

## Whistling

I was standing in the rain outside my Central Park hotel, trying to hail a taxi. The doorman who should have been helping find me a cab was standing under the awning, staying dry, talking to a middle-aged lady about local restaurants.

‘You don’t want to go there,’ I heard him say. ‘A lot of French people go there.’

I kept my hand out and tried to whistle for a cab like they do on TV shows but I’ve never been able to whistle, it just comes out like a reedy gust of air. As I stood there, getting wetter by the minute, I noticed a man walking purposefully towards me.

‘Tony,’ he said, approaching me now and extending his hand. ‘It’s great to see you again.’ I stared at him a little blankly and after a moment he said, ‘it’s me, Josh.’

‘Josh,’ I said cheerfully, shaking his hand, assuming that it would only take a moment before I realised who he was, but it didn’t come to me. More worrying, it took a little longer for me to recall that my name is not Tony.

‘I’m sorry,’ I said. ‘Josh, I don’t think we’ve met.’ I was trying to sound casual, friendly even, but he looked shocked and insulted.

‘Josh Groban,’ he replied. ‘We sung together at Radio City Music Hall last New Year’s Eve.’

I smiled and shook my head. ‘I think you’ve mistaken me for someone else,’ I said.

‘You’re Tony Bennett?’ asked Josh, frowning.

‘I’m not Tony Bennett,’ I replied.

‘Yes, you are,’ he said.

‘Seriously,’ I said. ‘I’m not. I can’t sing a note.’

‘You’re really not Tony Bennett?’ he repeated, looking completely confused, as if he was starting to doubt his own sanity. In the moment or two that I hesitated before answering – I wanted to be absolutely sure that I wasn’t Tony Bennett – I had a chance to take him in. A very tall man. Quite handsome. Young too. I imagine he has no trouble getting girls.

‘I’m sorry to disappoint you,’ I said.

‘It’s not a disappointment at all,’ he said with a shrug. ‘I can’t fucking stand Tony Bennett. You must know you look like him though.’

‘No one’s ever told me that before,’ I admitted.

‘I find that hard to believe,’ said Josh Groban. ‘What are you doing here anyway?’

‘I’m trying to get a cab,’ I said. ‘About four hundred have passed me by but none of them stop.’

He smiled for a moment, then turned his head before placing his index and middle finger in his mouth and offering the whole of 57<sup>th</sup> Street a piercing, melodious whistle. Sweet Jesus, it was like heavenly music, I’d never heard anything like it. Every head turned. Six cabs pulled in. Two of them nearly crashed into each other.

‘Thank you,’ I said.

‘See you, Tony,’ he said, walking off.

The following morning, thrilled by the whole experience, I bought Josh Groban’s latest CD. I have to be honest with you, it was a little disappointing.