

Chapter XLIV

Rendezvous in Naples

June 1, 1953 – June 6, 1953

Ramona was tired from the traveling and just wanted to go to the hotel and rest. She was amazed as Sheffield opened the trunk of a blue sports car that he had rented to put her luggage in.



“Wow!” she exclaimed with wide eyes. “What’s this?”

“Do you like it?” Sheffield quizzed as he closed the trunk. “It’s a nineteen fifty two Ferrari Ghia Cabriolet.” He lead her by the hand around to the passenger side door, which was on the left side of the car. “Go ahead, get in.” he invited as he held the door open.

Ramona settled into the seat as Sheffield came around to the driver side and climbed in behind the wheel. The snazzy car had only seating for the driver and one passenger. The deep bucket seats separated by the five speed manual transmission wouldn’t allow her to slide over next to him as she was accustomed to doing. “I’ve always wanted something like this.” he said grinning from ear to ear.

The American naval officer and his pretty blond passenger turned more than a few heads as they drove off in the open convertible. Ordinarily they wouldn’t have drawn much attention, but it was the car.

“Driving on the opposite side of the road takes a little getting used to.” Sheffield said as they drove the eight kilometers to the hotel.

“It does feel a bit odd.” Ramona admitted. She told Sheffield all about her flight as she took in the sights along the route.

In less than twenty minutes, they were at the Hotel Miramare. Sheffield had already checked in so they went straight up to their room. The street and a rock seawall was all that was between the hotel and the Gulf of Naples. Form their private balcony on the mezzanine level they could see the marina to their left with Mount Vesuvius beyond. To their right, the Reprisal lay at anchor with the Island of Capri beyond.

The small but charming hotel was originally built in 1914 as a private villa and briefly housed the American consulate before opening as a hotel in 1944. With the value of the American dollar compared to the Italian lira, the room didn’t really cost all that much. Neither did the use of the Ferrari for that matter.

The first thing that Ramona wanted to do was to take a nap. After resting, there was enough of the afternoon and evening left to go exploring. Within walking distance of the hotel was a public park and garden that bordered the Marina. Just beyond that was Piazza Plebiscito, one of the largest squares, in Naples. On the west side of the square was the domed San Francesco di Paola, a church reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome. Several other attractions were also nearby, including numerous places to eat. Getting around didn’t prove to be too difficult because enough Italians spoke or understood English. On Tuesday,

they spent the day exploring Naples. Someone told them that the best way to enjoy the historic center of Naples was to wander around without a plan. Doing so, they discovered all kinds of shops and interesting places.

Wednesday was Ramona's fiftieth birthday and Sheffield had something special planned for her. At fifty years old, she still looked radiant and youthful. To look at her, one would have guessed her to be in her mid to late thirties. When asked her secret, she chalked it up to the blessing of the gift of youth that her Great Grandfather Tombi had given her as baby.

Her birthday started with breakfast at the hotel. From there they walked to the marina where Sheffield had arranged for a sixteen foot sailboat. They set out from the marina and sailed southeast along the shoreline with the city as a back drop. Further down the coast, they were directly under Mount Vesuvius. Beyond that, the coast was dotted with small villas. The southern end of the Bay of Naples is formed by the Sorrento Coast, a jagged promontory that juts out into the Tyrrhenian Sea. The hilly terrain of the peninsula ends abruptly in sheer cliffs that plunge into the sea.

"From what I read about it," Sheffield said as they glided along beneath the cliffs, "this entire coastline was once a Greek colony and was the legendary site of Homer's sirens in the Odyssey. Did you ever read it?"

"No, I don't believe I did. I know Janet has a copy of it."

Sheffield continued, "You really missed out, its a classic. I had to read it in high school. Anyway, according to Greek mythology, sirens were dangerous creatures who appeared as mysterious and seductive women. When a ship or a boat came near they lured the sailors to them with their enchanting songs. Men found them mesmerizing and were drawn toward shore to get a closer look. Once shipwrecked on the rocky coast, what they thought were beautiful women showed their true selves as some sort of a birdlike creature that devoured their flesh, leaving their bones strewn among the rocks."

"That's silly. Were people really that gullible back then?"

"I guess. People back then had all kinds of superstitious. That's what mythology is all about."

"I didn't know the Greeks were in Italy."

"Oh yes." Sheffield said sounding rather scholarly. "During the Hellenic Period, there were Greek city-states located all along the coast of southern Italy as far north as Naples. From what I read, after being conquered by the Romans, they enjoyed this area as a summer playground and it has had the reputation as a resort destination ever since."

Ramona didn't respond, but simply started singing. First softly to herself and then her pleasing voice became louder. Sheffield simply listened to her as they sailed along. After a few minutes she stopped singing and asked, "Aren't you afraid that I might be a siren and am going to eat you?"

"No, I don't think so. Besides, sirens are always portrayed in art as being naked."

"I can be, if you want me to." she teased. "After all, it's my birthday and I can wear my birthday suit if I want to."

"Maybe when we get back to the hotel. And I just might have a birthday present for you."

"Really." she winked "And what might that be?"

"You'll just have to wait and see, now won't you."

They laughed and talked some more as they neared the tip of Sorrentine Peninsula. Beyond was the resort island of Capri. Around noon they put in at the Marina Grande and went into the town of Capri to have lunch and look around. As they continued on their way they stopped at the northwestern tip of the island to visit the Blue Grotto, a sea cave noted for the blue reflection that illuminates the cavern from the sunlight shining through the seawater. The Blue Grotto was known to the ancient Romans but was only rediscovered in 1826.

Just outside of the cave, a number of rowboats waited to take tourists into the cavern, for a fee of course. Tourists come either by ferry from the mainland or by boat and transferred into the rowboats that were barely big enough to fit through the opening. To pass through, people have to lay on their backs as the opening is only three feet above the water. For that reason, it could only be accessed when the sea is calm, as it happened to be that day. Once inside, the grotto is quite spacious, and it is possible to sit upright.

After visiting the Blue Grotto, Sheffield set course due north across the gulf back towards the city. As they drew near, they passed between some of the ships at anchor. Sheffield brought the boat close aboard the Reprisal as they passed by. It was about six o'clock when they returned to the marina. Both of them were famished and popped into the marina's restaurant for dinner. Later they walked hand in hand back to the hotel and went up to their room.

On Thursday they returned to exploring Naples and went to some of the more distant attractions. Like Tokyo, Naples received considerable damage from allied bombing, more so than any other Italian city. In the ten years since Italy surrendered, much of it had been rebuilt, but some areas still showed effects of the war.

One of the places they visited was the Naples National Archaeological Museum with its large collection of Greek and Roman artifacts. The museum featured a number of marble statues, including the Venus Kallipygos with the "beautiful buttocks" from the 1st century BC. Venus, or Aphrodite to the Greeks, was featured lifting her gown and looking over her shoulder at her own bare behind.

She wasn't the only naked statue on display. Hercules and Atlas were also there as were Harmodius and Aristogeiton and a sculpture of two men and woman subduing a bull.

"They're all in their birthday suits." Ramona observed. "Didn't anybody wear clothes back then?"

A major collection of ancient Roman bronzes from the Villa of the Papyri was also on display at the museum, including the Seated Hermes, who was also naked. The museum also had on display several mosaics recovered from the ruins at Pompeii including the Alexander Mosaic, dating from about 100 BC, depicting a battle between the armies of Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia.

After spending a good share of the morning at the museum, they had lunch and then went to the Cathedral of Naples, the city's premier place of worship completed in the early 14th century. The main attraction of the cathedral was the Royal Chapel of the Treasure of San Gennaro, with its lime plaster murals and other works of art. The afternoon culminated at the Naples Villa Comunale, which was actually not far from the hotel. The park was the most prominent public park in Naples, which was built in the 1780s on land reclaimed along the coast. The park was originally a "Royal Garden", reserved for members of the royal family, but open to the public on special holidays. The park was opened to the general public on a permanent basis in 1869 after the unification of Italy.

That evening, Admiral Brason treated Lieutenant Moncur, Commander Kirk, and Yeoman Walinsky to dinner at a quite restaurant near the hotel to show his appreciation for all of their hard work and their friendship.

On Friday, they drove down to Mount Vesuvius. The distinctive humpbacked mountain rose above Naples to an elevation of 4,302 feet above sea level and is the only active volcano on the European Continent. It has erupted many times throughout the centuries, the most recent was in March 1944. The most notable eruption occurred in 79 AD, burying Pompeii and the surrounding area to the south under thirteen to twenty feet of ash and pumice. The estimated twenty thousand people living in Pompeii and more in the surrounding villas were killed instantly by the intense heat or by suffocation from the volcanic ash and dust, even if they had taken shelter inside.

The city was rediscovered in 1599 and then a broader rediscovery occurred almost 150 years later in 1748. The objects that lay beneath the ash were well preserved for all of those hundreds of years because of the lack of air and moisture. That fact provided an extraordinary detailed insight into the life of a city at the time.

During the excavation, plaster was used to fill in the voids between the ash layers that once held the bodies of the victims, allowing them to be seen in the exact position they were in when they died. They had seen some of the plaster casts the day before at the Archaeological Museum. Many of the casts laid where people of all ages died in what was called the "Garden of the Fugitives". There were even casts of animals among them.

As Sheffield and Ramona wandered around looking at the recovered ruins of the structures and other artifacts, they encountered Quinn and Sedric who were on a site seeing expedition of their own. They

teamed up with and tagged along behind the Brasons as they continued to take in the sites.

In addition to what was on display on site and at the museum, they learned many of the artifacts and paintings recovered were of such explicit content that they were locked away from the public in a secret room at the museum. Even many of the recovered household items had a sexual theme. The presence of such imagery and items found everywhere indicated that the sexual mores of the ancient Roman Empire, particularly in Pompeii at the time, were considerably more liberal and perverse than what was acceptable in 1953.

“No wonder God destroyed the city with a volcano.” Sedic observed. “These people were as wicked as those in Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Sheffield and Ramona treated Quinn and Zedric to lunch before parting ways. From Pompeii, Sheffield and Ramona drove through country side.

“Shall we see what she'll do?” Sheffield grinned.

“If you must. Go ahead and get it out your system.” Ramona consented. “Just don't kill us in the process.”

The 170 horsepower delivered by the Ferrari's 2.56 liter V-12 engine produced a thrilling burst of speed on the straightaway as he put the accelerator to the floorboard and shifted gears. The speedometer dial had a limit of 250 kilometers per hour, if it really could achieve such speeds which amounted to 155 miles per hour. Sheffield backed off when it reached 160 kilometers per hour, only because he was running out of straight road.

“Ha, ha!” he laughed as hot little car began slowing down. “The way I figure it, that was right at one hundred miles an hour.”

“I must admit, that was pretty exciting, but please don't ever go that fast again.” Ramona plead.

Soon they headed up into the mountains. The Ferrari had plenty of power to climb the hills and handled the winding roads with ease. Sheffield was very impressed at how it handled.

“Can I get one of these when I get home?”

“Not on your life, Babe”

“Spoilsport. You're no fun.”

“With you're airplane, don't you have enough toys?”

“I suppose you're right. I really don't need something like this.” he admitted

Once they came down out of the hills, they found themselves in Salerno. Sheffield wanted to see what was there because of the battle that caused the injury to his leg. They found the beachhead where the Army came ashore while the planes he sent in from the Reprisal provided air cover and attacked enemy positions.

Not far from the beachhead was the cemetery where those who didn't make it were buried. A large monument paid tribute to the sacrifice of those who made ultimate price. Sheffield reflected on the 143 men under his command who died when the ship was hit by the German guided bomb. "I almost made it one hundred and forty four." Sheffield said somberly.

"But you didn't, did you." Ramona said taking him by the arm. "You had a greater purpose yet to fulfill and God saw fit to spare your life. And I'm so grateful that he did. I was in love with you and I couldn't bare losing you too after loosing everyone else I had ever loved before you."

Sheffield took a look around at the serene setting. "After seeing this place and after having seen Naples, it was all worth it. Those of my crew and these who died here on the beachhead didn't die in vain. This country and it's people are free from tyranny and are prospering in a way that they never have before."

They got back into the car and drove around around some more before heading back over the mountain and back to Naples. On the way they got hungry and stopped in a little out of the way place for dinner. Of all the nice places they had eaten in Naples, this little place had the best food they had tasted during their stay.

That evening they strolled over to the square and walked around for a while. Eventually they sat down on a park bench to talk and watch people as they milled about. Most of them were Italian but there were a few American servicemen among them. As it got late, they returned to their room and went to bed after another full day.

"The week has gone so fast." Ramona lamented on Saturday morning as they were getting ready for the day.

"Time has a way of doing that." Sheffield agreed. "But we still have today and Sunday. What do you want to do today?"

"I can't come all the way to Italy and not claimed to have gone for a swim in the Mediterranean Sea. I want to spend the day at the beach."

"In case you haven't noticed, the shoreline around here is to rocky, but there are some nice beaches along the coast just north of here. We can make a day of it."

"Thats what I want to do. Perhaps we could go to two or three places for some variety."

"I just wish we had more time." Sheffield pined. "I had hoped to take you to Rome too, but there is so much to see and do here."

"Don't worry about it, Babe. This is more than I ever expected. If we went to Rome, then we'd want to go to London and Paris, and then Brussels and the list can gone and on. I feel fortunate just to be here. After all, we've been to Rio and Tokyo. And don't forget, we've lived in Hawaii. How many people would love

to go there for just a week.”

“Of all the places besides home in Roanoke, I'd have to say that Hawaii is my favorite.” Sheffield said.

“For as long as I lived there, Hawaii is my home. I lived there longer than I've lived anywhere else. If I could live anywhere, I'd go back in heartbeat. But I've found my home with you and the kids and your family in Roanoke, and that makes me happy.

“There, I have our swimming suits, some towels, a blanket, and some suntan lotion. I just wish we had Geannie's beach umbrella with us. Let's go get something to eat and then lets as the Marines say, 'Hit the beach'.”

Sheffield placed the bag that Ramona had packed in the trunk and they started off on the days adventure. They hadn't left the city before stopping off for breakfast. From Naples, the drove west along the shoreline and around the south end of Campi Flegrei, the caldera of an dormant volcano much larger than Vesuvius. According to mythology, it was the home of the Roman god of fire, Vulcan.

After rounding the craters, they drove north along the shore. The farther they went the smother the shoreline became. The stopped at Licola, which looked like a suitable place to begin. At ten o'clock on a Saturday morning in June, the beach was beginning to fill up with people.

“This looks like a good place.” Ramona observed.

“”Yeah it does.” Sheffield said looking around. “The problem is, I don't see a place to change. We should of worn our swimming suits under our clothes.”

“Well, we'll just have to improvise and do the best we can then won't we. Get our stuff out of the trunk.” Ramona replied.

“Aren't you afraid that someone will see you?”

“If they did, they wouldn't see much. Besides you're going to hold up the blanket for me.” She sat in the car while Sheffield retrieved duffel bag with their things and the blanket. When he came around to her side of the car, Ramona instructed, “Now, hold up the blanket for me, Babe.”

With the open car door and the car itself as a partial shield, Sheffield held up the blanket as the third side of the makeshift changing room. Sheffield watched as his wife took off her clothes and slipped on her one piece bathing suit. “Now, I'll hold it up for you.”

She took the blanket and held it up while Sheffield took off his clothes. “Oops.” she said as she let it slip from her hands.

With a red face, Sheffield jumped into his swimming trunks with both feet and pulled them up while Ramona stood their laughing at him.

“Ramona!” he snorted.

“Oh cool your jets. No one saw you, except for me.” she winked. “Now come here and let me put some suntan lotion on your back.”

He came close and turned around with his back toward her. “Turn back around, its more fun the other way.” Sheffield complied and she reached her hands around behind him and began slathering it on. “See. Now isn't this much better?”

“It is now.” Sheffield said as he pulled her body against his. “Let me have some of that and I'll do your back.”

After covering their exposed skin with suntan lotion they strolled out onto the beach and picked spot and spread out the blanket to stake their claim. Being that early in the day, the sun wasn't as direct, and the sea breeze help to keep it cool. They sat side by side on the blanket with one arm around each other as they surveyed the beach.

With Ramona's natural skin tone, she blended in with the Mediterranean complexion of the Italians. She had what some would consider the perfect tan without even trying. She came by it genetically from being one quarter Indian and one quarter Spaniard. Sheffield on the other hand, was white all over, except for his face and arms below the sleeve lines of a short sleeve shirt.

None of the people within earshot seemed to be speaking English. There were people of all types, sizes, and shapes. Some appeared to be families with a mother, father and varying numbers of children of different ages. Others were in groups of just women or just men. One group of men were most likely American servicemen. Some were couples. In fact a young couple strolled up and selected a spot not to far from them. They were obviously Italian. Sheffield and Ramona watched in amazement as without any inhibitions, they removed their clothes to put on their swimming suits. She had her back to them but he was directly facing them. He put on a pair of skimpy briefs and she a bikini. At least she put on her top. A little while later Sheffield got an eye full as two women strutted by who hadn't.

Ramona jabbed him in the ribs, “What are you looking at?”

“I couldn't help it. They just came out of nowhere.” he said, his face flush with embarrassment.

“Yeah, I saw you taking it all in.”

“What about you? I saw you look at that fellow over there when he took off his clothes to put on his bathing suit.”

“Yeah. But that's different.”

“Oh it is, is it?” Sheffield challenged.

“You've got to remember that I was a navy nurse for how many years? I can't tell you how many men I've seen over the years. After a while they all look the same. Its just a matter of anatomy.”

“Oh really?” Sheffield huffed.

"You've got to admit, those girls were very beautiful. Now, talk about your Roman goddesses. I'll bet you enjoyed that, didn't you?" Ramona laughed.

"Not really. You know I'm not that kind of man."

"I know, Babe. I'm just giving you a hard time."

Ramona continued. "I must admit, I'm kind of jealous. I wish I had what they've got."

"I like what you've got just fine, sweetheart." Sheffield assured her.

"Really? Then I forgive you." Ramona said as she snuggled in even closer.

"In that case, I forgive you for dropping the blanket."

"Okay then." Ramona concluded. "Then I guess we're even."

After watching people for a while, Sheffield and Ramona decided that it was time to take the plunge and got up and waded out into the sea. For the next hour or so they frolicked in the surf like a couple of kids, forgetting their age. They played tag with each other, did some swimming and diving and just having a good time. When they returned to their piece of beach front property, they laid down on their blanket in one another's arms. They talked or simply listened to the sound of the surf and the gulls.

"What was that?" Ramona asked with a start.

"That was my stomach growling." Sheffield admitted. "I'm starting to get hungry."

"Come to think of it, so am I. Lets go find someplace to have lunch."

They gathered up their stuff and headed back to the car. Rather than making use of the impromptu changing room, Sheffield slipped on his shirt and shoes while Ramona wrapped the scarf that she had worn around her head around her hips.

They got back into the car and drove on up the coast a little further and found a little open air café and had lunch before driving further up the coast. They stopped off at another beach for more of the same. As the afternoon began to wear on, they packed up and drove back to the hotel. Still in their swimming suits, they had to change before going out for dinner.

Sunday was the last full day of the rendezvous in Naples and Sheffield and Ramona observed it in the way that they were accustomed to spending their Sundays. The Sunday before in the Reprisal's serviceman's group meeting, Admiral Brason suggested that they have their services for this week ashore to be followed by a Sunday picnic that he would host. It was agreed on and Lieutenant Moncur was assigned to schedule a place and Sheffield would take care of the food. Seaman Trouper would take care of the service.

Phil had reserve a section of the park near the Hotel Mirmare. Sheffield arranged for the ship's mess staff to cater it since it was for members of the ships company.

Then the idea was put forward to include the serviceman's groups on the other ships of the fleet anchored in the Gulf of Naples as well and the word went out.

Sheffield and Ramona spent a leisurely morning before the gathering and took their time to get ready. Sheffield placed a shore to ship telephone call to ship just to make sure everything was ready and gave permission for his admiral's barge to bring the food ashore.

About ten thirty, they left their room and walked to the park. His ever efficient aid had rounded up some chairs from somewhere and he and some of the men had them all set up. He even found a portable piano from somewhere. His barge was tied up in the marina adjacent to the park with the food being kept warm in galley. Everything was in order, even the weather.

Several men had already arrived from the Reprisal and the various other ships in the fleet. Being the largest ship, the Reprisal's group was by far the largest with about a dozen men. The two cruisers had each had about half that many and the destroyers even fewer. For them, it was a real treat to meet in a larger group. By the time the meeting started, there were about thirty five men there, plus Ramona, the only woman. Besides Sheffield, Dan, and Phil, there were three other officers present. But in this setting, rank was set aside as the thing they all had in common prevailed. As it turned out, three or four of the men were not members of the church, including Yeoman Walinsky who said that he came for the food.

In making some last minute arrangements. Alma Trouper found someone to play the piano and asked Ramona if she would lead the music. On her own, she offered to sing a solo for a musical number. She and the man who would be providing the accompaniment quickly decided on piece that they both knew. After arranging for the prayers and someone to administer the sacrament, Alma called the meeting to order at precisely eleven o'clock.

He welcomed everyone present and then asked each to stand a state their name, where they were from, if they had served a mission – and where, and what ship they were assigned to. It wasn't surprising that most of them were from Utah and Idaho.

When it came to Sheffield, he simply said, "I'm Sheffield Brason from the Reprisal and this is my wife Ramona. Were from Roanoke, Virginia." Everyone from the other ships knew who he was, but didn't know that he was a member of the church.

Ramona stood in as the chorister while the small congregation sang a rousing rendition of "High on the Mountain Top". There was an invocation followed by the sacrament hymn. Quinn and Sedric blessed the sacrament while two others passed it, using the trays from the Reprisal.

After the Sacrament, Bernard Hanks from the Reprisal gave an excellent talk on being in the Navy but not of the Navy. He talked about the challenge of maintaining their standards while surrounded by those who have none. He focused on language, the word of wisdom, and remaining morally clean and how to deal

with peer pressure from shipmates.

After Bernard's talk, Ramona sang what had become her favorite hymn since joining the church – “O My Father”. Just like Homer's sirens, the sailors were mesmerized by her lovely sining voice. Many of them were brought to tears for one reason or another. For some, it was because they missed their mothers, others because they felt the Spirit.

Alma related a few examples from his own experience of being in the Navy and not of the Navy and bore his testimony. At the conclusion of his remarks, he turned the time over to the congregation for the bearing of testimonies. There wasn't any hesitation as one after another, men stood and expressed their feelings and testimonies. They spoke of the examples in their lives, families and girlfriends and wives back home. There were stories of conversion and expressions of gratitude. Nearly every one of them were grateful for the opportunity to meet together as a combined group. Most of all, there were expressions of faith and testimony.

Sedric expressed his appreciation for the Brasons and his relationship with them and how their home had become his home away from home. He said that it was because of them that he met the love of his life, who he planned on proposing to when he returned to the United States. Quinn had something similar to say.

By the time those who were more apt to express themselves had finished, the more reserved men also took their turn. Some were quite brief but heartfelt in their expressions. Even though rank was not to be an issue, the officers among them waited until the sailors were through before taking their turns. Both Dan and Phil bore their testimonies and expressed their gratitude to Sheffield for the role he played in their conversions and the privilege that it was to serve with him.

Every man there took the opportunity to express themselves, even those who were not members of the church took their turn. They weren't sure what it was that they were feeling, but wanted to know more, both because of the way they felt and the examples of their friends and shipmates who had invited them. Even Yeoman Walinsky who said that he came for the food admitted that he came for more than that, it was the examples of the Admiral Brason, Commander Kirk, and Lieutenant Moncur who he served under.

Only Sheffield and Ramona had not yet done so. Ramona talked of her conversion and told the story of how they found the gospel. She told of how their family came to be and the blessing of being sealed in the temple.

When she was finished, Sheffield was the last to stand. He began by telling that long before he found the church, he had the same standards and how he was able to be in the Navy and not of the Navy during his long career. He had somewhat of an advantage when it came to peer pressure because he was an officer. Once he was in command positions, those under him became aware of his high standards and

acted accordingly around him, for the most part. He expressed his gratitude to the serviceman's group for accepting him into their meetings despite the demands of military protocol. There wasn't much he could add to what Ramona had said, but he did express his appreciation and love for her and his family. In conclusion, he proceeded to bear his testimony and told how he had experienced the witness of the Holy Ghost in confirming the truth to him in no uncertain terms.

Following his testimony, Ramona lead them in "God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again". That was the clue for the mess attendants, who had been listening from a distance, to begin bringing the food from the admiral's barge and setting it out. They paused while the benediction and a blessing on the food was offered.

Sheffield and Ramona held back and let men go through the line first. One of the attendants noticed and took it upon himself to bring them each a plate of food. They thanked him for his kindness and found a table and sat down. They were joined momentarily by Quinn and Sedric. There was plenty of fried chicken, potato salad, baked beans and soda to go around. Many of the men had seconds. The Sunday picnic continued with visiting and games. Every man there took the opportunity to shake hands with Sheffield and Ramona, surprised at how warm and approachable the Admiral was, except for the men from the Reprisal. They already knew that.

The gathering continued long into the afternoon as no one wanted to return to the real world, but some had watches to stand or other duties to attend to. Things started breaking up around four o'clock and by five only a few remained, including Quinn and Sedric. Soon everyone who remained went their own ways.

"Well that certainly went well." Sheffield exclaimed as he and Ramona walked back to the hotel.

"I'll say. I can tell that they look up to you as a father figure."

"Maybe so. At least today they had a mother figure too. They all went out of their way to be so polite to you."

"Oh I bet it just came naturally for them. They remind me of all of the missionaries we've had in our home over the last few years." Ramona paused and added, "Come to think of it, they're all missionaries too. Even you."

"Yes they are, but I'm not sure about me."

Ramona stopped in her tracks and tugged on his arm. "What do you mean? You heard what Dan and Phil said. You were a big influence on them. Even Yeoman Walinsky talked about what an example you are. And don't forget Paula and Jacob. And then there's Bill and Marge Casper. I'm sure there are others who don't come to mind right now.

As they started walking again, Sheffield replied, "I've just never thought of myself as a missionary."

“Sure you are. The way you are with these young men and your wrestling team and the way they respond to you, I can see you working with missionaries someday.”

When they got back to their room, they just relaxed and took it easy for the rest of the day. Ramona had a long trip home beginning in the morning and she wanted to turn in early. They had a prayer together and she went to bed. Sheffield sat out on the terrace looking out over the gulf as the sun settled low, silhouetting the ships at anchor. While taking it all in, he reflected on the day. He couldn't help but wonder what insight Ramona may have and what it might mean. He did love working with young people. He was anxious to return to coaching and teaching for that very reason.

After the sun set and darkness began to gather, he went back inside and changed his clothes, knelt in his personal prayer and climbed into bed with the very special woman who was already there – his woman. She hardly made a sound as he laid down next to her.

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The Hotel Miramare and the 1952 Ferrari Ghia Cabriolet are as described as are the places they went and visited.

