

## Chapter 11    *One more question*

We left Barcelona. I was very unhappy. I thought about Simon in prison. We played concerts in Madrid and Bilbao. We didn't play very well, of course, but we played.

On our last night in Bilbao, Adriana and I went out after the concert.

'Are you going to be all right?' Adriana said. 'You've had a terrible time.'

We were walking by the Río Nervión, Bilbao's big, black river.

'Adriana,' I said. 'Can I ask you something?'

'Yes, of course.'

'Do you – did you like Simon before?'

'Well, I liked him.'

'Were you very good friends?'

'What? What are you asking? Like lovers?' Adriana asked.

'No. Yes. No. I don't know.' Why did I start this, I thought.

'Of course he wasn't my lover,' she laughed. 'Why did you think that?'

'I didn't, really. It's just, well, you had a secret.'

'Ah. That . . . ' She stopped and looked at me.

'You did have a secret, didn't you?' I asked.

'Yes, yes we did.' She was silent for a minute. I waited. 'Simon saw us, you see. He saw me with Martin.'

'Martin!' Now I was really surprised.

‘Yes. We’ve been together for three months. But we didn’t want to tell anyone.’

‘So the night Simon killed Frank?’ I asked. ‘Somebody was in your room . . .’

‘You thought it was Simon! Oh, Penny!’

‘I’m sorry,’ I said.

‘It was Martin, of course, you silly thing.’ She laughed.

‘I’m sorry,’ I said again.

‘Now listen to me,’ said Adriana. ‘Don’t feel sorry, don’t think about Simon. Start your life again. Start thinking of the future.’

That’s when I heard it. Music. Someone was playing a guitar. Somebody else was playing a violin. But that wasn’t all. There was another instrument too.

‘Adriana!’ I shouted. ‘Listen!’

‘What?’

‘That sound. I know that sound. Come on.’

We ran by the side of the river. We ran to the music. The players in the street were very good. We stood there, listening to the guitar and the violin. And a double bass. A beautiful double bass with a special sound. A Panormo. Made in 1798. It was my double bass.

‘Hey,’ I said. ‘That’s my double bass.’

‘No, it isn’t,’ said the double bass player.

‘All right,’ I said, ‘Where did you get it?’

‘Well, I . . . er . . . I . . . it’s mine,’ he said again.

‘That’s not true,’ Adriana said. ‘It’s not your double bass and you know it!’

The double bass player was not sure what to do. He didn’t look very happy. He knew that something was wrong.

‘All right,’ he said. ‘All right. A man sold it to me. Very cheap. In the street. It wasn’t right. I know. But I don’t like it anyway. The sound is all wrong. You give me some money and you can have it.’



Finally we gave him some money, but not much. I went to the bass player and took the lovely instrument. It was dirty and there were some black lines on the wood. But I loved it anyway. I was very happy. I put my arms around it.

‘Come on,’ I said to it. ‘Let’s go home.’

At that moment a car came round the corner and stopped. Two policemen got out. I didn’t know the first one, but I knew the second.

‘Ah,’ he said. ‘Hello Miss Wade. Penny.’

‘Inspector Portillo,’ I said. ‘What are you doing here? You work in Barcelona.’

‘That is true. I work in Barcelona.’

‘So why are you here?’

‘We ask the questions,’ he said. He was laughing at me. ‘You have found something, I see,’ he said.

‘Yes, it’s my double bass. Isn’t it fantastic!’

‘It is good news, yes. You said it was a very good double bass. It looks nice. But I think its player is more beautiful.’

‘Sorry?’ I said.

‘Why do you think I am in Bilbao, Penny Wade?’ the inspector said. He *was* very good-looking.

‘Come on, Penny,’ Adriana said. ‘It’s time we went back to the hotel.’

‘I will take you,’ my inspector said. ‘Your double bass can go in our car, I think. Come on. Then I want to ask Miss Wade a question.’

‘More questions! I don’t believe it.’ I said.

‘Only one,’ he said. ‘I’ve only got one more question.’

And he did ask me one more question. The most surprising question in the world. And my answer? ‘I’ll think about it.’ And I have thought about it. Maybe there is a future after all. I’m going back to Spain tomorrow.