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1 Double Header

“No man succeeds without a good woman
behind him, whether wife or mother. If it
is both, he is twice blessed.”

- Godfrey Winn writer, served in the Royal Navy

A gentle drizzle deflected off a multitude of
black umbrellas and dampened the freshly cut
grass amongst the endless crosses, row upon row.

The dark overcast sky cast a gloomy grey hue over
the small group of close knit family members and
friends who gathered for the double header. Tiny
beads of glistening gold like teardrops cascaded
from the two caskets that sat side by side.

The hand of a young woman dressed in black
clasped the hand of the gentleman standing next to
her tightly, Distinctly discernible, missing from her

7

ring finger, a symbol of eternal love. In vain?
unrequitted? A widow waiting anxiously to renew
her vows? Before sound science, many thought the
vein from the left finger ran straight to the heart,

the 'love vein'. Both of their heads hung low and with heavy hearts, the minister offered inciteful words of comfort and inspiration at this difficult time for all in attendance. In the distance the echo of a 3 volley, 7 member 21 gun Mi Garand .30 caliber salute resonated through the revered meticulously groomed grounds. In colonial times one shot was fired for each state of the union. The gentle melody of the timeless Deep Purple cult classic "Soldier of Fortune' came to mind.

I have often told you stories

About the way

I lived the life of a drifter

Waiting for the day

When I'd take your hand and sing songs

Then maybe you would say

Come lay with me, you love me

And I would surely stay

But I feel I'm growing older

And the songs that I have sung

Echo in the distance

Like the sound

8

Of a windmill goin' 'round

I guess I'll always be

A soldier of fortune
Many times I've been a traveler
I looked for something new
In days of old
When nights were cold
I wandered without you
But those days I thought my eyes
Had seen you standing near
Though blindness is confusing
It shows that you're not here
Now I feel I'm growing older
And the songs that I have sung
Echo in the distance
Like the sound
Of a windmill goin' 'round
I guess I'll always be
A soldier of fortune

9

An image of the 'Old Mill', the oldest working
windmill in America in Nantucket built back in
1746 transformed into wind washed waves drifting
out to a turbulent sea came to mind.
The lyrics gradually faded as the minister's
resounding message came to the fore.
By your wisdom and understanding you have

acquired riches for yourself and have acquired gold and silver for your treasuries. By your great wisdom, by your trade....your heart is lifted up because of your treasures.... (Ezekiel 28:4-5 KJV)

Do not store up treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal... (Mathew 6:19 KJV)... for where your treasure is there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21 KJV) Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever...Psalm 23: 6

10

KJV) In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ we commend to God your beloved servants Dr Emily Appleton and Patrick Gates. We commit your bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless you and keep you both, the Lord make his face to shine upon you both, give you grace and peace. Amen.

A somber heart felt amen resonated as endless drops of tears fell from heaven.

The woman raised her black fishnet veil and gave the gent next to her a peck on the cheek.

“See you soon sweetheart.” encouraged Dr.

Abigail Chase warmly to her on again off again irascible betrothed rebel, Ben Franklin Gates. A dapper gent in a black tweed jacket huddled around his two grieving colleagues.

“Give me a minute” requested Ben as he fought back the tears then forced the lump in his Adam’s apple down his constricted throat.

“We’ll help you pull through this” insisted Riley as he placed a warm hand on his friend’s shoulder.

The two grief stricken colleagues held each other as they turned back to glance at Ben.

11

Ben stood before the two caskets then gathered the strength and leaned to his left. His hand touched the smooth wet surface of the oak coffin.

“I hope you were proud of me... dad. The irascible sonthe insistent misfit...with an insatiable thirst.....” His parched throat needed to be appeased and to ease his weary overtaxed, troubled mind racing down the tracks at a thunderous pace.

Countless fond memories of precious moments shared with his father flooded his thoughts. Thrill of victories, agony of defeats in their relentless

quests and wild goose chases. The timeless treasures, the dynamic duo together through thick and thin, were indelibly etched into his long term memory. Stored in the vast vault of his cranium. readily available for retrieval and referral from time to time.

He patted the precious wood one last time.

12

“I must’ve inherited that from you.” His thoughts turned to his mother as he stepped to her casket and gently placed his moist hand on it.

“Mom, to you I owe the pleasure of persistence, tenacity and”he took a long pause to inhale the fresh mist and soak up the assortment of their turbulent lives. His head strong stubborn parents, oft separated for decades, in fact, at last summation some 33 years apart...rarely seeing eye to eye.

“After all these years and inspite of all your differences, you two are once again inseparable... for all eternity. As on your very first this your last treasure hunt. I’ll miss you both so much!”

The tears welled up...Ben could not contain his emotions any longer. A barrage of salty tears burst forth as the floodgates opened. He let out a guttural cry and peered up to the heavens.... And let the

soothing rain cleanse his wrinkled weather beaten
face. After all as Robert Plant so succinctly wrote,
'on everyone a little rain must fall'.

13

Several sleek racing yachts were moored in
the safe secluded cove in the Hudson Marina host
to the 2016 highly coveted America's Cup race.
Towering proudly, defiantly a lone sentinel
1776 feet above lower Manhattan near the
Reflection Pool, the effervescent eternal fountains,
like a pair of footprints along an endless shoreline,
where once the Twin Towers of the Trade Center
stood. In a graceful descent a golden eagle gradually
set it's talons atop the East Coast Memorial
to commemorate thousands of servicemen who
also gave their lives so valiantly serving their
country. Oft surviving hellish ordeals only to
helplessly await their fate in the heavily shark
infested waters of the Atlantic.

Shifting our focus to the solitary sentinel, a lost
soul seated at the end of One Bar nestled high

14

within the Freedom Tower, like the eagles who
oft make their nests high atop the skyscrapers in
lieu of rocky outcrops.

A few gold flakes gently descended and settled
on the bottom of an old bottle of Goldwasser dated
1598. The vessel contained the precious gold laced
alcoholic elixir rested atop a few moist, equally
aging parchments, the Merchant of Venice,

15

a few photographs and the flimsy edge of first
class air fare tickets.

The lone patron reached for the Goldwasser and
poured himself another hearty shot and watched
intently as the gold flakes slowly came to rest on
the bottom. A young couple rushed into the bar
presumably to prevent the patron from doing
anything rash in his far from sober state of mind.

“The quality of mercy is not strained.

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

Ben was oblivious to their advances.

“They loved you very much” insisted Abigail

attempting to breach the cold hard shell, an exterior
sheltering his emotions from all human contact.

Her warm hands gently pulled the first class tickets
for two from underneath the bottle. She surmised a
last ditch effort to seal the rift that had separated

them for so long lay just beyond their fingertips as fate would have it..

16

“Elderly couples oft die together” added Riley softly trying to add his two cents worth of stress induced cardiomyopathy science.

“Quality of Mercy..... from the Merchant of Venice” noted Ben oblivious to their futile attempt to comfort him.

“They were planning to renew their vows?”

“A speech by Portia, nickname for Abigail used by James Lovell in his love letters to her.”

They were both astonished by his keen astute mind inspite of the amount of alcohol he’d undoubtedly consumed.

“Love....ll, a signatory?”

“Not of the Declaration of Independence per se but of the Articles of Confederation, the 1st

17

constitution and the Secret Correspondence. He created the ciphers.” Ben’s razor sharp response startled Riley and Abigail.

“What’s Love...ll got to do with it?”

Ben had an epiphany but had to excuse himself.

“I have to take a pea”, he stumbled like a

drunken sailor toward the head.

“Montagu Love, a Shakespearean actor once portrayed “old bacon face” justice Samuel Chase.

Riley waited for Abigail to get up to speed. “The guy on the \$10,000 bill. The highest denomination in circulation.”

“The 1st treasurer to add “In God We Trust” to the US coins in 1854.”

18

“Speak of the devil” as Ben slipped back into his berth...to continue the imbibing and marinating process. Riley was in his spot.

“Seated in George Washington’s chair, 57.”

Riley scoped the bar for a Heinz 57 bottle.

“Catch up” insisted Abigail.

“56 signatories, one writer – Thomas Stone, copperplate engraved on vellum. The quill – eagle, hawk, turkey, goose, peacock? The Syng ink well, The Goddard Broadside, only nine in existence.”

Riley’s picked up speed seemingly on the right track.

“Peacock, symbol of immortality, good luck, an ‘eyelet’ on each feather...reminds me of the..”

“All seeing eye on the presidential seal” interjected Abigail astutely. All three American

history aficionados were now on the same
wavelength.

As they were about to spill the Boston baked
Beans, One Republic's 'Secrets' from the 2009
album "Waking Up" began from the bar's playlist.

"Secrets"

I need another story

Something to get off my chest

My life gets kinda boring

Need something that I can confess

"Above it, Annuet Coeptis, God has approved of
our undertaking" asserted Ben learned in latin.

"Not another wild turkey chase on the American
Whiskey trail" snapped Riley

20

'Til all my sleeves are stained red

From all the truth that I've said

Come by it honestly I swear

Thought you saw me wink, no

I've been on the brink, so

"The Sons of Liberty, a secret society of the
original 13 colonies would oft gather at Fraunces
Tavern to display their displeasure and to fight
British taxation. Fired upon by HMS A....."

The letters SIA eluded him but added , "cannonball

once sailed through the roof.”

Tell me what you want to hear

Something that will light those ears

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

21

“The (tea) party’s over.” Riley waved the bartender to pour out Ben’s drink as the British captain did in New York harbor ordered by the Sons of Liberty to dispose of almost \$1 million worth of tea AND apologize.

This time don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

“I’m sorry.”

My God, amazing how we got this far

It's like we're chasing all those stars

Who's driving shiny big black cars

And everyday I see the news

All the problems that we could solve

And when a situation rises

Just write it into an album

Send it straight to gold

But I don't really like my flow, no, so

“Where is the love?” alluding to the Black Eyed

Peas gold hit. Let's get this party started" insisted

Ben defiantly.

Tell me what you want to hear

Something that will light those ears

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

22

"Ben, let's get you home" stated Abigail

sincerely. Ben defiantly sank into his seat like a stone.

"SS Florida broadsided RMS Republic, sunk off

Nantucket in 180-240' of water. \$3 million in \$20

gold eagles lost. A loan to the Tsar. A specie about

9 cubic meters."

This time, don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

Oh, got no reason, got no shame

Got no family I can blame

Just don't let me disappear

I'ma tell you everything

23

"Worth more than a billion dollars today." A

quick flashback to the funeral, an old windmill on

Nantucket...and a sinking ship.

So tell me what you want to hear

Something that will light those ears

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

"Here we go again" fretted Abigail as Ben

pointed off into midtown space.

"Syng (pr sing) er building. There the Fed drafted legislation in 1910 after the panic of 1907 that saw the collapse of the Knickerbocker Trust, the 3rd largest Trust in NYC. The NYSE plummeted 50% after United Copper Company's failed attempt to corner the market..."

Riley and Abigail cornered Ben, in what proved a futile attempt to pry him from his sermon. He pointed to a precious piece of property. "The Ansonia was built by Anson Phelps, the copper mining & saddlery magnate in 1899."

Riley waded into the water and ventured an addendum nervously.

"Michael Phelps won 57 Olympic gold medals."

24

This time, don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

"The Ansonia was designed by Stokes who also

created the Soldiers and Sailor's Monument. It had
a self sufficient rooftop farm, 500 chickens... laid
an egg a day..." recalled Abigail.

"It's the goose that laid the golden eggs I'm
worried about" relayed Riley.

So tell me what you want to hear
Something that will light those ears

25

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

"August Belmont built a racetrack and NYC's 1st
underground transit system."

"Big wheels keep on turnin' " added Abigail
anxious to leave the premises.

This time, don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

All my secrets away, all my secrets away

"If the founding father could embed ciphers in
parchment. David Copperfield made the Statue of
Liberty disappear, 5 tons of golden eagles must've
landed somewhere." Ben grabbed the bottle
disturbing the gold flakes, noticeably shaken and
stirred. He peered out toward the Statue of Liberty
hoisting a torch high into the air with her right

hand, a tabula ansata inscribed with the date of the American Declaration of Independence July 4th, 1776 in her right hand then hurriedly left with his two colleagues no wiser than when he'd entered.

"Where are you?"

26

Riley propped him up by one shoulder and softly suggested:

"I like my players to be married and in debt.

That's the way to motivate them - Ernie Banks,

Mr Sunshine", (1931-2015 played shortstop and

first base man for the Cubs from 1953-'71. Inducted

into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in '77

and Major League All Century Team in 1999.)

Abigail knew he'd need a lot more persuasion to

go down that aisle.