week. Sheffield picked up with his government class where the substitute had left off. At wrestling practice he turned his attention toward getting the team ready for their next match at the end of the week, after having had a bye the last week.

Sheffield wondered whether or not his book would be accepted. It had been nearly eight weeks since he sent it off. He decided that these things most likely take time and resolved to be patient a while longer before sending it to other publishers.

As it turned out, later that week, he received a letter from Simon & Schuster. He eagerly opened it and began reading. His eagerness turned to disappointment after “Dear Mr. Brason.” It went on to say, “Thank you for submitting your manuscript for consideration. Unfortunately we are not presently interested in the subject matter. We regret that we are not able to return your manuscript to you. Be assured that it has been disposed of properly as not to fall into the possession of unauthorized individuals.” He didn't bother to read the signature of the person who had signed the letter.

“So much for them.” he muttered.

Ramona encouraged him, “Be patient. You haven't heard from Random House yet. I suspect these things take time. I'd say that for now, no news is good news.”

Each day, Ramona changed Janet's bandage. Each day it looked better. On Friday she took her back to the doctor. He said that it had healed nicely and didn't think there was any permanent damage. However, he said that her left eye was weak from the injury and lack of use. He was concerned that the right eye would become dominant, causing an imbalance in her vision. He wanted her to wear a patch over her right eye for the next two weeks, forcing the eye that had been injured to strengthen.

“But the other kids will tease me and call me a pirate.” She protested.

“Well if they do,” the doctor said, “make a fist with your index finger extended, bent like a hook. Then slash it through the air and say, 'Arghh!'”

That diffused her concern.

By the end of the week, the last cow had her calf and the wrestling team was ready for their match at Harrisonburg, which was another win for the Magicians. During the rest of the month of February there were two more wins and one loss.

When Ramona took Janet back to the doctor at the end of the second week, he said that her left eye had regained most of its strength and encouraged her to wear the patch for only a couple of hours at a time three or four times during the day. At the end of the third week, he told her that she didn't need it at all and best of all, her vision was perfect, with no lasting damage.

During the quarterly district conference held at the Jefferson High School auditorium on the second Sunday in February, sixteen men from the Roanoke Branch were presented to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. They were all from the Brason and Austin families, or associated with them. Sheffield had the privilege of ordaining his father and brothers, as well as Murry Austin, his once wayward crewman.

With this, they were all one step closer to getting ready to go to the temple and continued to make plans for just that. Sheffield looked into an idea that he got while flying back from Brazil. He called United Airlines and asked about chartering a DC-4 to take them from Roanoke directly to Salt Lake City, Utah and back. He found out that by chartering an aircraft, it would cost less per seat than it would at the regular fare. With the capacity for up to eighty six passengers, the Douglas DC-4 was perfect for the number of people who were wanting to go, plus a few seats to spare.

Sheffield presented his findings and everyone was in agreement. Between the Brasons and the Austins, there were a total of seventy five people, more than half of them children, who would be making the trip. That left a few seats available for anyone in the branch who wanted to go. There were more who were interested than there was room for.

Sheffield called the airline back and made the arrangements. The plane would leave on Memorial Day which was Monday May 30<sup>th</sup> and would return on Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup>. Fifty percent of the cost was due up front in order to secure the plane and crew.

Next Sheffield turned his attention to where everyone would stay while in Salt Lake. He called the Hotel Utah which was located adjacent to Temple Square and was able to arrange for a discount as well due to the number of reservations and purpose of the visit, since the Church was a major stock holder in hotel.

With the reservations made and plans in place, President Roger Rowan put in place a temple

preparation class which was taught by his father, Henry Rowan the district president. The class was held in the evening of the first Sunday of every month.

As each week in February passed, Sheffield wondered if Ramona had been wrong in her optimism. It had been his experience that the longer something took, the less likely it was to happen. He was seriously considering which publishers to send his manuscript to next.

Then at the end of February, he received a letter from Random House. He was almost afraid to open it, expecting another rejection letter.

The letter began, "Dear Admiral Brason." At least they recognized him for credentials in writing the book. The first three words of the letter set the stage for what he had hoped for. Those three words were, "We are pleased..." He now had reason to be optimistic as he read on, "to inform you that after carefully reading your manuscript, we have decided to publish your book, titled 'Reprisal: The Forgotten Carrier'. Your first hand account of the ship and her crew during the war is the type of material our readers are looking for.

"Even though you are a first time author, your credentials as serving as the captain of the ship and later as having her as your flagship gives the unique perspective that make your story come to life. It is well written and informative, yet paints a picture of an overlooked aspect of the war. We feel that your story will be a fresh alternative to the war stories that have been told over and over again.

"Naturally, your original manuscript will be edited and polished into its published form. As the publisher, we reserve the right to do whatever editing we see fit. Please sign and date the enclosed release form and return to my office. In addition, we request a brief biographical summary from you.

"Once we receive your consent to the terms specified on the enclosed disclosure form, we can begin the process. At that time you will be issued a check for a yet to be determined amount as an initial payment. All subsequent royalties will be based on the quarterly sales of the finished book. We anticipate having it ready for publication in roughly six months.

"Thank you for selecting Random House. We look forward to working with you.

"Sincerely, Basil G. Compton, Managing Editor."

Sheffield was elated that his effort had paid off and that his book was going to be published. He promptly signed the consent form and prepared a brief biographical sketch and put it in the mail the next day. He couldn't wait to see the finished product. He thought about what Ferron Alder had said and seriously considered writing another book. He envisioned it being partly about his naval career prior to the war and partly a history of the development of naval aviation. Perhaps, that would be his summer project.

But for the time being, he had the district and state wrestling championships to concentrate on. The Magicians finished the regular season with nine wins and three losses. Their standing in the rankings gave

them a good shot at the state championship that year.

The district tournament was held at Jefferson High School the second Friday and Saturday in March. The Magicians dominated the competition and advanced to the state tournament. Sheffield and Coach Karrington had two weeks to prepare the team for some very stiff opposition. Mr. Capps was brought in to prepare the boys psychologically as well.

On Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> of March the Wrestling team boarded the bus at one o'clock for the three hour trip to Richmond, which would give them three hours to prepare for the first match at seven. The bus pulled up in front of the Jefferson Hotel, just three blocks from Armstrong High School. Once they got checked in and received their room assignments, they had a light meal before getting back on the bus for the short ride to the school.

Ramona picked up the girls from school and drove to Richmond to watch Craig in his final high school tournament. Once they arrived in Richmond, they too went to the Jefferson Hotel. Sheffield had left instructions with the front desk to provide her with a key to his room upon her arrival. As they took their luggage up to the room, the hotel was full of wrestlers from various high schools throughout the state who were also staying there. Many parents of wrestlers, including the Rowans, were also staying there. Needless to say, the hotel was booked solid.

That evening, Saturday afternoon, and Saturday evening, scores of wrestlers competed against each other with their eye on an individual championship for themselves and to bring home trophy for their school.

The Magicians faired well throughout the competition, with enough individual wins to put their team in reach of a first place win. Read Rowan won his match, setting up the final match of the evening, which would determine the ultimate outcome. The final match was between Craig and a kid from Arlington. In sizing up the two going into the match, the other kid was favored to win, giving his school the title.

After the first period, Craig was down by three points. During the second period, he was nearly pinned but managed work his way out. At the end of that period, he was down by five points. With seconds remaining in the third and final period Craig was against the mat and it the referee was a split second from declaring him pinned.

His opponent prematurely assumed the title in his mind and lost focus. Craig took advantage of the moment and with a burst of adrenalin overturned his opponent and had him pinned, giving him the state championship in his class and the trophy to Jefferson High School. In three years of coaching it was Sheffield's first. His team had placed in the previous years.

The celebrating lasted the entire three hour bus ride home. Once everyone was off the bus and had a way home, Sheffield and Craig drove home. It was late and they went straight to bed.

The next morning in Priesthood meeting, President Rowan recognized both Read and Craig for their championship wins the previous evening. All it took for them to secure their wrestling scholarships at Ricks College was a letter of certification from the Virginia High School Athletics Association.

With the season over, Sheffield gave more thought to his next book. That was spurred on by the advance that he had received from Random House for "Reprisal: The Forgotten Carrier" in the amount of five hundreds dollars.

On April Fools Day, Jefferson High School held their junior prom. The Admiral and Mrs. Brason were invited to serve and chaperons. Naturally, Craig's date was Edith. Although they began dating fairly young, rules for boys and rules for girls seemed to be out of balance. The house rule was that Norma and Janet couldn't date until they were sixteen.

That wasn't much of a problem until Norma unexpectedly was asked to the prom by Grant Furness from church. Sheffield and Ramona decided to make an exception for such a special occasion, after all, they would be there to keep an eye on things. Rather than stay home alone, Janet went over to Olivia Furness' for a sleep over. (Grant and Olivia were cousins.)

The prom theme was the current hit song, "Cruising Down the River" by Russ Morgan. The gymnasium was decorated with with a mural of a river full of boats along one wall. There was even a rowboat that the photographer took pictures of couples in. Sheffield and Ramona enjoyed dancing to the live orchestra with an occasional partner exchange. At one point they traded off with Craig and Norma and their dates.

The three couples sat out a couple of numbers to enjoy some refreshments together. After that, Sheffield and Ramona sat out most of the rest of the evening. Sheffield had to confront a couple of seniors who he suspected of attempting to spike the punch. It turned out that they had been drinking and they were expelled from the dance, with an appointment to see the principal on Monday morning.

After the dance, Sheffield was released from his duty and thy went home. It wasn't long after they came home that Craig, Norma, Read Rowan and their dates came and played games and had refreshments. Their after prom party lasted until midnight.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cruzeiro was the currency of Brazil from 1942 to 1986 (two distinct currencies) and again between 1990 and 1993. The name refers to the constellation of the Southern Cross, known in Brazil as Cruzeiro do Sul, or simply Cruzeiro. The first cruzeiro circulated between 1942 and 1967 and had the symbol ₤. \$1.00 would have been worth between ₤22.50 and ₤25.00. It came in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 cruzeiros. Coins came in denominations of 10, 20 and 50 centavos, and 1, 2, and 5 cruzeiros.

The Hotel Grande is fictional.

The story of Sheffield and Tony stopping the robbers is found in Missing Geannie, Part I,

Chapter 4.

Basil Compton, the managing editor from Random House is a fictional character.

