

Excerpt from “Autumn Daffodils – Joanna’s Story” by Peter Turnham

We agreed to get ready as quickly as possible, and Charlie said he would be waiting in the car right in front of the hotel. As we made our way up to our rooms, I asked Molly what she thought I should wear. When she said I looked great just as I was in jeans and a t-shirt, I asked if perhaps it was a bit casual. She replied that on her it was casual, but on me it was a statement.

“Are you just saying that?”

“Mom, it’s your confidence you’re losing, not your looks.”

In next to no time, we were sitting in the car with Charlie and there was obviously no question about where we were going. I asked again about Audrey, and Charlie told us some more about her extraordinary life. I was surprised to find myself looking forward to seeing his friends, especially Audrey. I did find the community, or the Village as they called it, a dreary place, though ‘dreary’ was the last word that could be used to describe that group of people. We could tell how pleased they were to see us when they met us at the door. Audrey took my arm, while Harry just about beat Bill to Molly’s arm.

We were escorted to what I assumed were their usual chairs, and we sat down. Molly was once again the centre of attention, but it was obvious who the mystery woman was here, as they also wanted to know about me. I wasn’t remotely relaxed about it. Audrey could see I was uncomfortable.

“Why don’t Joanna and I go for a little stroll together, so we can discuss things that only we ladies will understand. You gentlemen can devote all your attention to Molly.”

Audrey did have an air of authority about her, she left them all with no room for discussion. I felt much the same and simply fell in line behind her as we got up to leave the room together. We strolled arm in arm into the gardens. I had a slight feeling of trepidation; what did Audrey want to say? I didn’t have to wait long. Audrey isn’t backward in coming forward.