

## **CRUISE SISTERS: Betrayal**

*Previously: Rosemary and Daisy have never got on. Rosemary, the elder,, is anything but protective of her sweeter-natured 'Little Sister'. Things reach their lowest point when Rosemary gets Daisy arrested for fraud on her Wedding Day!*

*Daisy's fiancé Carl tracks Rosemary down to Mount Bathos, where she is disguised as a Monk. But She escapes...*

*With their Wedding postponed Carl suggests they take a Mediterranean cruise together. Daisy agrees but the very first night she thinks she hears a familiar voice through the cabin wall. Then another... NO! Can it really be true?*

### **THE NEXT MORNING –**

Yes, you guessed it, didn't you?

You guessed Carl wouldn't be there next to me? That I'd have to get dressed by myself, get made up by myself, get lost on the way to breakfast by myself. Then when I finally got there I found...

No one has seen Carl but Everyone is talking about *Her! L'Inglesa Solves World Crisis!* “*I have the answer!!!*” she cries. *And she does...*

When people aren't jabbering to each other they are glued to their phones or tablets.

“*Why, She looks just like you,*” says a cheery old Gent, holding his phone up for me to see. “*You must be so proud of her.*”

“No she doesn't and I'm so not!” I scream and throw a half-chewed croissant at him. It ricochets off his shiny forehead, knocks his wife's glasses off, and lands in the borscht soup tureen splashing everyone at his table. Who has borscht for breakfast anyway?

Time to go, Daisy.

By the time I had stopped crying and dared to show my face again we had docked at the Spanish Port of Assafoetida for a Guided Tour. I'd shuddered at the idea of a tour but I need distraction and I need to get off that horrible ship so I join the queue and half an hour later I am in a creaking bus taking us to a so-called historic town and port I had never heard of. But then geography was never my thing.

The Tour Guide says we have to descend through the emergency exit onto a very busy road due to a crass planning decision of the Mayor's. Even the wheelchair and walking frame-people take this in good spirit. Until they realise how close the oncoming vehicles are. We gather on a triangle of cobblestones to hear the Tour Guide.

“Is this your first time in Spain?” she asks.

Pointing at the many who cry *Yes!* she says 'Wrong! You are not in Spain you are in Galicia. A free proud land conquered by the Espanish! Never forget that. We never shall. And shall remind YOU if you EVER forget it. Understood? I HOPE SO!’’

“She's fierce,” says M Borscht.

“Do you admire her?” I say.

“She has passion,” he replies. “Right for the job. I admire passion in a woman,” he adds, making me feel uncomfortable.

And that's when the alarm bell should have rung. But words tumble out of the Tour Guide like chickpeas from a ripped sack. She is obviously very proud of the City. Fair does. But it is massively congested and an unplanned mess. Though the rocky geography of the area doesn't help. Still, thanks to traffic, and despite the dramatic bridge work, we spend all

but 10 minutes of the allotted 75 on the Coach.

We are told, twice, that the city pioneered the frozen fish trade in Europe by importing some 20,000 tons some 100 years ago. Ho hum.

She also tells us that Julius Vernala researched his "20,000 (*not again?*) Legs Under the Sea" in Assafoetida. And she says it again later. Obviously a killer line. Ho Hum. Ho Ho Hum Hum Hum. But at least this nonsense takes my mind off my emotional problems.

Then she has to go and say Bullfighting was banned here solely for the sake of potatoes and other vegetables. (*Sic*) Then adds that thanks to the diligent research of a heroic English Woman – *Blessed be her name!* - that fabulous sport which pits male beauty, agility and self-esteem against the brutal violence of a faithless beast... THAT NOBLEST OF HUMAN ENDEAVOURS CAN FLOURISH ONCE MORE! LA CORUNA CONTINUA!

I'm thinking, *Calm down, dear*, when she stops by my seat and pokes a scarlet fingernail between my eyes.

“AND YOU ARE SHE! YOU ARE SHE! YOU ARE SHE! LA CORUNA CONTINUA! LA CORUNA CONTINUA! LA CORUNA CONTINUA...”

Everyone is standing up clapping and chanting. Those nearest touch me where they can. The others form a line to do so.

“I knew it,” says M Borscht. “Your modesty gave you away. Will you marry me?”

I use the only polite phrase of Spanish I know. (From teaching a Summer School for Overseas Students.) “Please be seated, Class. I am a virgin.”

*Ohmigod! I used the whole phrase How stupid am I?*

But it works: Coachload bows to me and resumes their seat. Though I see some craning over their shoulders for a glimpse while others hold up their phones to take what I later learn they call a *DAISY*. But then they respectfully leave me alone.

Except for M Borscht who pushes through the crowd and moves into the empty seat next to mine. And smiles. He very carefully removes his cufflinks and twists them together to make a ring of diamonds and gold. He takes my hand, kisses it, and slips his cufflink ring on my finger. His perfectly wanton cuffs stray over my wrists and knees which have somehow suddenly bared themselves in a not hostile way.

He leans in for The Kiss.

Which in this culture may possibly mean we're betrothed. I wish I'd paid more attention to Senora Delgado's lectures on culture at school. Boredom is not the worst emotion to indulge. But it can get you into as much trouble as lust...

Where's fiancé Carl? It's his job to help me out of stuff like this... And he's with my treacherous sister.

But sometimes a Girl just has to look after herself.

I look at M Borscht's lips and wonder what he had for lunch...

Then I purse mine lips and turn them away in maidenly modesty to look out of the window.

And see we are passing a Mid-Road bronze statue *Celebrating Sailors Who are Enormous, Muscled, Very Muscled, and Naked*. Which could possibly distract some drivers and cause accidents...

But standing next to it, gazing into each others eyes, are Rosemary and Carl.

The Skunks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I turn away from the hideous sight...

My lips collide with M Borscht's  
And stay collided.

